

## Deuteronomy 8:10-18

People like to hear stories of humble beginnings. How our country came to be after a group of settlers declared their independence from a powerful and oppressive government and went on to uphold freedom as the highest value. How Michael Jordan didn't grow up as an automatic success, but struggled to make his high school team on the way to becoming a basketball legend who would win multiple championships. How thanksgiving has grown from two groups coming together to celebrate a bountiful harvest to a nationwide holiday for food, family, and football.

The Israelites certainly had a humble beginning. A nation, not great in number or status, not impressive in the eyes of the world was chosen by the almighty God. This nation that travelled often, moved from place to place, struggled with their identity, was eventually given land that would allow them to flourish. Land that they would claim from established nations with fortified walls and resources and armies. Land that would give them room to grow there and be grateful. God had certainly blessed them many times over and established the work of their hands, promising to be with them along the way.

But it didn't take too long for Israel's possessions to become a snare in their lives. Where their humble beginning transitioned into an arrogant end. And they were warned in this section of Scripture! If you forget the Lord and his commands it's going to turn into pride swelling up in your heart! You're going to quickly forget how the Lord rescued you from the slavery of Egypt then! See instead how God has used something as unique as manna in the desert to humble you and test you so that after it's all said and done it will go well with you. It was always meant to be for their good! But they could turn away from God and following his Word...

Have you been humbled? Have you seen your worries over rent payments disappear before your eyes as everything fell into place? Have you been tested? Wondering how time with your relatives is going work out after the last get-together ended on a rough note? Have you been surprised? By an unexpected phone call from an old friend? By an apology from a co-worker or a classmate? By an uplifting message from God's Word heard here at church or in your home? God's hand was there in each scenario, not just the last one.

This thanksgiving you don't have to look at your own hands, messy from preparing the big meal or having the remote in hand ready for the game and think, "I've brought about this wealth, this wonderful food, this functioning family." The Lord is the one who has given you the ability and the freedom to enjoy these blessings from his hand.

Remember the Lord this Thanksgiving as he has provided you with everything that you need. Just as God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, so he has brought you out of slavery to sin. God has lifted you from the humble beginnings of being stuck in your sin and disobedience to a place no self-aware sinner would ever expect to be - in good standing with God and assured that heaven is your home purely because of God's grace shown in the life of Jesus. His life that was given for you. That's something to celebrate for a lifetime, not just this Thanksgiving! But it's a good place to start again,

taking a moment to reflect on God's goodness expressed through the gift of Jesus and turning that into remembering the Lord each day, thankful for his grace.