

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, March 22, 2016

Speak to the Rock

Numbers 20:1 – 21:35

Theme: *Failure*

Major Segments:

- Israelites thirsting for water and rebelling against God
- Moses' sin of striking the rock to receive water for the Israelites
- Israelites turned away by the king of Edom. Aaron dies and God sends poisonous snakes because of their complaining.
- God delivers the land of the Ammonites to Israel

Segment Questions:

- Earlier in the exodus (Exodus 17:1-7), God commands Moses to strike ("smite") a rock to bring forth water to the Israelites. The Israelites need water again. God specifically tells Moses to "speak" to the rock to get water. Why is this significant, he achieved God's plan to provide water for the Israelites? How do the words "speak" and "strike" demonstrate God's power as compared to Moses' power?
- God was offended by Moses striking the rock and he states that Moses did not trust Him. How did Moses not trust God? How does this indicate that he took credit or matters into his own hands?
- The scripture provides no information on Moses' and Aaron's response to God punishing them. How would they have felt? What did they learn from this leadership failure?
- King of Edom sent his army and threatened war so Moses turned the Israelites away and went around Edom. Later in the story a similar situation occurs in the land of the Amorites, but this time Israel fights and totally defeats the Amorites to take over their cities. Why did the Israelites respond differently? In what ways is this difference significant and how is it a lesson for us?

Action Questions:

- Failure is such a negative term and feeling in the world. It is even harder when your actions seem to be successful but later you are rebuked by God. Can you think of a situation where you felt you were honoring God to later figure out you were fulfilling your own ego or plans? How did you come to realize your failure?
- How did Moses and Aaron respond to their failure and rebuke? How did God respond to them after he rebuked them? What does this teach us about our faithfulness and God's love for us?

Numbers 20:1 – 21:35

From: www.btstories.com

The Israelites travelled to a place where there was no water and they complained to Moses – to the extent that they wished they had died with the others in Egypt.

The Lord said to Moses, “Gather the people together and stand in front of them with your staff. Speak to the rock, and it will give you water. There will be enough for the people and their livestock.”

So Moses stood in front of the people. He said, “You’re a bunch of rebels. Do I have to provide you water from this rock?” With that, he hit the rock two times with his staff. Water came gushing out, and everyone had enough.

But the Lord wasn’t pleased with Moses and Aaron. He said, “You didn’t trust my power. These people saw you disrespect my command. Therefore, you won’t take these people into the land I promised them.”

As the people of Israel moved on, they came to the border of Edom. Moses requested permission to pass through the land, but the king of Edom refused. He even sent his army to their borders and threatened war if the Israelites crossed into their land. So the Israelites turned away.

At Mount Hor, God told Moses to take Aaron and his son, Eleazar, up the mountain and to strip Aaron of his (priestly) garments and put them on Eleazar. Aaron then died on the mountain. The people mourned for thirty days.

As the Israelites moved around Edom, the people started to complain again. So the Lord sent poisonous snakes into the camp. People were bitten, and many died. They rushed to Moses confessing their sin and asked him to pray for them.

The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake out of bronze and put it on a pole. People will be healed from their snake bites if they look at the bronze snake.”

As the people of Israel traveled they came to the border of the Amorites. They sent a message to the king asking if they could travel through his land. They assured him that they would not take anything and would do no harm.

The king of the Amorites refused. Instead, he took his army and attacked Israel. So the people of Israel fought them and totally defeated them. They took over all their cities and lived in them. They controlled all the land right up to the Ammonite border.