

Season 7: Deuteronomy

Episode 8: Remember the Lord's Commands Bring Life (Chapters 19-26)

The following is an uncorrected transcript generated by a transcription service. Before quoting in print, please check the corresponding audio for accuracy.

Sarah: Welcome to another episode of Two Sisters and a cup of tea. Before we get into our next part of Deuteronomy, I want to tell you about our season sponsor, Kaleidoscope Kids Bible. Kaleidoscope help kids and parents bridge the gap between storybook Bibles and adult translations by retelling every book of the Bible at an elementary or private primary age reading level in beautifully designed, single volume chapter books. What I love about Kaleidoscope as I look through their volumes, is that they're not afraid to tackle the big and hard books of the Bible. Proverbs, Numbers, Daniel, Revelation, these are all big books that might seem daunting to read with your kids, but wonderfully Kaleidoscope are committed to providing a fresh way to get them open together. Pick them up at tenofthose.com.

Felicity: Welcome to Two Sisters and a cup of tea. We're delighted to be back in your ears. I'm Felicity, I'm in the US. And this is my sister, Sarah. She's in the UK. And this episode, we are cracking into the next chunk of the law bit of Deuteronomy. We're in chapters 19 through to 26. Good to see you, Sarah.

Sarah: You too. Good to be back.

Felicity: Yeah, I'm pretty excited about my biscuit choice, actually. A Kind listener sent me a box of Fox's Classics, like a selection box. And can you ever just eat one from a selection box?

Sarah: Hard, what's your favourite?

Felicity: Well, the sandwich, the kind of, like, little sandwich one. It's got like a normal plain biscuit and then it's got a little chocolate filling and then chocolate filling?

Sarah: Not just cream, chocolate.

Felicity: Yeah, no, I love a little bit of chocolate in there. So, Sarah, tell us you have been well, very much enjoying getting into the book of Deuteronomy, and particularly this week. I feel like there's been a kind of particular process you've gone through in order to to kind of get into it. So can you help us see how have you got into this part of the book, which is by no means a go to an easy part?

Sarah: It's not your natural kind of pithy verse part of the Bible, is it? It is hard to get into, but there are some practical things I have done which have really, really helped me to kind of see some patterns emerge in this part. So the first thing I did, and I've done this a couple of times, and I've gone through and tried to label each part of the law. So actually, each law that was mentioned, I've just tried to kind of label it under one of the Ten Commandments, because we had those Ten Commandments at the beginning of Deuteronomy that was like the kind of set up as, like, the thing. And then this is for now, fleshing that out. So I've just basically, you look at my Bible, you see I've got numbers all over the place because I'm trying to kind of pick out how it's fleshing out the Ten Commandments so that's the first thing I did. I then highlighted everything in one color to do with the identity of God's people. So all the way through this section and through the last section last week as well, everything in pink is to do with God's kind of God's people, their identity as his rescued, chosen people. And that's just really helped me to see how it's framing the law. Then I've highlighted other repeated phrases. So things like there's a lot of mentioning of purging from evil. There's a lot of mentioning of the word detestable. Again, there's a lot of mentioning of God's generosity and character and blessing. So I've just kind of, again, gone through with those things. The thing that surprised me most in this was that I then basically wanted to go back to the beginning of Deuteronomy to find that love the Lord your God with all your soul and love your neighbor as yourself, because it was starting as I was reading it, I was like, oh, this just feels like it's. Love your neighbor in action. And I went back to the beginning, and I was like, Hang on a second. Love your neighbor isn't in Deuteronomy as a verse, which is kind of funny.

Felicity: Because you said that to me a little while ago, and I was like, what? What?

Sarah: I know I texted you this morning. I was like, It's not in here, because this feels like this is just summing up loving your neighbor. So then I typed in Bible gateway, love your neighbor. And it turns out it's only in one place in the Old Testament in Leviticus, chapter 19. And then Jesus puts it together with love the Lord your God. And then Paul picks it up in Romans and Galatians. And this has been the thing that's been really helped me to then kind of bring context and really read this. So I thought, should I just read out the Romans and Galatians verses? Have we got time yet?

Felicity: Please do. Please do.

Sarah: Okay. So Romans 13, verses eight to ten say, whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and whatever other command there may be are summed up in this one command love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor.

Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. And then Galatians five, verses 13 to 14, you, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh. Rather, serve one another. Humbly in love, for the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command, love your neighbor as yourself. And those, too, have really shaped how I've been. They've basically articulated what I was beginning to see in this chunk that we're doing, and it's opened up for me. So that's basically how I've started to get into it.

Felicity: That's so helpful. Sarah, thank you for being so transparent about that. I know it's really just how do you even begin? And that's just a really good starting point. So thank you. With those New Testament kind of nuggets in mind, let's get into our chunk. Big chunk. We're actually going to chunk it up, and we're going to do little bits all throughout chapters 19 through to 26. And so we're going to start with 19, chapter 19, verses one to seven. I'm going to read that one. When the Lord your God has destroyed the nations whose land he has given you, and when you've driven them out and settled in their towns and houses, then set aside for yourselves three cities in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess. Determine the distances involved and divide into three parts the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, so that a person who kills someone may flee for refuge to one of these cities. This is the rule concerning anyone who kills a person and flees there for safety. Anyone who kills a neighbor unintentionally, without malice or forethought. For instance, a man may go into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and as he swings his axe to fell a tree, the head may fly off and hit his neighbor and kill him. That man may flee to one of these cities and save his life. Otherwise, the avenger of blood might pursue him in a rage overtake him if the distance is too great, and kill him even though he's not deserving of death, since he did to his neighbor without malice or forethought. This is why I command you to set aside for yourselves three cities.

Sarah: I'm now going to read chapter 20, verses one to nine. When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. He shall say, Here, Israel, today you're going into battle against your enemies. Do not be faint hearted or afraid. Do not panic or be terrified by them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory. The officers shall say to the army, has anyone built a new house and not yet begun to live in it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may begin to live in it. Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else enjoys it. Has anyone become pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else marry her then the officers shall add, is anyone afraid or faint hearted? Let him go home so that his fellow soldiers will not become disheartened, too. When the officers have finished speaking to the army, they shall appoint commanders over it.

Felicity: And then we're going to 22, verses one to eight. So, chapter 22. If you see your fellow Israelites ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it, but be sure to take it back to its owner. If they do not live near you, or if you do not know who owns it, take it home with you and keep it until they come looking for it. Then give it back. Do the same. If you find their donkey or cloak or anything else they have lost, do not ignore it. If you see your fellow Israelites donkey or rocks falling on the road, do not ignore it. Help the owner get it to its

feet. A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing for the Lord your God to test anyone who does this. If you come across a bird's nest upside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. You may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life. When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof.

Sarah: Thank you. Felicity. Wow. There's there's a real range there, isn't there? And we've only just we've just plucked a few passages there. There's so much more we could have read. We could have read any of it, really. Do you want to just tell us what struck you, reading all the way through this chunk? What most struck you, do you.

Felicity: Think? What's been kind of mulling in my head as we've been approaching this whole thing is how much this these words, this law, reflects the character of God. And as we read it and we.

Sarah: Kind of think before we even get.

Felicity: Into the nitty gritty of what this actually looks like, to play it out this side of the cross, this picture is beautiful, that if these laws were all kept, people would be cared for and looked after and seen. I've been really struck by the empathy. This law sits with the woman who's in trouble, with the foreigner, with the widow, with the fatherless, with just with.

Sarah: Animals, as you just said. Even the bird's nest.

Felicity: The bird's nest amazing. There's just a real picture of compassionate, tender love, and that's just been really striking. And I think as I've been in detronomy more and more, I've just been struck by God's righteous character, like his glorious it's made me love the Lord more. Before we even get into thinking how we apply it. So that's been a big thing for me, I think. What about you?

Sarah: Yeah, I think really similarly, it's really striking just that first passage you read about the city of refuge that is such mercy to provide a city of refuge for someone who has unintentionally killed someone. Such mercy to make provision for people who to go home from the army in a number of different ways. But the word that I've written basically on every page throughout the whole way through is honor. That seems to be that just kept ringing out for me. And it's not that the word was used, but the way people are kind of lifted up and exalted like God's image bearers are kind of honored here in every way. It's really honoring to people and as you say, it's really honoring to the vulnerable. It's really honoring to those who in ancient laws would not have been given any precedence or any provision. There really is provision here and I just think it's beautiful in that. And I think that surprised me because I think I was just going to think this is just going to be hard work. But as you say, our hearts have been enlarged as we've seen the honor given to people in every sphere of life. It really is it covers everything, doesn't it?

Felicity: I think that's it for us. We're not really in the habit of going to war and these kind of things, but what we're seeing is that every aspect of life is being covered. Well, actually, maybe that's not right, maybe it's not every aspect of life. But what we have is this principle that everyday life, whatever that looks like, is impacted by God's word because there will be situations that are not described here. So there's an element of wisdom here, isn't it? So this is kind of the principles of wisdom by which you then seek to live life. And ultimately we're seeking to reflect the righteousness of God as we righteously live with one another. That seems to be the kind of underlying principle.

Sarah: Reflect the love of God as he loved one another.

Felicity: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. One of the other things that strikes me is the distinctiveness of the way in which these people are called to live.

Sarah: Okay?

Felicity: To be part of God's people is to be set apart and to be different and to be holy and to do things in ways that the nations around them were not doing well as we think this side of the cross. What does it look like to even begin to apply these things? I think a kind of primary kind of thought has to be because I am rescued, redeemed, because I'm in Christ, I need to be willing to live differently, to be distinctive from those around me. And not for sort

of any random reason, but because our God is gloriously, compassionate and kind and righteous and I.

Sarah: Guess we go and not wanting to kind of fast forward to that point too quickly, we go to Jesus to see that in reality, don't we? We go to Jesus and we see how willing he was to stand up for the vulnerable, to stand up for the ostracized to draw near. His heart was kind of overflowing with compassion. That was his very heart, wasn't it? And you see that fleshed out in him what we have written down here, and it is beautiful and it is distinctive and it is striking. And it made people sit up either to turn to Him or to turn away from Him. And I guess that is what happens here as well, isn't it? People then, through the rest of your testament, either drawn to Israel or they harden and turn away.

Felicity: But maybe we should kind of get there in the sense of, like, what is it to be us here now reading that then? So for them, then, they're living in this kind of theocratic society, aren't they? Like, there's a very particular structure society. We're in a different structure. But as people who we sit, we read this, we see we can't keep it. Our righteousness is not dependent upon keeping the law. Our righteousness comes because of our faith in Jesus. So we've run to Jesus, we're in Christ, and as those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we then come back to this not as a means of salvation, but actually as a means of living the Godly life that we're commanded to live as Jesus's followers. And so there's a freedom in which we then sit with this and wrestle with it and work out what are these principles, what do they look like as we seem to reflect our God.

Sarah: And I think that is really helpful. And I love kind of Paul's slant on that in Galatians that he's like, you're free. But this freedom you have in Christ isn't to indulge the flesh. It's to love, and it's to serve humbly, to serve others. And I think just really seeing that. So I think I don't know, should we just pick out something that's particularly struck both of us in terms of how it's driving to our hearts? For me, it's looking out for the vulnerable, it's looking out for the widows, the fatherless, the foreigners. And actually, we have people coming into our church most weeks who need to be looked out for and actually, just what is it like to honor them? What is it like to seek to give them the best of my time, the best of our resources, the best of ourselves, to honor them, to exhort them and to lift them up to where God sees them?

Felicity: Yeah, so good. And I think I've been challenged by just literally the idea that I can let this word go to work on my heart. It's not just an interesting historical lesson, but actually God is at work through this word and what does it look like to let this kind of seep into my everyday? I don't know whether this is right, but I was reading it and thinking about the parapet. Building a parapet, basically, that you would be looking after the welfare of people in your charge. I think that's what you're saying. And then I looked out and we've got a lot of snow and ice and our pavement in front of our house is just really treacherous. I was like, I think I need to clean it, clear the art parapet by clearing ice.

Sarah: There is something in that, isn't it? So you're not directly obeying this, but there is the kind of the tone of it, isn't it, that actually look out for the people who might be injured on your watch. Exactly.

Felicity: That was the support.

Sarah: I think, what struck me, and I think we may be talking about this earlier, but it is hard work to get into this part of the Bible. But it's bearing fruit, isn't it? We've had some really good conversations and this is just the beginning of it. And I think I've been really surprised at how rich this has been. I think we've kind of been like, you know, bearing ourselves up for it, going, oh, how are we going to do it? We're getting to the law a bit and actually the Lord's but just fully surprised us. And he's like, this is this is good. Yeah.

Felicity: And I'm actually feeling like I want to spend more time in it, which is surprising, too. There's been a bit of a shift in my heart.

Sarah: I think it's suddenly gone too quickly. I'm like, no, I know.

Felicity: I'm excited to really work out what it looks like to be obedient and to live this this godly life and to have this word contribute to what that looks like. I think that's been something that's excited me.

Sarah: And to kind of the chapter 26, as we said last week. Twelve and 26, they kind of bookend this law section with worship, didn't they? And just kind of actually, as we seek to

want to live this way, it is out of worship to the Lord and all that he's given us and all that we are in Him and just keeping that front and center. I guess it's the love. You love the Lord your God and then love your neighbors said it.

Felicity: Yeah, who knew? Shall I pray for our hearts as well? Please do it. Heavenly Father, we thank you that your Word is living and active and we praise you that that's true in Deuteronomy just as much as anywhere in the Bible. And we thank you for the ways in which you are awakening in our hearts and we pray that you would help us, please, all of us, those listening and us here, to listen carefully and to be wise in how we seek to obey you please. Would you give us soft hearts that we'd be eager to let your words seep into every little nook and cranny, every part of our lives that we might be those who live out this beautiful life, who follow Jesus, full of Godliness and truth. We pray this in your name. Amen.

Sarah: Amen. Is a nook and cranny? Is that an English phrase?

Felicity: As I said, I think that probably is. And then I felt like I added in a little qualifier of, like, every part of our lives.

Sarah: All right. The Lord knows what you mean.

Felicity: Multilingual. I'm glad.

Sarah: Brilliant. Brilliant. What a joy. I can't believe we're kind of we've got a few more episodes to go, but still this is going quick. I don't know. It's going quick, but I'm really enjoying this. If you have enjoyed this season, if you're enjoying getting to Deuteronomy with us, would you leave us a review? That would just be so helpful for others to find us and hopefully share the joy of Deuteronomy. We'd really appreciate it. We will see you next time for chapter 27 28.

Felicity: Looking forward to it. See you then.

Sarah: Bye. Thank you so much for listening to this episode. It's been sponsored by ten of those and Kaleidoscope kids Bible.