

Deuteronomy 31:30-32:52  
The Song of the God of Moses  
2017-07-09

Find life in the perfect work of a faithful Father

With grandparents visiting during this last week, one of the conversations that came up around the supper table was the topic of favorite movies. But not only favorite movie overall, but favorite movie by type or genre. One of those types was favorite musical. For those unfamiliar with this type of movie, it's the type of movie that seems perfectly normal right up until the actors spontaneously break into singing, and often, dancing. Movies like *Mary Poppins*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, and *The Sound of Music* are all classic examples. Perhaps even now you're recalling songs and scenes from these movies, a testament to the power and effectiveness of music to impress our memories. Joel, when it came to his turn to answer this question, answered with a perennial favorite of our family - *The Fiddler on the Roof*. In the opening scene of that movie, the main actor is describing everyday life to his audience, and then turns to answer the question - why do we do the things we do? The answer, he says, he can give in one word - TRADITION! At this point the music is queued, and the voices are raised in song. He doesn't know where the traditions came from, and he doesn't seem to care, but the question is a pretty good question. Why do we do the things we do? Have you ever asked your children that question? Why did you disobey? Why did you take the toy? Why did you...? *Children naturally take for granted, refuse to acknowledge, forget, and they aim to build the world around themselves.*

**Scripture Passage: Deuteronomy 31:30-32:52**

There's a very prominent theme in this chapter of God as Father and Israel as his children. We see the work of a generous Father, but then it will be contrasted with the sinful response of a wayward child, and this pattern is repeated several times in this song. The study of this song, and all of this chapter, should help us to answer the question - why do we do the things we do? Because life is found in the perfect work of our faithful heavenly Father, and what we do should be in response to what he has done. **Find life in the perfect work of a faithful Father.**

**In the Father's greatness we should gladly obey (we don't have to be in control) (vv.1-4, 5-6)**

1. **vv.1-2** "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak..." - Moses calls heaven and earth to bear witness to what he is about to speak. This is important, and attention must be given. These words to be sung are words of instruction (v.2), and bring life and refreshment like rain to a desert land.
2. **v.3** "For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God!" - The greatness of God. This speaks of his eminence, how much higher and glorious he is, that he is majestic and magnificent.
3. **v.4** "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice." - God is called the Rock, which speaks of his unchanging ways, his permanence and strength. His work is perfect. This speaks of both degree and quality. God does his work completely, and it has no lack.
  1. **Here at the Oregon coast we get a good picture of the steadiness and stability of rocks. Massive rocks that are beaten by waves and wind, yet these rocks are unmoved.**
  2. God is faithful, always performing what he says he will do, always without sin or iniquity, just and upright, doing what is excellent, because it flows naturally out of his character. The greatness of God, his sovereign control, his justice and faithfulness and righteousness, should lead us to glad obedience. We should cling to him, hold fast and follow after. But what was Israel's response?
4. **vv.5-6** "They have dealt corruptly with him... Do you thus repay the LORD... Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?" - Instead of clinging to the Rock, holding fast to the One who is faithful, instead they chose their own way to walk. Rather than walk in obedience to the One whose work is perfect, they chose what was most unwise, abandoning their Maker and Creator, the One who made them and established them.
  1. **God's greatness should lead us to obey. We will never find any greater, higher, or more in control than God. We don't have to be in control of things, because the Rock is in control. We don't need to force our way; we can instead trust God's control and obey him. We can work out his will in our lives instead of trying to force our own.**

**Transition:** Next, the song moves from the Father's greatness to the Father's goodness.

**In the Father's goodness we should rightly delight (we don't have to look elsewhere) (vv.7-14, 15-18)**

1. **v.7** Moses calls the people to remember the good works of God in times past.
2. **vv.8-10** Notice all that the Lord did for Israel. He gave all nations their inheritance, divided mankind, and fixed their borders, but his special delight was in Israel. Israel was found in a desert land and God surrounded him, took care of him, and protected him as that which was most precious (apple of his eye).

1. Apple of his eye - This is an expression that refers to something that is most precious and treasured. Have you ever had a splinter in your hand? Uncomfortable, but usually tolerable. How about a speck of dirt in your eye? It's a constant irritation and usually needs to be dealt with right away. But this isn't just speaking of the eye in general, but the pupil of the eye. Our bodies react quickly to anything going toward our eyes, because they're precious and treasured. That's what this expression is referring to.
3. **v.11** The metaphor changes to an eagle caring for its young, teaching them to fly, even catching them when they fail.
4. **vv.12-14** It was the Lord, and the Lord alone, that took care of Israel. It was the Father, in his goodness, that provided for them. In his tender care he sustained them with the very best.
  1. Why would Israel look anywhere else for anything good? In the Father's provision they had all the good they could need or want. They weren't lacking in any way. Their Heavenly Father had all good things for them, but they chose to look elsewhere.
5. **v.15** "*But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek...*" - Jeshurun is like a nickname, or a pet name if you will, for Israel. We'll come across it again in **Deut. 33**, and it's also used in **Isaiah 44:2**. It means upright or law-keeper. It clearly finds an ironic use here, because Israel was guilty of the opposite of uprightness or law-keeping. Instead, Israel grew fat on God's goodness and became stubborn.
6. **vv.16-17** Israel began going elsewhere in search of something more, something else, some other good. Looking to other gods, false gods and idols, committing abominations, sacrificing to demons. Israel abandoned the goodness of God and traded it for devotion to demons.
7. **v.18** They were neglecting to remember the Rock that gave them their very existence. To not forget requires active attention be given.
  1. **Deuteronomy 4:9** "*Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children—*" **Deuteronomy 8:11** "*Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today.*"
  2. **The goodness of God should lead us to remember his works and delight in him. Mothers, can you imagine one of your children digging around in the trash for food when you faithfully prepare delicious and nourishing food for them? How surprised would you be if little Jimmy was pulling out egg shells and plating them up for his supper, when you have a wonderful meal prepared and on the table? Hard to imagine, right? But this is the very thing we do when we look elsewhere for goodness; when we look anywhere other than to God for our greatest delight.**
  3. **That image on your screen, that extra hour or product you billed for but didn't earn, that relationship you know you shouldn't be engaged in, the neglect of your family for a few extra dollars at work. Have you forsaken God's ways and God's goodness as your greatest delight, and started looking somewhere else for goodness? James 1:17** "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*"

**Transition:** The Father's greatness leading to our obedience, the Father's goodness leading to our delight, and now we see the Father's glory leading to trust.

### **In the Father's glory we should fearfully trust (we don't have to fear others) (vv.19-43)**

1. **vv.19-21** The Lord sees their waywardness, and so he acts. He says in **v.20** he will hide his face, that he will conceal himself, remove the light of his presence, the radiance of his glory from them.
2. **vv.22-25** recall the curses of **Deut. 28**. These weren't merely natural disasters, but the hand of God against them because of their disobedience.
  1. These are what all sins deserve; the righteous wrath and indignation of God. But thanks be to God that we are spared from the wrath of God because Jesus took it upon himself.
3. **vv.26-27** The Lord would have wiped them out completely had it not been for his concern for his own glory. If Israel were destroyed, the other nations might be tempted to think that it was their own hand that was triumphant. God is jealous for his glory, and that's a good thing; there is no higher aim than his own glory. Our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, and God's chief end is to glorify God. Paul writes that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all to the glory of God (**1 Cor. 10:31**). **That's why our first Core Value at Pillar is "Working for God's Glory."**
  1. God doesn't want these nations to glory in themselves, but to know that it was his hand at work. Israel is spared, not because of merit, but for the sake of God's glory.
4. **vv.30-31** God is glorious, and he is to be feared. He is the Rock, higher above and more powerful than any idol or false god that might be worshiped.
5. **v.36** When Israel is at the end of themselves, when their power is gone, then he will act.

6. **vv.37-38** He is the true God. The false gods they tried for refuge could not save or deliver. They offered sacrifices and drink offerings to things they had carved and created, which are unable to eat or drink, or speak or hear or act in any way. Can they rise to deliver and help? Can they be your protection? (**v.38**)
7. **vv.39-42** When God acts, none can stand to oppose. He is to be feared above all gods.
8. **v.43** Rejoice in the glory of God. Other gods are nothing and aren't deserving of our worship and devotion. But in God we should delight and rejoice. Israel is being called to trust in God, and all the nations under heaven are called to rejoice. This great God who provides and protects, who also disciplines and corrects and cleanses, he is the God we should fearfully trust. He is the God we must reverence and be in awe of.
  1. **We don't need to fear other people or false gods, but only the glorious Father. This fear, in daily actions, looks like trust and obedience.**

**Transition:** This song, which seems to be carried along mostly in a minor key, turns at the very end to a note of grace and hope, and this continues into the narrative section that ends the chapter. In this we see that...

**In the Father's grace we should humbly abide (we don't have to prove ourselves) (vv.44-52)**

1. **vv.44-47** This song is recited by Moses and Joshua before all Israel so that they would learn it, and so that it would serve as an aid to their obedience to God's law.
  1. God has graciously given his law to his people, and it is their very life. It was to serve as the pattern of their lives, showing them how to order their days toward abiding in God and living long in the Promised Land. This is a gracious act of God, and in his grace we should humbly abide.
2. **vv.48-52** We see Moses called to ascend Mount Nebo where he would die. This is on the east side of the Jordan River, as Moses was not permitted to enter the land promised by God. We're told why.
  1. **v.51** "...because you broke faith with me...because you did not treat me as holy..." - In **Numbers 20** we have the account of Moses breaking faith. The Lord instructed Moses to speak to the rock and that it would yield water for the people. Moses, however, struck the rock. Instead of hallowing God, treating God as holy, he acted in disobedience, choosing to do what he wanted instead of what God commanded. There were consequences to Moses' disobedience.
3. The people were dependent on God for his grace, and he gives them his law as an act of grace, to guide them in the way of life. Moses was dependent on God for his grace, and God was gracious to Moses. He brings him up the mountain and allows him to view the land of Canaan. And, even more, Moses received the gift of salvation. We see Moses appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in **Matthew 17**, so we know that Moses had his sins forgiven and was justified by faith.
4. It's in the Father's grace that we should humbly abide. We don't stand in the faith arrogantly, as if we have deserved the grace shown to us. We don't act in pride, thinking we've earned anything good from God or that he owes us for good behavior. We stand and abide humbly in the grace of God, knowing it is a divine gift.

**Conclusion:** Church, God is great, God is good, God is glorious, and God is gracious. All that we do, what we believe, where we go, how we speak, how we work, rest, study, eat and drink, should be determined by those truths. They're rich with significance for us, if we will consider them and respond to them. We have a faithful Father in heaven who has worked a perfect work. He is the Rock of our salvation, so let us find life in him.

# Family

## Table Talk



July 9, 2017

### Family Discussion

1. In chapter 32 of Deuteronomy, Moses proclaims the faithfulness and perfection of God's work in the lives of the children of Israel in a very special way – a song! Song is a special gift, a unique way God has given us to express our hearts in worship. Is song a regular part of your family worship?
2. In Moses' song, he praises God, as well as teaches, testifies, and warns the people. He sings truth that glorifies God and directs the people to the perfect and faithful work of God. Think of some of your favorite worship songs. What do they teach about God? What do they proclaim? Who do they glorify?
3. If song isn't a regular part of your family worship, be encouraged to make it a regular addition. Consider God's Word and it's testimony of song through those whom God used. Allow the gift of song to be used and enjoyed in worship to our faithful and perfect God, the reason we have life and voices to lift to Him!

### GOD'S TRUTH

We find life in the perfect work of a faithful Father!

#### Key Verse



"The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."

Deuteronomy 32:4 ESV

#### TABLE READING

Lead your kids into God's Word...

1. Deuteronomy 31:30, 32:4
2. Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16
3. Exodus 15:1-2; Psalm 28:7; Psalm 33:1-5; Psalm 69:30; Psalm 92:1-4; Psalm 96:1-4

**Scripture Memory: Deuteronomy 31:8**

"AND THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE. YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR EYES. YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND ON YOUR GATES." - DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9 (ESV)