

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Key Thoughts from a small group guide on Numbers & Deuteronomy from vacation in SC..

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Introduction: As you know we have just returned from a 2 month “snowbird” vacation to SC. We attend a church that is close to the condo where we stay. While there we were invited to attend a small group class one Sunday and were given a copy of the study guide being used by the group. Neither one of us liked the class and we didn't return but the book caught my attention and I'd like to share some thoughts from it as well as others that have impressed me since we've been gone. I will begin with an introductory statement on these two books, then share some thoughts from statements that caught my attention.

Q – Does anyone know the primary theme or purpose of the book of numbers?

- The book is named for the two censuses that Moses took of the children of Israel.
- The group that left Egypt.
- The group that would take control of the promise land of Canaan.

Q – Does anyone know the theme or purpose of the book of Deuteronomy?

- This book contains a series of 3 speeches from Moses to those who would enter the promise land.
- They were given in the final weeks of his life.
- He was retelling and explaining the law to the second generation of those who left Egypt.
- You will recall the original generation rebelled against God, wandered for 40 years in the desert and were not allowed to enter into the promise land.
- The last 4 chapters describe Moses' final days.

Read: Exodus 13:17 - 22 & Numbers 9:15 – 23.

Q – How is the word pillar defined? - A tall vertical structure used for support.

Q - What purpose did the pillar of cloud and fire serve for God's people as they were being led toward the promise land? - Exodus 13:

- 21) By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud **to guide them on their way** and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.
- 22) Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.
- Numbers 9:
 - 15) On the day the tabernacle, the tent of the covenant law, was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening till morning the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire.
 - 16) That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire.
 - 17) Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped.
 - 18) At the LORD's command the Israelites set out, and at his command they encamped.

Q – Again the purpose of the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night was? - **To guide God's people and provide the necessary support for them on their journey to the place where He was leading them.**

- Q – Step back for a moment and tell me what the pillar of cloud and fire represented to the children of Israel?
- These visual images represented the presence of God.
 - They demonstrated His desire to lead them consistent with His will, plan and purpose for their lives.
 - He was telling them, no matter what happens, it's OK because I'm right here with you.

Q – What occurred on the day the tent of the first Tabernacle was set up? - The presence of God in the form of the cloud and fire covered it and remained. (It did not leave)

- Q – What did we read while studying the book of Hebrews about the NT tabernacle?
- Hebrews 9:11) But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.
 - He became the mediator of the new covenant.
 - He represented the presence of God to His disciples and all who would believe.

Q – If the pillar of cloud by day and fire at night represented the presence of God to the children of Israel and God is the same yesterday, today and forever how is His presence manifested to His children today?

- By the Holy Spirit.
- Whom God has said will never, never leave you or forsake you.
- No matter what we are going thru, if we **will allow** Him to the Holy Spirit of God will whisper into our hearts it's OK, I'm right here with you.

Q – What did He say to His disciples before He was arrested? - It is better for you that I go away because unless I go away the Holy Spirit will not come to you.

Q – Where can we find that in scripture and what “time” is it on the “clock” of the life of Jesus?

- John chapters 14, 15 & 16.
- He said these things to His disciples within hours of His arrest and trial.
- He also prays for them and all of us on His way to Gethsemane. (John 17)
- This is a great homework assignment for any who are interested.
 - Re-read John 13 – 17.
 - To refresh your understanding of;
 - The ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - The spiritual significance of God's intent.
 - To be present in the daily lives of His people.
 - Never, never will I leave you or forsake you! (Hebrews 13:5)

Q – How did Jesus describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit? (John 14, 15, 16)

- A Counselor who lives with you and will be with you forever.
- He will teach you all things.
- He will guide you into all truth.
- Remind you of everything I have said to you.
- The counselor or Spirit of Truth will testify about me.
- He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

Q – Again, as was the case with the children of Israel, the purpose of God in providing His presence in the form of the Holy Spirit is to?

- Guide us on our journey.
- So that we might know the peace and joy of the Lord,
- To help us live and walk consistent with His plan and purpose for our lives.

Q – What are some of the roadblocks that keep God's people from being aware of His presence?

- Willful acts of sin and rebellion.
 - Sin separates us from God.
 - It causes us to want to avoid His holy presence.
- The cares of this life. .
- The deceitfulness of riches.
- The desire for other things.
 - Jesus said, these things will choke the word and make it unfruitful.
 - If we will allow Him to the Holy Spirit will tell us, regardless of circumstances,
 - It's OK, I'm right here with you.

Statements that caught my attention:

- One must earn the right to be believed. (From a sermon one Sunday morning.)
- Believers paint a picture of God with their words and actions.
- Living by God's wisdom believers can demonstrate to others that God is loving, caring and merciful.
- Love is a choice, a willful determination regardless of circumstances.
- People invest their time, money and energy in their pursuit of what they consider the good life.
- For the believer, the good life is found in a strong relationship with God.
- God is not just a promise making God He is also a promise keeping God!
- God graciously offered His presence to His people in Moses' day. He makes the same offer to us today!
- God is sovereign over all people and all nations at all times!
- God is present among His people and leads them by His Spirit according to His will and purpose.
- God never has and never will abandon His people.
- God is faithful to the covenant with His people and keeps His promises to them – even when they are unfaithful.
- Following the Lord's leadership daily has and will produce blessings and joy.
- God always knows what is best for His people both physically and spiritually.
 - God's presence always accompanies His command.
 - When we follow His leading we will enjoy His presence.
 - God graciously offers His presence to His people.
 - God offers direction to His people.
 - God expects His people to attentively follow His leadership.
 - God is honored thru His people's obedience to His direction.
- Refusing to trust God is rebellion against Him.
- Failure to trust and obey God has consequences.
- Their act of rebellion didn't start at Kadesh-Barnea.
 - It was a culmination of a series of missteps, of complaining and not trusting God.
 - We must be careful in the small things or little decisions as they will shape the future.
 - A majority can be wrong.
 - The narrow road of righteousness is the least traveled path.
- Fear is wrapped in the sin of unbelief..
- God provides His people with solutions for life's difficulties.
- Salvation is only available by trusting in Jesus by faith.
- Only by taking one day at a time and trusting God can we find grace & peace in any situation.
- God didn't just offer Moses a solution;
 - He gave Moses His presence.
 - The Lord never changes;
 - His eyes are still on His children today in every circumstance.
- When covering up sin, a little justification goes a long way.....the wrong way.

- Numbers 14:18)
 - The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.'
 - Every action has a consequence. The sinful actions of one generation influence the spirituality and morality of succeeding generations.
 - Likewise the opposite is also true.

- Q – Does frustration reveal our true character or does it cause us to react in a way that is inconsistent with our character?
 - **A very good question, worthy of careful consideration for all of us.**
 - Speaking of Moses when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as directed by God.
 - The statement is made that he **allowed** his anger to get out of control.
 - Do we at times **allow** our emotions to control our behaviors in a way that is contrary to the will plan and purpose of God?
 - God holds us accountable for our actions.
 - Regardless if we are provoked, emotionally drained or physically exhausted.
 - No excuse exists for a lack of faithfulness.
 - **We are expected to represent God well in this world!**

- Q – How does God communicate to us today? - His primary method of communication to His children today is thru His word, the scriptures.

- Q – How do we know if a message is from God and not the wishes or emotions of the messenger?
 - How can believers today protect themselves from preachers, teachers and prophets who don't always handle the word of God with integrity?
 - For us the test is what kind of fruit is evident in the messenger's life?
 - Is the message in agreement with sound doctrine?
 - Does the person's life generally display evidence that God is working through them?

- Uttering the phrase “I have sinned” doesn't necessarily mean one is putting saving faith in God and is willing to turn from sin.
 - Both King Saul and Judas made similar statement but didn't turn to God.
 - **Repentance is not an emotion; it's a series of actions to move in the opposite direction.**
- All generations of believers are in need of shepherds who are committed to God for His purposes..
- God rewards faithfulness, on the other hand, He opposes those with a haughty spirit.
- Speaking of the tribes that wanted to settle on the east side of the Jordan,
 - God's permissive will allowed them to live outside the promise land.
 - However they opened themselves up to unnecessary temptations and problems.
 - Believers must be aware of the costs of failing to fulfill the full purposes of God in their lives.
- We can affirm that the bible treats a baby in the womb as a living person to claim otherwise is willful blindness. (Psalm 139)
- For believers there is never a wrong time to do the right thing.
- Although individuals and communities might ignore sin, God never does!
- The goal of Moses' instruction to the Israellites and by example God's word to us was threefold.
 - So they could live abundantly in God's grace and protection.
 - So they could enter the promise land or receive the promises of God.
 - Take full possession of the promises of God.'s will for them.