

ReGroup
Selected Texts of Deuteronomy

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Text Introduction: As most of you know, yesterday, we hosted a conference called ReGroup. I like that title. We all need to regroup. This is a wonderful time to regroup. This is a time to regroup as a church. So, we are having a Sunday School leadership meeting this afternoon. Our deacons are meeting this afternoon. Our staff, though we meet weekly, will meet soon in a more extended way to regroup. We are beginning again things like our missions organizations, choir, orchestra, discipleship class offerings, and FAITH evangelism. It's a wonderful time in the life of the church.

This is also a wonderful time to regroup as families. Maybe you have let some things slide that you once did with great discipline.

This is a great time to regroup as an individual. It is a time to put into practice those things that you know that you need to do.

So, hear my challenge to you today. It's time. It's time to regroup. Don't let another day go by without doing what you know you need to do. Regroup.

There's a whole book of the Bible devoted to regrouping. It's Deuteronomy. The title Deuteronomy comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible and literally means second law. But, this is not a second law in terms of a new law, but rather the second giving of the law. Remember the generation of Israelites leaving Egypt wandered around in the wilderness for forty years. God did not intend for this. Because of their disobedience, the whole generation had to die off before God would allow them to enter the Promised Land. Deuteronomy, then, is the preaching of Moses to this new generation. They were indeed in need of regrouping before entering the Promised Land.

Notice this initial text and then we will move on to the latter parts of Deuteronomy.

Initial Text: These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazereth, and Di-zahab.² It is an eleven-day journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea by way of Mount Seir.³ In the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first of the month, Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him to say to them.⁴ This was after he had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth, at Edrei.⁵ Across the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying:

⁶“The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb: ‘You have stayed at this mountain long enough.’⁷ Resume your journey and go to the hill country of the Amorites and their neighbors in the Arabah, the hill country, the Judean foothills, the Negev and the sea coast—to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon as far as the great river, the Euphrates River.⁸ See, I have set the land before you. Enter and take possession of the land the LORD swore to give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their future descendants.’

Introduction: It's time! You have stayed at this mountain long enough! Resume your journey. I wonder if someone needs to hear those words in a very personal way this morning. You have been wandering around the wilderness of sin. Or maybe you have been wandering around the wilderness of apathy or laziness or inactivity or neglect or unforgiveness. So, we regroup.

What is involved in Regrouping?

There is a lot in this text that we cannot get to in the time we have this morning, but allow me to paint with broad strokes the message that Moses delivered to Israel that is so applicable to us. I want to give you three words today that are involved at some level in what it means to regroup.

Remembering

So much of what Moses said to this generation was in remembrance. And these messages are interwoven into the messages of Moses found throughout Deuteronomy. If I could summarize, I would say there are two primary themes.

- Remember the consequences. (Deuteronomy 1:19-46 for example)
- Remember the care. (Deuteronomy 29:5-9 for example)

All of this remembering culminates at the end of the book as Moses reminds them that the same is true for them now. If they disobey, horrible consequences will follow. If they obey, God will bring them into the Promised Land and pour out His blessing. (See Deuteronomy 28)

Returning

Now Chapter 30 is interesting because after Moses warned them, now he prophesied their future disobedience. And, he called them to return when they did rebel in the future.

There are going to be times when we have to return. Maybe today is one of them. You stand at a crossroads today of continued rebellion or return.

The often-quoted poet, Anonymous wrote:

I wish there was some wonderful place
Called the Land of begin again.
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches
and all our poor selfish griefs
Cold be cast like a shabby old coat at the door
And never be put on again
I wish there was some wonderful place
Called the Land of begin again.

Well, Mr. Anonymous, that place does in fact exist. That place is the cross.

Renewing

The point of Moses' sermons was to bring Israel to a point of response—a renewal of their commitment. His closing words (except for words of blessing) are found in 32:44-47.

So What? What are some practical steps I can take to regroup?

Today, as your pastor, I want to challenge you to recommit to at least these five areas. There are probably more, but let us begin here and the Lord will show you personally where to go next.

1. Priority of Worship and Sunday School
2. Participation in at least 1 area of ministry
3. Personal and Daily time with the Lord through His Word and Prayer
4. Personal Holiness
5. Progress of the Gospel through giving and going

Now, let me conclude with what regrouping is not. Regrouping is not retreating.

When I was in college, I was invited to attend an "Advance" sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. When I asked about the meaning of an "Advance," my leader asked if I had ever been on a retreat. When I indicated that I had been on many retreats, my leader told me that an advance was like a retreat, but FCA called them Advances. My leader continued that Christians are never to retreat, but always to advance. As Christians, even when we go on a retreat, we do so in order to advance.

Let me leave you with a caution. You will find the caution in one of Moses' sermons. Look at Deuteronomy 29:19.

When someone hears the words of this oath, he may consider himself exempt, thinking, 'I will have peace even though I follow my own stubborn heart.' This will lead to the destruction of the well-watered land as well as the dry land.