

Numbers 11:1-3
Deuteronomy 8:1-5
1 Corinthians 10:1-11
Hebrews 12:7,8

November 11, 2018

A Man Named Moses
“A God Who Chastens”

Introduction: Today, as we continue to chronicle the life of Moses, we turn from the record of Exodus to that of the book of Numbers.

In Exodus (Each message has revealed another aspect of the divine character)

- Birth of Moses (A God who is Present)
- Early adulthood of Moses (A God who is Active)
- Burning Bush (A God who is I AM)
- Exodus from Egypt across the Red Sea (A God who Fights for us)
- Golden calf rebellion and Moses with the glory of God (A God who is Grace-giving)

Next Two weeks we turn to Numbers: Again a revelation of the Divine Character

Preliminary Context

Title of the Book of Numbers (derives from the Greek “arithmoi” and the Latin “numeri” translations of the Old Testament)

- ✓ Title based on two major and detailed numberings of the people (census lists) of the 12 tribes of Israel.
- ✓ First one is in chapter 1, 2 years after the Exodus
- ✓ Second one in Numbers 26, 40 years after the Exodus and prior to entering Canaan
- ✓ Hebrew title is “Bemidbar” or “In the Wilderness” and is the story of the nation dying in the wilderness in preparation for the new generation to enter the promise
- ✓ Numbers 13 and 14 explain why (narrative of the 12 spies, 10 with and report and the people rebel”) ONLY Caleb and Joshua have a good report

“Then the LORD said: “I have pardoned, according to your word; but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD — because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.” Numbers 14:20-24 NKJV

- ✓ So Numbers is the account of the wilderness wandering from Egypt to the Promised Land, an 11-day journey that became 40 years

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- ✓ In Deuteronomy (Moses final farewell...his last will and testament, he will describe what the wilderness was to Israel.

“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.” Deuteronomy 8:3-5 NKJV

- ✓ Paul in 1 Corinthians said all these things happened for our example
- ✓ Hebrews says that chastening -as a father chastens his son

Chasten (Hebrew=Yasar-ya-say-er and Greek-pidyuo-pi-do-o)-both mean to train, instruct, discipline

The wilderness reveals the instruction, discipline, and chastening work of God with His people-FOR OUR EXAMPLE!

Numbers 11 and 12-Four Narratives-each describing the chastening work of God with His people

I. The chastening work of God seeks to rid us of PERPETUAL COMPLAINING

“Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.” Numbers 11:1-3 NKJV

- A. This complaint came after they had been ordered, organized, cleansed, blessed, taught how to give, reminded of God’s deliverance and given God’s presence.
- B. The tabernacle was complete and in their midst
- C. But they complained and it DISPLEASED the Lord
- D. He harshly judged some who were in the “outskirts of the camp”
 - 1. These were out of order
 - 2. Stragglers who were not in the right place and relationship...out of order
 - 3. Implicit is the notion that they were complaining about how things were aligned
- E. Complaining and murmuring reveals two things:
 - 1. Failure to be grateful
 - 2. Discontent with what God has done in my life

New Testament Theme:

“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,” Philippians 2:14-15 NKJV

“Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” I Peter 4:9 NKJV

(ILL) Discontented Hearts

The person with the discontented heart has the attitude that everything he does for God is too much, and everything God does for him is too little.”-Don Kistler

- Far too much complaint among believers
- We damage seriously our witness

II. The chastening work of God seeks to rid us of LUSTFUL CRAVING

“Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: “Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!” Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it. Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased.” Numbers 11:4-10 NKJV

NOTE: Tired of the manna...they wanted meat

Major Concerns regarding Lustful Cravings

A. We begin to see Christ's Lordship as restrictive rather than liberating

1. They made up stories about Egypt
2. Remembered it better than it was
3. This Manna is restrictive
4. We use to have freedom there
5. When we start lusting after the world we see our walk with Christ as restrictive (can't do that and be a Christian, God doesn't want me to have fun)

B. We start seeing the provision of Christ as ordinary

1. Bored with spiritual life
2. Bored with the Word of God (manna)-this is a major issue in church life today
3. Want something more, new, exciting

C. Creates dissatisfaction with others as well

“Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: “Who will give us meat to eat?” Numbers 11:4 NKJV

NOTE: The mixed multitude. Possibly those who had mixed with Egyptians, not thoroughly pure. But, it spread to the whole nation. When we dabble with sin, eventually it overtakes us.

“Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased.” Numbers 11:10 NKJV

NOTE: Your sin does not just hurt you...complaining, murmuring, lusting or craving after the world is contagious

Note God’s response:

“Then you shall say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, “Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt.” Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, “Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?” ’ ” And Moses said, “The people whom I am among are six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You have said, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month.’ Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?” And the LORD said to Moses, “Has the LORD’s arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not.” Numbers 11:18-23 NKJV

D. Miracle of Judgment

“Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day’s journey on this side and about a day’s journey on the

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other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.” Numbers 11:31-34 NKJV

1. 10 homers, 50 bushels, or 465 gallons
 2. That was the smallest amount
 3. Penalty for lustful craving they became sick
- E. The Church is sick...God has given us our fill but we are ineffective, inadequate, weak and powerless. He is chastening us to rid us of our lustful craving

Lust is like the craving for salt by a man who is dying of thirst.

1. People who are addicted
2. Jesus isn't enough
3. They want more
4. Sometimes the spiritual struggle brings us to the place of submission.

Those bound by lust won't heed the warning

- No repentance
- No remorse
- They became sick

III. The chastening work of God seeks to rid us of ENVYING CONFLICT

CONTEXT:

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- Moses overwhelmed by the complaining and strife
- What am I to do

“Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. So Moses said to the LORD, ‘Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,’ to the land which You swore to their fathers? Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!” So the LORD said to Moses: “Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.” Numbers 11:10-17 NKJV

- Get 70 others and I will use them
- God transferred the anointing to them

“Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’” So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, “Moses my lord, forbid them!” Then Moses said to him, “Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!” Numbers 11:25-29 NKJV

- 2 men didn’t go to the tabernacle (Eldad and Medad)
- They refused to do what Moses had said
- Maybe they were among the complainers the ones causing the rift
- In the wilderness there is such tendency to conflict
- They prophesy
- Joshua is loyal to Moses
- Moses is humble and meek

- A. Spirit of negativity and discouragement flows easily among the people of God
- B. Easy to point blame and find fault when things are not going well

- C. Easy to become envious when God uses people, some who aren't even like we think they should be
- D. But the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God must be priority over our envy and rigidity
- E. The Holy Spirit fell and the Word was spoken and Moses was happy about that

Truth: God may use someone who has not been on board or who has stood against us.
 -Can we let God use them and let go of our envy?
 -Both Paul and Christ did this.

Paul to Church at Philippi

It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. 16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. 17 Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. 18 But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice. Philippians 1:15-18

John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn't in our group."

Jesus to John

"Don't stop him!" Jesus said. "No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me. 40 Anyone who is not against us is for us. Mark 9:38-40

He wants to rid of of envying conflict!

IV. The chastening work of God seeks to rid us of REBELLIOUS CRITICISM

“Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they said, “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.) Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!” So the three came out. Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?” So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. So Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother’s womb!” So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “Please heal her, O God, I pray!” Then the LORD said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again. ” So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again. Numbers 12:1-16 NKJV

A. Aaron and Miriam critical of Moses on two accounts

1. Ethiopian wife (probably Zipporah dead and he had remarried)
2. Is he the only one that can hear from God?

B. God’s anger-Miriam with leprosy (not sure how Aaron got off)

- Some say she instigated
- Some say because of His priesthood role
- Some say that priest edited out his punishment

C. Moses who was most meek and humble interceded for them

D. Lessons

1. God hears your grumbling, complaining, and criticism, even if you think you are in safe company
2. Even the closest of relationships are vulnerable when in the stress of the wilderness
3. Be very careful when you criticize those to whom you are accountable
4. Those who lead should pray for those who criticize them rather than seeing their criticism as giving them the right to hold a grudge

Conclusion: Throughout this narrative God is chastening His people to get the ready for the privilege of Canaan

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”
Hebrews 12:11 NKJV

God loves us the way we are, but he loves us too much to leave us that way. Leighton Ford, Leadership, Vol. 4, no. 1.

John White (Missionary in the Philippines Bush)

When my son Scott was just learning to walk, he fell on a cement driveway and split the area below his chin so deeply that the floor of his mouth was exposed. Hospitals and doctors were 250 kilometers away over tortuous mountain roads. I had no surgical instruments with me. A quick catalog of our resources turned up a less-than-impressive array of one darned needle, coarse thread, one pair of rather blunt scissors, and a pair of eyebrow tweezers. Infection in children develops rapidly and infection in the floor of the mouth can have fatal complications. We also had a little sulfonamide powder. There was no local anesthetic. Rightly or wrongly, I decided to trim and stitch the wound with what we had.

We sterilized "the instruments." I could not help but look at the affair from Scott's point of view. I did my best to explain, but what can a one-year-old understand? Then he was placed on the dining room table and judgment descended on him. Cruel adults seized his limbs and his head so that movement was impossible. Then the father he had trusted became a fearful monster inflicting unbelievable pain on him. How I wished that he could understand that I feared for his life.

Mercifully, he still seemed to trust me when it was over. As for me, I caught a glimpse of judgment from God's angle.