

How to Deal With Disappointment

Exodus 15:22-27

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. ²³ Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴ And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” ²⁵ So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, ²⁶ and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.” ²⁷ Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.”

In the past years we have seen the mighty hand of God move here at Mountain Grove. Souls have been saved. Lives have been changed. **Families have been restored.** **And yet, some of you have not yet received your miracle, and you are somewhat disappointed.** So, tonight I want to talk to you about **Disappointment.**

Disappointment is a common experience in life. There are many things in life that disappoint us. But by far, **the greatest disappointments of all are people.** **People who let us down, who are unreliable, who don't appreciate it when you've done something for them, who are ungrateful, who tell you one thing then do another, who hurt you either intentionally or unintentionally.** A broken promise, a misunderstanding, they cop out, they let you down.

To make it in life you've got to learn to deal with people. One of the secrets of success is learning how to deal with people who disappoint you.

If anybody were a pro at dealing with people it was Moses. Moses knew how to deal with **disappointment.** He was the most patient man around in his day. **No man put up with more complaining.** The favorite pastime of the Jews at this point in their life was complaining. They were very quick to criticize their leader. **They would challenge his leadership, doubt his decisions, criticize and question his motives.** At one point they just said Moses, "You just brought us out here in the desert to die." Moses must have thought, "Is that what I get? Is that the kind of thanks I get?"

The incident we're going to look at tonight is a water problem. The Israelites had many water problems. The first problem they had was too much water at the Red Sea – "How are we going to get across?" **The next water problem is that they didn't have any water.** And they were looking for water. Then the third problem here is they came to Marah where they found bitter water and they weren't able to drink it.

From this incident in Moses' life and the reaction he took we see three lessons about **disappointment.**

Verse 22 says "Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the desert of Shur." **For three days they traveled into the desert without finding water.** When they came to Marah they could not drink its water because it was bitter, that is why the place is called "**Marah.**" The Hebrew word "**Marah**" is the same word we get the name "**Mary**". Marah means bitter. It was a difficult situation and from this we learn **three facts about disappointment.**

1. **The Greatest successes in life is Often Lie is often followed by failure.** Count on it! Notice that only three days earlier they had a victory at the Red Sea. **They were flying high.** It was a spiritual mountain top. In the first part of this chapter they're singing a song of praise, "God has delivered us. What a great day! We're unbeatable! We're invincible!" **Three days later they're grumbling, murmuring.** Each new day brings its own problems.

The fact is, after every mountaintop there is always a valley.
Always.

Later on they're entering the land of Canaan, their Promised Land. They first took over the largest key city in Canaan -- Jericho. They marched around it and the walls fell down. It was a tremendous victory. They defeated the biggest enemy in the country. The very next week they go to Ai, which is a little dinky village and they were defeated. They got a little cocky, a little too confident.

Why did God led them to Marah, where it was bitter? Verse 25 says "Then the Lord made a decree and a law for them and there He tested them." This situation was simply a test. God's led them to Marah, a bitter disappointment, to test their reaction, "Do they really trust Me?"

Tonight we are going to talk about "What does disappointment say about you?" How do you handle it? How do you handle discouragement? The truth is – the greatest successes in life are often followed by failure.

Israel's response in v. 24, "So the people grumbled against Moses saying, 'What are we to drink?'" The typical response: complain, grip, grumble, criticize their leader.

2. The Greatest Services in Life are Often followed by forgetfulness. Israel had such a short memory. It's just three days after the Red Sea. They've just had an incredible miracle. Three days later, at the first sign of trouble, they're already doubting. They're already criticizing. And they're giving up. I think their motto was "When in doubt, grumble against Moses." Poor Moses! What a fickle group. One minute he's the hero, the next minute he's a zero. Yet he never gave up.

What do you do when you're disappointed in somebody? What do you do when they let you down? **Five things.** We can look at Moses' life and see three things he didn't do and two things he did do and we learn how to deal with disappointment.

First, when you're disappointed in life don't retaliate. Don't try to get even. The Bible says in Romans 12:14, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." **It's the typical reaction for most of us, when we have been hurt to retaliate - to strike back.** Jesus said this in Matthew 5:43-44, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." The moment you start retaliating God stops defending you. **God says "If you go out and start trying to get even, I'm backing off."** But when you respond in love and forgiveness God will always bless your efforts.

Second, don't rehearse it. When you're hurt, the tendency is to go over and over and over it in your mind. **Job 5:2 says,** "To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish thing to do." **Ephesians 4:31 says,** "Get rid of all bitterness, anger and slander along with every form of malice." **The truth is this - every time you rehearse a hurt it gets bigger.** It gets blown out of proportion. It is a very dangerous habit because ***criticism*** and a ***negative attitude*** becomes addictive. **Soon your whole life is consumed with it.**

Third, don't dwell on your hurt. That is, don't have a ***pity party***. **Ephesians 4:26-27 says,** "Do not let the sun go down while you're still angry. And do not give the devil a foothold." **When I allow anger to dominate my life I open the door for Satan to steal my joy and replace it with bitterness.** Anger turns to resentment very quickly. **Job 18:4 reminds us,** "You're only hurting your self with your anger." **Don't allow your hurt to make you negative.**

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Encouraging Words From God's Word - Part 6 of 6

What kind of example did Moses give us? The people are grumbling against him, they're upset at him. Verse says, "Then Moses cried out to the Lord." That's what you do. You give it to God.

When you're disappointed, when you are hurt, you don't talk to others about it. You talk to the Lord. Moses simply gave it to the Lord. 1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your cares on Him, because He cares for you." The truth of the matter is this – the more you rehearse it, the bigger it grows in your mind! And if you are not careful it will dominate your life, as seen in Hebrews 12: 14-15, "Pursue peace with all people., lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled." In other words, your anger and bitterness will cause others to stumble in their walk with God!

And last of all, the greatest shortages in life are often followed by fullness. Verse 27 says they left Marah, "Then they came to Elim where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees and they camped near the water." They come to an oasis in the desert! The Bible says they spent over a month there - about 42 days.

Now watch this! Elim was only five miles from Marah? Five miles! Just around the corner is more than enough, but they're complaining and they're ready to give up.

What is the point of this story? Why is it in the Bible? I think the point of this story is that too often we stop too soon.

What is the answer? Keep on going! Keep on praying! Keep on trusting! Why? Because God is faithful!