

Numbers 20 - Wisdom for Solving Life's Problems

Num 20:1-29 ESV And the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. And Miriam died there and was buried there. 2 Now **there was no water** for the congregation. And ***they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron***. 3 And the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! 4 Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? **It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates**, and there is no water to drink."

We all face problems --- question is "How Do I Deal With Them?"

PROBLEM - There was no water

- **Find someone to blame** they assembled themselves together against Moses and Aaron
- **Complain** the people quarreled with Moses
- **Irrational statements** -- "wish we had died" -- then in the same breath -- "why did you bring us here, so we would die?"
- **Refuse to take responsibility for their own decisions**
 - They wanted out of Egypt
 - now "why have you made us come up out of Egypt?"
 - Every new direction could have some pitfalls
 - There are consequences for our decisions - they are the ones who refused to go into the promised land
 - "It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink."

Where is your source of wisdom?

6 Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and **fell on their faces**. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, 7 **and the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, 8 "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle."

- **If any lack wisdom, ask God** (not google, not siri, not alexa)
- **They had no answer, but God did** - Take the staff and TELL the rock
- **God's answer SEEMED impossible** - So you shall bring water out of the rock
- **He gives above all we ask or think** - water for the congregation AND their cattle

Jas 1:5 ESV If any of you lacks wisdom, **let him ask God, who gives generously** to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Col 2:3 ... is Christ, 3 **in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

If you seek His Wisdom - follow through with what He tells you

9 And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, **as he commanded him**. 10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 And Moses lifted up his hand and **struck the rock with his staff twice**, and **water came out abundantly**, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.

If you seek His direction, why not do what He says?

- He took the staff **as he was commanded**
- He gathered the assembly together **as he was commanded**
- He STRUCK the rock, rather than TELL the rock (**NOT as he was commanded**)
- **God had mercy even in the disobedience of Moses...** "water came out abundantly" for them AND their livestock

There ARE consequences to our actions

12 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because **you did not believe in me**, to **uphold me as holy** in the eyes of the people of Israel, **therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.**" 13 These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy

- **Moses and Aaron paid a big price for disobedience** - they will spend nearly 40 years in the wilderness, but never go into the land
- There are consequences to our actions (a reaping and sowing)
- The LORD looked at their disobedience / **partial obedience** as disregarding His holiness
- through them he showed himself holy - this has to do with the fact that He disciplined them

We need to gain wisdom not just to deal with problems but also with people

14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom: "Thus says your brother Israel: You know all the hardship that we have met: 15 how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time. And the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our fathers. 16 And when we cried to the LORD, he heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. And here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. 17 Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from a well. We will go along the King's Highway. We will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory." 18 But Edom said to him, "**You shall not pass through, lest I come out with the sword against you.**" 19 And the people of Israel said to him, "We will go up by the highway, and if we drink of your water, I and my livestock, then I will pay for it. Let me only pass through on foot, nothing more." 20 But he said, "**You shall not pass through.**" And Edom came out against them with a large army and with a strong force. 21 Thus **Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory, so Israel turned away from him**

One of the greatest pieces of wisdom we need is preparing the next generation

22 And they journeyed from Kadesh, and the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor. 23 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom, 24 **"Let Aaron be gathered** to his people, for he shall not enter the land that I have given to the people of Israel, **because you rebelled** against my command at the waters of Meribah. 25 **Take Aaron and Eleazar** his son and bring them up to Mount Hor. 26 And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron shall be gathered to his people and shall die there." 27 Moses did as the LORD commanded. And they went up Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments **and put them on Eleazar his son**. And Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. **Then Moses and Eleazar came down** from the mountain. 29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron had perished, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

- **Miriam died in verse 1 - Aaron died in vs 28 & Moses will not take them into the land**
- Aaron died because Moses rebelled - I wonder how much our influence matters?
 - What about our wives, our children, our friends

God's purpose being established is not dependent upon any one man

- It is only dependent upon **whoever that man is learning to follow Jesus**
- Don't be afraid to pass the baton
- God takes the death of people into the equation with regard to His purposes

All our days are written in a book

Psa 90:10-12 ESV The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. 11 Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you? 12 So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

One of the most important thing we can do is be prepared for that day

- Anyone who believes in me, even if he dies shall live
- And give to the next generation (invest in those younger than you)

Pro 4:5-8 ESV Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. 6 Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. 7 The beginning of wisdom is this: **Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.** 8 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.