

**“ENTRANCES AND EXITS”**  
**Deuteronomy 29:9-14; 30:11-18; 31:1-8**  
**Holiday Island Presbyterian Church**  
**May 5, 2019**

**Deuteronomy 29: 9 Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do. 10 All of you are standing today in the presence of the Lord your God—your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, 11 together with your children and your wives, and the foreigners living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. 12 You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God, a covenant the Lord is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, 13 to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 14 I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you 15 who are standing here with us today in the presence of the Lord our God but also with those who are not here today.**

**Deuteronomy 30: 11 Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. 12 It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” 14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. 15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. 16 For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, 18 I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will**

**not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.**

**Deuteronomy 31 Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: 2 “I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The Lord has said to me, ‘You shall not cross the Jordan.’ 3 The Lord your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the Lord said. 4 And the Lord will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land. 5 The Lord will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”**

**7 Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. 8 The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

**The Bible is filled with accounts of entrances and exits.**

**The very first one, of course, is Adam and Eve.**

**They are created with free will – which they misuse –  
and they are forced to exit Eden.**

**I have chosen these particular pieces of scripture**

**because they contain some very important advice  
from Moses**

**as he prepares to exit from his leadership role.**

**BACKGROUND:**

**These chapters in the Book of Deuteronomy  
contain a record of Moses' last address to his people.  
It is as message of religion, power and humanity.**

**Moses reminds the people of where they have come from  
so they can understand where the future  
towards which they are heading.**

**Under the leadership of Moses,  
the children of Israel have exited slavery in Egypt,  
have spent forty years in the wilderness,  
and now stand on the threshold  
of entering the Promised Land.**

**It is a welcome exit from the wilderness  
one the people have been waiting for – praying for.  
It is also the entrance into the Promised Land.**

**But there is another exit and entrance that is occurring.**

**Moses, who has shepherded them for many years,  
is now in his final days.  
He is about to exit this earthly life  
and enter the land of heavenly reward.**

**Moses is giving his farewell address.**

**He reminds the people of who they are.  
He tells them that they are the people chosen by God.**

**They are to keep and observe the commandments.**

**He reminds them, that in the midst of all their hardships,  
God has always remained near to them.**

**It is a very powerful message.**

**MOSES' MESSAGE:**

**Because the people did not trust God,  
    God caused them to wander for 40 years in the desert.  
Now, after all these years,  
    the big day has arrived.  
The people were ready to cross over the Jordan river  
    and into the land God had promised them.**

**Can you imagine their anticipation?  
    They had been slaves,  
        they were freed from slavery  
            but held captive by their own stubbornness  
                and now God was giving them their own land!**

**They were about to exit the wilderness  
    and they were about to walk into a land  
        flowing with “milk and honey.”**

**They would no longer live in tents,  
    God was about to give them “houses they didn't build  
        and vineyards they didn't plant.”**

**Moses take one last opportunity  
    to bring the people together to challenge them.**

**Because God has forbidden Moses to enter the Promised Land,  
    he knows this will be the last thing he will say  
        to this group of people that he had loved  
            and invested his life in leading.**

**If you begin to see a parallel between the end of my ministry here  
    then you would be correct.**

**However, I don't intend to compare myself to Moses.  
That would be too arrogant even for me.**

**But what Moses had to say to the people he loved,  
is pretty much what I want to say to you  
as my ministry comes to an end here.**

**Moses first piece of advice is  
to ask the people to keep God first.**

**We have accomplished a lot together over the last two years.  
None of which could have been done  
without the providence of God.**

**Moses reminds the people  
that it was easy to keep God first in the desert –  
- they needed God to survive.**

**It was God who provided water and food every day.**

**Moses is afraid that as the people become more prosperous –  
- as the hardships decrease –  
- they will rely upon themselves more than God.**

**Moses is saying: make your covenant with God now!  
Don't wait until you are comfortable or distracted;  
make your decision now.**

**There is a glorious future ahead for this church – for us.  
We need to put God first in every decision we make –  
- every action we take.**

**We need to ask ourselves:  
Are we doing the best we can do?  
Or are we coasting in our comfort?**

**You see, when times are hard,  
when we face hardship and anxiety  
it is easy to call upon God.**

**But are we as quick to recognize God in our successes?  
Does God remain sovereign when everything is going well?**

**Second, Moses urges his people to choose life.**

**<sup>15</sup> See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. <sup>16</sup> For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.**

**Here is a very simple formula for what Moses is saying:  
If we honor God – God will honor us.**

**If we live lives which bring honor and glory to God –  
- by keeping God's commandments –  
- then we can expect God to continue to bless us.**

**Every decision we make  
has an impact on our lives;  
small decisions as well as big ones.**

**When we decide to get our pound of flesh  
from someone who has wronged us – instead of forgiving –  
we dishonor the covenant we have with God.**

**Moses is asking his people to put God first –**

**in every situation!**

**Finally, in chapter 31, Moses turns to Joshua  
Moses blesses Joshua,  
and essentially, passes the baton of leadership to him.**

**Very soon, I will pass the baton of ministry to Brad Rito.  
Let me remind you that God  
is the star of the story we are living.**

**Moses realized he was only a part of God's story.  
I have been only a part of God's story, as well.**

**As Rev. Rito makes his entrance into the ministry of this church,  
I will be making my exit.**

**I'll still be around,  
most likely sitting near the back with my lovely wife,  
taking notes as odd thoughts occur to me.**

**I'll still be your friend;  
I just won't be your pastor.**

**THE MESSAGE I LEAVE WITH YOU:**

**So, let me leave you with the words of Moses:**

**“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified ...for  
the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor  
forsake you.”**

**You have been a great blessing to Gail and me.  
your love and support for us both has been incredible.**

**We've come a long way together;  
God has truly blessed all of us.**

**We have further to go –  
and God will lead us.**

**The time is coming – and will be here soon –  
- when I must exit  
and Rev. Rito must enter.**

**To quote the Apostle Paul:**

**6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:6-9**