



## Sermon, Sunday November 10, 2024 “Job’s Confession and Our Confession”

**SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 6:1-10** <sup>1</sup>“Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, <sup>2</sup>so that you and your children and your children’s children may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. <sup>3</sup>Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you. <sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. <sup>5</sup>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup>Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. <sup>7</sup>Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. <sup>8</sup>Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, <sup>9</sup>and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.<sup>10</sup>“When the LORD your God has brought you into the land that he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—a land with fine, large cities that you did not build,

### Introduction: Make God’s Word the Center of Your Life

Today is the 25th Sunday after Pentecost. Deuteronomy is Moses' final teachings to the Israelites just before entering Canaan after 40 years in the wilderness. And today’s text is the core of Deuteronomy.

Chapter 6, verse 3 of today’s text says, **‘Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.’**

As in this verse, if the Israelites obey God's word, they will greatly prosper in the land of Canaan. However, if the Israelites do not obey God's word, they will not escape judgment. However, it is not easy to live in obedience to the word of God.

So, Moses says in verse 4 of today’s text, **‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.’** This passage is an accurate teaching about monotheism. Most religions at the time were polytheistic. The reason many empires at the time did not like monotheistic faith was because their kings could not be elevated to gods. If the Lord is the only God, then no human can become a god.

It was not easy for the Israelites to maintain their monotheistic faith. To the north of Canaan, where the Israelites had to settle and live, was Mesopotamia, and to the south was Egypt. They were forming a civilized society, and polytheistic beliefs were the mainstay of their lives. It was difficult to believe only in God in such an area.

So, Moses says in verse 5 of today’s text, **‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all you might.’** Moses exclaims that the only way for the Israelites to survive is to love God with all their heart.

Finally, Moses tells three ways the Israelites can maintain their monotheistic faith. **First**, it is to keep the word of God in your heart (verse 6). **Second**, it is to teach the word of God to your children (verse 7). **Third**, it



is to bind the Word of God as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (verses 8-9). All these methods mean that we should make the Word of God the center of our lives.

### **Body: Jesus' thoughts VS our thoughts**

The reason Moses gave detailed instructions on how to maintain monotheistic faith is because it is difficult for us to listen to the word of God. In fact, having fun doesn't have to be taught. The same goes for making money. However, because the Word of God is not as attractive to us as making money or playing, people do not want to listen to the Word of God.

Also, we don't even try to listen to what other people say, let alone listen to God's word. Although there may be individual differences, many people today have poor listening skills. Many people would rather talk than listen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Do you know how the Old Testament prophet Elijah heard the word of God on Mount Horeb? He heard the word of God in a **'gentle whisper.'** (1 Kings 19:12). If we want to hear God's word well, we must be sensitive to a gentle whisper of God. In other words, we can hear a gentle whisper of God in our own quiet space for deep fellowship with God.

So, how can we hear the word of God? First, we need the ability to discern the Word of God. Most of all, the ears of our soul must become sensitive. If our ears are not sensitive, it is difficult to distinguish sounds properly. However, it is not easy to know whether our ears are sensitive or not. We can know this from the fact that even in the time of Jesus, there were many religious experts who claimed to have clear ears.

Jesus quoted a proverb referring to the religious elite of the time, the Pharisees and scribes, said, **'a blind man leads a blind man.'** (Matthew 15:14). The reason why Jesus said these words was because of an incident in which Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem saw that Jesus' disciples did not wash their hands while eating and criticized them for not keeping the **'tradition of the elders.'** They simply accepted God's word as law, but did not know or distorted its fundamental meaning.

Even today, misinterpretations of the Bible and Christian doctrine without accurate knowledge are repeated. For example, think about 'sin'. Most people believe that immoral and unethical behavior is sin. Therefore, many people always think of the words in the Bible, such as repent or have your sins forgiven, as connected to such immoral acts. Of course, not all these thoughts are wrong. However, this idea does not accurately point out the root of sin as spoken of in the Bible. Immoral acts are the result of sin. The sin that Christianity speaks of is at a much more fundamental level. The desire to elevate oneself to the level of God is the root of sin.

Jesus once argued with the scribes about sin. Jesus said to the paralyzed man, **'Son, your sins are forgiven.'** (Mark 2:5) Also, Jesus said to the scribes who accused this of blasphemy, **'the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.'** (Mark 2:10)

These words of Jesus revealed the misunderstanding and hypocrisy of the sins of the people at the time. To ancient Jews, the poor and the disabled were all sinners. Ancient Jews believed that these unfortunate events happened because they or their parents had sinned. So, they advised the poor and the disabled to repent of their sins.

However, Jesus' thoughts were different from these. Jesus said that even if the world judges us to be sinners, we can live a fulfilling life if God is with us. Here is the core of the gospel. However, sometimes we still listen to our own thoughts and experiences rather than to the words and thoughts of Jesus. So, we condemn and even kill others with our words.



**Conclusion: He who has ears, let him hear.**

Do you remember Jesus' words, 'He who has ears, let him hear?' (Luke 8:8, Mark 4:9, 4:23) I hope you don't just take this verse as a cliché religious lesson. These words of the Bible contain the reality by which we reach the truth.

We may think that it is difficult to live while paying attention to our 'ears to hear' because we are busy and tired with making a living. We must accept this reality of life and our weaknesses and seek the grace of our merciful Lord. Furthermore, we must pray that we may become people who can listen and hear the gentle whisper of the Lord. If we can truly hear the detailed voice of the Lord in our lives, our souls will enjoy greater abundance and freedom. I pray that such blessings will come to everyone. **Amen!**

