

Season 7: Deuteronomy

Episode 4: Remember God's Covenant (Chapters 5-6)

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Felicity: We're thankful to 10offthose and Kaleidoscope Kids Bibles for sponsoring this season. Sarah and I love the Psalms and know that they've been so helpful to me in my faith. I was excited to see the Kaleidoscope book Empty or Full, which is Psalms 150, made accessible for elementary and primary age children. My seven year old and I have started reading it together and I've been so impressed by the way in which the writer has captured the poetry, but in language that my son is able to understand, it's already prompting conversations about prayer. Grab a copy at 10offthose.com.

Sarah: Welcome to Two Sisters and a cup of tea. My name is Sarah, I live in the UK. This is my sister Felicity. She lives in the States. And today we're back in Deuteronomy and we're going to be looking at Deuteronomy chapters five and six. Felicity, welcome. Good to see you again. Good to see you.

Felicity: Isn't it a joy to be back in back in together, back into Deuteronomy? I'm excited. We're ambitiously. Taking on a fair amount.

Sarah: Well, two chapters, I think it's all right.

Felicity: Okay, easy.

Sarah: Got any biscuits?

Felicity: Well, actually, I'm on a roll of chocolate hobnobs. Anyone else did it? Well, maybe this is just me, actually. I basically run out of tins in my house. Not that I have so many biscuits. I don't know. I need to get some more tins anyway. I haven't got any tins left, so half the packet has fit into a tin, but the other half anyone else do this where you open the packet and then you don't have any room in a tin, so you have to sort of rest it again. We have to rest it against the wall or something, or the counter in order to keep it fresh, but that's obviously not a long term solution.

Sarah: So you eat them instead?

Felicity: Yeah, so everyone is the boys have just said they don't really like them. What are you, my child? Why would you not like a chocolate hub? ***.

Sarah: Yeah.

Felicity: What about you? Got any treats over there?

Sarah: Well, I'm actually recording in our church building tonight in my husband's office, and I found a classic ten p biscuit in the cupboard, so delight beyond delight, we've always said. Speaking of church, we've always said that what we're doing here on the podcast is always an overflow of what we're up to in local church life and share with our listeners. Share with me a little bit of what that looks like for you this season at church.

Felicity: Yeah, I love that, but it is an overflow, and I think it really is, because in church context, I helped to lead our women's Bible study and very much with the same heart, just helping people to get the Bible open. We're studying James this semester, so we just started this week and I'm feeling just very excited about it. I just love teaching the Bible in that context and I think I do a bit of one to one kind of thing. I'm reading the Bible with a couple of different people at the moment, reading James with someone, and then we're actually Galatians with someone else. I feel like that I just really want to be doing that, just getting the Bible open with people. What about you?

Sarah: Yeah, very similar. I think I'm probably in a much smaller context than you, but I helped lead women's Bible study here and had a really great time this week, just with a couple of leaders, just getting ready for the term. We're going to be doing Titus this term and also yeah, meeting at one to one with a couple of people as well. And it's again been an absolute joy this week. To be honest, I feel like I'm just very excited about the Word and life at church at the moment for that same bring up.

Felicity: We've both had a bumper week on that front. Have we? Just feeling encouraged, and all the more so for being here on a Friday.

Sarah: Really great. But we're going to get into Gento Enemy, chapters five and six. We're not going to read chapter five. We're going to read chapter six. Philip, do you give us a quick overview of what chapter five involves?

Felicity: Yes. So, chapter five, we have Moses, he's speaking, saying, here, everyone, this is the Word. And he gives us again we've heard them back in ecstasy, but he gives us again the Ten Commandments. And he's very much speaking about this awesome God who is giving this Word. And so then when he gives the Ten Commandments again, it's like that. And this is then the word of that awesome God, which you are then to follow as we go into this new land.

Sarah: Nice. Great. Let me read chapter six, reading from the NIV, chapter six of Genotomy. These are the commands, decrees and laws. The Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess so that you, your children, and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear Israel. And be careful to obey, so that you may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing of milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you. Hear o Israel. The Lord. Thou God. The Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts, impress them on your children, talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down, when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads, write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. When the Lord your God brings you into the land, he saw to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant. Then, when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Fear the Lord your God. Serve him only and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you. For the Lord your God, who is among you is a jealous God, and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. Do not put the Lord your God to the test as he did at Massa. Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord your God and the stipulations and decrees he's given you. Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight so that it may go well with you, and you may go in and take over the good land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors, thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the Lord said. In the future, when your son asks you what is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws, the Lord our God has commanded you to tell him we were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt. But the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand before our eyes. The Lord sent signs and wonders, great and terrible on Egypt and Pharaoh in his whole household, but he brought us out from there, to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our ancestors. The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we may always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.

Felicity: Thank you, Sarah. Just before we dive into the verses that you've just read, let's just remember, I reckon, the start of chapter five, so that first five verses we get real clarity from Moses as to who he's speaking to. And it's this kind of squirm moment, isn't he? Because we have that smooching of the you that we talked about is now going to be in. So he's saying the covenant wasn't just with your ancestors. You can't just pass the book to them. Actually, God is speaking to he made this covenant with us, with all of us who are alive here today. And I think that actually that us does reach into the future as well, back to the past.

Sarah: It is really striking because actually in chapter five, he spends quite a lot of time talking about the event of giving the Ten Commandments, doesn't he? And that the way he says, you were there, you were there to witness it all. They weren't there. Yeah, they weren't, but they are, because as a people, as a nation, they were. And it's their history, it's

their ancestors and it's their identity that he's really the covenant identity. So the promise that God is giving them, that he will be their God, they will be his people. Moses is kind of reinforcing that again, that this is your thing, this is your God and this is your law. So he's reinstating the Ten Commandments, isn't he? He's kind of saying, this is your foundation stone, this is the very pillar of what it is to live a good life, the best life, the blessed life. And yeah, they need to hear that again. They need to hear that again afresh just before they head into this land, I think is striking, isn't it?

Felicity: Oh, absolutely. And I think then the Ten Commandments, they show as well who God is, don't they? Reflect his character like that he is the only God. But also I feel like there's a real there's a vertical there, but there's also a horizontal and we see, we hear that especially, I think the Sabbath one is a little different here. That's in verse twelve five verse twelve. It's a little different to how it is in Exodus. I just think it really emphasizes loving one another, give everyone this rest on the Sabbath. And in that, I think that kind of sets up quite well what the life is that the people are being called to as they live in the land, that they are to honor God as this awesome, glorious God. Because that's kind of the emphasis in in that 22, verses 22 24, chapter five, this glorious God and also to love one another because of who God is and his character. This is what it is to love one another as you go to land.

Sarah: Yeah. And that's a beautifully distinct thing, I think is what he's setting up, isn't it? And I think what we're going to see as we go on in the book is that this kind of foundation stone of the Ten Commandments are going to be fleshed out into the other laws that are given. But you can't read the other laws without reading this first.

Felicity: Yeah, absolutely.

Sarah: Is the kind of you have to have this down before you can then read the others. That kind of excites me because I think it excites me to see how they're going to be fleshed out. And I think that's the drive in chapter six, isn't it, actually the kind of transition that he's trying to impart to them that you spent 40 years in the wilderness with basically nothing but god providing your manner and your bread, you're now going into a land of plenty. You're now going into a land of cities that you did not build, of vineyards that you did not build, of wells, of everything, of houses. And you're going into somewhere which there's going to be a whole load of new temptations. And he's kind of saying what he is saying, don't forget me. Remember this covenant. Remember the importance of this covenant that's been made with you, with the Ten Commandments and how crucial and foundational that is. Don't forget it when you see all this new stuff.

Felicity: Now, I think that's so right, isn't it? This is who you are, that identity. And therefore as those people, those are rescued people, respond to your God like this. It's interesting. In five, verse 29, he says, oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always so that it might go well with them and their children forever. And their hearts, like it talks about their hearts. And I think we've highlighted that before, but we have this what is it to respond to the God of grace? It is a heart level response that is actually a response to this word. So heart level engagement with these commandments, with this law that is being given by him.

Sarah: And then that makes sense, doesn't it, of when you get in chapter six, the very famous verses about love to Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength, and then talk about it with your children, impress it on their hearts, impress it on them and make this a part of everyday life. Because actually the hearts at stake, isn't it? It's not just obeying a law for the law's sake. It's because actually generation upon a generation need to keep going back to this foundation pillar, so to speak, of what's at stake.

Felicity: And as that is then passed on to the children, then that is also securing the identity, isn't it? The identity won't be forgotten while this word is being passed on to the children. I think that connection between the word and their identity as God's people just can't be emphasized enough. As soon as it gets separated, then the Lord just seems a little bit random and like, well, why would I?

Sarah: That's why it's interesting at the moment. He's just very skilled at this pasturing persevermon thing, isn't it? Then he goes back in verse six, verse 20, so when my son asks, when our children ask, what's this all about? He goes back right to Exodus again. And it feels like it's a circular couple of chapters in that sense, doesn't it? It's Ten

Commandments and what was given there. And then he goes right back to the Exodus, pharaoh coming out, slavery, and then you're back at the Ten Commandments again in terms of remembering that. And yeah, I think that's just really helpful and I think that helps us to drive it to our own hearts. Because actually the drive for us then is rooted first and foremost in our salvation, in our own exodus from slavery to sin, isn't it? We've been bought out, we've been bought out of that. We've got redemption through his blood, forgiveness of sins according to the riches of God's grace. And so then live in light of that and take these commands seriously, because this is the way to live best with Jesus's Lord, isn't it?

Felicity: Yeah, so true. And I wonder whether that then points us to a sort of cyclical pattern of the Christian life that we we always then go back to the gospel, we always go back to the cross, because as we do, we're then reminded of our identity as this treasured possession, this bought people. And so then we're more inclined to live out the commands which are given so that we might live well in the land. And that land for them was very physical, wasn't it? But for us, I mean, the land is is literally right here, right now, as God's rescued people, ultimately, is it's the new creation. But so as we seek to live this life as a new creation under Christ, so we then want to listen to what God has said to us. And I've been really struck, as I've been mulling on it this week, how gracious that is of God to give us instruction. Like, if I don't have instruction, then I'm just going to be wandering around a little bit lost and doing the wrong thing, most likely. So I feel like it's a gracious thing and that's been quite a shift in my thinking, I think.

Sarah: And at the heart of the instruction that he gives us, the law that he gives us is love, isn't it? Love the Lord your God with all your heart. And actually Jesus says that, doesn't he? You'd go to John 15 and he says, if you love me, you will obey my commands and you will know my love. Again, that cyclical thing, isn't it? As we obey, we see more of God's love and we see more of what it is to live the good life, the best life, with Him in charge. And I think I've been surprised at how much this has really kind of helped me to see more of the goodness of Jesus's words in that, but also just let's go wow at the new covenant, the security that we have in Jesus. Because we all know, we all know that if we looked at this last verse in Deuteronomy six where it says, if we're careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God as he commanded us, that will be our righteousness. We all know we do not have that righteousness. We all know we fall so far short of this, and yet Christ is our righteousness and he has made peace by his blood. He has given us everything that we need.

Felicity: Absolutely. And all the more secure because it is in that done work of Christ rather than because what we're going to see as we go through Deuteronomy is this kind of doing and throwing, isn't it, from the people of Israel, our heart, our kind of undulating heart. We're in love with the Lord and then suddenly we're not. One of the other things that's been challenging, which we talked about, Sarah, is as they're going into this land of plenty, what does it look like to remember these things and to remember who we are in Christ? And those circumstances don't change our identity like we are of Christ, but they.

Sarah: Can certainly challenge our identity, aren't they? Because it's really hard. Money is a snare, isn't it? Essentially, that's what he's saying here. The temptation for them to go and worship stuff and things and then in the later chapters absolutely. Other gods. That's as much relevant for us as it is for them, then, isn't it?

Felicity: Yeah, absolutely. And so to the heart, which is fitting when this goes big on the heart, but I've been surprised by that. My heart has been stirred up by the end.

Sarah: It's good. It's really, really good. Do you want to pray for us?

Felicity: Father, we praise you that you are the same glorious, awesome God. We pray that you give us your Word and that through Jesus we are in such security and delight in our identity because of what you've done on the cross, Father. We pray that you'd help us to remember that. Would we remember along with the people that are spoken to here? We pray to remember who we are in Christ, and as we do, would you help us to be obedient to your Word with our whole hearts for your glory? Amen.

Sarah: Thank you, sisty.

Felicity: What a joy.

Sarah: I just feel like we're really getting going now and I'm really enjoying it and it's really challenging, but there's so much. Join us next time for chapters seven through eleven. So

we're going big with five chapters. Next time. We're not going to read all five, but in the meantime, check out our new website if you haven't already. Two sisters and a cup of tea.com. We're very excited it's now live and we really pray and hope that it is a blessing and useful for you to help you get stuck into the Word with your friends, whatever that looks like for you. And we look forward to seeing you next time.

Felicity: Absolutely. See you next time. Bye. Bye.

Sarah: Bye.

Felicity: We're so thankful to ten of those and Kaleidoscope Bibles for sponsoring this season.

Sarah: Thank you.