

April – June 2018

Gold Hill



A seven week series in

DEUTERONOMY

“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity... Choose life.”

(Deuteronomy 30:15, 19)

Introduction

Deuteronomy finds God's people at a turning point as they look ahead to the land that God has promised and is now going to give to them. But God's interest is not first and foremost in the land; He has promised it and will give it to them. He is interested in their hearts, and whether they will choose to live well in it.

As we explore the book, looking at different things the people were encouraged to 'choose' life, we'll examine our own lives, our own community, and ask what it means for each of us to choose life today, and to offer the life we have chosen to a world that needs it.

Lecture evening

Monday 14th May: 8pm (refreshments 7:30)

As part of the series, we are going to have an evening going deeper into certain aspects of the book, and especially how we handle law material in Scripture.

What this booklet contains...

In this booklet you will find, for each week in the series:

- Details of the **Sunday sermon** and space for notes
- **Study notes** for you to use, personally or in a group
- Ideas and activities for **family times** together
- A daily **reading plan** exploring themes each day

Sunday Series Overview

1. 'Choose to Remember' (1:1-8, 29-33: 2:7) – **April 15**
Looking back at God's promises and faithfulness

2. 'Choose to Obey' (4:1-9) – **April 22**
Adopting a lifestyle of responsiveness & obedience

3. 'Choose to Love' (6:1-9) – **April 29**
Letting all of God have all of our lives

4. 'Choose God's Ways' (10:12-22) – **May 6**
Being shaped by God's hearts, not just His rules

5. 'Choose to Worship' (12:1-14) – **May 13**
Forsaking all else, seeking God as He wants us to

[WEEK BREAK: PENTECOST, May 20]

6. 'Choose Blessing' (28:1-68) – **May 27**
Harnessing God's blessing by choosing His paths

7. 'Choose Life!' (30:11-20; 31:9-13) – **June 3**
Deciding our destiny by choosing to keep going

You can find all of these details, along with recordings once they've happened and blog articles once they're published at goldhill.org/deuteronomy.

WEEK 1: 'Choose to Remember'

Sermon Notes

April 15

Deuteronomy 1:1-8, 29-33; 2:7

For the people, looking back to remember what God had promised and choosing to hold onto it was such an important thing. In these notes, we'll explore why that is, and how we can carry that attitude today.

READ DEUTERONOMY 1:1-8

In v2, we see that the journey that took 40 years was possible in 11 days! **Are there times you have had to wait, or are there things you are waiting for now?**

In v8, the people are shown the land (the realisation of the promise). **What promises has God made to you, through His word or in other ways?**

The people are also told to 'take possession' of the land for themselves. **How can we live our lives every day in practical ways that claim the promises of God?**

READ DEUTERONOMY 1:29-33

The people are also reminded that there were times they lacked trust in God. **What, honestly, makes it hard to trust God?**

How can we seek to trust God even when it is hard?

READ DEUTERONOMY 2:7

Ultimately, in all the times of wandering and waiting for the promises, God provided for their needs. **How has God provided for you in difficult times?**

Are there ways in which you are needing God to provide for you now?

Family time

to do together

As a family, how can you find ways to remember God's promises and His goodness to you? Here's an idea!

1. Share your earliest memories

Take time to talk about some of the earliest things you each remember – you might find some!

2. Ask what some good memories are

Be deliberate about setting some time aside to think about things you can remember that are good.

3. Pray to thank God together

Having remembered, it's time to thank God, so take time together to do that.

Reading plan

to go deeper

This week, take time to read these examples of God's promises, and choose to remember the commitments He has made to you as His child.

April 16, Matthew 28:20

April 17, Isaiah 40:29-31

April 18, Ezekiel 11:18-21

April 19, John 14:25-27

April 20, Philippians 1:6

April 21, Matthew 11:28-29

WEEK 2: 'Choose to Obey'

Sermon Notes

April 22

Deuteronomy 4:1-9

Before giving the Law in full, Moses calls the people to a decision to obedience. We all want to be obedient to God, but honestly it is hard! This study considers why that is, and how we can press on.

READ DEUTERONOMY 4:1-9

Words like 'law', 'commands' and 'obedience' evoke strong reactions for many. **What do you think our world thinks of 'laws'? How do you feel about it?**

The reality is that God does give His people laws to live by. **Why do you think this is? Are there things said in these verses that help us understand God's aim?**

In v2, the people are warned not to add or take away from the Law. **Are there things Christians can be guilty of adding as expectations God doesn't make?**

On the flip side, are there things we know God has said that we are in danger of disobeying because we have in some way 'removed' it as important?

The passage is really all about being obedient to God in the ways we choose to live our lives. **Why is it so hard to be obedient in all we do?**

Have a look at v9 again. **What are some things that we can do in order to increase our obedience to God or overcome the difficulty of it?**

Think about the week you have ahead of you. **What might obedience to God look like in real terms in the situations you are going to face?**

Family time

to do together

These are some ideas to explore together the idea of God's 'rules' and why they matter.

1. Come up with your own 'family rules'

Think outside the box! Get everyone to come up with rules for everyone to live by – not just for the children!

2. Talk about what God would put on the list

Add things you think God would want your family to look like. Talk about why they are good things.

3. Put them up on a wall!

Instead of just thinking about it, write up your 'rules' and put them up so you can all stick to them.

Reading plan

to go deeper

This week, we are going to look at a man who at times was so obedient and at others messed up: Peter. As you read, consider how similar you are.

April 23, Mark 1:16-20

April 24, Matthew 14:22-33

April 25, Mark 8:27-9:1

April 26, John 13:1-5

April 27, John 13:36-38; 14:15-17, 25-27

April 28, John 21:1-17

WEEK 3: 'Choose to Love'

Sermon Notes

April 29

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

These are some of the most significant words of the whole Old Testament, and became a central part of the life of God's people. As we explore them may God deepen our love for Him as a community.

READ DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9

In v1, we hear of the importance of being taught God's heart. **In your lives, where do you receive that from? Are there places or people you go to keep growing?**

In v2, the importance of each generation passing this on is talked about. **Who are you sharing what God has given to you with? Who are you building up?**

Before the statement of us loving God is made, it is said that God is the only god (v4). **What are we most in danger of putting in the place God should have?**

The words about loving God with 'heart', 'soul' and 'strength' are famous! **But how does that look? What does someone look like who does that fully?**

It is clearly about more than just our feeling of love. **So how can we ensure love moves beyond emotions?**

Take some time to dream! **How different would our church community look if we were so totally sold out in our love for God?!**

In v6-9, we get a picture of a community constantly pointing each other back to God. **Is that our culture? What might it look like for it to become more so?**

Family time

to do together

This week is all about finding ways to love God in our everyday and keep Him central in our lives...

1. Repeat these words together

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 express who God is and a desire to love Him. Find time to say them together each day.

2. Challenge: every room in the house!

If we are to be reminded of who God is in every part of our lives (Deut 6:6-9), then what does that look like? So set a target: by the end of the week, there will be an item in each room in your home to point you to God and His love. Make a plan together, get creative, and do it!

Reading plan

to go deeper

This week is all about love: God's love for us, ours for Him and love in our world. Each passage explores an aspect of love for you to consider.

April 30, Mark 12:28-31

May 1, Romans 12:9-21

May 2, Romans 13:8-10

May 3, John 15:9-13

May 4, Psalm 86:11-13

May 5, 1 Chronicles 16:34-36

WEEK 4: 'Choose God's Ways'

Sermon Notes

May 6

Deuteronomy 10:12-22

Behind the rules and regulations of the Law given to the people stands a God whose heart is on display and who cares deeply for the world He has made. So this study focuses on God's heart and ours, not just rules.

To get you thinking: **As a general rule, do you prefer to be told what to do, or how to be?**

READ DEUTERONOMY 10:12-16

In v12-13, Moses starts by saying God 'only' requires... and then gives a long list of things! **Which part of this list do you find most natural, and which is hardest?**

In v16, we hear this idea of circumcised hearts. **It is a strange image, but what does it mean? What is circumcision, and how might it apply to our heart?**

READ DEUTERONOMY 10:17-22

In v17, it starts with the bigness of God, and moves to His heart for justice in 'small' ways. **What does it say to us that these are in the same breath? Are there ways we are guilty of separating them?**

In v17-19, God's justice is explored. **Today, who might the 'orphans' be in our society? How strong are we in showing God's justice for them?**

We also read of 'strangers/foreigners', those who are unwelcome. **Who would you struggle to welcome? What could be done to strengthen the amount that we are welcoming as a community?**

Family time

to do together

This week is all about finding God's heart for justice as a driving force in our lives, so let's get practical!

1. Discuss difficult things you have seen

We all see examples of injustice in our lives: bullying at school, office politics, people acting unkindly. Find a way to all share some of those that worry you, and try to be honest and listen to each other.

2. Share what God might want you to do

In each of those situations, take a bit of time to talk about how you could respond to them and advocate for justice in that situation. Then pray for each other and commit to keep on doing so.

Reading plan

to go deeper

God's heart for justice is one of the biggest themes in the whole of Scripture, and this week's readings explore that theme in lots of different ways.

May 7, Micah 6:8

May 8, Amos 5:21-24

May 9, Isaiah 58:1-14

May 10, James 1:27

May 11, Luke 11:37-42

May 12, Psalm 33:4-5

WEEK 5: 'Choose to Worship'

Sermon Notes

May 13

Deuteronomy 12:1-14

This is the beginning of the central section of the book where the law is given again and explained. In this passage, worship is explored, both in terms of what to worship and how to worship.

READ DEUTERONOMY 12:1-7

The instruction to demolish altars to other gods is very clear. **Why was that necessary for the people?**

This boils down to the issue of idols. **What idols do you think might exist (1) in society; (2) in your life; and (3) in church life?**

“The Bible uses three basic metaphors to describe how people relate to the idols of their hearts. They *love* idols, *trust* idols, and *obey* idols.” (Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*)

What steps might need to be taken to ensure some of those idols are demolished today?

READ DEUTERONOMY 12:8-12

In v8, we read an instruction not to worship each in a way they want, but to come together. **Why would this be, if it curtails experience of worship for some?**

In this passage, worship/sacrifice is to be centralised in one location all together. **Does this make worship seem more enticing, or more constrained? Why do you think God gave this instruction?**

In our worship, we worship as individuals but do so alongside others. **Are there ways in which you might need to limit yourself to be sensitive to others?**

Family time

to do together

This week, instead of a few activities, a challenge:

What would a family approach to worship look like?

As a family, how can you create space to seek God not just as individuals but together? Could you spend time together and if so what would you do? Perhaps you can make a plan, and include some of the following:

talking silence being in nature
prayer Bible reading drawing
singing serving together writing
fasting discipline

Reading plan

to go deeper

From Deuteronomy 12 through to 27, there are lots of laws given and explained. During these two weeks (we have Pentecost in the middle!) dive into them, and also check out the website for blogs on some of them.

May 14, Deut 12:15–13:5

May 21, Deut 23:19–24:7

May 15, Deut 13:6–14:27

May 22, Deut 24:8–25:4

May 16, Deut 15:1–16:17

May 23, Deut 25:5-16

May 17, Deut 16:18–18:22

May 24, Deut 26

May 18, Deut 19:1–22:8

May 25, Deut 27:1-11

May 19, Deut 22:9–23:18

May 26, Deut 27:12-26

WEEK 6: 'Choose Blessing'

Sermon Notes

May 27

Deuteronomy 28:1-68

The passage this week is a very long one! That might mean that reading the whole section isn't possible, but we would encourage you to do so in some way if you can! It's in two sections: blessing and curses.

READ DEUTERONOMY 28:1-14

God gives some pretty specific blessings on offer for the people. **What would blessing mean for them, and what would being blessed mean for us?**

Where does blessing come from according to these words? Is it the same place we would always look to for blessing in our lives?

There are words in the passage about obedience as well as blessing. **What is (and is not) the connection?**

READ DEUTERONOMY 28:15-68

Now the section on curses, and again obedience is at play. **How obedient would the people be in the land when they got there? How obedient are we?**

The people are told about consequences (curses) if they're disobedient. **What were those consequences in general terms, and what should the consequence for our disobedience be?**

Deuteronomy is one part of the story, but there is a bigger story in the Bible! **Ultimately, where does the curse that should be on us go?**

Family time

to do together

The idea of blessings and curses is a hard one, and it's important not to create fear. But perhaps these would be helpful things to talk about together.

1. What consequences do our actions have

We can all relate to this in different ways, but how we act does affect life for us and for others. Talk about examples of this, and why actions have consequences.

2. But Jesus steps in!

For different families, there will be different ways to do this, but try to explore the idea that though the deep consequences that we should have faced have in fact been faced by Jesus for us.

Reading plan

to go deeper

The Bible speaks about blessing in lots of ways and a lot of it is quite different from how we might think about being 'blessed'. This week, explore those ideas.

May 28, Matthew 5:1-12

May 29, Psalm 1

May 30, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

May 31, Jeremiah 17:5-8

June 1, Number 6:24-26

June 2, Proverbs 16:20

WEEK 7: 'Choose Life!'

Sermon Notes

June 3

Deuteronomy 30:11-20; 31:9-13

Now we come to the crucial moment. The people have heard all of what Moses has spoken, and now must make their choice: will they take it on and choose life or disregard it and choose their own way?

READ DEUTERONOMY 30:11-14

In these verses, the commands of God are talked about as being easily accessible. **How true does that feel to us? Is it too lofty, or easy to understand?**

If this is all meant to be grounded, we need to hold on to specific and practical things from it. **In this whole series, what thing or things do you want to hold to?**

It is said that the parts of Scripture we do understand how to approach are the ones that are hardest! **What do we know we need to act on more fully?**

READ DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20

This is the invitation: choose life. **But what does that mean in reality? What 'life' is it we can choose?**

In reality in our lives, what holds us back from that life being lived fully?

READ DEUTERONOMY 31:9-13

Moses knows the people will forget unless they choose to keep remembering. **How can we make sure we do not drift, and keep coming back to the truth?**

Specifically, it was the reading of God's word that was instructed. **How is that part of our lives, and our life as a community? Do we need to grow in it?**

Family time

to do together

We all have to make choices, and some are easier than others! This is something you can do together.

1. Would you rather...?

Play a game of 'Would you rather?' by coming up with options of things and asking what people would prefer – make sure you finish with ones where the answer is really obvious!

2. Will you choose God?

We have to choose if we would rather a life with God or without Him. Has everyone made that choice? Or would they like to? Explore that together.

Reading plan

to go deeper

If it is life we are choosing, we need to know what that life is like! So in our readings, we will explore how the Gospel of John talks about 'life'.

June 4, John 1:1-18

June 5, John 3:1-21

June 6, John 8:12

June 7, John 10:1-18

June 8, John 11:25-26

June 9, John 14:5-21



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