

Read Through the Bible

Week 10, March 8-13, 2010

Readers: Deuteronomy 4-22 & Mark 11:20 – 14:50

Reflections and Questions for Thought

By Raymond Buettner

Deuteronomy chapter 4 starts out with the title, “Obedience Command” in the Life Application Study Bible, NIV in which I spend most of my study of the bible. After finishing the 22 chapters or so and then going back I thought, wow, obedience is right. I sorta felt like I was having a bit of déjà vu moment throughout these chapters because the same resounding theme just gets hammered home here. Remember, remember, remember. . . .

In chapter 4:7 it says, “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?” This verse hit me as I skimmed back through the text and looked at how our evil desires continue to take over us. As Paul says in Romans 7:15 “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.” It’s so easy for us to get off track and thinking like the world or the community around us. Just like the children of Israel, we hear from God, we witness a miracle, we are blessed in some manner, God carries us through some turmoil in our lives and what do we do given time? We forget, we go back to our old ways, we find ourselves not in the word, we turn from the Lord, we become corrupted, we look to man for answers rather than focusing on God’s nature for the answers.

What disturbs me more than our desire to be of this world rather than in the world, is the thought that God would remove his light from a nation or even worse from us. As it says in the earlier verse 4:7, “...what other nation or god is so great that He chooses to be near us?”

The message given by Andrew Latillupe in the Contemporary service reminded me how precious the Holy Bible is. The fact that these are God’s words and this is our chance to develop the most important relationship that we will have during our time on God’s green earth. To steal a phrase from Del Tackett of the Truth Project I think this is something we should continually ask ourselves on a regular basis, “Do I really believe that what I believe is really real?” The Lord continually asks us to remember, to not forget, to love and obey him, not to worship other gods or idols, to keep our minds clean and pure, and to steer clear of evil. He has given us the framework in which to live our lives, as a people, as a community and as a nation. It is our duty to understand how a loving God developed this framework for us to live as we commune each day with Him.

Mark Chapters 11:20 – 14:50

I couldn’t simply begin with verse 20, I had to begin this at the beginning of the chapter so that I had the full context of where we were; however, verse 20 starts out like everything in our lives should, in prayer. Jesus gives us the most awesome of examples in these first few verses with

a challenge to check our prayer life. He's telling us to not throw out little prayers to God in hopes that they will be answered. Instead he tells us to pray for mountains to be moved. Pastor Mary recently gave a call to our church to gather one day a week and to pray for BHAPs (Big Harry Audacious Prayers). This is exactly what Jesus is talking about. This week I was reminded of this given recent changes at my work that will have an affect on me and my family. The first thing I felt was the need to pray for a clear vision, to ask for peace and to ask God for direction but this example from Mark immediately came to my mind. I quickly questioned myself about how I was praying. Was I simply just throwing up prayer because I felt a sense of need? Was this need purely selfish because doubt was creeping in, or was I praying because I knew in my heart that God had a plan for me and my family?

Later on in the chapter Jesus gives us another example of how someone gave all and for this reason, "...she gave out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on." Mark 12:44. Just as God says to us, see the birds of the air, they do not worry about where their next meal is coming from or where they will sleep yet they live because I take care of them. Am I living and believing that God will take care of my every need?

I really strive to keep things in perspective, meaning that I am trying to focus on God's will not mine or the will of the world. People come and go from this world, nations rise and fall, kings come to power and one day their reign ends, economy's also have their ups and downs just like stock markets because all of this is of this world. Yet through all of this one thing has stood the test of time: God's word! Mark 13:30 "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." God's word must be the authority in our lives. This has to be the one place we go to when we doubt, question, see the injustice in the world because God put inside each one of us this barometer that gets fired up/ it burns when we see, feel, hear and experience a groaning world. It's okay to feel, to question, to get angry because even Jesus had some righteous anger when he turned over the tables in the temple: Mark 11:15-17. But at the same time he directs Peter's anger when he's arrested as recorded in Matthew 26:50-54.

These last chapters gives us one of the most awesome glimpses of Jesus' prayer life when he is face down praying to God our Father in the garden just before he is put on trial. Just as I started this Jesus ends it with prayer. Without prayer, without that one on one time with God we miss out on one of the most important parts of our relationship with Him. As Jesus prayed in the garden that night so should our prayer be, "Mark 14:36 "...Yet not what I will, but what you will."

As we continue on during this Lenten season and begin to prepare for Easter I can't help but to be encouraged that Jesus, GOD, is in control. He and only He alone conquered death, walked out of that tomb for me and for you so that one day we will spend eternity with Him.