

Moses and the Journey of Faith

Week Six

Monday, March 21st

Numbers 27:1-11

¹One day a petition was presented by the daughters of Zelophehad--Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Their father, Zelophehad, was the son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Makir, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph. ²These women went and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the tribal leaders, and the entire community at the entrance of the Tabernacle. ³"Our father died in the wilderness without leaving any sons," they said. "But he was not among Korah's followers, who rebelled against the LORD. He died because of his own sin. ⁴Why should the name of our father disappear just because he had no sons? Give us property along with the rest of our relatives."

⁵So Moses brought their case before the LORD. ⁶And the LORD replied to Moses, ⁷"The daughters of Zelophehad are right. You must give them an inheritance of land along with their father's relatives. Assign them the property that would have been given to their father. ⁸Moreover announce this to the people of Israel: 'If a man dies and has no sons, then give his inheritance to his daughters. ⁹And if he has no daughters, turn his inheritance over to his brothers. ¹⁰If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. ¹¹But if his father has no brothers, pass on his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan. The Israelites must observe this as a general legal requirement, just as the LORD commanded Moses.' "

Points of Interest:

- In this final week's passages, we fast forward about 40 years. The Bible describes the intervening 40 years quite sparingly. Having been told by God that they will not enter the promised land, they wander around the desert, occasionally getting themselves into similar types of trouble to what we've already seen, and often getting more complete instructions from the LORD as to how to be a people in relationship with him. Recently, as a new generation comes into adulthood and the previous generation dies out (Aaron himself died shortly after the episode of the water from the rock, and his son Eleazar has taken over his role), they've started to prepare for entry into the promised land: they're drawing closer now to the land; they've fought a preparatory battle on the way; and Moses has begun to give them instructions for settling the land.
- 'He died because of his own sin'—in other words, although their father was part of the unfaithful generation who were destined to die in the desert, he did not take part in Korah's rebellion against Moses. This is significant because the families involved in Korah's rebellion were sort of erased from the membership of the Israelites, being swallowed up by an earthquake. These women are simply establishing that they are members in good standing of the community.
- 'Why should the name of our father disappear just because he had no sons?'—the promised land has been parceled out in advance among the tribes, with each individual family that left Egypt getting its own, hereditary plot of land. These family holdings were meant to stay with the family perpetually. Even if the family had to sell it to pay off debt, it would eventually be returned to them—every fifty years all land was to be returned to the original family. The inheritance laws were designed to give every single Israelite a stake in the promise, while at the same time insuring that family holdings did not get too small for viability. In order to make this plan work, the majority of inheritance went to the eldest son; daughters usually became a part of the family into which they married. Zelophehad, however, had no son. If the daughters do not inherit the father's land, then his family and its stake in the land would altogether cease to exist. Zelophehad's daughters are saying that, while they understand a family might be blotted out of the inheritance because of rebellion, it seems harsh and unfair for it to disappear simply because of the bad luck of having no sons.
- 'Moses brought their case before the LORD'—the situation of the daughters of Zelophehad is unforeseen in the instructions Moses has received so far. He's supposed to be the supreme court justice of the Israelites, but even he doesn't quite know what to do in this particular circumstance. So, he appeals to God himself for guidance.
- 'The daughters of Zelophehad are right'—Zelophehad's daughters have correctly understood the intention of the inheritance law to give each family a perpetual stake in the future of Israel, and they have correctly understood that the fact that they are women should not get in the way. They are not merely seen as an exception. They provoke a change in and an expansion of the law. God is actually improving upon his instructions, at the instigation of Zelophehad's daughters.

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Taking it home:

- *For you:* Zelophehad's daughters wanted to take their full, rightful place in the community. They staked a claim that their family belonged among the community of God's people. What's the next step for you in terms of taking your full place in the community? Are there ways you need to assert yourself? Commitments you need to make? Is there help you need from others?
- *For your six:* Perhaps some of your six have kept themselves at a distance from God because they believe his words have led to unjust treatment of them. Zelophehad's daughters discovered that the LORD was more willing to listen to them and remedy the situation than they might have thought. That might be the case for your six as well. If it seems appropriate, consider encouraging any of your six who are in this situation to bring their complaint to God.
- *For our church:* God gave Moses instructions and a plan. As the people of Israel stepped into that plan, God gave them modifications, clarifications, and adjustments to that plan. God has given us hopes, dreams, and plans as a church as well. Pray that we would have the wisdom to know when to seek clarification from God and the ears to hear his guidance. Pray too that we would have peace and resiliency when reality forces an adjustment to our expectations.

Tuesday, March 22nd

Deuteronomy 8

¹"Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors. ²Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would really obey his commands. ³Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the LORD. ⁴For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell. ⁵So you should realize that just as a parent disciplines a child, the LORD your God disciplines you to help you.

⁶"So obey the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. ⁷For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with springs that gush forth in the valleys and hills. ⁸It is a land of wheat and barley, of grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey. ⁹It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. ¹⁰When you have eaten your fill, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

¹¹"But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the LORD your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and laws. ¹²For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, ¹³and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, ¹⁴that is the time to be careful. Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. ¹⁵Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! ¹⁶He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. ¹⁷He did it so you would never think that it was your own strength and energy that made you wealthy. ¹⁸Always remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you power to become rich, and he does it to fulfill the covenant he made with your ancestors.

¹⁹"But I assure you of this: If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you will certainly be destroyed. ²⁰Just as the LORD has destroyed other nations in your path, you also will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

Points of Interest:

- Much of the book of Deuteronomy consists of parting words from Moses. He knows that his own death is drawing near. The rest of the people will be going on to the promised land, but he will not be going with them. So, he's taking a final moment to remind them of what they've been through, to tell them a few things he's forgotten, and to give them some last words of wisdom. Moses' own journey is nearly

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complete. The last thing he needs to do is to serve as a mentor, training a whole new generation how to have the same, exciting, larger than life, hero's journey of faith he had. He's learned a few things over the past 120 years of hero's journey with God, and he wants to pass them on before he goes.

- 'God led you through the wilderness for forty years'—Moses himself spent 40 years tending Jethro's flocks before his hero's journey really kicked in. Likewise, this new generation of Israelites has spent 40 years in the wilderness being trained and formed, to prepare them for the adventure ahead.
- 'real life comes by feeding on every word of the LORD'—this is perhaps the perfect summary of Moses' life lesson. He has learned this lesson himself powerfully by actually feasting off of God's word rather than food for 40 days on the mountain, by seeing innumerable amazing things happen as he has obeyed God's instructions, and—painfully—by facing the dramatic negative results of ignoring God's instructions in the second incident of bringing water from the rock. Utter confidence in the truth of this statement is the 'magic elixir' Moses has gained through his life-long heroic journey with God, and he is now handing this key to success on to the people so that they can thrive in the new land God is going to give them.
- 'the LORD your God disciplines you to help you'—having heard so much about the times the people of Israel have come to the edge of hunger or thirst might prompt us to ask the question, 'If God is so good, why wouldn't he provide for them more quickly?' Moses gives us an answer here. First of all, he points out that in other ways God has been a miraculously generous nurturer and provider: their clothes have never worn out, and their feet have never gotten tired even though they've been walking in the same shoes for 40 years—not to mention the fact that God has protected them from their enemies during this time. So, obviously, it's not that God is unconcerned for their welfare or unable to care for them. Why then does he let them get to the point of wondering where their next food or drink will come from? Because he is trying to teach them something. A parent's intention in disciplining a child is not to act out of anger, nor to show hatred of the child, nor even to make the child feel bad. In fact, a good parent disciplines a child for the exact same reason he or she feeds a child or provides a good education: to prepare the child to thrive. That's what God is trying to do for the Israelites as well. He has spent 40 years trying to teach them to trust him to provide, to ask him for what they need, and to recognize—as Moses did—that relationship with God himself is more important and more satisfying than any material blessing that he could give them. If they follow this lesson, they will have a great life ahead of them in the promised land.
- 'It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking'—this whole time, God hasn't particularly wanted to be in constant contention with his people. He's desperately wanted to give them an awesomely good gift. At every point, though, their complaints, rebellion, or abandonment of him have gotten in the way.
- 'that is the time to be careful!'—it will be even harder to remember to stay close to God when they don't have immediate needs that force them to cry out to him. It is their relationship with God that will bring them into the place of blessing. If they forget that fact and abandon God for his blessings, they will cut themselves off from the source of future blessing.
- 'Just as the LORD has destroyed other nations in your path'—at core, there's nothing essentially different about the Israelites from the people they are replacing in the promised land. The only thing that makes them distinct is their covenant with the LORD. They've agreed to be God's special people and to follow his instructions, and God has agreed to show just how good he can make life for a people who put themselves into his hands. If the Israelites ever decide that they are uninterested in maintaining this agreement, they are just like anybody else. God has promised to give them this amazing place to live, but he would also be willing to take it away from them if it comes to that.

Taking it home:

- *For you:* While it is certainly not true that every bad thing that happens to us is God's will, it seems that this passage is saying that at least some things that we find difficult or unpleasant are actually signs of God's love and care for us. God is using them to train us how to survive and how to thrive in life. What are some trying circumstances you've experienced lately—not evil things that have happened to you, but things that stretch your patience, trust, or faith? Ask God if he is trying to teach you something in

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that circumstance. If you feel able, express your gratefulness for the fact that he loves you so much that he is willing to help you build the skills and the character to really thrive.

- *For your six:* Remembering is a very important part of building trust in God. It's all too easy for us to forget about the good things we've been given: in bad times, our memories of the good times are crowded out; and in good times, we quickly take the good things for granted. Pray that your six would have a good memory for good gifts they've received. Ask God to remind them even today of a wonderful thing that happened to them that they haven't thought of for a while.
- *For our church:* Our church has had a pretty exciting history of great blessing from God. This passage warns us that times of blessing can easily become dangerous, because it's easy to take the blessings for granted and to forget God completely in the midst of the enjoyment and pleasure. Pray that God would rescue us from any complacency, would protect us from forgetting in the future, and give us a limitless hunger for relationship with him above all else.

Wednesday, March 23rd

Deuteronomy 17: 14-20

¹⁴"You will soon arrive in the land the LORD your God is giving you, and you will conquer it and settle there. Then you may begin to think, 'We ought to have a king like the other nations around us.' ¹⁵If this happens, be sure that you select as king the man the LORD your God chooses. You must appoint a fellow Israelite, not a foreigner. ¹⁶The king must not build up a large stable of horses for himself, and he must never send his people to Egypt to buy horses there, for the LORD has told you, 'You must never return to Egypt.' ¹⁷The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will lead him away from the LORD. And he must not accumulate vast amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself.

¹⁸"When he sits on the throne as king, he must copy these laws on a scroll for himself in the presence of the Levitical priests. ¹⁹He must always keep this copy of the law with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the LORD his God by obeying all the terms of this law. ²⁰This regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud and acting as if he is above his fellow citizens. It will also prevent him from turning away from these commands in the smallest way. This will ensure that he and his descendants will reign for many generations in Israel.

Points of Interest:

- 'select as king the man the LORD your God chooses'—Moses has, of course, been their leader ever since they left Egypt. Now that Moses is nearing the end of his life, it's natural that the question of who will lead them in the future would come up. Moses has led them as a prophet, but they may in the future want to go the more conventional route of having a king. Moses recognizes and allows for that preference. But he warns them that if their king is going to be able to do his job, he can't be a king just like any other king. They should ask the LORD to guide their choice, rather than take their cues from the nations around them.
- 'must not build up a large stable of horses'—horses in the ancient Near East were used pretty much exclusively as weapons of war. So, having a large stable of horses was synonymous with having a large and powerful army. Kings would be prone to have lots of horses for a couple of reasons: since chariots were the elite troops of the day, having lots of horses would be a status symbol; and having a large and powerful army would protect them from their enemies. The LORD wants a king that will trust him, rather than the latest military technology, to be their source of security.
- 'You must never return to Egypt'—at the time, Egypt had the best horses and chariots. If a king were to want a powerful cavalry, he would look to Egypt for equipment and training. Such a choice could lead to a dangerous dependence on Egypt. God did not free them from Egypt only to see them enslave themselves to Egypt again voluntarily—especially for the sake of military equipment that, from God's perspective is unnecessary and harmful anyway.
- 'must not take many wives for himself'—it was common for kings to marry for the sake of diplomacy. They would marry noblewomen from surrounding nations with whom they were allied or with whom they were trying to form an alliance. So, a king could have many wives, and part of the job of these wives would be to advance the political and religious agendas of their home countries.

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- ‘for himself’—even if a king starts out as a servant of the people, the lure of power is strong. It’s all too tempting for a king to use his authority over the people to enrich himself rather than to protect and lead his people. Most kings can’t or don’t resist that temptation. God warns them about choosing a king carefully primarily for their own sakes. If they’re not extremely cautious, they could end up sorely regretting their choice. Having a king could easily seem to be a much more attractive idea than it is in reality.
- ‘That way he will learn to fear the LORD his God’—the king is supposed to rule in the same way any Israelite is supposed to live: by trusting the LORD and listening to his guidance. If he follows God’s instructions, rather than the example of the kings around him, he will be able to lead his people in the right direction and thrive himself while doing it.
- Sadly, when the Israelites do in fact form a monarchy, almost all of their kings starting with Solomon, the third king, do the exact opposite of what the LORD suggests—to the ruin of the nation. They enrich themselves at the expense of the people. They make Israel (and Judah, which breaks off from Israel in a fight over royal succession) indebted to and dependent on other nations, both financially and politically. They introduce the idols of their many foreign diplomat-wives into the official religion of the nation. And they foolishly depend on the power of their own military. By all of these choices, they quickly ruin the good and pleasant land God has given them.

Taking it home:

- *For you:* Moses predicts that the Israelites will want to be just like all the other nations, but God wants so much better for them than that. As you try to step out on this journey of faith, do you find yourself envying people who live ‘normal lives.’ What are the things you wish for, and why? Confess your envy, and bring your desires to God. Ask him to prove that he can do better than we could do for ourselves.
- *For your six:* Moses knows that the Israelites will be tempted to slip right back into the slavery from which God just rescued them. If any of your six have experienced any new freedom from the things that have held them down, pray that they would be able to easily see and resist paths that would lead them back into their old problems.
- *For our church:* Moses recommends to future kings that they read God’s words daily as an antidote to pride, greed, and error and as a constant encouragement in the direction of goodness, truth, and life. Even though we aren’t kings, Moses’ recommendation still sounds wise to me. As we approach the end of this 40-day devotional, pray that God would help us to continue to turn to his word with expectation every day.

Thursday, March 24th

Deuteronomy 30

¹“Suppose all these things happen to you--the blessings and the curses I have listed--and you meditate on them as you are living among the nations to which the LORD your God has exiled you. ²If at that time you return to the LORD your God, and you and your children begin wholeheartedly to obey all the commands I have given you today, ³then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes. He will have mercy on you and gather you back from all the nations where he has scattered you. ⁴Though you are at the ends of the earth, the LORD your God will go and find you and bring you back again. ⁵He will return you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will possess that land again. He will make you even more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors!

⁶“The LORD your God will cleanse your heart and the hearts of all your descendants so that you will love him with all your heart and soul, and so you may live! ⁷The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and persecutors. ⁸Then you will again obey the LORD and keep all the commands I am giving you today. ⁹The LORD your God will make you successful in everything you do. He will give you many children and numerous livestock, and your fields will produce abundant harvests, for the LORD will delight in being good to you as he was to your ancestors. ¹⁰The LORD your God will delight in you if you obey his voice and keep the commands and laws written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

¹¹“This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you to understand or perform. ¹²It is not up in heaven, so distant that you must ask, ‘Who will go to heaven and bring it down so we can hear and obey

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it?' ¹³It is not beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, 'Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear and obey it?' ¹⁴The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

¹⁵"Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between prosperity and disaster, between life and death. ¹⁶I have commanded you today to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, laws, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and become a great nation, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, ¹⁸then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

¹⁹"Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, that you and your descendants might live! ²⁰Choose to love the LORD your God and to obey him and commit yourself to him, for he is your life. Then you will live long in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Points of Interest:

- 'Suppose all these things happen to you'—as we have seen in the previous days' passages, Moses is exhorting them to remember God, his goodness to them, and his promises so that they do not gradually drift away from him and find that they have abandoned their special relationship with him. If that were to happen, then God would remove his protection over them and allow—in fact encourage—another nation to come and take them captive. They would end up right back where they started.
- 'God will go and find you and bring you back again'—even if that were to happen, it need not be the end of the story. God will be eager to renew the covenant yet again. All they need to do is call out to him, and he will find them and rescue them, no matter where they have gone.
- 'Oh, that you would choose life, that you and your descendants might live!'—God is not aiming for misery. He does not hope to punish the people, or to weigh them down with guilt or with harsh rules. What he wants for them is full, good, satisfying life. All they need to do is choose it, and trust God to provide it.

Taking it home:

- *For you:* Do you feel as if you've gotten off-track? Maybe just for a day or a moment, or maybe for quite a long time, you've wandered away from the life God has for you. The great news is that God promises in this passage that you can't possibly wander too far for him to bring you back. If you feel a little lost, call out to God for rescue. Moses tells us in today's passage that if we do so, he will not only put us on the right track, but give us an even better life than we've ever had before.
- *For your six:* As Moses says in today's passage, the thing he is telling them to do is not difficult. All he's asking them to do is to say, 'yes,' to the abundantly good life God is offering. Despite the fact that it is not a difficult thing to do, it remains curiously difficult for us to consistently decide to do it. Moses promises that God himself will give the power to say, 'yes,' to anyone who asks for it. Pray for your six, that God would indeed give them that power to choose.
- *For our church:* Our church's dream is to empower impossibly great lives, the kind of lives this passage describes. Pray that our dream would be fulfilled, that anyone associated with our church would have the amazingly rich lives described in this passage, and that we would have a special ability to invite others to choose life.

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Friday, March 25th

Deuteronomy 31: 1-15

¹When Moses had finished saying these things to all the people of Israel, ²he said, "I am now 120 years old and am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has told me that I will not cross the Jordan River. ³But the LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy the nations living there, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua is your new leader, and he will go with you, just as the LORD promised. ⁴The LORD will destroy the nations living in the land, just as he destroyed Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites. ⁵The LORD will hand over to you the people who live there, and you will deal with them as I have commanded you. ⁶Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid of them! The LORD your God will go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you."

⁷Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched he said to him, "Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the LORD swore to give their ancestors. You are the one who will deliver it to them as their inheritance. ⁸Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD is the one who goes before you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor forsake you."

⁹So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, who carried the Ark of the LORD's covenant, and to the leaders of Israel. ¹⁰Then Moses gave them this command: "At the end of every seventh year, the Year of Release, during the Festival of Shelters, ¹¹you must read this law to all the people of Israel when they assemble before the LORD your God at the place he chooses. ¹²Call them all together--men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns--so they may listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully obey all the terms of this law. ¹³Do this so that your children who have not known these laws will hear them and will learn to fear the LORD your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy."

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "The time has come for you to die. Call Joshua and take him with you to the Tabernacle, and I will commission him there." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the Tabernacle. ¹⁵And the LORD appeared to them in a pillar of cloud at the entrance to the sacred tent.

Points of Interest:

- 'the LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you'—just because Moses is leaving does not mean God is leaving as well. They have no need to worry. They're in very good hands.
- 'just as he destroyed Sihon and Og'—they've already seen how God can defeat their enemies. They will not be facing anything as they enter the land that they have not already faced in the wilderness. They have been tested in the desert, and they are ready for the big event.
- 'Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD is the one who goes before you'—this must be an unsettling moment for Joshua. For almost 40 years now, he has served as an assistant to Moses. Now, he is becoming the leader. He could be afraid that he will not be able to succeed without Moses to guide him. He could be discouraged because he doubts that he will be able to pull off what even Moses could not. But Moses focuses his attention back on God. Joshua need not be afraid, because he will have the exact same source of guidance and empowerment as Moses had: God himself.
- 'Do not be afraid of them!'—Moses is echoing Joshua's own words, which he and Caleb said while trying to encourage the people not to be dismayed by the Canaanites. Moses is not trying to pump Joshua up into someone he is not. He is encouraging the faith that he knows Joshua truly has.

Taking it home:

- *For you:* Has God recently been calling you into a new level of leadership? How do you feel about the prospect? Who have been your mentors and sponsors? How would you like to follow their example? What have you learned and experienced that encourage you that you might indeed be ready to respond to a call into greater authority or responsibility?
- *For your six:* When Joshua responds to God's call to take up the adventure of being the leader of the people, it doesn't mean that Joshua has to become a completely different person. Rather, Joshua becomes an even better version of the person he already was. Pray that your six would have the opportunity to be absolutely shining examples of the person they were meant to be.

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- *For our church:* Pray for our church that we would have a legacy like Moses. Moses led quite an incredible life himself; then, he blessed the next generation to do what he could not. Pray that God would work through our current leadership amazingly, and then do even greater things through the new leaders we raise up.

Saturday, March 26th

Deuteronomy 34

¹Then Moses went to Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab and climbed Pisgah Peak, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him the whole land, from Gilead as far as Dan; ²all the land of Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; all the land of Judah, extending to the Mediterranean Sea; ³the Negev; the Jordan Valley with Jericho--the city of palms--as far as Zoar. ⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I told them I would give it to their descendants. I have now allowed you to see it, but you will not enter the land."

⁵So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, just as the LORD had said. ⁶He was buried in a valley near Beth-peor in Moab, but to this day no one knows the exact place. ⁷Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever. ⁸The people of Israel mourned thirty days for Moses on the plains of Moab, until the customary period of mourning was over.

⁹Now Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁰There has never been another prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. ¹¹The LORD sent Moses to perform all the miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and his entire land. ¹²And it was through Moses that the LORD demonstrated his mighty power and terrifying acts in the sight of all Israel.

Points of Interest:

- 'the LORD showed him the whole land'—although he does not actually get to go into the promised land, God graciously gives him the supernatural ability to get a glimpse of the whole thing.
- 'to this day no one knows the exact place'—an air of mystery surrounds the death of Moses. It's almost as if, having accomplished his goal by leading the people from Israel to the very edge of the promised land, he just fades back into the wilderness to die quietly.
- 'yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever'—just like the Israelites' clothing and shoes, Moses very body has been supernaturally sustained during the 40 years in the desert. God gave him the strength he needed, even physically, to fulfill his task.
- 'full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him'—throughout the Bible, we see stories of spiritual power being passed from one person to another in this way. It's as if, once God gives us a gift by his Spirit, that gift is an actual substance we possess. We can literally hand it off to someone else if we wish.
- 'in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh' and 'in the sight of all Israel'—Moses had two audiences for the wonderful things he did. He showed both Egypt, the superpower of the time, and Israel, the nation God chose for a special relationship, just how powerful God is and how committed he is to giving his people a good life. Along the way, Moses also demonstrated to us just how extraordinary a life can be when it is given over to the adventure into which God calls us.

Taking it home:

- *For you:* Moses is given the privilege of seeing his impact on the future laid out for him before he dies. Ask God to give you that same privilege. First of all, ask God to give you a little glimpse ahead of time of what the impact of your life might be if you consistently respond to his call to adventure. Then, ask God to give you the power by his Holy Spirit to cross the finish line of your life still running strong, as Moses did. And finally, ask God to give you a fuller picture before you die of what your legacy will be.

Moses and the Journey of Faith

Week Six

- *For your six:* Has God given you a special gift by his Spirit? Why don't you share it? If it seems like your gift would be helpful to one of your six, consider passing it along to them. If you think they might be receptive, explain the idea of a spiritual gift to them and ask if they'd be willing to allow you to pass it along to them in prayer. You could say something like this:

You've mentioned to me before that I seem to be a pretty wise person (*'wisdom' is, or course, only an example. Replace hopeful with whatever spiritual gift you have that you'd like to pass along*). I know this may sound kind of strange, but I don't think of that wisdom as just some personality trait I happen to have; I believe it's a gift God has given me. I also believe that God allows us to share these kinds of gifts with others. Would you mind if I asked God to give that same wisdom to you? (*If they say, 'yes*) God, I thank you for giving me this gift of wisdom, and I thank you for allowing me to share it with others. I ask that you would give to my friend the same gift you gave to me.

So, _____, I give to you the same gift of wisdom that God has given to me.

If you're really bold and pretty comfortable with the person, you could even ask if you could lay a hand on their shoulder as you pray.

- *For our church:* Moses was given the opportunity to speak powerfully both to God's people and to the world at large. It's a dream of our church to do that same thing, speaking God's words equally well to both followers of Jesus and secular America. Pray that God would give us the same gift he gave to Moses, allowing us to see that dream come true.