The Ultimate New Year’s Resolution

Nothing else we resolve to do matters, if we do not remember this one thing

Deuteronomy 8

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 23, In the year of our Lord, 2012
Scripture Reader and Reading: Kadin Lopez – First Corinthians 11.23–26
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – “Count Your Many Blessings”

Prelude:

I. In a couple of days, most people will remember the birth of Jesus Christ, and
A. remembering the greatest Gift ever and
B. remembering the greatest Giver ever,
   1. does more for us than anything else we may do this time of year.
      a) As you know, about a week later, we begin a new year,
      b) which means that many people will make New Year’s Resolutions.

II. I want to show you something
A. that will help you appreciate what will be happening
B. between now and the middle of next week.
   1. It will help you to appreciate all things that God has given us,
      a) whether His Blessed Son who came into this world by human birth, or
      b) all the material and spiritual blessings that we each enjoy, and
   2. it will help you to make 2013 your best year ever.
      a) Lord willing, next Lord’s Day I will propose to you another thing,
      b) a tool that you need for next year
         (1) whose value I cannot quote to you, because
         (2) it exceeds money.

III. Now, let us hear what the Lord told Israel in Deuteronomy 8, and
A. if you have never read this before,
B. you are going to think that it is talking about America!
**Persuasion:**

I. Remember God’s Commandments – Deuteronomy 8.1

1 “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers” (Deu 8.1).

A. Israel could not neglect any command.

B. If they did every commandment, as they stood at the border of Canaan,
   1. Moses promised that they would live and multiply, and
   2. they could go into the Land of Canaan and possess it,
      a) just as the Lord had sworn to their fathers.
      b) God keeps His promises, but
         (1) can we or will we
         (2) keep His commandments?

II. Remember God’s Leadership – Deuteronomy 8.2–4

2 “And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3 So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. 4 Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years” (Deu 8.2–4).

A. Israel, remember how God brought you through everything.

B. He sustained Israel during those years wandering in the wilderness, but
   1. He also humbled them and tested them,
   2. to know what was in their hearts,
      a) whether they would obey Him or not.
b) They saw how they responded to the difficulties of life and

(i) thus knew whether they would follow Him in all circumstances.

C. He humbled them by allowing them to hunger,

1. giving them special food, and

2. not allowing their clothes to wear out or their foot to swell.

   a) They would then learn that man does not live by bread alone, but

   b) by everything that God says.

III. Remember God’s Chastening – Deuteronomy 8.5

5 “You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you” (Deu 8.5).

A. They chastened their own sons, and

B. the Lord did the same with them,

   1. not to destroy them or hurt them, but

   2. as part of the growth process.

IV. Remember God’s Blessings – Deuteronomy 8.6–10

6 “Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. 7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; 9 a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 10 When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you” (Deu 8.6–10).

A. Knowing

   1. how the Lord had sustained them, and

   2. what He had taught them,
a) they were then to keep His commandments,

b) walking in His ways and fearing Him.

B. They were about to go from a wilderness

1. to a land that had an abundance of natural resources,

2. so much so that they would not have to be in want again, because
   a) they would have everything they needed.
   b) God would fill them in that new land.

C. Then verse 10 said

1. that they needed to bless the Lord

2. for what He had given them.

V. Remember God – Deuteronomy 8.11–17

11 “Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His com-
mandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, 12
lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell
in them; 13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and
your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; 14 when your heart is
lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of
Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 who led you through that great and terrible
wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where
there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; 16 who fed
you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He
might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end— 17
then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me
this wealth’” (Deu 8.11–17).

A. Now comes the stern warning not to forget God, and

1. Moses even identified the way in which they could forget God,

2. by not keeping His commandments, judgments, and statutes.

B. Here the Scripture provides insight into the nature of man,

1. that once we are doing well,
2. We lift up our hearts and forget what God has done for us.

VI. Remember God’s Power – Deuteronomy 8.18

18 “And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day” (Deu 8.18).

A. Remember that the Lord God is the One who gives power to get wealth.
   1. It does not come from the government.
   2. It does not come from businesses.
   3. It does not come from universities.
   4. It does not come from natural resources.

B. God gives the skill necessary to do well.

VII. Remember God’s Warnings – Deuteronomy 8.19, 20

19 “Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. 20 As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God” (Deu 8.19, 20).

A. Here is another insight into human behavior.
   1. If we forget God,
   2. We will turn to other things.

B. If Israel misplaced their faith,
   1. The Lord laid out clearly what He would do,
   2. They would perish just like the nations before them.

C. Centuries later the great man Daniel,
   1. Confessed to God in prayer,
13 “As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth” (Dan 9.13).

**Exhortation:**

I. What shall you do as an American Christian?

I. Remember God’s Commandments – Deutero 8.1

A. Millions of people have come to America.

B. God has blessed countless numbers of people, because
   1. they tried to obey Him.
   2. Therefore, He gave us a good land.

II. Remember God’s Leadership – Deutero 8.2–4

A. America has also suffered much in her history,

B. which God allowed to see what we would do.
   1. We have learned that man does not live by bread alone, but
   2. by everything that God says.

III. Remember God’s Chastening – Deutero 8.5

A. God loves America

B. even as He loves all the nations of the earth.
   1. Therefore, He let us experience severity
   2. that we might learn to lean upon Him.

IV. Remember God’s Blessings – Deutero 8.6–10

A. I cannot read these verses without thinking of us.
   1. We have a land with an abundance of natural resources,
   2. so much so that we do not have to be in want again.

B. Then as verse 10 said
1. let us bless the Lord
2. for what He had given us.

V. Remember God – Deuteronomy 8.11–17
A. We cannot forget God, for
   1. even as He has given us blessings,
   2. so He can take them away.
B. Yet, the further we have gone in our history,
   1. the further we have prospered, and
   2. the more we have kicked God out of national and individual life.
C. He was okay while we struggled, but
   1. now that we have all we need,
   2. we see no need for Him.
D. We believe that we can do without Him, and
   1. that our national prosperity had nothing to do with Him, but
   2. we did it ourselves.

VI. Remember God’s Power – Deuteronomy 8.18
A. Remember that the Lord God is the One who gives power to get wealth.
   1. It does not come from our government.
   2. It does not come from our businesses.
   3. It does not come from our universities.
   4. It does not come from our natural resources.
   5. It does not come from the fact that we are Americans.
B. As our national motto says, “In God We Trust.”

VII. Remember God’s Warnings – Deuteronomy 8.19, 20
A. These verses provided another insight into human behavior.
1. If we forget God,
2. we will turn to other things.
   a) The faith that the average American used to put in God,
   b) now goes into government, insurance, business, the economy, et al.

B. Verses 19 and 20 also showed
   1. that if Israel forgot God,
   2. He would cause them to perish from the land.

C. If God did that to Israel,
   1. if God did that to the Canaanites,
   2. if God did that to the Egyptians,
   3. if God did that to the Babylonians,
   4. if God did that to the Persians,
   5. if God did that to the Greeks,
   6. if God did that to the Romans, and
      a) countless nations after them,
      b) do you think He will ignore us?

D. However, if the nation serves God, but
   1. I fail to serve Him,
   2. I shall perish.

E. If the nation fails to serve God, but
   1. I serve Him,
   2. I shall live forever.

VIII. Remember God now, and He will remember you later.
   A. Forget God now, and He will forget you later.
   B. At the Judgment
1. He shall cast away from Him,

2. those who forgot Him, but

   a) He shall invite to be with Him,

   b) those who remembered Him.

IX. Remembering God brings blessings now and later.

   A. Even as parents want their children to remember them,

   B. so the Lord wants us to remember Him.

      1. For this reason, He set up communion,

      2. during which we remember the sacrifice of His body and His blood.

         a) Failing to take part in this memorial

         b) will result in the Lord forgetting us.

   3. Why do we take the Lord’s Supper every week?

X. The Bible tells us to remember God,

   1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,
      Before the difficult days come,
      And the years draw near when you say,
      “I have no pleasure in them”
      (Ecc 12.1)

   7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;
      But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.
      (Psa 20.7)

   21 “Remember these, O Jacob,
      And Israel, for you are My servant;
      I have formed you, you are My servant;
      O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me!”
      (Isa 44.21)

8 Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel... (2Ti 2.8).
XI. What do you think about all that the Lord has done for you?
   A. What has He done for you as a Christian?
   B. What has He done for you as an American?
      1. Whatever your struggles in life have been,
      2. you have somehow made to this day, because
         a) the Lord worked behind the scenes,
         b) doing this and that for you,
            (1) showing you His endless care, and
            (2) that He remembers you in all things.
   C. How about if you start remembering Him now?
      1. You have nothing to lose, and
      2. everything to gain.

XII. He has poured out many blessings upon you, but
   A. if you are not living a faithful Christian life,
   B. He has withheld several.

XIII. You want to remember Jesus in two days?
   A. Good, but
   B. make a resolution
      1. that starting now,
      2. starting the new year,
         a) you will remember Him
         b) everyday for the rest of your life.
   C. Let us help you make that resolution!