

THE STORY...

HIS STORY

Chapter 6

Creation: Wandering



THE STORY

Plot Points

- The Lord is forming his chosen people to passionately honor and trust him.



Plot Points

- Israel grumbles
- God gets angry
- Moses gets frustrated



Plot Points

- Israel evaluated God's commands according to their limited perspective, disobeying God and refusing to take the land, condemning an entire generation to death in the desert.



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Plot Points

- Moses' years of faithful obedience did not give him license to disobey, even once.



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Cast of Characters

- Moses
 - Led God's chosen people through the wilderness to the edge of the Promised Land but was not allowed to enter.
- Aaron
 - Served the Lord as high priest in Israel's desert wanderings. His son Eleazar took over his ministry after Aarons death.



Cast of Characters

- Eleazar
 - Son of Aaron; anointed as high priest when his father died; name means “help of God.”
- Miriam
 - Sister of Aaron and Moses; served the Lord in the exodus and in the desert wanderings; died at Kadesh in the Desert of Zin.



Cast of Characters

- Joshua
 - Son of Nun; an aid to Moses; name means “The Lord Saves.” Joshua in Greek is Jesus.
- Caleb
 - Son of Jephunneh; one of the spies who went into Canaan and came back, convinced that the Lord’s power was sufficient to lead them to victory.
- Phinehas
 - Grandson of Aaron; takes decisive action against idolatry.



Cast of Characters

- Balek
 - King of Moab; attempted to curse Israel
- Balaam
 - Pagan diviner, called to curse the Israelites but blesses them instead
- Baal of Peor
 - The main Canaanite deity; chief competitor to Yahweh in the hearts and minds of Israel.



Freedom vs. Familiarity

- No less than six times in the chapter, the people pine for “the good old days” in Egypt:
 - *“Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord”* (p.71)
 - *“If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost...”* (p.72)
 - *“Why did we ever leave Egypt?”* (p.73)
 - *“If only we had died in Egypt!”* (p.76)



Freedom vs. Familiarity

- *and 40 years later...(!)*
 - *“Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!” (p.78)*
 - *“Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!”*
 - (p.80)



Freedom vs. Familiarity

- In fact, when given an opportunity to choose health or disease, the unhealthy is often chosen because it involves far less risk and engagement.
- Why take a chance on a potentially positive relationship, when a poorer choice would remove any possibility of future disappointment?



Freedom vs. Familiarity

- It's always striking to watch how people cling to the familiar, however damaging and unhealthy, over freedom from that bondage.
- A poorly fitting shoe, over time, conforms to the foot so that when you try on a properly fitting shoe, it feels foreign and out of place.



Freedom vs. Familiarity

- Satan convinces us that no matter how traumatic our wounds, the sting of an antiseptic is not worth the long-term effect; no matter how heavy our baggage, we dare not off-load it.
- It's the old devil-you-know ploy that traps people in a closed, spiraling loop of faithlessness.



Wandering

- Who among us has not experienced an “in-between” time of aimlessness and lack of direction?
- Is it possible that unbelief in God’s grand story is the source of our wandering no less than it was for the Hebrews?



Wandering

- The Bible is full of examples of the cycle of deliverance and then relapse...victory followed by defeat...freedom overshadowed by recidivism.
 - Judges, Exile → Return, etc.
- How great the grace of God that His salvation is perpetual, enduring, and new every morning.



Leadership Issues

- Moses gets fed up with the whining, fussing and griping of the people. If this is my burden, just kill me, he says.
- But even when you reach exasperation trying to “herd cats on linoleum,” we can trust that God gets no less fed up but never fails to apply mercy.
- Lesson #1- Focus on Mercy



Leadership Issues

- Aaron and Miriam were leaders, but did not have Moses' mantle. They too begin to grumble (p. 73). They begin to sound a lot like James, John and their mother in the NT: "What about us??"
- Lesson #2- Bloom where God plants you.



Leadership Issues

- The same story contains the next lesson. Moses' humility was the key, and as far as Scripture records, he let God do all the talking – in fact, p. 73 says after the Lord heard Miriam and Aaron, “at once” the Lord jumped in the fray.
- Lesson #3-Focus on humility and leave the defense to God.



Leadership Issues

- You'd think Moses' striking the rock instead of speaking to it could have been explained by exuberance and maybe a little grandstanding... but as the leader of the people, his example sent a message that no other person's disobedience would – and so he lost the capstone of the journey: crossing the goal line.
- Lesson #4- If you're in a leadership role, God's expectations of you go way up.



Leadership Issues

- Real leaders never fail to equip their people to do without them:
 - *“May the Lord, The God of every human spirit, appoint someone over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”* (p. 83)
- He knew his work wasn’t completed without ensuring sound leadership for his flock after his departure, even in the face of his punishment.
- Lesson #5- Have a plan of succession
 - *What was Jesus’ plan of succession?*



Wrongdoings to Die For

- Israel spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness for their unbelief. God told Israel to go into the Land that He would give them. But they did not trust Him



Wrongdoings to Die For

- Israel grumbled about their hardship
- Israel and the Egyptian rabble complained about the manna
- Israel wanted meat so God gave them quail and a plague
- **GOD'S ANGER BURNED**



Wrongdoings to Die For

- Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses
- Israel's leaders brought back a bad report from the Land and refused to enter as God instructed
- **GOD'S ANGER BURNED**



Wrongdoings to Die For

- 40 years later, the new generation was repeating the sins of their fathers.
 - They grumbled for lack of water ns they grumbled for lack of food
 - GOD SENT SNAKES.
 - They worshiped Baal and indulged in immorality
 - GOD SENT A PLAGUE.



Words to Live By

- The 10 “Words”



Words to Live By

- Who said this?
- *“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”*



Words to Live By



- John F. Kennedy
- Inaugural Address
- 20 Jan 1961



Words to Live By

- *“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men were created equal.”*



Words to Live By



- Abraham Lincoln
- Gettysburg Address
- 19 Nov 1863



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Words to Live By

- *“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.”*



Words to Live By



- Sir Winston Churchill
- Westminster College,
- Fulton, MO
- 5 March 1946



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Words to Live By

- *“I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”*



Words to Live By



- Martin Luther King Jr.
- 28 Aug 1963



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Words to Live By

- *“Love always hurts.”*



Words to Live By



- Mother Teresa
- National Prayer Breakfast
- 3 Feb 1994



Words to Live By

- Moses' final words were those of great encouragement: the Lord is God and trustworthy; love him completely; teach your family to do the same; remember his chastening; and finally, in a very Messianic tone: as you enter into the Promise, be of good cheer, for God has overcome already.
- John 17...



Words to Love By

- There is only one God, the LORD. He loved you and redeemed you. Therefore, listen to his “words.”
- Living by the “words” will result in prosperity in the Land.
- Living in relationship results in life.
- Going your own way results in death and will result in exile.
- The LORD is your life--choose life!



Words to Love By

- *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the Lord is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”* (p. 85)

