

Dear fellow children of God and followers of his Word

True Christianity is not a Buffet-style Religion!

- I. God wants us to receive his Word and his blessings in full measure (vv. 1, 7-8)**
- II. God wants us to live and share his Word in truth (vv. 2, 6)**

INTRODUCTION

I don't care whether it's Ponderosa, Old Country Buffet, China Buffet or another restaurant of the same type. Are you one of those people who likes to eat at a buffet-style restaurant – one where you have an almost unlimited choice of what to eat and in what size portions you want as well?

The temptation is that we let that buffet-style mentality spill over into our spiritual life as well. Did you ever notice how we have come to expect to have an almost limitless number of choices when it comes to entertainment – movies, music & TV? Did you stop to think about how we get a little pouty if we don't have the choices available that we want? That buffet-style mentality has also spilled over into just about every aspect of life. We expect to be able to choose what we think is right and wrong and don't you dare tell me what should be right or wrong for me or that my lifestyle is not God-pleasing. To pick and choose what we want to believe and what we don't want to accept spiritually has also sadly become the accepted norm.

Today we turn our attention to some words which God spoke to the Old Testament Children of Israel and they address that idea of a buffet-style religion. Even back in the Old Testament, there was that idea that they could choose what they wanted their spiritual beliefs to be and to let other things lie there on the table. God reminds the Children of Israel and us **True Christianity is not a Buffet-style Religion!**. Through Moses, God reminds us of two things: 1) God wants us to receive his Word and his blessings in full measure and 2) God wants us to live and share his Word in truth. I invite you hear the words of Deuteronomy 4:1,2, 6-8.

I. God wants us to receive his Word and his blessings in full measure (vv. 1, 7-8)

In the first 3 chapters of Deuteronomy, God has reviewed for the children of Israel the blessings he had given to their ancestors and he wanted to continue to give to them. But did you notice from our text where God spoke these words to the Children of Israel? *“that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you”*. These words were spoken to the Children of Israel as they stood at the banks of the Jordan River ready to enter that land we often refer to as The Promised Land. Do you remember what had happened in the 40+ previous years. Remember how God had sent a group of Israelites to explore that land and the majority of them brought back a negative report – the people are giants, there are warring people, there is no way we are going to be able to survive. For that lack of trust in him, God told the Children of Israel that all those who doubted his power to help them would not be able to enter that new land. That they would have to wander in circles for 40 years until every last one of those doubters died. That time had passed and now so that a new generation does not make the same spiritual mistakes of their ancestors, God reaffirms what his truth is. God says *“Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them....”*. Notice God does not say to them *“Here is a whole collection of spiritual truths, you may choose what you want to believe and what you don't want to believe.”*

God remind Israel of his Word and how he wanted them to receive all of it. And he does that for a purpose. A heart which trusts fully in his Word also receives all of the spiritual blessings which God has in store for them.

Which part of the buffet line do you like to go through first? Sometimes that sweet-tooth part says *“let me sample the desserts and the ice cream bar before anyone else gets there. Our parents reminded all of us – eat your veggies, meat and potatoes – they help your body grow.”*

You might say that spiritually God is saying the same thing. He does not want us to eat from the *“spiritually-light menu”*. He wants us to receive his Word – all of his Word and with the Word all of the spiritual blessings which come with it. It is through that Word that God gives us his blessings.

II. God wants us to live and share his Word in truth (vv. 2, 6)

But not only does God tell Israel and us of how he wants to bless us, he also reminds us that he gives us his Word to live and share “*Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees*”. The Lord makes no mistakes about it doesn’t he. Living God’s Word means not adding anything to what he says, but also, not taking anything away.

What does it look like to live God’s Word – looking to apply every part of it to our lives – not choosing what we want to live and share? It might look like that coworker who constantly defames the name of our Savior and says there are any number of ways to get to heaven and it give us the opportunity to stop and repeat the words of Jesus “*I am the way, the truth and the life*”. Perhaps it looks like that relative or neighbor who fills the air with nothing but a blue streak of words which use our Savior’s name in vain. It give us the chance to in love remind them that God gave us all 10 commandments and none are optional.

God makes it plainly clear that how we live our lives according to his Word is also a testimony to his Word *Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees*”. For the Israelites it meant that they would be able to share with the heathen people they would encounter in the Promised Land that there is only one true God and then by their beliefs and their lives they could give a good witness of him. Perhaps for us it might come at the loss of a dear friend or loved one who died believing in their Savior – we can witness in words and actions to the comfort of the resurrection. Perhaps it is when a difficult moral question comes up – we can speak clearly and confidently on what God’s Word says.

CONCLUSION

If you have ever stayed up to watch the Tonight Show with Jay Leno, perhaps you have seen the segments called “Man on the Street” where Leno goes to downtown LA and asks people questions about what should be rather basic and simple knowledge. In one such segment he asked people a few simple questions about the Bible – “Name one of the 10 commandments” People named things from the Constitutional Bill of rights. He asked them to complete this Bible passage “Let he who is without sin....” People said “Have a good time”. You will remember that our Savior’s words were “*Let him who is without sin throw the first stone*”. (John 8:7). He asked them about a well-know Bible story – Who was swallowed by a whale” I won’t even tell you some of the ridiculous answers which people gave.

I trust that you know all 10 commandments. I know you have those favorite Bible passages and Bible stories. The point is - How can we live and share God’s Word if we don’t even know it? This doesn’t just happen when we gather as a congregation to worship as we are doing now. It may happen as we sit elbow-to-elbow and study God’s Word in Bible Class. It may happen as we gather around the kitchen table with our family and have a family devotion or as we kneel by their bedside with our children and say their prayers.

Brothers and sisters in Christ – may each of us continue to receive God’s Word in all of its fullness and with it the rich blessings or forgiveness, the hope of heaven, the assurance of his strength and power and more and by his Holy Spirit may God give to each of us the power and the willingness to live and share that Word in all of its truth! Amen.