

Deuteronomy - Wholehearted Love

“Desert Disciplines”

Deut. 1:34-46

But invite you to turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter one, verses thirty-four to forty-six. That's Deuteronomy one thirty-four to forty-six. And I do want to again invite you to come back this evening. Bring a friend who might be looking for a church. We'd love to have you. We're going to be reading continuing from Mark, kind of like in Deuteronomy. We're at the end of the first chapter of Mark, where we will look at Jesus as he continues to begin his kingdom ministry, particularly as he calls his disciples, as he casts out demons and as he heals from diseases. And we're going to ask the question, why is Mark saying it the way that he says it? Because he's drawing this all together in three very short passages. So come back and join us this evening to look at Mark chapter one. But this is Deuteronomy chapter one, verses thirty-four to forty-six.

And the Lord heard your words and was angered, and he swore. Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it. And to him and to his children. I will give the land on which he has trodden, because he has wholly followed the Lord. Even with me the Lord was angry on your account and said, you also shall not enter in there. Now Joshua, the son of nun, who stands before you, he shall enter. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there, and to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. But as for you, turn and journey into the wilderness in the direction of the Red sea. Then you answered me. We have sinned against the Lord. We ourselves will go up and fight, just as the Lord our God has commanded us. And every one of you fastened on his weapons of war, and thought it easy to go up into the hill country. And the Lord said to me, say to them, do not go up or fight, for I am not in your midst, lest you be defeated before your enemies. So I spoke to you, and you would not listen. But you rebelled against the command of the Lord, and presumptuously went up into the hill country. Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do, and beat you down to Serre as far as Hormah. And you returned and wept before the Lord. But the Lord did not listen to your voice or give ear to you. So you remained at Kadesh many days. The days that you remained there.

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

Well, our context continues on. Now, from what we read last week to the ending of this episode, this could be called, you know what happened at Kadesh part two. Okay. But as it is, we're calling it Desert Discipline because it's the end of the story that began last week. We talked about how the Lord had called Israel out of Egypt, and he really meant for the Exodus, the reception of the law, and then the conquest to all happen in just one fell swoop. It was supposed to be one big event of leaving slavery and gaining abundance. And yet when he

called them to go up into the land, if you remember, Israel doubted. And they were concerned. They saw the people in the land, and they saw that they had more physical size and military prowess. And so they whispered in their tents and said, we can't take this land. It's too much for us. And do you remember what happened? They were doubting. And the Lord came and encouraged them. And he said, don't worry, I will go before you. And as is often the case in the Bible and moments like this, you expect maybe the Lord might say, no, no, you do have what it takes, guys. You do have the physical size and the military prowess. You can do it. Just have that can do attitude. But notice, remember, the Lord doesn't say that. What does he say? He says, you're right, you can't do it. But good news for you is that you don't have to do it. I'm going to go before you. But then this is the turning point for the passage today, even though now they have been given the command of the Lord, what began as doubts now becomes open rebellion. And they resist. Not just resist. They reject. They deny. They disobey the commandment of the Lord. And so that leads us to the desert discipline that we're talking about today. The people's provocation, which leads us, then, to the promise being preserved, even though the people have provoked the Lord. And finally, in the last passage, we talk about the presumptuous push, the presumptuous push to go into the land. So we're going to talk about those three things the people's provocation, the promise preserved, and the presumptuous push into the land. So let's begin now with the people's provocation. I want to point this out. Absolute. Moses is absolutely clear on this point. The Lord is being angered, but he's not being angered because of the doubts that are being Harvard in Israel. Why is he angered? He's angered because they are now rejecting his direct command to go up into the land. because he will give it into their hand. As a matter of fact, in Moses retelling here, unlike in numbers, we don't get all the details. If you remember in numbers, Moses, the reason why Moses is not allowed to enter into the land is because of a rebellion. That actually happens somewhat later. It's when he's in Meribah and he's told to strike the rock once and water will flow out of it and whatever he does. And we're not quite sure exactly what the problem is, but he hits the stone twice out of anger and frustration at Israel and whatever that is, it represents something that's going on in his heart. He is, in a way, rejecting the Lord. He's rejecting the commandment of the Lord because of his anger and frustration with the people. So notice how in this passage, Moses is kind of clumping. He's combining both rebellions, and they're not so far Different from each other anyways. What's actually happening? Israel is being told what to do, but they are trusting in their own emotional response as a not in the command of the Lord. Just like Moses is trusting in his own emotional response and rejecting the command of the Lord. And so Moses puts them together and he points out, not only were you not allowed to enter into the city, I myself am not allowed to enter into the city. Now notice the language that he uses when talking about the land. Notice he juxtaposes the evil generation and the good land. Not one of these men of this evil generation says the Lord shall see the good land that I have set aside for them. And so you get to this idea that we run into from time to time in the promised land discussions of the Old Testament. There's kind of a theology of the Promised Land, where not only do you talk about the land itself being abundant and good for people, but also what kind of people are good for the land. And that's not normally the way that we think about the land, is it?

It's not normally the way that we think about geography in general. What is good for the land? What kind of people does the land desire? But you'll find that in the Bible when they're talking about the Promised Land. As a matter of fact, it goes all the way back to when the Promised Land is promised to Abraham. You remember that story in Genesis fifteen. He's actually going by the name Abraham at the time. And it's where the Lord promises to Abraham that he will make his descendants like the sand on the seashore, like the stars in the sky. Abraham believes him and his faith is reckoned to him as righteousness. This is very early here in his relationship with God. As a result, there's that covenant making process where the Lord has Abraham lay out these animal parts and he walks through the animal parts after having sacrificed the animals. And Abraham doesn't go, but the Lord goes. And it's this beautiful picture of God's grace to us. But if you remember, tucked away in there as he's promising the land to Abraham and telling Abraham, I'm going to bring the curses upon myself, you don't have to walk through the animal parts. It's going to be me who walks through the animal parts. And this is what I'm giving you. I'm giving you the land. And it's all of the, you know, the nations who live in the land are listed there the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites. And remember, all those people are listed just to make sure we understand what land he's talking about. But then the Lord says this. I'm not giving you the land. Now you're going to have to wait. Matter of fact, it's not going to be till the fourth generation Israelites here in our passage today. It's just the next generation. Abraham had to wait for four generations or four hundred years For the land to be given to his people. And do you remember why? The Lord says the Amorites who live in the land, and he's using the term Amorites to talk about everybody in the land. Sometimes early on they say Amorites. Later they say Canaanites. That's kind of a representative group. Then later it'll be the Philistines. Okay. But what does he say? The Amorites who live in the land. The Lord says their sin has not yet reached its full. Think about the logic there. He's saying, Abraham, I'm going to give you this land. But when I give you the land, I want to be exchanging it for people who shouldn't be in the land. Evil people for good people, because the land needs to have good people in it. It's a good land. But if I do it now, the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full. It's not just yet for me to give you the land. We have to wait until it's just. It's actually a remarkable.

What kind of God does this? He makes his people wait to receive their blessing so that it will be just when they receive their blessing. It's a remarkable thing. And yet, if we read Joshua and Judges, we see that by the time they get to the land, it is the sin of the Amorites has reached its full. It is a land that is rife with oppression and with sexual exploitation and with child sacrifice. And it is indeed a good thing for those people to be driven out of the land and for Israel to come into the land. But notice that's the same logic that Moses is using here that the Lord is using here about Israel. He says it's a good land, but you don't even listen to my word. Forget about doubts. It's one thing to harbor doubts. It's one thing to completely reject my word outright. You see. As a result of how you respond to my word, I recognize that it would not be good for you to enter into this land. The land member. As we said last week, it was never just about relocating Israel into the proper place. It was never just about kind of a migratory, you know, a trend that was happening in the Levant. Rather, when Israel comes into the good land, they're coming into the good land that is the sanctuary of the Lord. It's like a return to Eden. It's where God will dwell with his people. But if you want to come into that land, he's looking for people

who have faith, not people who reject his commands. And so he tells them, you'll have to wait. You see, the land is God's sanctuary. And for God to drive out those who are not suitable for it, he needs to have someone who is suitable for it to receive the gift of the inheritance.

Now, it may seem harsh at first. I think for many of us we read this and we go, wow, this is kind of kind of harsh, isn't it, Lord, that now you're letting your people be destroyed, as opposed to giving them the victory that you had just promised them in the previous section, though I would note, by the way, look at the provocation. It happens in three steps. You first have the doubts. Last passage and the Lord says, trust me, I'll go with you. I've got this. Then you have open rebellion, after which the Lord says, don't go into the land. Rather repent and return back toward the Red sea. And then what happens next? They then go into the land. They say we plan to go into the land. And the Lord says, absolutely not. Don't do it. And then they go into the land. So do you notice it goes from doubts to rejection of the positive command that moves into rejection of the negative command and then amplified again. They do that twice. They reject the Lord's command not to go in twice and then finally go in. They have been warned amply before this judgment comes. And it's in this way that we can see that this is the Lord disciplining his people. I want to draw our attention to this. And here's the hope in the passage. Notice that the Lord does not say, okay, that's it. I've had four. I've had one doubt and three disobediences in the course of one passage. You're done. Israel. I'm just done with your plan. Let's find another nation because you guys don't have what it takes. You don't have the faithfulness to stick to this covenant. So I'm going to go find another way for my people to be saved. But notice he doesn't do that. And that's how we see that this judgment is not a judgment unto condemnation, but rather it is a judgment unto life or what we call discipline.

And so that leads us to the next part of this text, verses thirty six to forty, the promise preserved. Israel is not denied its status as the people of God, but it maintains not only its status, but the promise of its inheritance. You see, we notice that right away. The Lord says you won't get the land current generation, but your children will. As a matter of fact, the ones who you were so afraid about being hurt or wounded in the invasion, they're the ones who will actually receive the blessing. They're the ones who are going to actually receive what you were afraid to give to them by just trusting in me. Notice they even says, and those among you who are faithful, like Caleb, the one who actually just trusted in my word, he'll get to enter into the land. And Joshua the son of nun, he'll be able to come in and take over Moses leadership and lead the conquest. But the gift will not be for you. It will be for your children. This is a reminder to us that in spite of Israel's continued failure throughout the Old Testament, the Lord never rejects Israel as his people, but he always holds out for them even in the coming exile. And we'll see this in Deuteronomy thirty. He always holds out for them the promise that he will restore them to himself. Even after exile, when he'll restore them to a better place than they could have imagined before, than Joshua or Caleb or the other patriarchs of the conquest could have imagined. You see, when God walked through those animal parts with Abraham calling down on himself the judgment of the of the curses rather of the covenant, and not having Abraham walk through those animal parts on his own. When he does that, he is securing Abraham. He's securing Israel, the Promised Land, no matter what, because it's not based on their faithfulness, it's based on his faithfulness. And yet it reminds us as well that

growing in faith, being a covenant people, just as it was for Abraham who is still told, you must walk before me and be blameless, you must be in the covenant. Israel, too, is supposed to respond to God's overwhelming grace with faithfulness, and that often means learning how to be faithful. The mature Christians in the room this morning know that that often means waiting. That often means a blessing deferred. That often means striving for a thing but not getting it into your grasp. And notice, notice that doesn't mean this. It doesn't mean every season of waiting, every season of suffering or deferred blessing that every one of those seasons is because of some kind of sin that you committed, like it is here in this passage today. Notice that that's not what the Bible teaches. However, the passage like today does remind us that when we are dealing with seasons of waiting, when we're longing for some kind of healing in that relationship, when we were yearning for some kind of blessing, we want to see our ministry grow. We want to see the gospel go out. You're praying for that brother or that father that that maybe he would believe in Jesus Christ and find life when you're yearning for those things. It is one thing to recognize the yearning. It's one thing to recognize that I'm waiting and to cry out in that. And it's also another thing to do this. These texts authorize us to go to the Lord in prayer and repentance. There are some times, times where it's appropriate to say, Lord, I've been striving for this, but I have not attained. Is there something you're drawing out in me? Is there something you're trying to show me? Is there an indwelling sin? Is there some kind of blind spot that I have that I should repent for?

I remember one ministry that I was involved in. It was a good ministry. We were translating important, uh, theological, spiritual development type materials for pastors who were converts out of Islam. And so we were needing good translators who could speak Arabic, um, Arabic clearly and yet also had enough theological knowledge, theological insight that they could evaluate what we were doing, make sure they were using the right words. So they want to be able to evaluate the text but then articulate in a clear way. And I remember we just kept running into walls. We'd find the right person, but then he'd take another job and he wouldn't have time. Or we'd find the right person and nobody could get in touch with them because they'd be out of pocket for some reason, you know? Or they'd be, for one reason or another, weren't able to come and be a part of this ministry. And I remember at that point our whole group got together and we were going through our different departments, and we came to this issue of Arabic translation. We were like, we just keep hitting dead ends, we keep hitting walls. And I remember the head of the ministry saying, let's, let's just stop right now and let's repent. Let's ask the Lord what he's trying to show us in this. That was the first time I'd ever seen someone do something like that. And so we just took a season where we just prayed and said, Lord, what are you teaching us? Why is this happening? We recognize it's a good thing. What would you have us do? Right?

It's important in our lives to recognize that that's an entirely appropriate response. And by the way, even if the waiting is not because of your own particular sin, it's not a response of God's discipline to us. Let's say it's just because you're living in a world that's broken. Sometimes we're just going to be frustrated, right? That's what the book of Ecclesiastes is about in this life. You might just find frustration. That's what it means to be in this post sin pre resurrection world. Or maybe it's spiritual attack. Maybe that's the reason. Or maybe you're just being

united with the sufferings of Christ, right? As Paul says in the book, in the letter to the Philippians. But one thing you can know is this it's always appropriate to respond with humility and repentance. You see. If you are in God by Christ, you don't have to fear from your sin. Condemnation. Rather, you are being disciplined in him, but you cannot be rejected from him. And there's a deep encouragement in that kind of gospel. As we read for our gospel word of assurance, we read Romans chapter eight thirty eight to thirty nine. I want to remind you of this. Remind you of what Paul actually says here, because this is true for Israel as it's true for us today. For I am sure that neither death nor life Israel was worried about whether or not they would get the land in that generation. Forget about that. Look what the Lord is saying. You could die and you can't be separated from the love of God. **Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** You see, the promise is preserved even as the people are being disciplined. I want to be clear about this. Sometimes we read stories like this and we think, well, that whole generation must have been unbelievers and they're all in hell now. Okay, notice that's not the case where they're unbelievers amongst that evil generation. Yes, I'm sure that there was. But we know that there were believers too, because Moses is counted in their number. So is Aaron. We know that there are believers, too, that are being disciplined. And the discipline is. Wait. Hold on. Seek the Lord. And it begins this grand event known as the wilderness wandering, which becomes one of the symbols, one of the representations throughout all of Scripture of what it means to live in this life.

Right now, you're in a wandering, you're being trained up. And as the author of Hebrews says in that proclamation of truth that we read earlier, you're being trained up in disciplined by a loving God who is training you, who is teaching you, who is forming you so that you too can know what it means to trust in him. That passage from Hebrews, Hebrews chapter twelve that's there in your bulletin could be a companion passage for the whole of the Old Testament. Why is it that we're hearing about these stories? Why is Israel going through all of this? Because God is a loving father who raises you up and he disciplines you. That's how the promise is preserved to Israel.

Imagine a father who's sitting in his front yard and his children are playing. And there you have this busy road with cars zooming by. And the father's just got his head down. He's looking at the phone, you know, he's checking sports scores or he's doing Wordle, and the kids are running in and out of this traffic. That's zooming by this way. And that would you say, wow, what a loving father. Look at all the freedom that he gives his kids. Now imagine another father. He's sitting now he's out there, his children are playing, but he's over by the road, right? And when they get too close, he's coming over and he's moving them back, back into the yard. Sometimes he's even grabbing them by the scruff of their necks when they're really energetically chasing the ball. Right. And he's putting him back into safety. And what would you do? We'd say, what a mean, dad. Look how he keeps constraining them. He doesn't let them do the things they want to do. What did you say? No. No one. One is a loving father, and he's disciplining. He's training and he's caring for. And one is not a loving father. You see, our God in heaven is a loving father. We finally end on this, the presumptuous push. It's interesting

to notice, isn't it, that the Lord says directly to them, do not go into the land. I am not going with you. Okay, I'm holding it off. It's for the next generation, and we can do a kind of counterfactual mental exercise here. Because I think the Bible actually encourages us to do counterfactual imaginations. Recognize that you're speculating. Okay. We don't know what would have happened. And yet there are passages in the Bible where the prophets themselves will say, what would have happened? You know, think about Jesus standing over Jerusalem, saying, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks. What's he saying? Jerusalem? If you had received me, I would have received you back. But you didn't. Right. It's a counterfactual. The Lord didn't receive Jerusalem back because they had rejected him. We could ask the same question here. What should what should have the people of God have done? What should Israel have done when they said, Lord, we doubt. We doubt against you. And he says, no, I'll go before you. And they say, forget it, we're not going. And then he angrily says, therefore I will postpone the blessing until the next generation. How should they have responded? They should have obeyed him. They should have turned away. They should have moved back into the desert, going towards the Red sea. They should have repented and they should have said, Lord, please have mercy. We deserve this discipline and so much more. Just as Daniel prays in Daniel nine, right? Just as the people pray in Ezra and Nehemiah nine, those post-exilic communities who repent, they say, Lord, we deserve the exile and so much more. But we know that you're a God of mercy and you love to show grace and compassion. Please have mercy upon us. And then they should have waited on the Lord. And you know what I mean.

If you read every other biblical text or something like this happens, whether you're talking about Israel or Nineveh in the book of Jonah, the Lord almost always says, okay, you can go in, but they don't do that. And what happened? What does that mean in this presumptuous push into Israel? What we realize about Israel is that they don't understand the God who's called them out of Egypt. They think because they're coming out of this slave environment, they think he's a slave master God, who's just trying to get them to do the stuff he wants them to do and what they're slowly learning, and what the rest of the book of Deuteronomy is about is that he's not looking for their rote obedience. He's not looking for their mindless adherence to his laws. He's looking for their hearts. You see, when they finally pick up their weapons and march into the Promised Land, they're doing it like a person who's just had a. imagine having a fight with your spouse and you're about to walk into a public place, right? And you're not even talking to each other. But as soon as you hit the public place, you kind of grab hands and you sort of just act like you're happy and you're in a good mood, right? Has anyone ever experienced that? I'm sure not. Not here at Briarwood. Right. That's what they're doing. They're saying fine, fine, fine. We'll go up. We'll do it. We'll do the thing you keep telling us to do. Fine, fine. Right. And the Lord goes. That's not. That's not why I'm giving you this land. It's a good land. I'm a good God. I want you to go up joyfully, happily, and in faith. He wants us to, as he tells us later on in the book, love him with all of our heart and all of our soul and all of our strength.

See, the Lord was never like the Egyptian slave masters, just trying to get them to make more bricks with less straw. He wants them to be a wife to him. The husband he wants them to be, the son to him. The father. He wants them to love him. Salvation in the Old Testament, as in the

new, is a matter of the heart, and the Lord desires sincere faith. See, this whole episode cannot be understood without recognizing that God is desiring them first and foremost, not foremost, not to go into the land. It's first and foremost to love him. Now, to some of you who are reading this along the way, some of you are watching this and you're saying, I don't get Israel. I don't know why they won't just do the right thing. Okay, now I want to pause. We'll come back to that in a second. But because there are others who are watching, watching this and they're having watching these events unfold and they're thinking, I don't understand the Lord. Is he just being harsh? Is he just being unforgiving? He sounds kind of like a is he like an abusive dad or something? Like, if you don't do it exactly the way I want you to do it, then you can't do it at all. And let me argue this. That can't be the way that we understand this passage. We should instead understand this as the Lord going out of his way to try to find out how Israel can receive her blessings, even though she continues to distrust him over and over and over again. You see, this is the first of many times that Israel will fall prey to her own destructive beliefs and behaviors and as a result, not receive the greatest good that the Lord has in store for her. And yet, over and over again, he keeps showing them mercy. He keeps leading them along. He keeps inviting them like a loving father, disciplining his child, inviting them to come. He said, just come and worship me. Come and receive the goodness that I have for you. Trust me.

You see, this story is a monument to God's persistent grace for Israel, not his unforgiving anger. But for those of you who have a hard time understanding Israel in this story, you kind of look at this and you're like, this is crazy. They saw the Red sea, they saw the plagues. Why won't they just trust in him? I actually think this situation gets more at our own personal experiences than we might admit. It gets a little bit more to what we actually experience in this life. And because it's this. Notice they're not distrusting in God's power to give them the land. If you remember what he said last week when they were whispering in their tents, what do they say? It's not that they say the Lord doesn't have the power to give us the land. You remember what they say. The Lord is actually desiring ill for us. It's not that we distrust his power. We distrust his goodness. I think we can all understand what that's like, particularly in our tradition here in the reformed world, we have a high view of God's power. And yet are there times when in your inmost being, in your innermost thoughts, you wonder, but does he really want my good? Does he want what's good for me? Remember at a previous church with a group of elders and we were caring for a family, and as a family, we had just had gone through some terrible tragedy over the course of about three years. The father had passed away, and then within six months of him passing away from a disease, a long battle with the disease, their youngest of five sons passed away. And I remember sitting with the mother and the wife, the mother and the wife in the midst of all of this. And we were talking and praying. And she said at one point she said, I have no doubt that God could have saved us from all these things, but I don't know that he actually wants my good. I sometimes wonder if he really cares what's happening to me. I was struck by that because we find throughout the scriptures that the Lord invites that kind of prayer. Even in the Bible's own prayer book, right. The Psalter, we find the psalmist saying things like this Lord, how long? How long? I keep praying, but. But how long? When will it be? When will you come and deliver me? Will you deliver me? We think about the book of job, where job is arguing with his friends who are saying clearly, job, you've done some

kind of sin. That's why you're suffering in this way. And Job keeps coming back saying, I don't know of what sin I did. Job even praise in Job thirty verses nineteen to twenty. He says this God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes. I cry to you for help, and you do not answer me. I stand and you only look at me. Have you ever felt that way, that you're praying and you're suffering and you're in the midst of it and there's no relief, and it feels like God is just standing there looking at you. And have you ever noticed how even in the book of Job, when the Lord finally arrives on the scene, he says, Job was the righteous one. Job is the one who brought the kind of prayers that I invite from my people. Notice this isn't just on the outer periphery of our faith. It's right at the very core where we find our Savior, Jesus Christ, on a cross, suffering, having his blessing, his inheritance held off for a time, not because of anything he did, but because of the sins of those for whom he came to save. And he's on there on the cross with the blessing in front of him, but not being given to him. Rather, he's in the midst of the suffering in the midst of the weight. And he says, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This is at the core of the gospel that you understand this. You see. Israel had no reason to doubt the Lord, and yet they exchanged their certainty, their uncertainty about the future, their imagining of what could happen if they did the wrong thing. They exchanged their concerns about that for their faith in the Lord. And they don't trust in his goodness. Rather, they trust in their own ability to do a worst case scenario. And as a result, the Lord says there's more you need to learn about me, and as a result, we have the Discernment of the period of time of the wilderness wandering, where they will have to discern the character of God and learn about him.

In the Synod of Dort, that's a grand church gathering from which we get tulip, you know, total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement. When they talk about the life of faith, they talk about the fact that we have this imperishable seed of regeneration that is within us, and that whenever you fail and you are disciplined by the Lord and drawn into repentance, it's a chance for that imperishable seed. Notice it's imperishable. It cannot be taken away, cannot die. But every time that that seed goes through the process of regeneration, what happens? It sprouts anew in faith. I love that image. You see, Israel is being given opportunity in this passage to repent, to grow and to learn, to let that imperishable seed of their rebirth sprout anew in faith. Now there's a temptation that we all have when we are challenged in this way to respond that in the way that they did with legalism, with rote obedience. It's just saying, fine, fine, I'll just do it right. To go through the motions of righteousness, but without faith. As if God is merely waiting for us to do the right thing, regardless of our love or our faith in him. That's Israel's error, but that's the error that we get to learn from this morning. God doesn't want your begrudging obedience. He doesn't want your formalistic confession. There are doubts may haunt us. It's important that we respond with faith because he wants us to love him in the way that he loves us. But even when our doubts as doubts haunt us, we are called back to him because His Spirit dwells within us, and that imperishable seed of our regeneration can sprout anew by faith.

Let's pray.

Heavenly father, we do come before you, and we pray that you would watch over us, that you would bless us, and that you would keep us. Dear Lord, as we reflect on the story of Israel, I

find that we would find our eyes drawn to Christ, that we would find the spirit at work in us, drawing us, warming our hearts, lifting us up so that in prayer and worship we can truly come before you in faith. I pray, Lord, that we would find ourselves quickened, disciplined as Israel, going through the wilderness, wandering Lord, that we too in this life would find ourselves being conformed to you. It's in the name of Christ we pray.

Amen.