

Friday, April 20, 2018

Facedown

Numbers 16-17

When Moses heard this, he fell facedown.

Numbers 16:4

I can't imagine what it would be like to be among the Israelites at this point in time. God has spoken judgment over them. And they know that God will keep His word. He has proven that over and over. The adults in the camp know that they will die and not enter the land that was promised to them. They know that they deserve it because of their actions, but they are not quick to take ownership. This chapter reveals the attitudes of some of the people: resentment toward Moses and Aaron. Blaming them for the problem allowed them to totally ignore their own. They make the statement that the whole community is holy—each person. Bold statement. Moses knows better. They have come to attack him, but I think he knows that what has just happened will bode badly for them. We are not told why he fell facedown. But the action shows that he was not threatened or arrogant. He did not try to defend himself. I believe that he fell facedown to pray—for rescue—and for direction. I think he knew that there would be swift and real punishment for this type of insubordination against God. I can learn from Moses. When I feel attacked, I can have my first response be to fall before the Lord and seek His heart in the situation. He is my shield, my defender, and it is He who guides my steps. This will keep me from pride and anger.

Dear LORD, please let me always come to You and allow You to guard me and guide my reactions. May my response always be pleasing to You. Amen.

Saturday, April 21, 2018

Gift

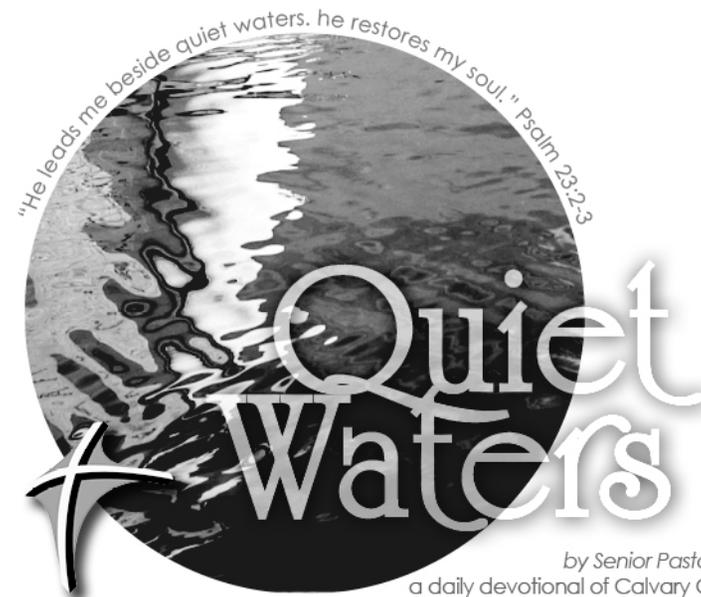
Numbers 18-19

But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else who comes near the sanctuary must be put to death. Numbers 18:7

With all that has happened, this could seem to be quite a burden for Aaron and his sons. God has been very specific about exactly how everything must be done in order for death to be avoided. He is holy, and entering His presence requires a holiness as He has described. It is clear that anything outside His commandments will be swiftly dealt with. And now, He tells Aaron that it is all his. It is up to him to perform the services in such a way that the whole nation may avoid wrath. If it weren't for the next words of our great God, this may seem overwhelming. God makes it clear to Aaron that this is not a chore, it is a privilege. I can almost hear God telling Aaron and his sons that they *get* to do this. They *get* to serve the LORD in the way He has prescribed. In many ways it is the same for me! I have been chosen by God to be a part of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) and I get to declare His praises, because of the amazing gift He has given me. He has forgiven me in Christ and set me apart for His service. I belong to Him! It is not a chore, it is an honor. Amen.

Dear Lord, thank You for calling me to be a part of Your chosen people—for calling me into a royal priesthood so that I may declare Your praises. Help me see this as the privilege it is. Amen.

April 16 - 21, 2018



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, April 16, 2018

Whenever

Numbers 8-9

Whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tent, the Israelites set out; whenever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped. At the LORD's command the Israelites set out, and at his command they encamped.
Numbers 9:17-18a

The cloud was the presence of the LORD in their midst. I can't even begin to fathom what this looked like as this cloud—which looked like fire at night—would be there in the center of the camp over the Tent of Testimony. Every moment, they would know that God was with them. *Whenever* the cloud rose, all the preparations described in chapter 4 began. *Whenever* the cloud lowered, setup of the Tabernacle began. God chose *when* and He chose *where*. There was no doubt as to Who was making the call. And *whenever* God moved, they moved. No one was to move apart from that. If it was a day or a year, they were to wait for the LORD. In the waiting, they would worship in the place where the cloud rested. The cloud was the center of the community. God's presence was the center of the community. It was provision and protection. It was peace and love, and God was their authority. I need to be aware of the presence of God in the midst of my life and I need to be aware of His presence in the midst of the community of the church. Whenever He leads, I must follow, together with the community that He has brought me into!

Dear Lord, please remind me often to follow You whenever You go. I want to be very aware of You and Your presence in our midst. Amen.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

Short

Numbers 10-11

The LORD answered Moses, "Is the LORD's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you."
Numbers 11:23

I love reading the conversations between Moses and God. In some ways, it feels as though I am eavesdropping. The conversations are so real and natural—almost, in some ways, like two very close friends. And yet, there is always the underlying truth: God is God and Moses is a man. He is a man who has the Spirit in a way like no other (maybe before or since)! But here, God must remind Moses that He speaks only truth and that He does not make any promise that He will not or cannot keep. There are so many ways in these chapters that God keeps His word and protects His holiness. Punishment for disobedience is swift and severe. But in the midst of all of this, God reminds Moses who it is that is in control. God—whose arm is never too short and who will keep every one of His promises. God keeps His promises. Whether that is a promise for provision or a promise of judgment. It is the same for me. God has made many promises that I can be confident He will keep in my life. He will be near me and with me. He will never leave me, never forsake me. He will forgive me, He will love me, and He will come again to take me to be with Him—because of Jesus and His work in my life. But He will judge each person who does not know Him. And He will at some point judge my motives too. He has promised that as well.

Dear God, remind me to rest on Your promises of provision and to bask in Your generosity without complaint. May my motives always be pure for You. Amen.

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Humble

Numbers 12-13

(Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)
Numbers 12:3

I consider the fact that God, through the Holy Spirit, inspired Moses to write these words about himself. How long did the quill hover? How long did he ponder what he had just written before he moved on? God considered that Moses was the most humble man on the planet. Moses had every reason to be proud. God had chosen him for a huge undertaking that had ramifications for all of salvation history. God spoke to him differently than anyone else. He had been given a special place in the heart of God. What would possibly keep him from being proud? How could he be the most humble of men? It would seem that being in the presence of God in a special way would remind you just how inappropriate pride would be. Pride caused Miriam and Aaron to begin to speak against Moses. Humility caused Moses to cry to God to forgive them. Reminds me of the cry from the cross.

Am I proud or humble? Am I drawing near to the presence of God in the Bible and in prayer? Does my submission to the power of the Spirit let me see how inappropriate my sinful pride is and how it keeps me from Him? Do I see that the consequence of my pride is "leprosy"—something which separates me from Him and His people?

Dear God, I long to be a man who is humble before You and before all people. I long to walk humbly with my God in all that I am and all that I do. Help me, please! Amen.

Thursday, April 19, 2018

Worship

Numbers 14-15

The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of the miraculous signs I have performed among them?"
Numbers 14:11

God had brought the people out of Egypt. He had rescued them from captivity. He had made the Egyptians pay them to leave. He provided constant proof of His love and protection. He was with them every step of the way. He brought them out so that they could worship Him. It was the reason given as to why they were to be released when Moses spoke to Pharaoh. Why wouldn't they worship Him? After years of horrible slavery and bondage, they were now free and they had come to the land that God had promised—a land filled with milk and honey. All they needed to do was go in. God promised the land to them. But they did not go in. They did not have the heart of worshipers. They had the heart of grumblers. They treated the amazing provision of the LORD with contempt. God is not asking Moses this question because He does not know the answer. He knows. They will not stop. They will always treat Him with contempt. In what ways do I treat God with contempt? More than I care to remember. I must worship without contempt.

O Lord, forgive me yet again for the times that I have taken for granted Your miraculous signs. Forgive me for the times I grumble and treat You with contempt. Help me worship You for all that you are. Amen.