

## **St. Swithun's House groups**

### **Deuteronomy 6**

#### **How to love God**

##### **Context**

The 10 Commandments (5:1-22) were given directly to the people of Israel in their hearing. The rest of the law was given to Moses to give to the people.

##### **vv. 1-3**

As Moses prepares to give the people this law, he calls on them to listen and obey. To listen and obey isn't the way to gain the promised land (cf. 5:31); it is the way to enjoy living in the land (6:3)

##### **vv. 4-9**

Moses gives (i) the fundamental reason why the people should respond properly to God and (ii) the description of what this response should be. A unique God deserves a unique loyalty; an undivided God deserves an undivided response; a wholly committed God deserves a wholly committed response. Such a response is to characterize the whole community.

##### **vv. 10-19**

Moses gives three warnings which highlight three alternative ways of responding to God:

- (i) vv.10-13 Do not forget God
  - the danger of blessing
- (ii) vv.14-15 Do not follow other 'gods'
  - the danger of culture
- (iii) vv. 16-17 Do not test God
  - the danger of suffering

Vv. 18-19 reiterate the right response and the reason for it.

### **vv. 20-25**

In the context of a father's answer to a son's question, Moses gives, once again, the rationale for keeping the law.

Keeping the law (v.24) is the response to God's grace (vv.21-23).

Keeping the law is the way to enjoy continued blessing (v.24).

Note: 'our righteousness' (v.25) is not a phrase that describes the Israelites achievement in keeping the law (as if they could achieve saving righteousness by their works); it is a phrase that describes the benefits of enjoying God's grace by responding to it appropriately (ie. by keeping the law).

The context (a father responding to his son's question) reminds us of the importance of teaching the next generation (v.2, v.7)

### **Summary**

Chapter 6 teaches how to respond to the grace of God.

The right response to God's prior initiative of grace is love.

Love is expressed by keeping the law and teaching others to do the same.

Law-keeping will remain an expression of love (and not an attempt to earn saving righteousness) only if they continue to remember what God has done for them.

### **Application to us**

We, too, are called to respond appropriately to God's prior initiative of grace.

God has 'brought us out' of slavery to sin (v.21) by 'miraculous signs and wonders' (the cross and resurrection).

Our response is to be whole-hearted, undivided love expressed in grateful obedience.

(cf. John 14:15 'If you love me, you will obey what I command.')

Such a response ensures the continued experience of God's blessing (Dt. 6:2-3 cf. John 8:31-32)

## Deuteronomy 6

### “How to love God”

#### Questions for Groups

- vv.1-3            In a sentence, what is the message of these verses?  
How is this not ‘salvation by works’?
- If it’s not, what is the relationship between grace and works?  
(cf. 5:31. Eph. 2:8-10 might help)
- The Israelites are told to ‘hear’ and to ‘obey’.  
How can *we* get better at doing both?
- vv. 4-9            What are the implications of saying that ‘the Lord our God, the Lord is one’
- How should we respond to such a God?  
(v.5f)
- What point is Moses making in vv.6-9?
- How should we, today, put this into practice?

vv.10-19      What dangers are mentioned here that might lead us to respond to God in other ways?

How can we resist them?

What incentives can you see here?

How would you apply them to our / your situation?

vv.20-25      Moses speaks of the importance of teaching the next generation (cf.v.2, v.7)

Applying these verses to ourselves as Christians, what should we tell them?

How can we do it?

What is the main lesson you think this passage teaches?

What is the main thing you think it is asking us to put into practice?

What one thing will you do differently as a result of studying this passage?

Spend some time praying for God's help to do this.