

Deuteronomy 29:29 | “Secret Things vs. Revealed Things”

Preached on June 11, 2023 by Pastor Matt Brown

This morning I wanted to share briefly from Deuteronomy 29:29. *[pause]*

Many of you could recite it by heart, but let me just read it for you...

It says, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” *[pauseeee]*

We hate secrets and mysteries, don't we?

If we see someone whisper something in someone else's ear, we feel like we just *must* know what is being said. *[pause]*

When you were a child, you probably heard another kid say, “I have a secret that you don't know,” and it drove you crazy. *[pause]*

If there's any sort of secret thing going on, there's just something in us that starts to obsessively want to know what's going on. *[pause]*

We want to know *everything*.

We get frustrated when we don't know how something works, or we get frustrated when we feel like we should know everything about the world around us. *[pause]*

Just look around in Creation right now and you realize that there's a vast amount of things that you don't fully know or understand. *[pauseeee]*

Here's one more thing that gets under our skin: we can't stand unsolved crimes or mysterious events. *[pause]*

For a stretch of time, I was watching a show about unsolved mysteries, and I loved it, but hated it at the same time. *[pause]*

I loved it because it was so interesting to hear about mysterious events, but I hated it because in the end, I had no idea who did it or what exactly happened. *[pauseeee]*

We want to know exactly how and why something has happened.

We search for all of the available information, we even entertain various theories, and in the end, there's something in us that longs to know the exact truth of what went down and why. *[pauseeee]*

This desire to know everything and dissatisfaction with mystery carries over into the things of the Lord.

We want to know the secret things of God. *[pause]*

This is why the end times, the sovereignty of God in salvation, and other topics are so obsessed over by some.

They want to “solve” the mystery, and finally have 100% knowledge of everything that’s going to happen in the end times...

...Or 100% knowledge of how God’s sovereignty and human responsibility work together.

Yet amidst all of this, Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us something very important: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God.” *[pause]*

So according to this passage...

I. There are secret things of God that we are not accountable to.

This verse tells us that there are secret, hidden, concealed things of God.

We don’t know them, and that’s OK, for they are secret things of God. *[pauseeee]*

Here’s the thing though: we don’t like this.

We get frustrated and annoyed that there are secret things of God that we don’t fully understand.

And for some people, this mystery actually causes them to walk away from the Lord altogether.

For they think, “Look, we can’t fully know how this all works, so it must not be true.” *[pause]*

For some people it’s some deep theological mystery.

For others, it’s not knowing why something horrible happened in their life. *[pause]*

They keep looking for the *how* and *why*, but because they never get an answer, it turns them away from the Lord in frustration.

Sadly, they end up thinking that God is not good, for “how could this not make sense, how could it work that way, or how could He not just show me *why* this happened?” *[pause]*

Yet by doing this, they are acting like they deserve to know everything that God knows.

They are acting entitled to every speck of information in the universe, and expecting God to tell them every single thing, or else He’s just this mean bully.

But that’s not how it works: He is God, and we are not. *[pauseeee]*

This verse grounds us and reminds us of that very truth.

This verse is showing us that we must be content with some mystery in life. *[pause]*

We will not fully understand everything because there are some things that only God knows.
[pause]

As Isaiah 55:8-9 makes clear...

“...My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” [pause]

He is so much higher than us in all ways, so we must bow the knee and say like Paul...

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!”¹ [pauseeee]

So everytime you feel a little bit of irritation not fully knowing the things or ways of the Lord, remind yourself that “the secret things belong to the Lord”. [pauseeee]

Something that has greatly helped me in this regard is by allowing these mysteries to point me back to the glory of God. [pause]

If there are certain things that we don't know, and only He knows - it just highlights His glory and greatness.

Since God can't fully be comprehended by us, it just reminds us that He is God and we are not.
[pause]

If He could be fully comprehended and His ways fully understood in every single degree, then He would no longer be God.

But because His wisdom, knowledge, and ways are so deep, unsearchable, and inscrutable, then it just goes to show off His glory. [pauseeee]

So in the face of the secret things of the Lord, our pride should flee, and worship should take its place.

Trust Him and leave the secret things of the Lord in His hands, for they *belong* to Him.

They are His to know, and not our's.

He has His reasons to keep them a mystery. [pauseeee]

So though we don't like it, there are secret things that only God knows.

That means that right here, the Word of God is telling us that there *will be* some mystery, so don't get discouraged about not knowing everything, but remember this truth.

¹ Romans 11:33.

Don't let the secret things cause you to walk away, but to draw near to your great God in worship and adoration. *[pauseeee]*

Don't worry, God doesn't hold us accountable to know and obey these secret things, but He does hold us accountable to know and obey the things revealed to us.

For...

II. There are revealed things that we are accountable to.

Think with me of how a parent sometimes works with their young child. *[pause]*

A parent of a 2 year old doesn't share with them every single thing, but they tell them what the child needs to know in that moment. *[pause]*

If you were struggling financially and had to cut back on some things, you wouldn't tell your 2 year old every single thing.

You wouldn't burden a 2 year old by telling them that you have no money, and you don't know how you will make ends meet, so you can't get certain snacks anymore.

Instead, you would probably just say, "Hey buddy, we can't have those snacks right now, I'm sorry, but we will be having dinner later." *[pause]*

So in a somewhat similar way, God only tells us what we need to know to live for Him rightly.

He doesn't share every single thing, but He does share everything that we need to know. *[pauseeee]*

There are certain secret things, but there are also things that are revealed.

These are things that are made clear to us, disclosed to us, and uncovered for us by God. *[pause]*

They are revealed to us, meaning, it is truth that God must declare to us.

We don't know these things by ourselves, but God must reveal them.

We are dependent on God's revelation, not on our inherent knowledge. *[pause]*

We aren't born into this world with all the knowledge of what we need to know in order to live rightly, rather, God has to disclose to us what we need to know.

And in great love and care, God gave us His written Word. *[pause]*

He doesn't leave us in darkness, not everything in life is a "secret thing", but there are truths revealed to us that we get to hear, understand, and comprehend. *[pauseeee]*

That God would allow us to know anything is astonishing, and yet He doesn't give us only small snippets of information.

On the contrary, what do we see?

We have these revealed things, "that we may do all the words of this law." *[pauseee]*

The Lord has given us every single thing that we need to live for Him.

As Peter says, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness."²
[pauseeeee]

For some people, they see the Bible as a book just full of interesting facts. *[pause]*

I remember as a kid, I loved the "Guinness World Records" books.

In those books, there were very cool and interesting facts and records, but we can't see the Bible that way.

We can't just look at it, and say, "Look at that interesting fact," and move on.

But rather, God has revealed to us what we need to know to live for Him! *[pauseee]*

It is these "revealed things" that we can know and are accountable to.

They belong to us, and therefore we should *know them*. *[pauseeee]*

Do you know God's revealed Word?

We should be in it more: reading it more, studying it more, and hearing it proclaimed more.
[pause]

What's interesting is that some of us are more concerned with, and spend more time on the secret, mysterious things of the Lord, than we do on what's actually revealed to us.

Some get so caught up in the unclear things to the detriment of the clear things!

That's like someone who is so caught up in how a road is made that they don't ever learn how to drive on a road. *[pause]*

May that never be said of us.

May we not be all about the secret things that we don't even know the revealed things.

But may we know and follow what has been revealed to us by God. *[pauseeeee]*

Do you know the revealed things?

² 2 Peter 1:3.

You find what He has revealed in the Scriptures, so dive deep and stay long. *[pauseeee]*

So the revealed things not only belong to us to know them, but to *faithfully do them*. *[pause]*

We don't know these revealed things just to gain some knowledge and walk away.

We don't know these things with the sole purpose of being good at Bible trivia.

Rather, we know them that we may live for the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

God desires for us to follow Him, obey Him, and live for Him as His people.

And it is through God's revealed Word, the Bible, that we learn how to do this. *[pause]*

He has given us what we need.

We aren't left floundering or wondering, but we are equipped with the knowledge by His Word. *[pauseeee]*

So where do you go when you need to know how to live rightly?

The world's ideas? Your own thoughts? Somewhere else? *[pause]*

Just recently I was watching a documentary on a well-known pastor, who had a great moral failure and lost his position as a pastor.

A couple years have passed since then, and he went to therapy, which he used to try to live better.

But in the documentary, he stated something to the effect that there are certain things that prayer and Christ cannot help you with.

And my eyes opened wide, for that's so wrong.

He's looking to modern therapy for how to live and disregarded God's Word.

But God is telling us here that His revealed Word gives us what we need to live and obey Him rightly. *[pauseeee]*

The God of all knowledge and wisdom has disclosed to us exactly what He knows that we need to know.

So we don't look to any substitutes, for they fall short.

We need the Word, so will you go to it for everything for life and godliness? *[pauseeee]*

It is these precious revealed things that belong to us, and they not only belong to us, but they belong to us and our children *forever*. *[pauseeee]*

Have you ever played that matching game, where you have to flip over the tiles and try to find the matching pair of objects?

You have to pay attention and try to memorize what tiles were where because you only have a short amount of time before the tile is flipped back over. *[pause]*

Thankfully, God's revealed truth isn't like that.

He doesn't disclose the truth momentarily and flip it back over, so it's concealed once again.

But His revealed truth is given to us forever. *[pause]*

We have the Word of God, and it will not just disappear or be destroyed.

God preserves His Word for us, so that we may always know it. *[pause]*

That means that we can keep going back to it and remind ourselves of what it says.

We can memorize it, study it deeper, and hold up our lives to it. *[pauseeee]*

Aren't you thankful for God's enduring Word?

We get to keep going back to the Word, determined to know it more and follow it more faithfully. *[pauseeee]*

This verse is so needed for us!

It helps us to be faithful to what God told us. *[pause]*

For Israel, here in Deuteronomy 29, there was sort of a covenant renewal going on.

Moses recounted all that the Lord had done for them in the past, and called on them to be faithful to the covenant.

They must also remember the danger of turning away and the curses that come with that.

And as they strived to follow and obey the Lord, they must fall back upon this truth: what has been revealed to them is what they need and are accountable to.

So will they be faithful to the Lord, even amidst all of the questions, secrets, and mysteries of God's ways? *[pause]*

And that's the same for us.

Will we be faithful to the Lord, even amidst all of the questions, secrets, and mysteries of God's ways?

Will we heed to what God has made known to us, or will we get entangled in unknowns? *[pause]*

Let's stop worrying and obsessing over the things we don't know, and start knowing and obeying the things that we do know! *[pauseeee]*

There are secret things of the Lord that we will not know and we are not accountable for, so don't concern yourself with them.

Instead, rest in the revealed things of God.

As Matthew Henry says, "[These things], the Bible plainly reveals; further than this, man cannot profitably go. By this light he may live and die comfortably, and be happy for ever."³ *[pause]*

We are given what we need to live for the Lord, be content, and joyously love and follow Him. *[pauseeee]*

So how does God's sovereignty and human responsibility work together in all of its minute details? The secret things belong to the Lord.

Why did that certain situation happen in your life? Know and heed what is revealed to you, not what's secret.

When exactly will Christ come again? Don't obsess, but hold fast and obey what He has told you, "Be faithful to the end."

It's the revealed things that we look to and focus on, so get in His Word, you won't regret it. *[pauseeee]*

One of the greatest things revealed to us is the coming, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He came, died, and rose again for us so that we could be forgiven and receive eternal life.

Do you know *that* revealed truth?

Have you trusted in that gospel message? *[pause]*

Knowing and believing that revealed truth changes your life for eternity.

So let's keep reminding ourselves of that truth, going back to it, and living in light of what Christ has done. *[pause]*

The revealed truth of Jesus Christ and His work is worth infinitely more than a million secret things.

³ Found at: <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/deuteronomy/29-29.htm>.