

What If We Chose to “Proclaim” Instead of “Complain”? Numbers

“How Long” – video How many of us can relate to this video?

Have you ever asked these questions, or similar questions, of God?
How often do we find ourselves in situations that prompt such inquiry?

Such as experiencing something that we thought would be resolved quickly, only to see that experience drag on for weeks/months/years!

Examples: Covid 19... A dispute with a loved one... An injury

The book of Numbers starts with God’s people beginning a journey from Mt. Sinai to the promised land. **It should have lasted 11 days but instead it lasted 40 years.** How should we respond to experiences like this?

Have we ever found ourselves on a journey through life that put more wear & tear mileage on us than we would have ever imagined or planned for?

Examples: A troubled marriage... Raising kids... A difficult job...

For Israel, it’s hard to calculate the exact mileage they traveled before finally entering the promised land - their intended destination. But the route looked something like this according to Numbers 33 – See the map!

Have we ever decided to go in one direction, only to discover that if we only would have chosen to go the other way we would have spared ourselves, and/or others, a whole lot of hurt and heartache?

Example: A doctor’s prognosis that was the direct result of choices we made... A broken relationship due to choosing the path of anger instead of reconciliation... Unemployment because of bad choice(s) on our part...

Israel chose to rebel against God instead of choosing to obey His instructions! **Then they chose to complain about their situation rather than trust Him!**

The result was 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and those over the age of 20 never entering the land of promise (except 2 men). Even Moses was not allowed to enter because of his wrong choice (Numbers 20)

The book of Numbers is filled with many examples of the people’s rejection of God & His plan for their lives. And then when things didn’t go well for them, **they complained and blamed God and others for it!**

Numbers 13:25-14:38 - God led them from Mt. Sinai to the border of Canaan. He gave them a promise & they were at the door, yet this was their response!

What if God’s people had chosen a different path? What if the Israelites would have listened to Caleb’s plea to trust God and take the land God had promised them? **What if they chose to proclaim and act upon God’s promise rather than complain about their circumstances?** What if...

- They would have avoided spending 40 years of their lives in the desert!
- They would have experienced Canaan instead of dying outside of it!
- **They would’ve discovered God’s faithfulness despite their circumstances!**

But instead, they chose to complain! They chose to not trust God! They chose to go their own way instead of God’s way! & they suffered b/c of it!

Following God’s way doesn’t mean an easy, pain free, trouble-free life, but it does mean **we can have confidence that God will be faithful to His promises.**

And even in the midst of our shortcomings, our unholiness, He remains holy. He remains faithful even when we are not. He is always righteous even when we continually fall short. And His ways remain intact, even if from our perspective they seem broken or delayed! **What’s broken is us!**

God never changes, but what does change is how we experience Him!

We can see this most clearly when we find ourselves in those “How long O Lord” moments of life! Do we choose complaining or proclaiming?

God has/will provide a way for us, just as He did for His people back in the book of Numbers, from His Holy Mountain to the promised land!

When we begin to doubt God’s way, we just need to look back! For Israel all they needed to do was remember the Exodus when God delivered them from slavery in Egypt & brought them through the waters of the Red Sea.

For us today, we too must look back to when Jesus delivered us from our bondage/slavery (sin), & saved us through the waters (baptism).

God’s people Israel failed to trust Him & the result was 40 yrs of wilderness wandering, but Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness & prevailed against the same temptations they faced, so that we would not follow in their footsteps!

Jesus has become for us the way into the promised land, as well as the provision for our journey there (from our Egypt’s to Canaan)!

In our wilderness moments of life, we can be assured that we are headed for the promised land (the promise of the new Heaven and earth) for our greatest enemies have already been defeated in the cross of Christ.

There is no room for complaining in a Christ-centered life! Let’s proclaim!

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