

## How to Live When Things Are Good and Bad

*Deuteronomy 8:1-20*

### Introduction

This morning, we are going to learn how to live in when things are good and when things are bad...

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#### Deuteronomy 8:1-20

<sup>1</sup> Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. <sup>2</sup> Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup> He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. <sup>5</sup> Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

<sup>6</sup> Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him. <sup>7</sup> For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; <sup>8</sup> a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; <sup>9</sup> a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. <sup>10</sup> When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

<sup>11</sup> Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. <sup>12</sup> Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>15</sup> He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. <sup>16</sup> He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. <sup>17</sup> You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” <sup>18</sup> But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

<sup>19</sup> If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. <sup>20</sup> Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

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### Exposition

#### I. **Remember God in Your Trials** (Vv. 1-10)

Verses 1-10 recount the LORD’s dealings with Israel in the wilderness, where the LORD humbled and tested them. In the wilderness, the LORD provided everything that His people needed exactly when they needed it, but the people had to trust the LORD. They did not live with an abundance during those days, but the LORD met all their needs.

The LORD was teaching His people that they had to depend on Him for everything. Verse 3 makes it clear that all of humanity must learn that their life depends on God and God alone. This is the passage that Jesus quotes during His own trial in the wilderness with Satan.

As Satan tempted Jesus to question the provision of His Father, Jesus responded by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, which is a testimony to us that in our trials we must remember that God will take care of us. We must depend on Him instead of hoping in other things to care for us. God is with us, and He is faithful, even when things are bad.

When work is hard, when the marriage is difficult, when the children are disrespectful, when the neighborhood is scary, when the pregnancies are full of pain, suffering, and uncertainty, when the future is not clear, when the country is divided, when the income doesn't seem to be enough, when the prognosis is not good, when the grieving doesn't seem to have an end, when the relationship doesn't work out, when the friendship is lost, when the hurtful words continue to linger, in all of this badness, in all of this difficult, when our souls are being tested and tried, God is still with us. He will not leave you nor will He forsake you. We must remember Him when things are hard. We must remember God in our trials. For even in these trials, He is committed to work all things together for our good, for those that love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

## II. **Do Not Forget God in Your Abundance** (Vv. 11-20)

If verses 1-10 deal with how we are to live when things are hard, verses 11-20 acknowledge that the hard times do have an expiration date, and there will be times of abundance and blessing. Yet, where there is abundance and blessing, there is still the temptation to forget God. Verses 1-10 detailed life in a bad times for Israel. Verses 11-20 anticipates life in the good times, when they will live with comfort, ease, and abundance in the promised land. There will be a time when the fight to drive out the inhabitants of the land will subside, and they will get apathetic. And it is in these moments of abundance that God tells the Israelites that they must not forget Him.

We, like the Israelites, face this very same temptation. When things are good and easy, when we have more than enough, when we seem to be cruising through life, our careers are taking off, we have an abundance of money and food and all kinds of other things, our children have good grades and are excelling in their extra-curricular activities, our relationships with our neighbors are good, the property values are increasing, we have equity in our homes, our marriages are strong, our doctors are impressed with our health, we are being recognized by our peers, the church is growing, our companies are growing, we are just living and enjoying the dream life, it is in these moments, when we can get so caught up in the abundance, in the gifts of God, that we forget the giver of all good things.

We, like the Israelites, are prone to these very temptations. When things are good, we must not forget God. When we have all that we need, we must remember what Jesus said in Luke 12:15, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." Your life is more than the things you accumulate in this world. You are not your possessions. You are not your retirement plan. You are not your career. You are God's child, and everything that you have been blessed with comes from Him. And your remembrance of Him in these things ought to be clear in the way that we bless Him and thank Him with grateful hearts. Lest we forget Him and turn His gifts into idols.

## **Conclusion**

Whether things are good or bad in our life, God instructs us to remember Him. We are to place our trust in Him alone. We are to be grateful for His gifts, but never forget that He is the giver of all good things. We cannot live in our strength. We need what He has provided for us.

And the greatest gift that God has provided us is the gift of His grace in salvation for eternal life. There is no greater gift that God has provided than this gift of salvation. In fact, if you receive all the other gifts from God in this life, but you fail to receive this gift, the gift of salvation, then you will have gained nothing at all. As Jesus said, "What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and yet lose their soul?"

Just as we cannot ultimately provide for our earthly life apart from God's provision, we cannot earn or secure eternal life apart from God. Yet God, in His mercy, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save all who would call upon Him in faith.

If you have never placed your trust in Jesus Christ, if you have never received God's free gift of grace, then this morning, would you receive it?

To receive this gift, simply ask the Lord to have mercy on you, to forgive you of your sins, to save you and give you eternal life. If in this moment you have prayed this simple prayer in your heart, as we close, we will have prayer leader up front who would love to pray with you and help you take the next steps of following Jesus.

For those who need prayer in other areas, these prayer leaders will be available. You may need someone to pray with you as you face a hard time. They will pray with you and point you to the God who cares for us in all of our trouble.

Or maybe you realized this morning that in all of God's goodness toward you, you have forgotten Him, and you realize that you need to repent and express your gratitude to God for His abundance in your life. Whatever it may be, these prayer leaders are available to pray with you.