



Sunday, September 30, 2018
Pastor Doug Phillips

Intro to Deuteronomy 8:1-7

Sometimes, it would just be nice to understand why we suffer. Would it be good for Job to hear God explain the conversation that took place in the first two chapters? Maybe, maybe not. Clearly, when God shows up near the end of Job, He didn't find it necessary to explain it then. But every once in a while, God gives us insight into His ways. One of the clearest pictures of that is in Deuteronomy 8. There, God explains to the people of Israel what He was accomplishing as they endured the hardship of wandering the desert for those forty years.

In His explanation, he gives several key purpose statements that explain that their suffering was not meaningless. In fact, he was humbling them and testing them so that they could know whether they would be faithful to God in the long run. He was teaching them that we are body and soul, that our sustenance doesn't just mean that we get to eat each day, but that we have regular communion with God and trust in Him each day. For us today, we may not get such explicit answers as to why we suffer in the specific ways we do, but we can be confident that God always wants us to deepen our obedience and faith, so we ought to take our trials as opportunities to examine ourselves and see if that is really happening or not.

Context

The sad irony of the book of Deuteronomy is that even though they were tested in the wilderness, the people of Israel did not last long in the land before they succumbed to their sin. The book of Joshua (despite recording its own sad episodes) is about the only bright spot until the reign of king David in 2 Samuel. Most of Israel's history was marked by a cycle of sin, oppression, confession and repentance, the raising up of a deliverer and final deliverance. Thankfully, we know Jesus as our final deliverer!

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Deuteronomy 8:1-10

“To Know What’s in Your Heart”

Main Ideas

- 1) A “happy all the time” atmosphere in the church can make it difficult for suffering people to fully engage.
- 2) Even if we had all the answers, pain still hurts.
- 3) In Western culture, we can get faked out into thinking that life ought to be comfortable all the time.
- 4) Christianity is primarily about friendship with God.
- 5) Trials are designed to humble us and test us to see what is in our hearts—to see if there is real faith there.
- 6) God leads us every step of the way; our suffering is never random.
- 7) We try hard to distract ourselves, so we don’t have to think deeply and ask ourselves hard questions.
- 8) Command-keeping is not legalistic, it’s diagnostic.
- 9) Many of the things we worry about never actually happen.
- 10) We must work hard to know our own hearts.
- 11) If we doubt God’s goodness, it’s going to ruin everything.
- 12) The Lord is bringing us into a good land (Rev. 21:1-5).

Discuss

- 1) What are your habits of self-reflection? In what ways do you examine your heart?
- 2) What do you love more than God? How do you know?
- 3) Would you characterize your relationship with God as a “friendship”? Why or why not?
- 4) What do you tend to worry about? How does this passage speak to that?
- 5) Is there anyone in your life who needs to hear the truth of Deuteronomy 8:1-7? How do you plan to share it with them this week?