

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan

# THE BIBLICAL WILD

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WEEK XI: Deuteronomy 19-34 /  
Psalms 59-64

From Psalm 59, let us pray.

I will sing of your might, I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning, for you have been a fortress for me and a refuge in the day of my distress. Oh my strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, oh God are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan. And this is the Biblical Wild: Pioneers in the Christian Wilderness. Let's continue the journey.

As we go further into the book of Deuteronomy we have a series of preaching and teaching by Moses that reinforce the themes of obedience for the people and obedience as a way to possess the land. The preparations continue and at the end of Deuteronomy, Moses is not going into the land himself but has prepared this new generation to actually occupy the land, to take the risk and cross the Jordan and go into the land.

God has used Moses as his faithful servant to remind the people that God will indeed always be faithful. God will sometimes be disappointed and there will be setbacks on the journey. But in the face of those setbacks, if we set our eyes toward the promised land and maintain the obedience that God has called us to, then in God's good time in our partnership with God through and interplay between faithfulness and obedience we will indeed see the land of promise. The interplay between human obedience and God's gracious gift of the land sets up a dynamic of the cooperative nature of recognizing the blessings and the presence of God in our lives.

It makes me think about those times in my own life when I was uncertain about what God intended for me. And the best way forward it seemed in each instance was for me to continue to be obedient and faithful to what God had revealed to me. It seemed that the best way forward was to continue to be obedient while occupying that border land between clarity about God's purpose in my life and the uncertainty on which way to go.

I'm thinking particularly about that time when Ed Leidel called me to join the staff at Eastern Michigan and when I told my friends in Texas they looked at me like I had lost my mind. Because the flow from Texas and Michigan was unheard of. People were supposed to leave Michigan and go to Texas or go to the south. It was a kind of counter intuitive move that was taking place. But it felt like what God was calling me to do and so we were obedient even though there was a great deal of uncertainty about it. And so we moved to a border place in our lives anticipating that God would continue to be faithful and our obedience to God's faithfulness would result in clarity of call and conviction of purpose.

Those boundaries between certainty and uncertainty are marks of the spiritual life that call us into a relationship with God. That allows us to encounter God's faithfulness and challenge us in new ways to be obedient to God's intent in our lives.

With the conclusion of our study of the book of Deuteronomy I have a couple of questions for you.

One is how do you experience the life of faith as living on the border?

Secondly how do you experience the life of faith as occupying the land?

God bless and I will see you next week on the Biblical Wild.