

## Season 7: Deuteronomy

### Episode 3: Remember that God Speaks (Chapters 4)

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**Sarah:** We're really thankful for the sponsorship of 10ofthose.com and Kaleidoscope kids Bibles that help us to make this podcast happen. The bright star: The Story of Esther by Holly Mackle draws young readers into the powerful story of Esther. It's full of adventure, intrigue, danger, but most importantly in this Kaleidoscope edition, It draws us into the bigger story of Christ, the Bright Morning Star. We really enjoyed reading this as a family and our kids couldn't wait for the next chapter each evening. Grab your copy at 10ofthose.com.

**Felicity:** Welcome to two sisters and a cup of tea. My name is Felicity and I'm in the States and I'm here with my sister Sarah. She's in the UK. And this episode we're going to be jumping into chapter four of Deuteronomy. Sarah, good to see you. What is in your cup right now?

**Sarah:** I've got a lemon and ginger tea today. That thing where you try things, what, 10-15 times, and it goes from not really liking it to liking it. That's what's happened over this season. When I've not been that well, I'm now a big fan of the lemon and ginger tea. So there we go.

**Felicity:** Wow, that's quite a transformation, really. I didn't really have you down as a lemon and ginger tea kind of girl.

**Sarah:** Oh, I do like lemon a lot. I've always loved it. I don't know, I used to suck those lemons in front of you when you playing a trumpet.

**Felicity:** I can't believe you just brought me playing the trumpet into this.

**Sarah:** But, yeah, the addition is the ginger. I guess I'm now calm. So what have you done for?

**Felicity:** Oh, just a classic Yorkshire tea, actually. We're recording this in the morning and I find that my first morning cup of tea is always a Yorkshire tea. Very habitual on that. Ready for action?

**Sarah:** Yeah, very good. All right, then, before we get stuck into chapter four, Felicity, tell us what distracts you from getting into the Word for yourself, into the Bible for yourself, and how do you kind of counter those distractions?

**Felicity:** Yeah, that's a good question, isn't it? I think distraction is probably like a buzzword for our age, isn't it? I am so easily distracted. To have sustained focus just is a really hard thing, and that is partly due to my stage of life of having small children around a fair amount of the time. But I think actually it's more technology, social media, just flitting. I feel like I flipped from one thing to the next, and that can be really true for me in the Bible as well. And it's something I've been thinking about over the last few weeks, really. I don't know, new Year, new kind of resolve. And I think one of the things is it has to come back to a heart level conviction that I really want to be in God's word, because he is at work through it and he is changing me through it. And this is where the kind of the good stuff happens, and that's more valuable than the time that I'm going to be tempted to spend on instagram or whatever it may be. So I think that kind of heart conviction is a thing. And then there's the practicalities and they're like actually putting my phone far from me in a different room, I've realized, because I can easily reach for it, far too easily. What about you? What are your top tips on that?

**Sarah:** Yeah, I mean, I'm a creature of habit and I find if I don't have my time with the Lord first thing in the morning, like the first thing, my head will just be spinning with what I need to get done that day and the busyness of life. So, yeah, I don't go near screens or anything that early in the morning. And that is the only way that I find that I'm not going to get distracted by other things, the other business of the day and kind of prioritizing this, the most important business first, but it's a challenge, isn't it? Yeah, it is a daily wrestle, a daily

battle, but it's worth it. I never regret it. I never regret spending time in the Bible and in God's word, but I can easily regret being distracted and spending time in other places.

**Felicity:** So good stuff to be thinking about. Let's get into our deuteronomy chapter. Chapter four. I'm going to read chapter four, verses one through to 31. So not the whole chapter, but a fair chunk of it. So chapter four, verse one. Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I'm about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the Lord the God over your ancestors is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the command of the Lord your God that I give you. You saw with your own eyes what the Lord did at Bail Paul. The Lord your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the bail of Peor. But all of you who held fast to the Lord your God are still alive today. See, I've taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations who will hear about all these decrees and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I'm setting before you today? Only be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at horrib when he said to me assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children. You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens with black clouds and deep darkness. Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form. There was only a voice. He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets. And the Lord directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and lords you're to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You saw no form of any kind the day the Lord spoke to you at horror out of the fire. Therefore, watch yourselves very carefully so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars, all the heavenly array, do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping the things. The Lord your God is apportioned to all the nations under heaven. But as for you, the Lord took you and brought you out of the iron smelting furnace out of Egypt to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are. The Lord was angry with me because of you and he solemnly swore that I would not cross the Jordan and enter the good land the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance. I will die in this land. I will not cross the Jordan. But you are about to cross over and take possession of that good land. Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you. Do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God is forbidden. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God, after you have had children and grandchildren who have lived in the land a long time. If you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God and arousing his anger, I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you're crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long, but will certainly be destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you. There you will worship man made gods of wooden stone which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find Him. If you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you're in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey Him. For the Lord. Your God is a merciful god. He will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors which he confirmed to them by oath.

**Sarah:** Thank you, Christine. So I think in all our conversations about the autonomy, every time, you're like, I just love chapter four. I just love chapter four. It's my favorite. Tell us why it's your favorite. Go on.

**Felicity:** I do. I just think it's so brilliant. I mean, you get God speaking and making it really clear that he's speaking to his people, and he's speaking to his people because he's in relationship with his people. And I love that bit where he says in chapter four, verse 20, the Lord took you, brought you out of Egypt to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are. And sort of that is sandwiched between statements about God speaking. And I love this idea of holding fast to the Lord and how do we hold fast? I know I want to hold fast to the Lord. How do I hold fast to that? I think this chapter says hold fast to the Lord by hearing him speak loving that we have this mighty God who, like other nations, are going to want because he's so immensely worthy of our worship. And I just think that is really clear throughout this whole chapter. I think it's not that this echoes the New Testament and what we hear of God and his word. There is such a continuum of what we hear here. The very fact that we have a God who speaks and that he's working through that word is just I love that. I love that.

**Sarah:** Yeah, it's extraordinary, isn't it? Like, it is awe inspiring, isn't it? And I think the chapter is meant to do that. It's meant to kind of grow out awe of how extraordinary it is that he would choose to speak to his people, isn't it? The amount of times it's repeated that the Lord spoke to you, he declares, he commanded, he speaks. You're hearing the voice of God. And I love that in verse 35 and then says, you were showing these things so that you might know that the Lord is God besides him. There is no other. And I think that's been the surprise for me in this chapter. And is that actually the speaking God is put in contrast with idols that have form. So our speaking God doesn't have form. The idols have form but have no words. They have no power, they have no life. And I think it's quite surprising when I was first reading through it, to see that kind of contrast brought out. I don't know what you thought about that.

**Felicity:** Yeah, it's not kind of the immediate place that we would go, is it? The idea that God speaking is a means of kind of countering any desire to worship anything else? That is an interesting thought. Surprising the way that he says.

**Sarah:** He.

**Felicity:** Really emphasizes that God didn't give a form, he gave a voice. So there's no temptation in that to put a form on Him. Like we just need to cling to the word. It really strips back any other possibilities, doesn't it? Even the heavens are not worthy of worship. Like the sun and the moon and the stars are not worthy of worship, but just love that he spoke. And that shows us that we have a living and an act of God. And that's one of the big things, isn't it, all throughout? Well, we've got the whole Bible, idols do not speak, they are not living. There's no active element to them. And here we have an active God. And I think you're right. And isn't that such a warning for us?

**Sarah:** Yeah. I think what we're seeing here, even in these first pages, is he's kind of really laboring the point of how dangerous idols are. How dangerous these lifeless blocks of wood or plastic or even another human, it says, or even the heavens or whatever it is you choose to idolize. Whatever it is you choose to put in that spot where God is. And it's supremely dangerous because the more that you let your heart be enamored by that and your mind focus on that, the more you're going to forget and what's the word he uses in, in verse nine, and the truth fades from your heart about who God is and how he works and how glorious he is. So I think it's striking how dangerous it is. And it's a severe warning here, isn't it? And he does kind of verses 28, there's a prophecy of when you go this way, when you worship things that cannot see or hear or eat or smell, it's going to be awful for you, it's going to be terrifying. Judgment will come. And yet then he says, if you seek the Lord with all your heart, you'll find Him. There's grace there again, it's kind of laced with grace, isn't it, even in the midst of what he knows will happen for the people.

**Felicity:** And interesting, that verse 29 there. If you seek Him with all your heart and all your soul, what is the answer? What is the counter to idolatry. It's a heart engagement, a heart desire to the Lord, isn't it? And as we kind of move on through Deuteronomy and we hear the Ten Commandments again, and we hear the Lord don't worship anyone else other than God is a big thing that we hear again and again. You can hear that and say, okay, what do I

need to put into place in order to make that the case? But actually the heart that would desire the Lord, that's the thing to be praying for, isn't it? And I think that what we hear in this chapter is as we hear God's Word and as you were saying, we grow in that awe for Him, that fear word, not fear, but that kind of reverence would then grow this love for the Lord in us and the clarity on who God is, I love isn't art. Verses seven through to nine just wonderful there. So what other nation is so great is to have their Gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to Him. That was quite a surprising kind of statement. Like why is he talking about us praying to Him? But actually God speaking is relational and relationship is two way and so we therefore are able to speak to Him and protein and he hears us and then the attractiveness of what it is to listen and obey. Yeah.

**Sarah:** And it feels like a bit of a side note here, doesn't it? That actually wisdom and understanding. You'll be showing that to the nations and I guess that's going to help us flesh out the law as we come to more detail of it. Actually it's it's wise, I think it's good to follow this because it's an attractive thing for the nations around you to see what kind of God you follow, I guess kind of driving this to our heart, but even driving this through Jesus as well. I guess one of the big things that we see here, the big things are the Word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us. So not only here we have the speaking God making Himself known to his people, but then in a most extraordinary and fleshly way, the Word became one of us like that. That's just an extraordinary thing, isn't it, to then kind of see that in view of this chapter today?

**Felicity:** Yes. And I think it takes us to a place like the start of Hebrews, doesn't it? And Jesus is the final Word and final in the kind of sufficient Word and that is all we need. And how much more are we able to see that as we have Jesus kind of in front of us and encountering Him in such a real way, as you say, as he dwells amongst us and God working through Him in.

**Sarah:** The Spirit as well? We've got the Spirit we've been given the Holy Spirit, who then testifies to Jesus and helps us and gives us everything that we need for life and Godliness. We have everything that we need in this Bible, in the Spirit who is within us, as we see Jesus, as we see the Word fleshed out. And yeah, I wonder whether the challenge is then not just the application for our hearts to be read more of the Bible. Yeah. You know what I mean? There's a conviction that God speaks. God speaks. This is glorious. But I don't think the application is necessary. Just read more of it. But kind of have a heart. It's it's the awe of my heart, isn't it? So, I mean, verse 39 when he says, acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on earth below. There is no other. What would it look like for me to take that to heart and thinking about those distractions that we were thinking about earlier, just to take to heart, the Lord is God and there is no other.

**Felicity:** He speaks and I think to hear that and as we hear it, God is at work through His Spirit, by His Word, and therefore we are more able to hold fast and resist the temptation to be distracted and worship other things. And because rather than hearing, I just need to sort my head and my heart out. Actually, God Himself, as we're in His Word, is enabling that to happen. Like the whole means by which these people and us now are able to hold fast and to hear and obey is through God's grace. And I love that. That's so reassuring because I know.

**Sarah:** And that is the right, isn't it? We can't hold fast. We can't hold fast without Him holding us. And that is the kind of trajectory of this as well, isn't it? You're going to go astray, but my covenant stands and if you see me again, come back to me. I will be here and continue to speak to you and ask. Amazing.

**Felicity:** And it kind of circles around, doesn't it? Because as we hear that, we want to hold fast and we want to do with our whole heart come back, how do we do that? We'll actually hear his words and see Him more and delight Him in more and hold fast more. Should we pray?

**Sarah:** Should we pray?

**Felicity:** Pray that we would be those who hold fast in that way?

**Sarah:** Yes.

**Felicity:** Please. Father, we praise you so much that you're a God who speaks. Thank you that you are worthy of all our worship and thank you that you are at work through Your Word. Thank you that you give us Jesus and you give us your spirit. And so we know that

as we hear Your words, you are helping us, enabling us to hold fast. Please, Lord, will be those who hold fast amidst any distractions. Amidst any temptations. Please would be those who hear and obey and love to listen to you and we pray all this in your name. Amen.

**Sarah:** Brilliant.

**Felicity:** Wow. Another chunk of duty on me. Done. Just not done in any stretch.

**Sarah:** Not done in any stretch, is it? But it is your favorite one, so it's a joy to dwell on it. It is. 20 minutes.

**Felicity:** Just didn't quite let's talk about it.

**Sarah:** More because we can chat about it more and other people will be doing that. We don't have to put a limit on other people's time. Do sign up to our newsletter if you don't already receive it. That is where we try and share a few more links and thoughts about the season that we're in. And we'd love you to join us on that. That comes out once a month. We'll look forward to seeing you next time.

**Felicity:** Yes. Can't wait. See you then. All right.

**Sarah:** Take care.

**Felicity:** Bye bye.

**Sarah:** We're so thankful to Kaleidoscope and ten of those.com who are sponsoring this season.