

JULY 12, 2020

LESSON 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

GOD IS A REDEEMER

We have been looking at the characteristics of God throughout this study that we have been going through. As we consider all of those characteristics and especially how they relate to us it is hard to imagine that there is one more important to us as this one.

Think for a minute what it really means to be redeemed. This means to be saved. One of the definitions that I found was to *“gain or regain possession of something in exchange for payment”*. If we consider what this really means to us as a Christian it is life changing. We were lost, more or less on a trash heap, yet God thought that we were important enough to “buy us back”. What was the payment for him to regain us? The death of Jesus on a cruel cross.

God has always been a redeemer. I want to spend the bulk of our time this afternoon in a discussion of Moses and the people that Joshua would ultimately lead into the Promised Land. Let’s head over to Deut 30 and take a look at a few things that we can see there:

Backing up just a bit, Moses warns the people near the end of Chapter 29 that (Deut 29:22-28)

22 “Now the generation to come, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of the land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted it, will say, 23 ‘All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.’ 24 All the nations will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?’ 25 Then men will say, ‘Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. 26 They went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they have not known and whom He had not allotted to them. 27 Therefore, the anger of the Lord burned against that land, to bring upon it every curse which is written in this book; 28 and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.’

This is the frame that we context the next chapter with. Let’s take a look at the first 6 verses of Chapter 30:

“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the Lord your God has banished you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, 3 then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. 5 The Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

⁶“Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live

If we consider what we know about this people we could all probably agree that the things they had done/will do are things that may not deserve a redeemer. Moses knew this but he also knew that God would redeem them. We see this here starting in verse 2. Moses tells the people that if they obey the Lord that he will restore them from captivity, that he will have compassion on them, that he will gather them from where they have been scattered, that he will bring them back to the land, that he will prosper and multiply them, and that their descendants will love the Lord so that they might live.

We see very similar language to this in Jeremiah 29 where God tells the people there that he has a plan for them for a future and a hope. Mind you that these are all people that left God, worshiped idols, and were what we would consider “terrible sinners”.

So then here is a question. **We may not be worshiping idols but what kinds of things separate us from God? Are we unlike the people that Moses was addressing here?**

In the next section (verses 8-10) we see this from Moses:

⁸And you shall again obey the Lord, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. ⁹Then the Lord your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the Lord will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; ¹⁰if you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.

Moses says that if they obey the Lord and observe all his commandments that he will prosper them but that they have to turn to the Lord with all their “heart and soul”. We have spent a lot of time over the years talking about the way that God loves us and we have also talked about the shortcomings that we sometimes have. Moses tells these people to turn to the Lord with all their heart and soul.

I think that this is a vital concept for us to consider today. **How do we turn to God with all our heart and soul? Does it require any sacrifice on our part?**

This speaks to a commitment. Moses is more or less telling these people that they need to decide to commit to God and that if they do that he will redeem them. God has blessed us with the sacrifice of his son (redemption) but we have to be committed to him. This is not a part time kind of thing.

The thing about making a commitment is this: It requires a conscious choice on your part. Think about exercise or a diet. You don’t just accidentally eat the right things and run a 5K. It takes work. It takes commitment on your part. When you actually make that commitment you gain from it. In a diet you may lose those 5 pounds that you want. In running you may run that 5K without a problem.

Moses relays that thought to the people here in verses 11-16:

¹¹ “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ ¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ ¹⁴ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it

He tells the people that the commandments that they are to follow is

- a. Not difficult
- b. Not out of reach

What is he commanding them to do? To Love the Lord and to walk in his ways. He says that it is not out of reach like it was in heaven and we could not get to it. He says that it is not beyond the seas. He tells them that it is near.

When you consider the commands of God today are they near? They should be. We should have God’s word/commands on our hearts from the amount of time that we spend in his word. This very topic was discussed in 1 John 5:1-4:

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

John says that we know we are children of God (redeemed) if we keep his commandments but he also says the same thing that Moses says to the people. He says that the commands are not burdensome and that what we need to overcome the world is our faith?

Faith in what? Faith that when we turn to God and keep his commands that he will redeem us. If we have that kind of faith we can overcome the trials of the world.

You may say that having that kind of faith is a very hard thing. You may believe that faith to overcome the world is out of reach. Moses told his people that keeping the commands of God was not out of reach. Having faith that we can overcome the world is not out of reach for you and me either.

Staying in 1 John but backing up to chapter 2 we see this:

² My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

³ By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

This is a section that we looked at in our class just last week. Why can we believe that we can overcome the world?

- a. **Jesus is our advocate**- He has been where we are. He know what we go through here
- b. **Jesus is the sacrifice (payment) for our sin**- This is why we can be redeemed from the sins that we have
- c. **What do we have to do**- Keep his commandments (just like Moses told his people)

Jesus is the reason that we can overcome. Jesus is the reason that we are redeemed.

Moses goes on to tell the people in verse 19 of Deut 30 to "Choose Life". This is just like the conversation that Joshua would have with the people in Joshua 24. We all know the passage where he tells the people to choose whom they will serve. The people that Moses had warned would fall into worshipping the gods of those in the land that God had given them and Joshua issues a challenge a new. He challenges them to serve the Lord.

We know the rest of that story. They serve God during the days of Joshua and the elders that survived them but in Judges 2 we see that "There arose a generation that did not know the Lord".

So then the question is **how do we choose**? Do we choose with our words? Our actions? Both? We have to make that decision to be committed to God and when we choose that and commit to that (and everything that comes with it) he will redeem us.

God is a redeemer. I will leave you with this evidence:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.