

The Red Thread
Connecting Sunday Scriptures to Daily Life

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

We strain to hear a person's last words as one last memory of that person. Famous last words are often important ones.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-9 is part of Moses' last will and testament as the Israelites are about to enter the promised land. Moses has had many things to say to the Israelites between Egypt and the promised land. His final word to God's people is about God's law that will allow them to live well in the land God is giving to them. Moses instructs the people to make the law part of their DNA so that obeying comes naturally. Their obedience will teach their children and introduce the rest of the world to their God.

Psalms 15 tells the harsh reality of the law that demands moral purity as the cost of admission to God's sacred place. The perfection demanded by the law: a blameless life that does what is right and speaks the truth; does not slander or gossip about others; values relationship that is based on relationship with God; keeps his word even if it puts him at a disadvantage; does not exploit others or use his influence for his own prosperity. It leaves us with the question – does the law allow anyone to enter?

James 1:17-27 expands keeping the law from just hearing to doing. God's law is like a mirror that reflects our true self, giving us opportunity to change. God's perfect law, though demanding, liberates us to be doers of God's word. It is in the doing of God's word that we are blessed.

Mark 7 offers us the ultimate final word – the gospel. Jesus directs us away from human rules and directs us to look good to God's law that transforms our hearts. We get confused about tradition and traditionalism. "Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. Tradition is the living faith of the dead." The gospel always makes the law possible for us as it calls us back to the command of Moses to make it part of who we are. When we fail we are forgiven. Our doing should not be empty and meaningless rituals that make us look good. As Christians, our doing comes from the heart that is transformed by keeping God's law.

The gospel trumps all famous last words – even Moses'. Create in us clean hearts O God!

Pastor Marilyn