

and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

INVITATION

As we celebrate this week a time of Thanksgiving, let us follow the example of the Israelites and remember: He's present in the good and the bad, and all good things come ultimately not from our own power and might, but from Him. But this morning, if you're not a faithful child of God, you don't have the same promises that were offered to the Jewish people or to the church. You don't have His Spirit on your hearts as a guarantee—you don't have the promises contained in **RM 8.28** ~ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

JL 2.12-13 ~ *"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³ and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.*

PS 107.8-9 ~ *Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! ⁹ For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.*

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When the Blessings Run Dry
PC X Pchd **BL** – 11/23/2025

DT 8.1-20

QUESTION: What does God want us to do when the blessings run dry?

TRN TO DT 8 **INTRODUCTION**

ILL—Family Traditions (we have lots of them; watching specific shows, reading specific stories, eating particular meals) Each Thanksgiving, regardless of whether we're at our home or somewhere else, we always do the same thing: we encourage everyone to think back to something for which they are thankful.

Some years, it's easy: when Erin was pregnant with Seth and Kara, our first year in our new house, when I started at a new job after a month of fear and anxiety. Other years, it's a bit harder. Some years, you look around, and you feel like your well is dry—like your blessings are run out. **In those moments, how are we to respond?**

BACKGROUND (DT 8.1)

Depending on how you looked at it, the Israelites were in a bit of a dry spell. They'd been locked out of the Promised Land, wandering and waiting for everything to change as the faithless generation passed away in the desert. Every one of them had lost someone to the sands of the desert. And at last, it was looking like that was going to end. But they had one last thing to lose before they could enter: they'd have to lose Moses as their leader.

DT 8.1 ~ *"The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers.*

Moses' spoke the message of **DT** in hope—hope that the future he would not live to see would be a good one. God had made a promise to him and the people: that they'd *live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers.* And yet, he knew that the people would still struggle in this new phase of their life to see something for which they could be thankful.

PS 107.1-3 ~ *Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! ² Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble ³ and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.* Brethren, many of us stand, today, in a bit of a wilderness wandering of our own: with difficulties in health, in family, in work, in school, in any number of areas. All around us, it feels like the blessings of life have dried up—and with that, coming to God in Thanksgiving this next week can feel a bit bitter-sweet. **We know we**

SHOULD be thankful, but how? How can you be thankful when it feels like your blessings are running dry?

The Israelites would have certainly felt the same: I can't imagine how alone and frightening it had to be to walk for 40 years through an actual desert. **In those moments, when God's people feel uncertain and alone, what are we to do?**

DT is a book designed to prepare God's people: to help them to remember: to refresh the minds of the people on what's gone before as they are preparing to enter into the Promised Land at last. The excitement would have been electric. But at the same time, they'd have felt a bit uncertain—after all, could this ragtag group fed on a diet of honey-bread have victory?

To help them get ready, Moses helped them to re-contextualize their life so far: he begins by pointing back to their wilderness wanderings: those times **when the blessings ran dry**—and he would show them that, contrary to their expectations, He was present even in the dry spells!

Today, we can often empathize with their uncertainty—after all, life can be exhausting and painful. Sometimes, it feels like **the blessings run dry** in our lives. But as with the Jewish people in **DT**, God's presence can be seen even in the dry spells!

BD1: Remember...He's There in the Desert (DT 8.2-5)

ILL—Rice and Beans (when first moved out, I was on a very limited diet; didn't have the money for nice meals, good food and clothes) At times, it'd be very frustrating when I'd see friends and others I knew living **"high on the hog"** while I was eating rice and beans, beans and rice. There's only so many times that you can eat the same food and wear the same clothes before it would start to get to you.

EX: That would be 100x worse for the Israelites: they didn't have the time and ability to really stabilize and build an actual economy. They didn't have the ability to have agriculture or build anything like a modern supply chain. But as Moses continues, we see that was the point!

DT 8.2-5 ~ *And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you.*

EX: They might have felt like their life in the wilderness had been difficult as they ate the same manna every day, wore the same clothes every day, and

EX: Moses saw the future: that the Jewish people would become prideful—thinking that their blessings and goods were theirs because of their own strength and abilities. Sadly, to some of them, when they ate the bread in the wilderness, it was because God had abandoned them. And when they were blessed, it was because of how strong and wise they were! In both cases, they failed to remember the presence and power of God.

I wish I could say we don't suffer from this same struggle. But we do. When we scrape by as the Israelites did in the wilderness, we fail to **remember that God is there in the desert**—that He's getting us through even these trials, and that, He's creating in us humility and reliance upon Him. Thankfully, God has provided for us wonderful **promises that the best is yet to come**—He has *put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee (2CO 1.18-22)*. But when the suffering ends and the blessings return, we tend to fall back into the same pattern the Jewish wanderers did, thinking that we came upon these blessings by the power of our own hands.

PV 30.7-9 ~ *Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: ⁸ Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, ⁹ lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.*

AP: Brethren, there is blessings that come through the wanderings—good that comes following the struggles! But when the good inevitably comes, we must never forget from whom they come. Otherwise, we will find ourselves like the rich builder in our Lord's parable.

B.ILL—The Rich Builder—LK 12.15-18 (rich man, plentiful blessings; tore down barns and built more) *And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."* (**LK 12.19-21**)

The sin of the builder wasn't in the building—it was in the misplaced priority—it was in the forgetting of the one who was the root of all his blessings! And sadly, today, many follow his example. They look at all they have and are convinced they have it through their own strength, and not the gift of God.

DT 8.18-20 ~ *You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And if you forget the Lord your God*

His brethren in the church. We often see the same: as the church rallies around broken brothers and sisters. God's **promise** stands: for the Christian, the best is yet to come—either in this world, or fully in the next!

2CO 1.18-22 ~ *As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. ²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. ²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

We have a guarantee—a promise. God has planted His Spirit in us to show how invested He is in us. He didn't forget His people in Judea—as He led them safely into the Promised Land through Joshua—and He will not forget us!

CONCLUSION – Remember...When You Forget

It's frustrating when we read the stories of the Israelites—seeing them fail in faith and trust in God—the same God who protected them during the Passover and as they walked across the dry ground of the Dead Sea. But we are no better. Like them, we often struggle to realize the blessings God has given us when we're in the **desert**—when things are difficult. But in truth, God is **there in the desert**—providing support, and using the struggles and difficulties we face to perfect us and prepare us for what's to come. And for His people, the **best is yet to come!** But he realized one final truth: that sometimes, when things improve, we have a bad habit of forgetting. We tend to forget.

DT 8.11-17 ~ *“Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. ¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’*

walked on foot for mile upon mile every day. I can't say I blame them, honestly: I got tired eating the same thing for lunch every day. And I get tired after just a 30 minute walk!

They might have wondered why God didn't give them better food, better clothes, or better transportation. Like us, when they're going through difficult times and tasks, they wonder why God doesn't make it **“go away”**.

But that misses the point! God didn't **“remove the bad stuff”**, because He was intent on using the **“bad stuff”**. He wanted to humble them. To help them to know *that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (DT 8.3b)*

Rather than focusing on how bad things had been for them, and why God hadn't made it all “better”, they should have realized that God **had** made it better. He describes three things He provided: an **“unempty belly”**, **“unspoiled clothing”**, and **“unswollen feet”**. **What do these three things have in common?** They were not what they wanted, but what they needed to complete the journey.

I'm certain they'd have preferred a varied diet of steak, eggs, and hummus (not all together). I'm sure they'd have preferred an overflowing closet with every fine garment. I'm sure they'd have preferred a series of horse drawn carriages. By providing them with manna as the primary food source for 40 years something incredible happened: they became fully reliant on Him. And He didn't fail them! There wasn't a day when they didn't have what they needed—even to the point of providing their clothing—which didn't wear out all those years. Even to the point of their feet, even following 40 years of wandering the harsh desert trails, never swelled. They were always able to do what God had called them to do.

PS 107.4-7 ~ *Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; ⁵ hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. ⁶ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. ⁷ He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.*

God provided the Israelites with what they needed: food, clothing, and health. He didn't remove the challenge: for by presenting them with what He presented, they realized their need for Him, and from those struggles and difficulties, their reliance and faith in Him only grew.

AP: But that's not what we want! We want abundance here, and now. We want everything we'd ever desire—everything we'd ever dream of. But that's not what God has promised. And honestly, that's not what's best for us! Sometimes, we need difficulties and struggles so that we can rely on God to help us to overcome them.

HB 12.5-11 ~ *And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and*

chastises every son whom he receives.”⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

God had provided for the Israelites enough for them to endure—for He knew that, through these trials, they’d grow in their faith for Him. As they **remembered** that **He was there in the desert**, they’d realize they could trust in Him—for He’d been there for them providing their needs—and He provides us with the same!

1PT 1.6-7 ~ *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Brethren, God has provided so much for us: “*our daily bread*”—and His intent isn’t to create a self-sufficient group who can survive on their own, but a God-sufficient people who **remembers He’s there—even in the desert**. So think of your life: your challenges, struggles, and, yes, successes—as things that God has presented to give you enough to persist and to rely upon Him as the origin of everything you have.

JS 1.16-18 ~ *Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

BD2: Remember...He’s Promised the Best is Yet to Come (DT 8.6-10)

ILL—Are we there yet? (a thing we commonly hear on a long journey; we tend to count down on long trips, announcing each milestone) The longest trips can be enduring when we know that ahead is a cruise, or a theme park, or a grandparent’s house!

But how do we persist through the pain in our lives? How do we exist in spite of the suffering? The Jewish wilderness wandering had to be so painful: going from place to place, day by day—knowing where your final destination was, but also knowing you wouldn’t get there tomorrow. But

God called on them to remain faithful: *So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. (DT 8.6)*

EX: The Jews had spent 40 years wandering, enduring limited resources, growing in their reliance upon God as their only source of food and support. But Moses wanted them to **remember He’s promised the best is yet to come**. That there would come a day without scarcity!

DT 8.7-10 ~ *For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills,⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees 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 And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.*

BRKGND: Their lives in the wilderness had been reliant and blessed by God. But that didn’t mean it was easy. The wilderness wanderings were filled with records of rebellion and struggle. But while they suffered and struggled, God still provided when they returned to Him: *Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.¹⁵ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron. (PS 107.13-16)* God’s **promise** stood: **the best was yet to come**—when they returned to Him, His blessing and providence returned to them.

PH 4.16-20 ~ *Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

AP: Today, it can be hard for us, as well, as we encounter struggle and strife and pain. As day by difficult day drags on. But the longest journey can be bearable when we know there’s an end to it. In truth, there is no suffering or struggle that lasts forever for the Christian: in this life, God has promised that He *will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus*. There is nothing the Christian need—truly needs—that is outside of God’s ability to provide. Paul experienced it with the help of