

**God's Bounty**  
Deuteronomy 8:7-17  
Rev. John Allen

This is one of those texts where I really feel the metaphor of God as a parent.

It makes me think of the times I have been kneeling on the sidewalk outside Wilburs Chocolate Store, looking into the expectant eyes of my young daughters, saying: "now before we go in there, you can each chose one thing. ok?" Their heads nod. But their eyes show me that they are not registering a word.

As I open the door, and the little bell rings, "one thing.... don't forget!"

Don't forget. Because it is easy to forget.

That is what God is telling the people in this text. At this point in the story, God's people having been set free from enslavement in Egypt, and sustained across the wilderness have come to the edge of promise, and poised right on the edge, God says to them. Don't forget!

You are about to head into a land teeming with wheat, heavy with figs, and olives. Hills flush with copper and iron. You will eat your fill. You will build fine houses. Your herds and your flocks will multiply. Don't forget!

It is easy to forget.

It would be easy, God warns them, to bask in this bounty and think.

How smart must I have been to have ended up with all this. How strong I have been. How courageous. How wise.

Do not say to yourself: "My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth," remember, remember that it was God. Remember that I brought you up out, I have carried you, I created you, and this earth that sustains you.

Don't forget!

When I read something like this, something written probably around 3,000 years ago, and based on oral traditions much older than that. It makes me think. We really don't change that much.

I mean, it really makes me feel like scripture has our number. If this most ancient admonishment, feels like it could be made to us today, maybe just by updating the olives and figs.

This temptation is just so relatable.

We give ourselves a little too much credit for the bounties that fill our lives.

Now, let me be clear. I am not saying we deserve no credit. And that is not what I hear in this text either. After all someone has to harvest the figs, and mine the copper, and tend the flocks. And yes, it did take quite a bit our courage to escape from Pharaoh and cross that desert thank you very much.

And I know the people in this community, you do work hard, you give generously of your time and your talent for the sake of others, you are tired at the end of the day, and you wake up to do it again.

And there is nothing wrong with feeling proud of ourselves for a job well done. Taking pride in how our children turned out. Or seeing the fruits of the effort we have put into an important relationship.

Do not exalt yourself.

That is what God says. Do not walk the tempting path to put yourself above me. Remember, these gifts came from me. That air you are breathing, that ground beneath your feet, the arms of your beloved, the earth that bears your food. You did not make these things. I did.

This week we celebrate Thanksgiving.

And many of you will sit at tables heavy with turkey and stuffing and mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce.

And in front of TVs glowing with football.

In warm homes.

With loving company.

I want you to enjoy it.

I also want you to pause before the meal, in whatever way your family prefers to, offer a word of prayer, say what you are thankful for, take a moment of stillness to look into one another's eyes, hold the memory of those that you have loved and lost close to your heart.

I think that Thanksgiving is like God, kneeling down on the sidewalk, in front of the chocolate store, looking into our eyes.

As we stand eagerly poised on the brink of all the gifts that fill our lives. And with love in God's heart, and a hand on our shoulder, God says: "Just remember. These are my gifts to you. All this life, you did not make it for yourself. I made it for you."

And God will know that we won't really hear it. Not completely. Its ok. It isn't the first time God has told us. It won't be the last.

God will push open the door to the bounty of creation, and we will charge through.

"Don't forget!"