

**Miscellaneous**  
***Two Truths God Taught Me in Europe***  
**May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011**  
**Text - Various**  
**Scripture Reading - Deuteronomy 7:6-11**

Intro

- *Behold Our God* will begin next week
- I've been in Europe the past two weeks
- HUGE blessing on many fronts
- One of those fronts was the travel time and the opportunity it gave me to read
- God spoke to me about a number of things through my reading but there were two truths in particular that He laid on my heart that were so encouraging to me that I knew I had to share them with you as soon as I got home.

Truth #1 - God clearly showed me the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant

- This is something that had I'd been thinking about for a long time.
  - o The first Sunday of every month I read this quote to you as we take communion
    - **1 Corinthians 11:25 (ESV)**  
<sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is *the new covenant* in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
    - I've often felt as though I should clarify what Jesus meant by that, but have hesitated because I felt unsure.
  - o The week before we left for Europe was Easter week and we had our first ever Maundy Thursday service where we focused on The Last Supper.
    - I was planning to expand on the difference between the old and new covenants at that time, but again I felt a little unsure.
  - o God really cleared things up for me on the trip through a combination of reading through Deuteronomy and

reading the King's Cross by Tim Keller on the first half of the trip.

- Deuteronomy (which I LOVE) clearly explains the old covenant
  - o In Dt Moses is addressing the second generation of Israelites who are about to enter the Promised Land. He spends 33 chapters reminding them of the agreement that God made with their fathers on Mount Sinai 40 years earlier.
  - o The agreement was essentially this, if they were obedient to the laws that God had laid out for them, God would be with them and would richly bless them. If they were disobedient to the laws that God laid out for them, God would not be with them and would terribly curse them.
  - o *In other words, their standing with God was up to them. The old covenant was advice. It was something they did.* If they obeyed, good things would happen. If they disobeyed, bad things would happen. It was as simple as that.
  - o There was nothing wrong with the old covenant. Nothing at all. If you were to read through Deuteronomy this week I think you would find it to be perfectly reasonable. Sure there were a few laws that seem strange to us today like not eating certain foods, steering clear of things that were dead, and not boiling a young goat in its mother's milk, but for the most part what God was calling His people to do back then was no different than what God is calling His people to do today.
    - **Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (ESV)**  
<sup>12</sup> "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>13</sup> and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?
  - o What were the commandments and statutes that God was calling them to keep?
    - Put simply they were the 10 commandments

- Put even more simply, 2 commandments
- o And were they ever for their good!
  - The blessings for obedience are laid out in the first 14 verses of Dt 28
    - **Deuteronomy 28:1-7 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>"And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. <sup>2</sup>And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. <sup>3</sup>Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. <sup>4</sup>Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. <sup>5</sup>Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. <sup>6</sup>Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. <sup>7</sup>"The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.
  - The Curses for disobedience are laid out in the next 54 verses
    - **Deuteronomy 28:15-20 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup>"But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. <sup>16</sup>Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. <sup>17</sup>Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. <sup>18</sup>Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. <sup>19</sup>Cursed shall you be when you come in,

and cursed shall you be when you go out.  
<sup>20</sup> "The Lord will send on you curses,  
confusion, and frustration in all that you  
undertake to do, until you are destroyed  
and perish quickly on account of the evil  
of your deeds, because you have forsaken  
me.

- So was the old covenant. Obey God, and things would go great. Disobey God, and things would go terrible. It was up to you. It was your choice. You determined your own destiny. There was nothing wrong with the covenant. It was perfectly reasonable. It was perfectly fair. It made perfect sense. At first glance at least, I don't think the people would have wanted it any other way. In fact, Jesus reiterates both the reasonableness and effectiveness of the old covenant in Luke 10.
  - o **Luke 10:25-28 (ESV)**  
<sup>25</sup> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"  
<sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup> And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."
  
- Thus, the reason God replaced the old covenant with the new, was not because there was something wrong with the covenant; *it was because there was something wrong with us.*
  - o If you know anything about the Israelite people you know that from day one of the old covenant's institution they couldn't keep it.
  - o The same was true in Jesus' day.
    - **Luke 10:29 (ESV)**  
<sup>29</sup> But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
  - o The same is true of us today.
    - **Romans 3:10-12 (NIV)**  
<sup>10</sup> ..."There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who

seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

- **Romans 3:20 (NIV)**

<sup>20</sup> Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

- Despite its perfect reasonableness, its amazing blessings, and its terrible curses, we were simply too sinful to keep up our end of the old covenant. *We couldn't do it. We couldn't keep God's law. We couldn't earn His favor. And that's why God, in His great mercy, gave us a new covenant in Jesus Christ that wasn't up to us, but was up to Him.*
- *You see, instead of being advice; the new covenant is news (good news!). Instead of being something we need to do; the new covenant is something that has been done. Jesus earned all of God's covenant blessings for us 2,000 years ago by perfectly keeping the law that we couldn't keep. Jesus made a way for us to avoid all of God's covenant curses 2,000 years ago by dying on the cross for our sins. All we have to do today is *believe that good news*. When we do, God forgives us of all our sins and frees us from their tyranny in our life, imparts Jesus' perfect record to our account, fills us with His Holy Spirit which loves Him and wants to obey Him, adopts us as His children, and begins to transform us into His image. Then, instead of our obedience being the means by which we earn either God's blessing or His curse, our obedience becomes our grateful, loving response to our Heavenly Father who loves us eternally and unconditionally, *no matter what we do*, because of what Jesus has done for us. That's the difference between the old covenant and new covenant, and that's the first truth I learned in Europe.*

Truth #2 – God REALLY loves us, not just in a sacrificial way, but in a relational way

- God showed me this truth the second half of the trip through Francis Chan's book Crazy Love.
  - One of the most challenging books I've ever read

- o I hope that it is going to be life changing both for me, my family, and the church
  - o I'm thinking and praying about the best way to get as many of you to read it as possible so that we can talk and pray about it together.
- The truth that God showed me flowed from an experience Francis relays in chapter 3. The chapter title is *Crazy Love* and the section title is *Wanted*. Both are perfect! (read [Crazy Love](#) pp. 57-58)
  - Upon reading this I quickly realized I was just like Francis Chan.
    - o I knew that God loved me, but my understanding of His love was too narrow. I viewed God's love almost exclusively in a *sacrificial way*. I saw God as constantly *stooping down* to love me. I saw Him as loving me genuinely for sure, but always out of compassion, mercy, and *my need*. I saw His love as being that of a good father, husband, or friend, but again, *strictly in the sense of sacrifice*. Good fathers, husbands, and friends, *give themselves up* for the sake of their loved ones, and I saw God doing the same for me.
  - All this is true of God' love for us, and I praise Him for it, but now I see that my understanding of His love was incomplete. It turns out God's love for us is even CRAZIER than I thought! Francis Chan helped me to see that God's love for us is not only sacrificial, *it is also relational*. Not only should we want to be with God; *He actually wants to be with us!!!*
    - o I had memorized Zephaniah 3:17 a long time ago, but I don't think I ever really understood its full meaning.
      - **Zephaniah 3:17 (ESV)**  
<sup>17</sup>The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

- o I knew that God saw me as His child, His bride, and His friend, but once again, I don't think I really grasped all that that meant.
  - Not only do fathers, husbands, and friends, make willing sacrifices for their loved ones, *they long to be with them* as well.
    - The thing I love most about going to pastor's conference each year is not the teaching (though it's amazing), it's being with my friends.
    - The thing I loved most about going to Europe was not the sites (though they were amazing), it was being with my wife and kids.
- Amazingly, God feels the same way about us! If we've trusted in Him we are His children, His bride, and His friends, and He not only loves us in a sacrificial way, *but in a relational way as well*. Just as we long to be with our children, our bride, and our friends, *He longs to be with us!* Now that's some CRAZY love, and that's the second truth I learned in Europe.

### Two application questions

- 1) Are you living in the new covenant?
  - a. Do you see the good news as news or as advice? Do you see it as something you need to do, or something that has been done for you?
- 2) Do you believe that not only should you want to be with God, *but that God wants to be with you?*
  - a. This truth has transformed my time with God the past two weeks.
    - i. Not only am I getting up early because I need to meet with God but because *God wants to meet with me*.
    - ii. Not only am I praying because I need to talk to God and to ask Him for His help but because *He wants to listen to me and provide it*.

