

“Advent, Sabbath, and Release”
Deuteronomy 15
December 17, 2023
Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service
Pastor Nicoletti

The Reading of the Word

We continue our series this morning in the book of Deuteronomy, as Moses instructs the people of Israel on the verge of the promised land, as we turn now to Deuteronomy 15.

Please do listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this morning.

Moses said to the people:

^{15:1} “At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release. ² And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbor. He shall not exact it of his neighbor, his brother, because Yahweh's release has been proclaimed. ³ Of a foreigner you may exact it, but whatever of yours is with your brother your hand shall release. ⁴ But there will be no poor among you; for Yahweh will bless you in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess— ⁵ if only you will strictly obey the voice of Yahweh your God, being careful to do all this commandment that I command you today. ⁶ For Yahweh your God will bless you, as he promised you, and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow, and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.

⁷ “If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that Yahweh your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, ⁸ but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. ⁹ Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to Yahweh against you, and you be guilty of sin. ¹⁰ You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this Yahweh your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. ¹¹ For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’

¹² “If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. ¹³ And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed. ¹⁴ You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As Yahweh your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. ¹⁵ You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. ¹⁶ But if he says to you, ‘I will not go out from you,’ because he loves you and your household, since he is well-off with you, ¹⁷ then you shall take an awl, and put it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your slave forever. And to your female slave you shall do the same. ¹⁸ It shall not seem hard to you when you let him go free from you, for at half the cost of a hired worker he has served you six years. So Yahweh your God will bless you in all that you do.

¹⁹ “All the firstborn males that are born of your herd and flock you shall dedicate to Yahweh your God. You shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn

of your flock. ²⁰ You shall eat it, you and your household, before Yahweh your God year by year at the place that Yahweh will choose. ²¹ But if it has any blemish, if it is lame or blind or has any serious blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to Yahweh your God. ²² You shall eat it within your towns. The unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as though it were a gazelle or a deer. ²³ Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

This is the Word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” [1 Peter 1:24-25]

Let’s pray ...

Prayer of Illumination

We praise you, Lord,
and we ask you to teach us your ways and your truth.
Help us to take your Word into our hearts and onto our lips.
Make us to delight in your testimony more than in riches.
Help us to meditate on your precepts,
and to fix our eyes on your ways,
Grant us to delight in your truth,
and to never forget your Word.
In Jesus’s name we pray. Amen.
[Based on Psalm 119:12-16]

Introduction

We come this morning to Deuteronomy’s teaching on the Sabbatical year of release.

Every seventh year was to be a Sabbatical year. And that was to be observed in a few ways that are laid out in the Law of Moses, but here in Deuteronomy the focus is especially on release granted to the poor.

Just as the sabbath commandment focuses on giving rest to others (not just taking it ourselves) – so the sabbatical year command is focused on giving rest and release from debt and even slavery to those in needs.

As we take this chapter as a whole, we’ll consider five things. We’ll consider:

- The temptation this text responds to,
- The alternative system it offers,
- The reason behind this alternative system,
- The relevance of that reasoning for us,
- And the application of these exhortations to us.

So: the temptation, the alternative, the reason, the relevance, and the application.

The Temptation

First, what is the temptation this text is responding to?

Our passage, in short, puts forward an economic system of mercy, grace, and release. As such, it responds to a system that is devoid of those things. If Deuteronomy 15 calls Israel to release of debts, release of power over others, and even release of their own property to bless others (as we see in verse fourteen) then the temptation that this chapter is pushing back against is one of self-serving grasping, hoarding, and exacting from others. Or, we might say, what this text is responding to is the temptation to fall into the economic patterns of Egypt.

Because in Egypt, Israel lived their lives as the victims of the self-serving, grasping, and exacting activities of Pharaoh. And God's call on Israel here, in many ways, is to not fall into the patterns of Egypt once they are established in their own land. And the patterns seen in Egypt were patterns of grasping, exacting, and oppression.

And those things are all related to each other.

The pagan concept of how the world works – the unbelieving concept of how the world works – is one in which we need to look out for ourselves ... because there's not anyone else we can trust to do that. The pagan or secular view of human life is, as Thomas Hobbes puts it, a "war of all against all." We may try to civilize that war through cultural institutions, but the war remains. And so even when there is no physical violence, human life is characterized by grasping, hoarding, and exacting. We have to grasp all that we can in the world, because the world is hostile to giving us what we need. If we get something, we need to hoard it, and clutch it, and share it with no one. When someone else owes us something, we need to be sure to exact it from them, to get it for ourselves. And if we have the advantage over someone else, we need to use it to press for our benefit – to lord it over them to get something from them – some sort of profit, even if it means holding them down in that state of powerlessness while we do it.

This was the economic system of the pagan world around Israel. It was the economic system they were the victims of in Egypt. And it is, in many ways, the economics of the secular world around us today – a way of living where we grasp at and exact whatever we can extract from others. It may be out of greed. But it may also be out of fear, because if we don't resort to such ways of relating to others, then perhaps we will get nothing. This way of viewing the world and relating to others is what God was responding to here in our text.

That's the temptation that this passage is responding to.

That's the first thing we see here.

The Alternative

The second thing we see here is the alternative.

And the alternative our text offers to the economic system of exacting, is an economic system of release.

And it does this by providing for the release of debts and of debt slaves.

Let's take a closer look at our passage to see how that played out.

“At the end of every seven years,” our text begins, “you shall grant release.”

And the passage then goes on to outline two kinds of release.

The first is what we might call release from the debt of “charity loans.” These were loans granted to those in need. Our text distinguishes this in verses three and six from international loans that may involve more complex arrangements or goals, and it zeroes in here on loans granted to people in the land of Israel, for the purpose of helping them through a time of financial need or hardship. That's the kind of debt in focus here – debt of those who are in need.

And our text commands that every seven years, all such debts would be released. While there's some debate about the details of what this meant, it seems to me that this included the discharge of the debt itself, the cancellation of all future payments, and the release of any property that had been held by the creditor as pledge or collateral for the debt.

This was to be done every seven years. And, as Moses spells out in verses seven through eleven, even though they knew such release would come sooner or later, it should not prevent Israelites from making charity loans to those in need. When they saw a need, when a brother or sister came to them and asked for help, they were called on to lend generously, even if they suspected they would not get it back. That's the kind of generosity God calls his people to here.

Where pagan culture called on people to grasp at what they could, to extract what they could from others, and to withhold what they already had for themselves ... the alternative that God called his people to was that they were to lend to those in need ... and then, every seven years, to cancel those debts, to return any pledge held for them, and thus to take a financial loss themselves in order to release others from the burden of debt and to raise up their level of living.

That's the alternative God holds forth in verses one through eleven.

And then, in verses twelve through eighteen, he intensifies it further.

Here he speaks of the release of debt slaves.

It's both sad and ironic that in the nineteenth century many Christians in America tried to use the Bible to justify their practice of race-based chattel slavery. Because what's allowed and what's aimed for here are both so different from what was practiced in America back then.

For one thing, the debt-slavery described here was not racially-based. Israel, as Exodus 12:38 tells us, came out of Egypt as a “mixed multitude” racially and ethnically. People of any race were welcome to join Israel, and then to be treated as natives of the land. And, as Genesis 17:12-13 would seem to imply, that invitation to covenant membership and all the benefits that come with it (including release from service after six years) were extended to foreign slaves as well. And so there is no racial element here. [Leithart, *Theopolis*, Episode 665, 17:00ff]

Second, where the slavery of American history was rooted in kidnapping, the kind of slavery – or, in many ways, indentured servitude – allowed in Israel was, in a sense, chosen.

The Law of Moses forbade slavery based on manstealing or kidnapping, and it was a capital offense to kidnap someone and then enslave them, or to possess a slave that had entered into slavery through kidnapping. [Exodus 21:16]

Instead, the indentured servitude described here was a choice a person or a family might make when their debts got beyond what they could bear. Now it was a choice that was usually made by necessity, but it was still a choice. The footnote in the ESV highlights this, as it points out that verse twelve could be translated to speak of one who “sells himself to you.” And so, what’s especially in view here is a form of indentured servitude that an Israelite might choose as a way to pay off a debt – again, something very different from the kidnapping-based, involuntary slavery practiced in America’s past.

Third, where the chattel slavery of American history treated people as property, the system allowed in Ancient Israel called on Israelites to treat such indentured servants as people, who bore God’s image. In his opening words on the subject, Moses reminds them that those in this indentured servitude were brothers – not property. [15:12]

Fourth, as our text focuses on, the debt slavery described here was meant to be temporary, not life-long. That’s the whole focus of the text: if this debt slavery or indentured servitude did occur in Israel, God is clear that the servant must be free to go after no more than six years of service. And, it must be noted, when that time was up, not only was the servant free to go, but the former master was required, as verse fourteen says, to furnish his former servant “liberally” with livestock, grain, and wine, so that the former servant was equipped to start a new life on their own – better off financially than they came in, and no longer dependent on their former master.

[As one theologian points out, there is a sad irony to the fact that while southern Americans in the nineteenth century were known for being strict Sabbatarians when it came to the Sabbath *day* ... they seem to have ignored the Sabbath *year* commands. Because even if they continued to ignore the biblical laws against racism and manstealing, they would at least have seen that they could only hold a slave for six years, and then they had to send them out – and send them out well furnished to start a life of their own of economic independence. But instead, tragically, they ignored these biblical commandments. [Leithart, *Theopolis*, Episode 665, 14:00ff]]

In so many ways, the race-based chattel slavery practiced in America was so different from the debt-slavery or temporary indentured servitude that is regulated here in Deuteronomy 15. [For

more discussion on slavery, see Esau McCaully's chapter "The Freedom of the Slaves" in *Reading While Black* and *Theopolis* podcast episode 665: "Biblical Slavery (Deuteronomy 15)"]

And the focus here, once again, is on release and redemption: after six years a master must release their indentured servants, and bless them liberally for their new lives.

Where pagan cultures of grasping and exacting naturally led to the creation of an underclass permanently characterized by debt or slavery, the alternative God calls Israel to here forbids such a permanent underclass, by wiping out need-based debt every seven years, by capping the amount of time an Israelite could be held in indentured servitude, and by requiring that when their time of service was up, a former slave was sent out with enough goods to begin a new productive life, and not fall right back into debt again.

This is the alternative that God calls his people to: where the pagan world grasps, exacts, withholds, and oppresses, God's people are to give to others, to release others, to redeem others from oppression and want.

That's what we see here in our text.

The Reason

But what's the reason God gives to his people for why they should do this?

I mean ... of course those in debt or servitude would like these laws of release. But what reason does Moses give to those in power – those who might stand to gain from continuing to exact debt or withholding release from others ... those who might take a loss by releasing debt or servants? What reason does he give to them to take on these losses?

Well, Moses gives them two reasons here.

The first comes in verse 15.

In verse 15, after commanding Israelites to release their slaves in the seventh year, Moses explains why they must do this. He says: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today."

They should do this for others because it's what the Lord has done for them. What God has already done for them in releasing them from slavery, serves as the basis for the command God gives them here. Because if God has freed them from lifelong servitude, how could they possibly hold others in it?

After all, the Lord didn't free Israel so that they could go and act like Pharaoh. He freed them so that they would act like him ... like God. And so, since he is a God who redeems and frees the enslaved and the oppressed, they should be people who redeem and free the enslaved and the oppressed.

But there's another reason for this command too. Because the worldview that lies behind the exacting of crippling debts, and the hoarding of personal goods, and the practice of oppressive slavery, is the assumption that we live in a hostile world, with no one looking out for us, where we must fight and exact and selfishly grasp to get what we need.

But Moses reminds them, that's not the world we actually live in. In verse 6 he says: "For Yahweh your God will bless you, as he promised you." And in verse 10 he says: "for this Yahweh your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake."

An approach to life of grasping and exacting is rooted in a view of the world where blessings are scarce, and where those blessings go to whoever fights for themselves the hardest.

But God reminds the people here that that is simply not true. It may at times look that way, in this fallen world. But God is actually sovereign over all things. And all blessings come from him.

And so, rather than living lives of grasping and exacting, Israel is called on to live lives of trust that the Lord will provide what they need. They are to work as they're able, to be sure – that's what God calls them to. But they are not to resort to self-centered grasping, or hoarding, or exacting – storing up for themselves while others go without. Rather, they are to give and lend generously, because they trust that God will provide what they need as they seek to serve him faithfully.

And so, taken together, the third thing we see is that the reason behind this alternative way of living for Israel, is the reminder that God provides for his people, that God has already released and redeemed Israel from slavery themselves, and that God calls for his people to imitate him, as one who redeems and releases the weak and needy.

Now ... that may be well and good for Israel. But what about us? We don't live in the promised land of Caanan. Also, we were not slaves in Egypt. It might make sense why Israelites should live this way – but why should we?

The Relevance

That brings us to our fourth point this morning: the relevance of this reasoning for us.

And here ... it's actually the season we're in right now that highlights that relevance.

When the Lord came to Israel three and a half thousand years ago, he came to rescue, release, and redeem them from slavery in Egypt.

When the same Lord came to us, in Jesus Christ, two thousand years ago, he came to rescue, release, and redeem us from slavery to sin and death.

That is what we sing of in this season of Advent. We sing of what Christ accomplished for us in his advent – in his coming to us. "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" "Hail redemptions happy dawn!" "From sin and death he saves us and lightens every load." He

came “to save us all from Satan’s power when we were gone astray” – we’ll sing all those words just this morning.

In Christ, the Lord has come to rescue us, to release us, to redeem us, to reconcile us – just as he did for Israel.

Now ... it is true that while Christ has already accomplished all this for us in his first coming ... we do not yet experience the full reality of it applied to our lives or to this world. That’s still to come at Christ’s final advent.

That’s what some theologians call the “already but not yet” of the gospel – in his first coming, Christ has already accomplished all that is necessary for the full release, redemption, and blessing of his people and his world ... but it has not yet been fully applied to us or to the world as it will be when he returns.

And there’s something of that “already but not yet” that’s even in our text this morning. We catch a glimpse of it, I think, in the seeming contradiction between verses four and eleven. Israel was blessed ... and yet that blessing had also not yet been fully applied to them in that age.

The same is true for us. And yet, the fact remains: We have been redeemed by God. That is what we celebrate in this season. We may not experience it yet in full, but we will one day. We have been redeemed, and we are called on to live accordingly.

So, it’s true – unlike ancient Israel, we were not slaves to Pharaoh. But we were slaves to far more sinister cosmic forces. And our prospects were much bleaker than Israel’s were in Egypt. But the Lord saved us. The Lord came for us. The Lord redeemed and released us.

And therefore the Lord’s logic with Israel also applies to us. Like Israel, we must heed these commands to bless and release others. Because as Christians, we once were slaves to sin and death, without hope of freeing ourselves. But Christ has released us. And so how could we not seek to be the kind of people who release others – how could we exact from others, when the Lord has not exacted from us?

The very same reasoning that Moses applied to Israel continues to apply to us today.

The Application

So we see how the rationale of this text’s commands applies to us. But how do the commands themselves apply to us?

Well ... there’s a lot we could say about that ... but let me focus on three things this morning. Let’s briefly consider how the concepts here apply to how we relate to others when it comes to money, to power, and to forgiveness.

Money

First, this applies to how we relate to others when it comes to money.

The picture here is of a people who do not grasp at money, or cling to it, or hoard it from others in tight-fisted ways. Rather, it's a picture of those who are open-handed and generous towards those in need because God has been open-handed and generous towards them.

And as such, it's a call to be very different from the world around us.

Tim Keller, in a sermon, put this really well. He said: "The early church was strikingly different from the culture around it in this way – the pagan society was stingy with its money and promiscuous with its body. A pagan gave nobody their money and practically gave everybody their body. And the Christians came along and gave practically nobody their body and they gave practically everybody their money." [I remember hearing this quote in a sermon, and was able to find it transcribed elsewhere, but I was not able to locate the exact sermon it was from.]

Now, even though it's the most obvious way this text applies to us, I won't spend more time on the subject of money this morning because we spent the whole sermon last Lord's Day focused on that. But even so, we must remember that one obvious way Deuteronomy 15 applies to us is that it calls us to be generous towards those in need with our money.

Power

But along with that, second, this text also applies to us when it comes to how we relate to others when we have power in their lives.

The logic of the text is, again, clear: Yahweh has power over his people. And he uses that power to bless them. His people should use power over others in similar ways.

We live in a world with power structures. Whether it's in families, in the workplace, in our local church, in civil government, or in other places, we can often find ourselves in situations where we have some kind of authority or power over someone else. Even if it's not in a long-term way – we all find ourselves in moments where it's true: even if it's just in a short interaction with the waitstaff at a restaurant, the workers at a fast-food joint, the staff in a hotel, the clerk at a store ... all of us, for at least brief moments, find ourselves with some level of power over others. And many of us experience that in more long-term arrangements as well, whether at home, at work, or in our community.

So I want you to think now of some of the relationships you have with other people, where you have a level of authority over them – a level of power. Don't slip into thinking about when others have power over you – think about when you have power over someone else.

Here's my simple question for you: Do they like it when you have authority over them? If they were given the choice to keep working under you, or to be free from you ... what would they choose?

That is, in a sense, the question put to us by verse sixteen. It imagines a situation where a debt-slave is so blessed by his master, that given the option of leaving his service, and (note from verse 14) leaving with free livestock, grain, and wine – he would choose instead to serve that master for the rest of his life.

The very idea seems absurd to us. But the fact that Moses raises it as a possibility shows us how Moses expected masters to use their power over their debt-slaves. They were to be so wonderful to work for, that it would be conceivable that those serving them would continue to serve under them by choice even when it was no longer a financial necessity for them.

Now, of course, we shouldn't overstate this. Moses doesn't say that if they were faithful masters than every debt-slave would choose to stay with them. Allowances must be made for individual situations, gifting, maturity, and so on. But he raises it as a possibility. He raises it, in a sense, as a goal: You should be the kind of authority figure that those under you would want to serve under you even if they didn't have to – that's how Christians should use the power and authority they have over others.

Because that's how God has used his power and authority over us. He is a Master who came to earth not to be served by those under them, but to serve them. [Mark 10:45] His yoke that he places on his servants is easy and light. [Matthew 11:28-30] And if we have any spiritual sense, then we will see that serving him is, ultimately, a blessing, not a burden.

And having so been blessed by him, that's how we are to use our power and authority over others as well.

When you interact with a store clerk, or wait staff, or some other worker tasked with serving you ... do they generally leave their interactions with you pleased, hoping they'll see you again ... or relieved to be free of you, hoping you don't return?

When others see they'll be working under your leadership in the church or some other organization ... are they excited ... or do they have to steel themselves for the frustrations to come?

If you have authority over others at work ... do they consider themselves blessed to be serving under you, thankful for your care of them, so that they would resist being transferred under someone else ... or do they long to be relieved of you, and feel you look out mostly for yourself, rather than them?

Children go through phases and lack maturity. But in their better moments ... are your children thankful for you and how you use your power over them ... or ... do you lord it over them in ways that are ultimately self-serving?

Husband and wife are not slave or master to each other ... but they exert significant influence on each other ... and it's worth asking yourself: does your spouse consider being yoked to you in marriage a blessing ... or more of a burden?

Again, I'm not asking how you feel treated by others, but rather, how they feel treated by you.

Do you bless those under your authority, like God has blessed you? Or do you place crushing burdens on others, like Pharaoh did for Israel?

Our text calls us to use our power to bless others, just as the Lord has blessed us.

That's a second application of this text.

Forgiveness

Third, and finally, I think this text has something to say about how we forgive others.

Because when we sin against each other, we create a sort of moral debt towards the one we sinned against. And when one person seeks forgiveness from another, what they are seeking is the release of that moral debt.

Now ... as our text implies in several ways, forgiveness might include restitution, it may not mean the restoration of trust, it can be complex, and it brings a cost to the one doing to the forgiving that may take some time to fully process and recuperate from. I'm not minimizing any of that.

But even so ... forgiveness means releasing someone from the burden of a debt they cannot pay. Forgiveness means releasing someone from slavery to the one who holds their debt. That was true when it came to forgiving a financial debt in ancient Israel. But it's also true when it comes to forgiving a moral debt, for us today as Christians.

When someone wrongs us ... whether it's someone more distant to us ... or someone close to us ... there can be a temptation to either withhold forgiveness ... or to only give it partially ... or to say we forgive, but then snatch the debt back later on. There can be ways we act that seek to morally enslave the other person to us.

We can use it as a way to extract something from them that we want. We can use it as a way to strip them of their rights in the future of ever confronting us when we sin against them. We can use it, in other words ... to manipulate and control, and so in a sense, enslave them – with that old moral debt ... rather than truly forgiving them.

The question I have is: Are there relationships in your life right now where you are using someone's past sins to enslave them to your will ... rather than forgiving them?

While acknowledging the importance of restitution and the complexity of forgiveness, our text reminds God's people that ultimately, we are called on to forgive those who have a debt to us.

And the last few verses of this passage especially remind us why.

It can feel a little jolting how in verse nineteen our text suddenly starts talking again about ritual sacrifices.

But I don't think it's a coincidence that the Holy Spirit, after calling us to sacrificially forgive the debts of others in verses one through eighteen, then shifts suddenly to speaking about the first born of the flock ... who is without blemish ... and who is to be sacrificed for God's people, before the Lord.

These verses reminded Israel that for them to be released from slavery to Egypt, in the exodus, a perfect lamb had to be slain in their place at the first Passover.

And it reminds us, that for us to be released from our slavery from sin and death – for our spiritual debt before the Lord to be forgiven – the perfect Lamb of God, the firstborn Son of God – had to be sacrificed in our place.

True forgiveness always costs something – it's always a sacrifice.

But as Christians we do it for others because we know that whatever sacrifice such forgiveness may require from us for others ... it pales in comparison to the sacrifice that God has already made to forgive us – the death of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters ... out of sacrificial love, our God gave his only Son on the cross so that he could release us from the debt that we owed, and bless us far beyond what we deserve.

Therefore, let us be people who show forth his love by releasing others from their debts – whether moral, spiritual, or financial.

And let us use what we have to bless others, just as the Lord has blessed us.

For that is the calling of his Sabbath. And that is the calling of his Advent.

Amen.

This sermon draws on material from:

- Alter, Robert. *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*. New York, NY: Norton, 2004.
- Barker, Paul. Introduction and notes to Deuteronomy in *The ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.
- Block, Daniel I. *The NIV Application Commentary: Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- McCaulley, Esau. *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.
- Theopolis Podcast. Episode 664: “The Sabbatical Year (Deuteronomy 15).” With Peter Leithart, Alastair Roberts, James Bejon, and Jeff Meyers. August 16, 2023. <https://soundcloud.com/user-812874628/episode-664-the-sabbatical-year-deuteronomy-15>
- Theopolis Podcast. Episode 665: “Biblical Slavery (Deuteronomy 15).” With Peter Leithart, Alastair Roberts, James Bejon, and Jeff Meyers. August 24, 2023. <https://soundcloud.com/user-812874628/episode-665-biblical-slavery-deuteronomy-15>
- Wright, Christopher. *Deuteronomy*. NIBC. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.

Note: In my preaching I often cite and draw from a range of sources, which includes material from Christians within my theological tradition, Christians outside my theological tradition (in keeping with our church's core value of “Reformed Catholicity”), and also (following the Apostle Paul's example in Acts 17) non-Christians who are well outside of Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxy. And so, when I cite an author or a source, that citation should not be understood or construed as me necessarily agreeing with, endorsing, or recommending to others anything else from that author or source, except for what I explicitly say I agree with, endorse, or recommend. When engaging with different materials and thinkers, all Christians must

exercise wisdom and discernment to determine what is helpful, appropriate, and edifying for each person, taking into account their current needs, wisdom, and spiritual maturity.