

LIFE IN THE PROMISED LAND

Text: Deuteronomy 11.8 - 17 (in pew Bible p. 183/ in large print Bible p. 285)

Intro:

-we have just celebrated *Canada Day*.

- so many things could be said *about our country*.
- a fine summary statement of our nation *is the flag*.
 - 2010 Winter Olympics often featured our red & white banner *at the winners' pedestal*.
 - whether it is fluttering over the vast stretches of the prairies, or above the pine forests in lake regions, or along the grand shore lines of our 3 coastlines; the Canadian flag inspires our hearts and minds to measure up to the Canadian worldview.

-did you know?

- maple leaf has been used as an emblem in Canada *since the eighteenth century*.
- red and white proclaimed Canada's official colours in 1921 by King George V.
- Canadian flag is twice as long as it is wide.
 - white square and its maple leaf *make up half the surface of the flag*.
 - red bars together make up the second half.
- in 1964, professor @ Royal Military College in Kingston suggested a red & white single maple leaf design for the flag *because it can be seen easily from a distance*.

-while life is not perfect in Canada, it offers people a country and society *that is as fine as any other nation*.

- **illust.** The Perfect Wedding
- there are parallels to this in the Christian life *as well*.
 - we do not have a bed of roses *without pain and challenge*.

-today's text outline's Moses' instruction for the Israelites *as they prepare to possess the Promised Land*:

- whole-heartedly obey God's commands (v.v. 8, 13).
- Anticipate God's blessings *of long life, in land flowing with milk & honey* (v. 9).
- Really depend upon God's provision *amidst the ups and downs of Canaan's hills and valleys* (v.v. 10 - 12).
- Conditional experience of God's promises *while ours through God's grace but also are our responsibility* (v.v. 13, 16).
 - nothing we can do to earn them but require our cooperation *with the Holy Spirit*.

Take Home Point:

-we are blessed to have dual citizenship – primary = K. of G. & *secondary = Canada*.

- be responsible citizens *in each domain*.

NOT LIKE EGYPT (v. 10)

-Egypt = symbol of tyranny of slavery & death.

- **illust.** Labour In Egypt.
 - forced labour & *PEREK*.

-in Canada, the tyranny of sex trade, ravishes of war, preventable diseases and grinding poverty are not nearly as pronounced as in other parts of the world.

- do what we can to empower the disadvantaged and disenfranchised.
- uphold rule of law and democratic process.
- be care-takers of God's creation.

-in Kingdom of God, we are delivered from the bondage of sin.

For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, (Colossians 1.13).

- walk in the newness of life (Romans 6.4).
- serve in the newness of Spirit (Romans 7.6).
 - release from performance.
 - living in loyalty & devotion.

-Joshua's probing question: How long will you neglect to possess the land ...? (Joshua 18.3).

- as dual citizens, be heavenly minded and earthly good.

COPE WITH THE HILLS & VALLEYS (v. 11)

-not Disneyland.

- amusements and thrills / candy coated fantasy.
- **Read:** 2 Corinthians 4.7 – 15.

-not yet the New Heavens & New Earth.

- we are still living in a fallen world.
 - pain, sorrow, illness, death.

-hills & valleys speaks of growth, testing and learning.

- step by step, looking to the Lord.
- living in & giving grace.
 - **illust.** Expecting Perfection.

-Joshua's probing question: How long will you neglect to possess the land ...? (Joshua 18.3).

- as dual citizens be realistic, flexible, and balanced in your journey of faith.

DRINK IN THE HEAVENLY RAIN (v.v. 11, 14)

-times of refreshing.

- seek glorious, saturating deluge from God the Holy Spirit.

Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah (Acts 3.19 - 20).

- do you regularly experience times of refreshing?
- do you drink in the heavenly rain of the Holy Spirit?
 - if not, why not?
 - if so, how often?

-results in transformation.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4.13).

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, (Jude 2).

-Joshua's probing question: How long will you neglect to possess the land ...?
(Joshua 18.3).

- as dual citizens drink in the heavenly rain each day – *no water ban in God's Kingdom*.

DO NOT BE DECEIVED OR BARREN (v.v. 16, 17)

-obedient and wise.

- be careful to obey God's command (v. 13) = *Jesus' "greatest commandment*.
- be careful not to be seduced by the gods of this world (v. 16).
 - in Canada = sports, cars, immoral pastimes, high rate of abortion.

-fruitful and vibrant (v. 15).

- submit to the pruning of the Father (John 15.2).
- fruitful unto every good work as we grow in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1.10).
 - **illust.** Prime The Pump.

-Joshua's probing question: How long will you neglect to possess the land ...?
(Joshua 18.3).

- as dual citizens bear fruit that remains for God's glory (John 15.8, 16).

Conclusion:

1. Know what God wants you to do.

-challenge for us to live as responsible dual citizens.

- whole-heartedly obey God's commands (v.v. 8, 13).
- Anticipate God's blessings of long life, in land flowing with milk & honey (v. 9).
- Really depend upon God's provision amidst the ups and downs of Canaan's hills and valleys (v.v. 10 - 12).
- Conditional experience of God's promises while ours through God's grace but also are our responsibility (v.v. 13, 16).
 - nothing we can do to earn them but require our cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

2. Know what God wants to do for you.

-Joshua's probing question: How long will you neglect to possess the land ...?
(Joshua 18.3).

- as dual citizens, be heavenly minded and earthly good (not Egypt).
- as dual citizens be realistic, flexible, and balanced in your journey of faith (not Disneyland).
- as dual citizens drink in the heavenly rain each day – no water ban in God's Kingdom.
- as dual citizens bear fruit that remains for God's glory (John 15.8, 16).

-as dual citizens:

- be a peace keeper / positive / practical & balanced / and prayerful.
 - a land that the LORD your God cares for. He watches over it through each season of the year! (Deuteronomy 11.12).

-Bruce Robertson:

Holy Spirit Wind Of God

Holy Spirit, Wind of God, blow on me.
With Your power fill my life and make me free
Waft away my guilt and sin,
Give me light and truth within,
Holy Spirit, Wind of God, blow on me.

Holy Spirit, wind of God, move this land.
Give this people resurrection;
Make them stand.
Set your blood-bought church aflame;
Glorify your Mighty name
Holy Spirit, wind of God, move this land.

3. Know that God will do it.

-**Final Hymn:** #571 My Country 'Tis Of Thee.

Benediction:

And now back into God's world we go,
stronger because we have been here in God's presence,
reminded of the privileges of living in this great country,
And the love that holds us to it.

And to all whom we love, here in this land,
in this Church, in our homes and in our communities
We go now to be God's people in all the places life calls us to be.
May God, Father , Son, and Holy Spirit,
Give us light to guide us as a nation
Courage to support us in times of crises,
And love to unite us and keep us united, now and always. Amen.

The Perfect Wedding

“Remember Goldilocks?” Robert Fulghum asks in an article which appeared in *The Red Book*. She wanted everything to be “just right,” and ended up in a bed belonging to an angry bear. Demanding perfection can lead to trouble.

Fulghum goes on to say that he presided over the wedding of a couple determined to have the Perfect Wedding – and have it outdoors to boot. They chose the first day of August at a location where it had not rained on that day for the past 44 years. They marched through details of the event for 6 months, like generals planning a siege.

Nothing could go wrong. It was to be a *big* wedding – 400 people, black tie, summer hats, more attendants than a queen has. And, truth to tell, they actually *had* a Perfect Wedding – until the bottom of the ninth inning.

The ceremony went fine. Boring – but smooth. Fulghum pronounced the couple husband and wife, and they turned to the smiling guests before striding triumphantly down the long, grassy aisle to live happily even after.

Meanwhile, the bride’s Uncle Harry had decided that a small fireworks display would be the Perfect Ending to this Perfect Wedding. So he had nailed rockets and Roman candles to a two-by-four and placed the board a short distance from the guests. As the bride and groom stood poised to walk back down the aisle, Uncle Harry lit the fuse. But when he turned to run away, he tripped – and kicked over the board - the one with the lit fireworks on it.

Uncle Harry just had time to scream, “WATCH OUT!” before the first salvo was fired in the direction of the crowd. The Charge of the Light Brigade was nothing compared to the exodus of those assembled. Fulghum had seen many brides and grooms recess, but never a couple run for their lives.

Fortunately, the rockets and fireballs went high enough to pass just overhead, so nobody was hit. A few of the slow-footed got bowled over in the melee, and several ladies ran headlong into some blackberry bushes, but nobody got more than their dignity bruised, which was okay since it was a kind of over-dignified affair in the first place.

Fortunately also, the video camera didn’t miss a thing. The tape was played again and again to the delight of the guests, who by now had loosened up and agreed that the

footage of the stampede was the highlight of the day. People talked about that wedding for years.

It wasn't a Perfect Wedding, but it was a Great One – there were flaws, unexpected difficulties and a little confusion, just like life itself.

The truth is that perfect marriages don't exist any more than perfect weddings. When couples accept this, they are freed to work towards true greatness – not detail, but in spirit and passion and Love.

Labour In Egypt

In the sight of God the laws are regarded as one, and the breaking of any commandment brings with it the judgment of all the commandments (cf. James 2.10). God expects a clean moral life of His people, and it would give the Israelites the necessary mental and physical strength for subduing the Canaanites and possessing the Promised Land.

The Israelites had very unhappy memories of working in the fields of Egypt. Since it seldom rained in Egypt, crop irrigation had to be supplied by the flooding Nile River. Controlling these floods for effective crop production required building canals, terraces, dams and ditches. Water had to be collected in ponds and channelled into the fields when needed. At some seasons in the year, it was necessary to elevate the water from the ponds and canals by means of crude animal – and human powered water wheels (v. 10).

Expecting Perfection

Henry C. Rogers, of the public relations firm Rogers and Cowan, learned early in his business career that a 40% success rate was considered very good. Later he realized this in his personal life as well.

“I used to expect perfection from myself and perfection from those around me,” says Rogers. “It didn’t work ... [Now] I have accepted the fact that I will always make mistakes, that I will always commit errors of judgment.” Rogers said that this was an important lesson for him to learn, and once he acknowledged that he shouldn’t be ashamed of a 40% success rate he began to succeed even more.

The Bible allows for a similar approach. It teaches that every child of God is already perfect in Christ (Hebrews 10.14), is in the process of being perfected (2 Corinthians 7.1), and is going to be just like Christ when He returns (1 John 3.2). Wise parents don’t expect perfection from their children. Neither does our Heavenly Father expect it from us. But he asks us to keep it as our goal (1 Peter 1.15, 16) and to accept our shortcomings as he patiently perfects us.

Aiming at perfection reflects who we will be. But demanding it with a perfectionism that can’t accept failure misses the point of who we still are (*Daily Bread*).

Perfect me, Lord, by grace divine,
So wilful is this heart of mine;
And help me not to turn aside,
Buy in Your strength and love abide.

Prime The Pump

We’ve all heard someone complain that the people in a certain church aren’t friendly, or that they seem to be lacking in love. Although such criticisms may be true, the one doing the complaining is often a part of the problem.

An experience I had as a boy illustrates what I mean. My grandparents used to draw water from an old well with a pump just outside the back porch. I remember my first attempt to get water from that pump. I repeatedly jerked that cast iron handle down and up, down and up, but I couldn’t get any water. My Grandpa handed me a bucket of water,. “Pour it down the pump,” he urged. Then as I worked the handle, water came in abundance. There was plenty of water in that well, but first I had to “prime the pump.”

To feel the love and friendliness of an assembly of believers, we may need to pour a little of our own love in first. It was God’s love toward us that prompted our love in return. This principle also works with other Christians. Try it! (*Daily Bread*)