



ROLLING HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH

MAKE READY • Prosperity • Deuteronomy 30 • 02/11/2018

Main Idea

Moses urges obedience here, not acceptance, because obedience leads to life and prosperity, while disobedience leads to death.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever found yourself accidentally driving the wrong way on a one-way street? How did you get into that situation?

What made you realize you were going the wrong way? How did you correct the problem?

When Jesus began His public ministry, He called on people to “repent and believe” (Mark 1:15). When we hear the word repent, we may think of it only in this sense, a one-time turning to Christ at the time of conversion. But repentance is an ongoing practice for the people of God, a willingness to continually examine one’s life for unfaithfulness and then to make adjustments at the prompting of God’s Spirit.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read Deuteronomy 30:1-4.

Why did Moses assume the people would stray from following God and need restoration?

What do the predictions concerning Israel’s future apostasy and their path to restoration suggest to you about God?

As the Israelites prepared to enter the promised land, Moses essentially told them, “You’re going to mess up. You will stumble and disobey God. It’s not a matter of if, but when.” This wasn’t a vote of no confidence in their character; it was an accurate understanding of human nature. Moses knew there would still be hope even when God’s people messed up completely, because God is a God of compassion and redemption. He gives second chances. So Moses urged the people, when they did find themselves far from God due to their own straying, to make the right choices.

How might our group embrace a culture where we openly acknowledge that we all fail, and we all want to help each other do a better job of living for Christ?

No matter how much we love God or how determined we are to obey Him, at times we will fail Him. In those times we must remember that God has compassion on those who return to Him in repentance with a desire to obey. He willingly forgives and restores.

| Have a volunteer read Deuteronomy 30:6-8.

What do these verses say will happen to people whose hearts have been renewed by God? Are there any commands for us in these verses? Explain.

What did God promise to do to the Israelites’ enemies if the people repented and returned to wholehearted faithfulness? Was that fair?

Circumcision in the flesh symbolized identification with the Lord in the covenant community. Circumcision of the heart (a phrase found only here, in Deut. 10:16, and Jer. 4:4 in the Old Testament) speaks of internal identification with Him. Paul equated circumcision of the heart with spiritual renewal. He argued that circumcision as a mere physical sign has no value at all to the disobedient (Rom. 2:25-27). What is required is inward circumcision of the heart and spirit that attests to genuine faith (vv. 28-29).

When we have messed up spiritually, what things can we change ourselves? What things can only God change?

How is a heart that has been touched by God different from an uncircumcised heart?

Only God can address the source of our sinfulness by transforming your heart and giving you the desire to obey Him. He cuts away the hardened, rebellious parts and leaves a heart that is soft toward Him—one that loves Him and desires to do His will.

| Have a volunteer read Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

What choice did Moses set before the Israelites as they prepared to enter the promised land? What’s the fork in the road here? Where does each path lead?

What is the connection between this choice and the renewal of hearts in verses 6-8?

In verse 19, Moses implored the people to “choose life,” that is, to choose for themselves the path of life and blessing instead of the path of selfishness that leads to death. God never forces us to adhere to His will; He always gives us a choice. But He makes it clear there are negative consequences for choosing disobedience just as there are positive ones for choosing His ways.

Based on these verses, what would you say is the mark of genuine faith today?

What excuses have you heard people use to avoid taking responsibility for their personal choices? Which of these excuses have you used?

Even after we trust Christ for salvation, we must daily choose obedience. What resources do we have as believers to help us do what is right? How are you using these resources?

Even for believers who have God’s promise of forgiveness and eternal life, walking with Christ involves a continual, conscious choice of right over wrong, faithful obedience over selfish disobedience. Like the Israelites, we are called to choose the path of life.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

The Lord graciously holds out the promise of forgiveness and restoration if we confess and repent of our sins. We are to genuinely repent of sin and ask the Lord to not only forgive our sinful actions but also to change our hearts. Because God has made eternal life possible through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, we can choose the way of life and faithfulness.

Would you say your relationship with the Lord is characterized more by love or by obedience? What would it look like to have these two qualities in balance?

How has God worked through other believers and through spiritual disciplines to shape your heart toward faith and obedience? How might you help others in this process?

What fork-in-the-road choices of obedience or disobedience are you facing right now? How does it help to know that God wants to bless you as you obey?

How can our group support one another by making the choice of the right path a group effort rather than an individual pursuit?

Pray

Conclude your group time in prayer, asking God to show each person present any matter for which he or she needs to repent. Thank God for His tender mercy and grace.

Commentary

| Deuteronomy 30

30:1-3 The grammatical structure of this passage suggests that Israel's repentance and return to the Lord would be at His initiative, an act of His grace wherein God's promises and Israel's need to be obedient to the conditions of the covenant would be reconciled—one of the hidden mysteries of the mind of God (29:29).

30:6 The image of circumcising the heart derives from the occasion of Abraham's having been physically circumcised, along with his household, as a sign of his covenant relationship with the Lord (Gen 17:9-14). Jeremiah also spoke of this mark of covenant reality in terms of spiritual circumcision (Jer 4:4; cp. Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26), and Paul compared it to the new life and relationship to God to be found in Christ (Col 2:11).

30:9 Israel's return to the Lord would bring about a reversal of the curses they had suffered, and they would enjoy the blessings of covenant obedience rather than suffer the consequences of disobedience (28:4).

30:11-14 Lest Israel should protest that the demands of the covenant were too difficult to obey, Moses reminded them that the power to do so resided within them (v. 14). This refers to the revelation of the Lord's mind and purposes to the Israelites at Sinai and now in the plains of Moab. Moses had instructed them about these matters (6:1), and they were to impress them upon their own hearts and souls as well as those of their children (11:18-19). Paul cited this text with reference to the proximity of the gospel and the ease with which it could be understood and appropriated; like the words of the OT covenant, those of the NT message of salvation are ready at hand and made available to all who will believe (Rm 10:6-10).

30:19 In a setting similar to a courtroom, the Lord summoned witnesses to His offer to Israel of life and death. Since these witnesses must be enduring and objective, He called not on human beings or even angels, but on heaven and earth (cp. 4:26; 31:28; 32:1; Isa 1:2; Mic 1:2). He appealed for Israel to choose a life of blessed obedience so they and their descendants might live.