

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
2nd Sunday after Pentecost
(series A.)
Deuteronomy 11:18-21 and 26-28
June 22, 2014



¹⁸ Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth...²⁶ See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse – ²⁷ the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸ the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.



Surely it is God who saves us. We will trust in Him and not be afraid. For the LORD is our stronghold and our sure defense. He will be our Savior:

"Like sands through the hour glass – so are the days of our lives!" I am 62 years and 1 month old today. That works out to 22,660 days – so far! That sounds like a long time 22,660 days--and so? The question is – what are we going to do with the days of our lives – the time of grace that we have left? What are we going to do? Are we living a focused life – with faithfulness – Jesus' benchmark – faithful with the gifts and the opportunities we have? Are we praying thy will be done? Are we growing in faith – with plans and goals and reasons for what we do in the light of God's Word? Today we walk beside the children of Israel as we remember:

We Are On The Road To The Promised Land!

1. Study God's Word
2. Share God's Word
3. Live God's Word.

Context! The part of God's Word we are concentrating on are from the Book of Deuteronomy – the second giving of the Law. These are some of the final words of Moses – the man of God – who knew his Heavenly Father “face to face”! These words of instruction and encouragement are words of practical value to us on the way through this life – on our way to Heaven. Moses said, “**18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.**” The Children of Israel took these words quite literally. They put the Scriptures in little boxes and quite literally tied them to their heads. What the LORD was really asking them to do – was put God's Word in their emotions and in their thoughts! That's why reading God's Word is so important. So we can have God's Word in our emotions and in our thoughts. That means think about Jesus all the time. When you get up in the morning – Jesus needs to be the first One you think about. What's on your agenda today? What are you going to do today? Obviously we need to be in contact with God's Word all the time. 59 minutes on Thursday night or Sunday morning – one hour one day a week isn't enough. That means reading *Meditations*. There is a devotion for every day of the week. Each week a different Pastor writes the devotions – different styles – different illustrations – the same Biblical law and Gospel – the same Christ crucified and risen. Each devotion is about 500 words. It takes literally less than 3 or 4 minutes to read one. Last week was about the Great Commission. Except the Pastor who wrote the devotions called it the GRACE Commission – the GRACE Commission. Get it? It talks about doubt, about Authority, about making disciples, about baptizing, about teaching, about going and telling everyone that Jesus is the only Way to Heaven. This week it's about false prophets – wolves in sheep's clothing. Anyone would recognize a wolf – running in packs – steel eyes and teeth that tear. But would you recognize a wolf in sheep's clothing – all soft and fuzzy on the outside – certainly looks harmless. The damage a false prophet does – is to your faith and soul and mind! The more you study God's Word – the more you are able to recognize a false prophet trying to deceive you! This week talks about picking grapes from thorns or picking

figs from thistles. You can't. Good trees – good fruits – bad trees bad fruit. Talk is cheap. It's easy to say you love Jesus and love your neighbor. Fruits of faith will be evidence of the love that really exists in our heart! Read *Meditations*. Pray the prayers in the back – one for every morning – one for every evening of the week. Pray the seasonal prayers in the back of *Meditations*. There is a prayer for Pentecost, for Trinity, for Father's Day, for marriage, for vacation time – for missions, for the sick and people facing trials, for those serving in the ministry, for Lord's Supper, and Luther's morning and evening prayer. Read Forward in Christ! There is a devotion by my friend Pastor Michael Woldt about "new and improved". There are places that publish the fact that "they are casual, relevant, non-judgmental, with playgrounds for children and padded pews with cup-holders for your travel mug of coffee." The seating isn't the point. Faithfulness to Scripture – to law and Gospel – to God's Word and God's will – does not change because it's 2014! Read a message from President Schroeder and from President John Braun and from my friend Prof. Daniel Balge from Martin Luther College – and much *much* more! Look on line – and you will find all kinds of books about God's Word – to help you understand and put into practice God's Word in your marriage – in your family – in the lives of your children.

God's Word talks about the children! ¹⁹ **Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.** Talk to your children about Jesus! You can teach them with family devotions. When the mommy is finishing putting the food on the table for supper – the Daddy can read the devotion from "*Little Visits With God*" or read a Bible lesson from a *Bible Story Book* – that's made especially for children. Read the Bible then make applications to day to day life. Then say a simple prayer – just before you pray, "Come Lord Jesus, be our Guest..." Older children can read the devotion. That works well, too. In order to do this – of course – you need to eat supper together. There is a bill board on the way to Waukesha. It's a picture of the earth with a giant heart shape in the middle. It says simply – *Heal the earth – have supper together!* Supper time – is important – to literally ask each other, "How was your day?" "How was your day?" "How was your day?" Talk about what's going on in your life and in your job or your school or your country or your world! Talk about war and peace! Talk about telling the truth! Talk about positions of great public trust! Talk

about everything. Ask questions! Pray for each other. Encourage each other. Build each other up! Talk about Jesus in any and every situation. Talk about Jesus – at home and on the road – when you go to sleep and when you wake up! Talk about Jesus with your family all the time!

²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates...

Again God's people took this very literally. They are called a Mezuzah! The little box containing God's Word that they literally fastened on the doorframes of their houses and on their gates. A Mezuzah was supposed to be a reminder – when you came through a doorway – when you went through your gate – leaving home – that you remembered the LORD at home – and away from home. Think about the LORD wherever you are! Think about Jesus when you are going down the highway. I was cruising down the highway the other day – when someone went past me in the left lane – the fast lane. The young lady was holding her cell phone with one hand – and was pushing her hair behind her ear with her other hand. How was she steering? Someone told me – “Oh, they steer with their knees. Young people are really good at that. They do it all the time!” Really! I was thinking to myself – this is someone I need to pray for! Not someone I should be angry or frustrated with. Pray for them! Pray that Jesus keeps them from crashing into anybody! Think about Jesus every time you back out of your garage – every time you pull out of the parking lot – every time you go sailing down the highway – with the cruise control set at 69 mph. Think about Jesus when the rain is pouring down!

²⁶ See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse – ²⁷ the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today... Obey the commands of the LORD. We don't! We make mistakes all the time! You can try really hard – and still you make mistakes! I was standing in line at the Pig the other day. I had about 8 items – when a lady with a baby in her tummy came up behind me – with 3 items. I told her go ahead of me. She said, “No, that's ok.” Then thought about it a moment and said, “Are you sure?” “I'm sure. Go ahead.” She said, “That's really nice.” I said, “It's my job!” “Your job to be nice?” “Yes,” I said. I'm a minister. “It's our job to be nice! If Jesus was here – He'd want you to go ahead – don't you know...” Jesus would. You can find the simplest opportunities to do something very simple for someone – even a complete stranger. And when they ask why – tell them because of Jesus! I saw on the news the other day – a lady at Chick *Filet* – who paid for the

chicken for the people in the car behind her. She got home – found out – that she didn't have all the pieces of chicken she was supposed to. When she came back – she found out that the person behind her had paid for the people behind them. And do you know how long that went on? 38 dinners – paid by the person in line ahead of you. And what would she say to the person who broke the chain? She said, "I hope they had a good chicken dinner, too!" Not something sharp or critical or bad – but hope you liked your chicken, too!

God places before us: **28 the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.** I was a child – listening to a sermon on the radio – in our living room after Church – while my mom finished making gravy for Sunday dinner. Pastor Hoffman said there are many things that God *seems* to tolerate. Being ignored is not one of them! If we live our lives against better knowledge – in willful wickedness and sin – there will be painful consequences. Remain in stubborn sin and unbelief and there will be eternal consequences. Moses called his people to a life-time of repentance. To rededicate them-selves to serving the Great I AM!

It has been said again and again – people ignorant of history are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. One of the blessings of being a Pastor is you get to spend time studying God's Word – and lots of time with lots of different people in lots of different situations – the happiest and the saddest of times – when little people are born – and when they die. I was very interested to read an article written by a person who worked in hospice – in taking care of people the last months and weeks and days of their life. This hospice worker asked people who knew for a fact that their time was short if they had regrets. The most common regret of all? People said they regretted not doing the things that in their ♥ of ♥s they always wanted to do. Truth be told – and at that point there was no point in lying – they hadn't done even half of the things they always wanted to do! How sad is that? Every single man said they wished they didn't work so much – wished they hadn't sacrificed their marriage – their children's childhood – for their job. They regretted that they had spent so much time and energy and effort to earn more and more money so they could buy more and more things and stuff – in this never ending effort to find happiness in things and stuff. All the men deeply regretted spending so

much time on the treadmill of a work existence. Think about that! Think of wise King Solomon who had all the finest things and stuff of all saying, **“Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!”** This world doesn’t matter! Heaven matters and hell matters. Eternity and your immortal soul matters! It’s not important to have a Samsung 78” Ultra High Definition Smart 30 LED TV. It’s not important to know they cost only \$7,200 and yes they have some in stock with their curved panel – with immersive 4K viewing experience – that reduces distortion of fast moving images like sporting events and more vivid life-like color! People regret having arguments and fights with family and relatives and friends to the point that there is so much bitterness and resentment they literally become sick – from the anger and even hatred. We need to show we are Jesus’ disciples by how we love one another--and forgive and forget the hurts and mistakes of the past. Treasure the friends Jesus has put into your life. Pray for them. Don’t just say you will pray for them – actually fold your hands and close your eyes and pray for them. Make time to be with your friends – to help them and encourage them – and love them!

We are on the way to the promised land! God’s Word again and again talks about attitude. God’s Word again and again says, **“Be joyful always. Pray continually. Give thanks under all circumstances for this is God’s Will for you in Christ Jesus. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will keep your ♥s and minds through faith in Christ Jesus.”** Contentment – happiness that grows to the point that we are joyful – rejoicing – is a gift from God. It comes from God’s Word and from Lord’s Supper. It comes from putting our focus – not on ourselves – but upon Jesus and the Gospel – and a life that is dedicated to loving and serving one another. Greatness in the Kingdom of God comes from loving one another. When we are dedicated to giving glory to Jesus and to be a blessing to our neighbor – our family and our fellow believers – then by grace alone Jesus will give us joy and contentment. Jesus will give you joy on the way to the Promised Land of Heaven. Amen!