

Deuteronomy – Wholehearted Love

What Happened at Kadesh

Deuteronomy 1:19-33

I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 1:19-33. I will, give you a little amendment to our Deuteronomy series on wholehearted love. I told you earlier, I promised two weeks ago that we would get through eleven chapters by the end of the spring. And now, as I'm going back to it, I'm saying, well, you know, I think I'd like to do a Sunday on each of the Ten Commandments, so that'll stretch it out a little bit. We won't get through all eleven chapters by the end of the spring, and I know some of you are reminded that it was only an eleven day journey to Kadesh Barnea, and it turned into a forty-year journey. I promise you, that's not my intent. Just a little bit of an expansion. Uh, but not hopefully that much. So please look with me at Deuteronomy 1:19-33...

Then we set out from Horeb and went through all of the great and terrifying wilderness that you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the Lord our God had commanded us. And we came to Kadesh Barnea. And I said to you, you have not come. Excuse me. You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. See, the Lord your God has set the land before you go up. Take possession as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not fear or be dismayed. Then all of you came near me and said, let us send men before us, that they may explore the land for us, and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up. And the cities into which we shall come. And the things, the things seemed good to me. And I took twelve men from you, one man from each tribe. And they turned and went up into the hill country and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out. And they took their hands in their hands, some of the fruit of the land, and brought it down to us, and brought us word again, and said, it is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us. Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. And you murmured in your tents and said, because the Lord hated us, he brought us up out of the land of Egypt to give us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. Where are we going? Up. Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, the people are greater and taller than we. The cities are great and fortified up to heaven. And besides, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. Then I said to you, do not be in dread or afraid of them. The Lord your God, who goes before you, will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you as a man, carries his son all the way that you went, until you came to this place. Yet in spite of his word, this word, you did not believe the Lord your God, who went before you in the way to seek you out. A place to pitch your tents in fire by night and in cloud by day, to show you by what way you should go.

This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Now this passage, if you notice, picks up again with the action of the travel log that we began two weeks ago. If you remember, it begins at the foot of Mount Sinai. Mount Horeb. Okay. Two

names, two mountains with one mountain, rather with the same name. There. their Horeb or Sinai, and they begin there. And the Lord says, now let's go up and take the place that the Lord has set before you. And then we have this little excursus where Moses explains to us how the elder government worked there. And now notice we're right back into that action. And the eleven day journey to Kadesh Barnea is actually kind of deleted. It's elided in Moses's account. This time he doesn't spend much time explaining what happens there. He just fast forwards us now to Kadesh Barnea, which is this oasis down on the southern border of the land of the Canaanites and the Amorites, and the Philistines, and all those people who lived there, the Promised Land. And so they arrive there and notice even before they go up, Moses reminds them, this is the land that the Lord has given you or is giving you. Now, actually, interestingly, in the Hebrew verbs are weird when it comes to tense. They can be past tense, and sometimes they can also be a kind of general present tense. Or in this case, there's a good evidence that what this how we should really translate this is this is the land the Lord is about to give you. In other words, it's its immediate future. This is all happening right now. It's all part of one big redemptive act. The plagues, the Exodus, the Red sea, the giving of the law, the taking of the land. It's all supposed to happen as part of one big salvation salvific act. God doesn't take you out of a place without putting you into a place. And here we see this. It's as if it was supposed to be Exodus eleven days conquest. The Lord is about to give it to you. This is the place that is for you. The land is in their grasp. And notice as well, this land isn't just a land for Israel to abide in. It's not as if God was looking around the ancient Near East and said, well, I need to find a place and it doesn't need to be that big because Israel's not that big. So he's not. He's not just trying to give them a place of their own. But as we'll see, this is a wonderful place. It is a fruitful place. They've got grapes the size of softballs in this place. It's so wondrous because it's not just a place for Israel to call their national home their fatherland, but rather this is a return for all of humanity into the abundance of the Lord's presence and blessing. This is here, on this side of the fall. This is a foretaste of what the Lord always had planned. He's going back, and he's fixing that solution from the garden. Where in the garden they were dwelling in abundance with the Lord, and Adam and Eve in their sin break that relationship are cast out of the garden. But now, finally, we see that hope. That is just a glimmer back in the story of Abraham now finding more fruition as they return back in to a sanctuary land, that there is a place where God will dwell again with humanity on earth. And guess what? It's abundant. You see, the land is right there in their grasp.

Now we can at times compare the accounts in Deuteronomy to earlier accounts like that in numbers. And this actually this text, this story rather is taken up back in numbers thirteen. And there we actually see that it's the Lord who tells them to send out the spies. But notice in Moses's abridgment of that story, he kind of moves past all of that, and he just says, you have this idea about spies. And I think I thought it was a good idea as well. And so I sent them out. But it's an important reminder, too, just as we're considering this text, as we're coming to the main point of the text, notice this is a miraculous thing that the Lord is doing through Israel. He's doing an incredible thing. He's going out and he's giving them a land that they do not have, the military might or the physical prowess to take on their own. He's about to give it to them. And yet notice what he says right before he does. He affirms their planning. It's okay. It's okay to go plan. Send out this recon mission. Try to figure out which direction you might go in order

to do the invasion. Now, there are times in the Bible where there's just. It's just a miracle. It's just an amazing thing, you know? It's David running out to fight against Goliath. Notice David doesn't stop and kind of draw up a game plan as to how he's going to take down Goliath. He just knows the Lord is giving it to him and he goes out to do it. And then notice at other times, like this one, you have an amazing thing that's about to happen. And yet the Lord affirms it's a good thing to plan, it's a good thing to go through just the ordinary work. As a matter of fact, my victory, if looked at from the outside, may even look like an ordinary battle that you just win. And yet you know that it's because I went before you. It's important for us to remember this because I think oftentimes in life we think, well, if it's if it's a God thing, then it shouldn't take my planning or my wisdom or my insight, right? If it's if it's a God thing, then it's going to be above and over and against. And that's really where you see God's power on display. And yet I would actually argue the scriptures don't hold that up, that we actually as mature believers, as we grow, we start to recognize the Lord is involved in the ordinary things more commonly than he's involved in the extraordinary things. As a matter of fact, we should be anticipating God's ordinary work in our lives and giving thanks, like the old doxology tells us to praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Right. Every blessing.

I remember a friend who had an illness. He had a medical condition, and he was praying that the Lord would relieve him of it. And I remember him going to the doctors to get his prognosis. And it turns out that the treatment that they had been doing had been effective, and that the medical condition was now, uh, lightning. It was decreasing. And soon, if he continued on this course of treatment, he would be healed. And I remember him coming back and saying, hey, listen, don't get me wrong, I'm glad I'm being healed. But he said, kind of abashedly he said, I, I'm kind of sad though, because I was hoping the Lord would do a mighty work. Yeah. And I had to tell him I said, brother, that's the mighty work. He did it. Don't take away from his blessings and his glory by saying, oh no, it has to be the way I anticipate it being.

So, it's interesting that it's not the sending out of the spies. That is a sign of unbelief in Israel. As a matter of fact, this is something the Lord affirms. He says, no, it's good. Plan your way. I'm going to give it to you. I am giving it to you. But plan your way. He invites us to be a part of the work that he is doing, or to even say it a little more deeply. He accomplishes his sovereign will through our plans and our actions and our prayers and our reliance on him. I call that thick sovereignty. Don't think of thin sovereignty. God's not just behind the scenes with strings kind of moving us around like puppets. It's right to mock that kind of view of the world. That's not how the view works. The world works. Rather, God is sovereignly involved at every stage of human history. So that brings us back to this passage. They go out, they scope out the land. And what do they find? They find an abundant inheritance, and yet that abundant inheritance ends or resolves results, rather in a fearful response from the people. And that leads Moses to lay out an explanation, a description about the covenantal nature of God. So the abundant inheritance, followed by the fearful response followed by the covenantal God. That's what we're going to look at this morning. Well, we see that the spies have headed out into the southern part of the Promised Land. Now they're going up through a region that's known as the Wilderness of Zin. If you've ever been there, if you've ever traveled around, uh, Israel, modern day Israel today, you would know that it's much like it was back then. You have these little

oasis in the desert, these wadis that are that are seasonal springs that in the rain time there might be some water in the stream, but most of the time it's just a dry riverbed. But you also have these springs, these wells that bubble up from below. And just like you'd expect, like you've seen in pictures or maybe even in movies around those springs would often develop little dwellings, little inhabitations where people would have houses because you could stop along the way. And of course, traders and commercial agents would set up there so that they could sell their wares to people who were going from spring to spring, from well to well. And it seems like that's what the spies do. They go up into the north through the wilderness of Zin, perhaps going along this way of the wells, as it's called, where you go from well to well to well, until they finally arrive in this valley called the Valley of Eshcol, which is just north of Hebron. If you know this area at all, it's south of Jerusalem, but it's still in this rocky desert area. But what do they find in these villages, these habitations? Along the way, they find produce that is coming to these regions from all over the Promised Land. And what they see there, what they see there is that this is an incredible place of abundance and riches, even in the even in the, well areas, even in this dry region. The people are eating, you know, outsized melons and grapes and fruit. It truly is a land flowing with milk and honey. It's like a return to the garden. You see, Israel was able to experience, in a small way through the spies report, the abundance of the inheritance that awaited them.

I just want to pause on that too, because, as we said, God will sometimes as he's doing his work, he'll do it through our planning and our actions. Notice this also Israel is not being called to a blind faith in taking the Promised Land. They've already seen God's victories in Egypt. They've seen him conquer the greatest empire of the known world in those days. He's now about to take them into the Promised land. And he doesn't say, trust me. It's really great there. But what does he do? He allows them to bring back little the little taste, a little teaser, something to just show them. You see what I have in store for you? I'm not just a powerful God who gives you victory over Egypt. The Egyptians. I'm a good god. I'm not a God who's dedicated to meaningless self-denial. Just so you can know what it's like to suffer. Because there's some virtue in that. I'm actually a God for whom you could say, taste and see that the Lord is good. You see, Israel was being offered in the spies report an experience of God's goodness in an immediate way, and they're being called on by God to trust in his goodness, to trust in his willingness to bless them. And I think we can understand how for slaves, people who had grown up being treated unfairly, people who had been subject to oppression and exploitation might have a hard time trusting in a God to do this kind of goodness. For him to really want their extravagant blessing in the way that he is offering it to them. And I think that's part of the tenderness of the Lord in this. He's letting them see and taste. He's saying, this isn't blind faith. This is reasoned faith.

By the way, the same is true for us. We who grow up in a in a broken world of sin and abuse and wounds and injustices and oppression, we who grow up sometimes being the victim of it ourselves, sometimes being adjacent to it and seeing others suffer from it. The Lord does not call us to a blind faith. The Lord calls us to a reasoned faith. Now what do I mean by that? I'm not saying that it's philosophically defensible, though it is rather this he calls us to a faith that includes letting us taste of the blessings of the abundant inheritance that awaits us. He says,

I'm not just going to say just suffer. And at some point down the road, maybe you'll experience goodness as a result of your suffering, but rather he lets us taste of what it's like to be saved from Satan's sin and death. He fills us with a spirit that testifies within us ABBA, father, crying out to the Father himself so that God is no longer stranger, but he is friend because Jesus is no longer stranger. But Jesus is friend. He lets us taste of what it's like to say and to mean it. Jesus is Lord and I no longer live, but Christ lives within me. As Paul says in Galatians two twenty and then he lets us do things like what we're doing right now, gathering together this group of disparate individuals from different generations, different cultural backgrounds, different socioeconomic groups. Just every once in a while, pause and think about how crazy it is, what we're doing right now. Your unbelieving friends don't know what this is like. We're all gathering together because we have this same heart desire to worship Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the risen Lord. Even many of us. You look around, you're like, I have nothing in common with them. I would not know them. I would not spend time with them apart from this. But because of this, they're like a brother or a sister to me. Think of it like this. Imagine if during the call to worship this morning, I had said, hey, listen, this is a special Sunday. Um, all of the actors from your favorite Netflix series are worshipping with us today. Okay. Whatever that is. Okay. Or all of the players and the staff and the coaches from your favorite football team. They're actually here today worshipping with us. Think about the mood in the room as people start to look around and say, you know who's looking at all the faces you're trying to see. Do I recognize anybody? Or if I say your favorite political commentators are here today? Okay. Look around. Imagine the excitement that you would feel, and maybe you could see one of them here. And yet. Yet. Let me remind you what the Lord tells us is happening when we gather to hear on, gather together rather here on Sunday morning. The Lord says where? Two or more. So imagine what it means when it's hundreds of you. Gather together in my name. I, Jesus Christ, the Lord of the universe, is there with you. And not only that, as Paul says, the people who are here no longer live, it is actually Jesus Christ living within them as if they are temples. Imagine if I said that, hey, listen, we actually moved the temple, the ancient temple in Jerusalem. We found it and we've set it up out there in the parking lot. You can go see it after worship, right? You'd be like, wow, let me go check that out. Jesus says that's what's happening right now. When we gather together, it's a bunch of little temples gathering together, making true temple an outpost in heaven. And all of this still is just a small teaser. It's a trailer to a movie for the great inheritance that awaits us in the new heavens and new Earth. The oversized fruit found in the Promised Land by those spies is just a small taste of the abundant inheritance that the Lord has in store for his people, and of which he gives freely. But Israel, of course, responds much in the way that we respond when we taste these teasers about the new heavens and the new earth, they respond with fear and with doubt.

So that brings us to the next section, verse twenty six to twenty eight, where we see that Israel, even though they hear the good report of the spies. And notice, by the way, again, this is something that that that Moses sort of shortens here. Bridges from the numbers section. There's no talk about how Caleb was one of the spies who came back and said, no, we can't invade the land. Moses leads that out. He's simplifying the story. So he says the spies came back. They told us good things. But privately. This is interesting, isn't it? Privately, in your tents, they spread rumors about the people who lived in the land that we'd be invading. So the people

see the abundant inheritance. But their response is a fearful one. Look at verses twenty six and twenty seven. Moses tells us, yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. And you murmured in your tents. And you said, because the Lord hated us, he brought us out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Two things I want to point out here. Notice they're not publicly rejecting this plan to go into the Promised Land, just like we don't often publicly stand up and do acts of unbelief. But what do we do? We go back to our tents, don't we? We say, did you hear? I was talking to one of the spies. He said, it's more people up there than we are. There's more of them than there are of us. We're outnumbered. And not only that, they're bigger than we are. They're even the sons of the Anakim. We'll come back to that in a second. Now, we might ask ourselves, wait a minute. What's going on here? They've seen the Lord conquer all of Egypt. Why are they afraid? There's a glitch that humanity has. It's not a feature, it's a glitch. We tend to live in the present. We tend to live in the here and now. It's how we try or think that we'll best survive is to live in the here and now and to address the problems of today. It's even an easy thing to say. Well, I'm a practical person. I just deal with what's right in front of me. And yet there is a glitch there. Because what it means is that when the Lord does give us victories, when good things happen in our lives, when we're when we're about to fail, and then the Lord gives us rest and relief, or when we're about to undertake something that we don't have the ability to accomplish on our own. And then he gives us the victory. When those things happen, as soon as time starts to pass, the value of those victories tend to lose their value to decrease exponentially. You have a great victory, and even within like a day, you start to say, well, that's the past. And the next day you get to go to bed and have a wake up and you wake up, and now it's really kind of fading from memory. And then you get a couple of weeks down the road, and now it's just become sort of a dead metaphor. You're like, yeah, yeah, yeah, I know about that. Maybe it just becomes like a meme that reminds you of a thing, but it doesn't actually have any contemporary relevance for you.

At our old home in Washington, D.C., you see a great illustration of this, and we all get to see it every four years or so. And here it is one of the worst things that can happen to you if you're a president and you're in your first term. Okay. This is just generally understood. Political theory in D.C., one of the worst things that can happen to you early in your first term as a president is that you have a bunch of successes because the thinking is this if you have the successes in the first two years, now you have two years that have to pass before the election happens. You want to have successes right before the election because people don't remember what happened two years ago. As a matter of fact, if you look through the history of one term presidents, they almost all struggle in this way. They had great victories early on, and then two years passed of just enjoying the fruit of those victories, just kind of maintaining the status quo. And so when the election comes around, people say, oh, that's all old news. You see, in politics, as often in our relationship with God, there's this rule that applies, and it's the rule of what have you done for me lately? We see here already the Red sea is fading from memory and the Israelites mind, and that Moses has to remind them of it. Now the rumor is spreading that there are not just more people. That's probably what the greater means. The people are greater and taller than us. The greater probably means more. More numbers. It's a bigger group of people and they are taller than us. And then we get this kind of little subtle insight. They are the

sons of the Anakim. Now, I want to be clear about this. They didn't do genetic studies or something in this report. This is a saying. And what they're saying is this the people who live in the Promised Land, the Canaanites who lived there, maybe, or they look like they are descended from this great old generation of people that are kind of mentioned in a very mysterious, shrouded ways throughout the Bible, but also in other ancient Near Eastern literature. And it's this idea of these great warriors, these great kings who existed of old. And sometimes what's attached to them is that they also had incredible size, so that Goliath is a descendant of the Anakim. Now, it's not just the Anakim. And when I say all these names, they all end in eem, because eem is just the plural, so it just means anakim means the anax. Okay, um, the Nephilim, the rephaim, the anakim, the emim. These are all names that are mentioned as kind of these great figures of old. Sometimes they have great size, sometimes they're just great adventurers. Think of Gilgamesh or King Arthur. Right now, it's not that these are fictional individuals either, but I would say the Bible is not exactly clear. Even if we go back to Genesis six, where the Nephilim are mentioned alongside this account of kings who are, uh, who are taking, uh, you know, the sons of God are taking the daughters of men, uh, in marriage and reproducing with them. It's not exactly clear what's going on in that passage, but it says in those days the Nephilim walked the earth. In other words, these great people of old. Whatever happens. And I don't think this is a scientific observation by the spies. What are they saying? We saw some guys down there and they were huge. They were linebackers. Okay, we've we're slaves. We haven't been training for battle. They were enormous. And notice what they're doing. They're forgetting what the Lord has done. Or rather, they're doing what we do, too. They have a pious view of what the Lord has done. Yes, we know about Egypt. We know about the plagues. We know about the Red sea. But right now it's about us. Do we have what it takes?

Anybody who's ever helped a child learn how to ride a bike has had a similar experience to what Moses is experiencing here. I've got five daughters with each one of them. I got to be a part of helping them learn how to ride a bike. And if I wasn't doing it, my wife Jen was doing it and we all had this experience. If you've done it, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You're on the grass so that if they do fall, they're falling on grass, they're not falling on concrete, and you're running along behind them. And where's your hand? It's on the back of the seat. Right. And you're running along and you're saying you got it. You can do it. And what are they saying? I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, don't let go, don't let go, don't let go I can't, I can't, I can't. Why. Because they are afraid. And you, you tell them, honey, would I let you get hurt? Honey, would I not take care of you in this? You remember how I've protected you my whole life? And what did they keep saying? I can't, I can't, I can't. Don't do it. Don't let go, don't let go, don't let go. And even when you let go, you're running behind them. You're like, I can grab them off at any minute. See, anyone who's ever taught a child how to ride a bike knows this dynamic immediately.

And here's Moses saying he's given you the land. He's the God of creation. His whole will is bent on going before you and fighting on your behalf. And they're in their tents and they're saying, we can't, we can't, we can't, we can't. See, this is where the power of memory serves the power of faith so well. Israel was to remember what the Lord had done, and we are called to remember what the Lord has done as well. And we're called to remember the big things, the

Egypt of our history, as well as the small things. So what are the big things? We're meant to remember things like this. The Lord made you in his image so that you uniquely and all of creation human, know him. You have what John Calvin calls a divine sense. We all know him. It's not a question of knowledge. The question is, do you worship him? But that's a blessing. He's made you in his image. And then when you are fallen in your sin, he did not leave you to your own self-destruction and disobedience before the Lord. But rather he began this long work of redeeming us through a series of covenants, binding himself to humanity so that we might be redeemed. He even walked amongst us like a high priest so he could. He could actually understand and sympathize with all of our experiences. Then he gives himself up on the cross so that we might be counted righteous as he is counted for our sin, and then we get to receive his inheritance, everlasting life once and for all. Those are the big things. Remember them. Don't let them fade into history and say, yeah, yeah, yeah I know. Have you ever caught yourself doing that? I know God loves me, but right. Don't the God of the universe loves you? There's no but that follows that. However, also remember the little things as well. And these are the peculiar blessings that you've experienced in your life, that unique experience that you had as a child that sets you on the direction of hearing the gospel and responding in faith. That relationship that taught you, maybe for the first time, the invaluable contours of what love looks like. That that moment of brokenness and honesty with yourself about who you really are, that leads to repentance and faith. And it changed the course of your whole life. The time when you were exhausted and you were spread out a mile wide and a millimeter thick, and the Lord relieved you and he gave you Sabbath. We should be able to recount those things. When you prayed and you threw yourself on his mercy. And he answered your prayer, and he brought healing, or he brought reconciliation, or he brought blessing. Remember those things. Recount them just as David does when he runs out to fight Goliath and says, I remember how he protected me with the bears and the lions, so I know I can trust him today.

You see, to be a person who believes is to be a person who remembers. And I just want to be clear, this is not the power of positive thinking. I'm not telling you to just think about the positive things so that you can keep the negative things at bay. Or something like that. Now. Now that may work in terms of a practical method, but that's not what we're talking about today. I used to have a friend, and he confided in me that before he went into difficult meetings at work, he'd stand out in the hallway and he'd just smile a lot. And he said, what kind of get me ready to go in there and, like, be positive. And that may work. I'm not saying, but that's not what we're doing today. This is not the power of positive thinking. This is you facing up to the reality about the world and the universe and God and your place in it. You're facing up to the hard truth that there is a God who's made you in his image. He's about the work of redeeming you. He's calling to you, him to you, to him in repentance and faith. And he goes out before you and fights on your behalf. This is recognizing the truth about the universe. This is not trying to delude ourselves about how difficult life really is. And why does God do this? Because he is our covenantal God. So the abundant inheritance which gave rise to a fearful response, leaves us now with Moses. And I love how he does this. They express their fear. They say, we're not going. And they don't go. They say they're not going. They doubt and they fear. And yet notice the Lord does not say, well, that's it, I've had enough of you, Israel. You're stuck in the desert for forty, forty more years. He doesn't say that right away. What does he say? He says,

let me remind you who I am. Let me remind you of what I'm telling you I'm going to do on your behalf. And it's this. He's their covenantal God. You see, in spite of Israel's doubts, in spite of their fears, the Lord is relentless in his love and his care for him. He is bound to them. This is not a capricious relationship that he has that can be broken with the first sign of trouble. He's bound to them. Look at how Moses describes it. The Lord your God. This is verse thirty and thirty one. The Lord your God, who goes before you, will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your own eyes. In other words, remember, this is not blind faith. You saw him do this. You saw the Red sea split back upon itself. And then, lest you think, oh, this is just a natural phenomenon, as soon as you are out of the water. And Egypt was in the gap, it crashes back down and destroys the whole of the army. You saw it with your own eyes. And in the wilderness where you have seen how the Lord your God has carried you. And I love this picture, as a man carries his son all the way that you went until you came to this place. Notice what he's saying there till you came to this place. He's been carrying you through Egypt. He's been carrying you through the wilderness like a father carrying his infant son. That's the picture there, right? How much effort is the infant putting into the into the journey? When the father is carrying the infant son all the way up to this place. What's Moses saying? He's carrying you right now. You think this is about your effort, but you're putting the same amount of effort that an infant son who's being carried in his father's arms is putting towards the journey. Now does raise the question for us. So is this what do we make of this?

God is faithful to covenant. He's promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob this land. Now he's delivering it to through Moses and the Israelites. And yet they have continually doubted and pulled back and failed where he has continually succeeded and been faithful and fortifying them, whether it was in Egypt where they said, during the plagues, Please stop. Moses. Stop trying to do all this. You're bringing down more trouble on us. Or is at the foot of Sinai Horeb, where they receive the law. But before they even have a chance to read it, they're already worshipping a golden calf. Or it's now, as they're standing at the bottom of the land and the Lord is saying, go in. I just want to give it to you. I just want to give you all of this goodness. And they're already saying, no, no, no, no, we don't have the ability to do the thing that you say that you're going to do for us. What do we make of this? Is God a fool? Why did he pick these people? It's good for him to be a faithful husband, but they don't seem to be into it. It's good for him to be a loving father who carries his infant. But they keep failing over and over and over again. Is the story of the Bible just a story of unrequited love? Our father is faithful to us because the father has a son in mind who would be faithful. You have to. You have to understand the Bible this way. Why is it that he keeps showing mercy? It's because there is one who will do the thing, who will honor the will of the father. Unlike Israel, the firstborn son who's been drawn out of Egypt, there is one. There is an Israelite who will honor the father. I love this passage from John chapter six. It's in the Gospel of John, chapter six, verse thirty seven through forty. And Jesus is preaching a sermon that will be very controversial. He's preaching out in the wilderness to a bunch of Judeans who are gathered around him. And at the end of the sermon, all of them will desert him. It says even some of the disciples will leave. And this is where he turns to Peter and says, Will you to desert me? And Peter says, where are we going to go? You alone have the words of eternal life. Well, here's a little segment, an excerpt from that sermon. This is where Jesus shed some light on the relationship that the father has with the

son. Jesus says of the father, all that the father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out, for I have come down from heaven. Why not to do my will but the will of him who sent me? You see this? This is how Israel should be responding at the foot of the wilderness of sin and the southern part of the kingdom. I should say our will is to do the will of the father. What would you have us do, father? Notice Jesus comes, for I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose nothing of all that he has given me. So look, it's not a question of can I get it? Do I have it within me to accomplish it? What is he saying? This is the will of the father. That I will gain the entirety of the inheritance, the abundant inheritance that was laid before us, that I shall lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. Here's the logic of the Bible. Jesus does not receive the inheritance because he's an Israelite. Rather, the Israelites get to enjoy the inheritance because it is out of their number that Jesus will arise. Do you understand that Jesus is not somehow being an Israelite, getting some kind of ethnic blessing or something upon himself that now gains for him eternal inheritance, but rather Israel itself? The people of God are who they are. Why? Because they are a blessing to all the families of the earth. How? Through the promise of Abraham being fulfilled, says the author of Hebrews, in the person of Jesus Christ. You see, all human history culminates on Christ coming, running the race, winning the inheritance and then shedding it out. Just giving it out to all who would believe in him. The same is true for us. That is true for Old Testament Israel. The covenant community today receives the blessings of the father, the blessings of salvation, of reconciliation, of sanctification, and one day glorification. Because we are identified in Christ by faith. He is the one who does the will of the father. And even though we fail like Israel did, even though we have doubts and brothers and sisters, every one of us has doubts.

Every one of us struggles and say, Lord, are you still there? The Psalter itself, the great hymn book of God, the Bible, inerrant Psalms say things like, Lord, are you still there? Can you hear my prayers? I know you're powerful. I'm not sure you're good towards me. And what is he telling us? I am good and it's okay. I entertain those kind of prayers. Even though we fail, we receive the abundant inheritance because we put our trust in him and in him. There is no fearful response. He's not afraid. And so we can be bold. Bold because he has done the will of the father. Now, if you notice, when I read that excerpt from the sermon of Jesus in John six, I only read up to thirty nine. If those of you who flipped along with me. I didn't read the last part, and I said, we're going to read through forty. And I want to end with this because Jesus says again, what is the will of the father that I am here to do? What is the will of the father? For this is the will of my father. He says in verse forty that everyone who looks on the son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. This is the inheritance of Christ. And here we get to gather together and enjoy it in him by faith. What a gift.

Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly father, as we come to you, we come before you in the spirit of the son. I pray, Lord, that you would draw us to you. And through the power of the spirit, we would recognize what it is like to be offered that taste of the abundant inheritance that we have in him. Dear Lord, we thank you for how you have blessed us richly, both uniquely in our own individual lives, and

generally as a people of God who have been drawn to you by faith. Jesus Christ, we marvel at you. We marvel at your glory. Continue to set our eyes upon you that as we as we are in you, we too would do the will of the father, because the spirit does it within us. In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.