

**18** Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **19** Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **20** Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, **21** so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

**26** See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse— **27** the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; **28** the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.

### **Glued, Staples, Lacquered. Secure**

Growing up there was always a celebration that involved a present be it Father's day, Christmas, or a birthday. Wrapping such gifts often involved duct tape, bailing wire, plenty of cardboard, zip ties, and tape. But as I matured so did my methods of wrapping presents which morphed into a seamless block of wood, glued, stapled, sanded, and finished with a coat of lacquer. Why? To keep them guessing, entertainment as well, and of course they'll never forget who gave them that gift.

But Moses had entirely different reasons for wanting God's Word firmly fixed in hearts and minds. It wasn't to preserve the integrity of the present or for entertainment purposes but Moses didn't want them to forget this gift or the giver. Remember God. Moses wanted God's Word accessible in every location at any time as a constant reminder of God's blessing. Moses glued these words in their hearts, on their minds, stapled them to their bodies, and inscribed them on the walls and door posts.

God doesn't want us to forget either. In good times and in bad he wants us to continually remember and not forget the greatest gift that God has given; his son our salvation forever. Fix these words. May they be glued, stapled, and secure in our hearts as well.

Moses is saying his farewell. Israel is about to enter the Promised Land without him. So like a Father on his deathbed Moses instructs the eldest - "Bring your brothers and sisters home. I want to see you again." After all these years of leading a large dysfunctional family Moses still wants Israel to realize that the Promised Land isn't the only home he wants them to see.

Why is Moses so concerned? Israel is about to be blessed beyond belief. The only life they've ever known has been a life on the road. For forty years they've been waiting to enter this land flowing with milk and honey. They've been waiting to set roots, build houses, vineyards, and call a place home. But Moses was well aware that blessings can become curses. That gifts from God can be abused. That's last thing Moses wants. Moses wants God's command glued, stapled, lacquered, and secure. Remember who it was that gave you these gifts in the first place. Remember your God who brought you to this land. Remember the blessings he has given you so you don't say, "It was by my own hands and strength." No, the only thing they've added to was the Golden Calf incident.

Listen, ***"fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them to your foreheads."*** not just secure in one location, but glued, stapled, and secure in many locations, every location, at every place and any time. Imprint them on your walls, impress them on your children.

Many Jews took these words literally, instructing their children to bind these words to their hands and foreheads (Phylacteries), and inscribe them on doorposts (Mezuzah) and on the gates to their cities. These words were inscribed in their hearts, minds, and souls and physically inscribed on paper, doorposts, and city gates.

While posters and wall decorations can be beneficial and serve as reminders that's not entirely what Moses had in mind. These words speak seriously to how secure we should make the Word of God in our day to day life but we would miss the point if we were to relegate God's Word to household decor. Jesus' commentary on the situation is, ***"These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me,"*** (Matthew 15:8). Our Gospel, ***"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*** (Matthew 7:21).

You can go through the motions, hang up these words but if you don't believe what they say or listen - then it is of no value.

I'm not Moses. I hope and pray that I'm not on my deathbed. I want to remain with my children and the church for many years to come but no matter what happens in this world - I want to see you again. Just as Moses I want God's Word to be a part of everything you do. Secured. Glued, stapled, lacquered. Part of everything, not just locked securely in one place, buried in the ground where it does no good to yourself or others but invested, shared, and carried securely wherever you go in good times and bad.

Why during good times? Because gifts can become curses. We too can abuse the good gifts God has given us. Some of the most obvious tend to be the way we forget the giver of gifts during good times. We may take for granted the gifts that God gives us.

Blessings can be a burden and direct us away from the church or God. Gifts and good things can become a source of pride and supposedly a sign of God's approval. Good things can lead us neglect God's Word and the hearing of it, and even lead us to carnal security the thought that we don't need the church. Moses warns us because he wants us to remember. The only thing we add to our salvation is the fact that we make it necessary.

Because we often don't cherish his word. We don't inscribe his words into our hearts and minds. We may even get sick of it and just want a break. That ought to terrify us. Because along with blessing there is also a curse. ***"the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known."***

Why is God telling us this? Is Moses trying to drive God's people with fear of punishment? No, rather realize that a life without God is a life outside of God's blessing. ***He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous***, that only happens during the time of grace which comes to an end. These blessings are of no benefits if one holds to false gods. These other gods are no gods at all and cannot save. But the one true God blesses his people (be careful how you define blessing. Paul explains God works all things for our good).

The Law is not just threats of punishment, "You're guilty and going to hell." A gift. The advice of our heavenly Father who wants to see his children make it home. The advice of one who knows how this world works because he made it. So he also gives, ***"A lamp for my feet a light for my path."***

God is also serious about the curse. Like a father disciplining his children when they do something wrong. They aren't illegitimate children that he doesn't care about but rather he wants what's best. Some father's don't care what their children do, where they go, what they do, who they sleep with. That's not a father. That's a child. A father cares enough to step in and step up and say something. God did something about their rebellion. He was serious about the curse. He sent them off into exile.

But he did even more when he stepped in our place and took the punishment we deserved. Jesus came down to earth, walked the world, lived and died perfectly for us and became cursed for us so we could be blessed. The gift he gave us wasn't glued, stapled, and lacquered but it was nailed and finished on the cross. This gift is secure sealed in a hollowed out tomb so we won't forget. .

Now, he wants to get there. He sends his Word. He sends the Spirit. He sends his servants out to gather disciples with his word and sacrament. Jesus is the ultimate Father who doesn't just bark order, "Go and do!" Nor does he ask for an awkward personal relationship with you, but he leads the way, "Come, follow me." I'm not asking you to do anything already haven't for you.

And although imperfectly we do follow Jesus. We are his disciples. We do put the word of God into practice. Just this last week we spent our time, energy, and money in educating a future generation of disciples. That's something rejoice in. God has allowed us to participate in sharing his gift. Empowered by the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament we do good works. You are Jesus' disciples, following in his footsteps, and continually be renewed in his image.

When we fail and our words and actions are out of line or out of place with God, he sends his servants the church, our brothers, and sisters, his word to bring us back. Sometimes life will be tough. God isn't punishing us. He's already taken that punishment upon himself. He only disciplines us for our good. No matter what happens - no matter how bad life gets God has given us a gift that no one can take away. It's glued, stapled, lacquered - secure.

It's a gift you can share. You don't have to wrap it up and make it impossible to get at. The idea isn't to make you confused or to conceal the contents but to clearly proclaim the solid truths that God has done for us. You can give gifts without duct-tape and bailing wire. So this Father's Day we give thanks to God for Fathers who provide, protect, and lead their family in faith. ***"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching, and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*** - Colossians 3:16