

Deuteronomy 9-10

Good morning and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 9? We're continuing our study through this incredible book as God prepares the nation of Israel to enter the promised land.

None of us like to be reminded of our failures. It's always uncomfortable to travel down memory lane and make pitstops at those areas where we've, for lack of a better term, 'botched it'.

Yet remembering our failures is important because not only do our flops in life teach us lessons, our failures provide fertile soil for God to minister to our hearts.

This morning God reminds the Hebrews of their failures as they continue their own journey down memory lane, as God is reminding them to lean on Him as they enter the promised land.

We're going to study both chapters 9 and 10 this morning, and the title of this morning's message is AN UNCOMFORTABLE JOURNEY

Would you please stand as we read verses 1-3 together?

1 "Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2 a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?' 3 Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you

LETS PRAY

If you recall, the word “Deuteronomy” means “second law”. The nation is camped on the edge of the promised land, ready to enter in. And throughout Deuteronomy, Moses reminds Israel of the words and works of almighty God, demonstrating His faithfulness. The generation of Hebrews who are about to enter the Promised Land need to remember the experiences and failures of the 1st generation of Hebrews who left Egyptian slavery.

Lets dig in...

1 “Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2 a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, ‘Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?’ Now a lot of folks struggle with the bible’s descriptions of Giants, including Goliath. Yet there are still giants today.

SHOW PIC 1 The Watoosi tribe in Africa, has several members who stand over 7 feet. So does the African tribe of the Dinka’s. There are many 7-footers in these tribes, which is surprising given the reduced average height of those around them. **CLOSE PIC 1**

If you recall, the Anakim were the giants who the 1st generation saw, and because of their fear of them, refused to enter the promised land. **Numbers 13:28 28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.**

No invading army was a match for these Anakim. These battle ready giants had a reputation, word had spread even before FB-look at verse 2. **and of whom you heard it said, ‘Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?’**

Yet God had called the Israelites to enter into this seemingly impossible situation, to battle the enemy. God called them to do

something they could never accomplish in the flesh or on their own strength. They needed to rely fully upon the Lord.

3 Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you. On their own Israel was no match for the giants, but God would fight for the Israelites as “a consuming fire.”

This is still the way God works. The Lord challenges His people with tasks that go beyond anything we could do ourselves. God will often times call us to a task that forces us to rely on Him as the only answer. Then He gets all the glory for it.

Now after God delivers their enemies to them, Israel might be tempted to walk with a swagger-but look at God’s warning...

4 “Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you. God gave the nation of Israel the promised land not because they were so upright and moral, but because the Canaanites were so evil. God’s blessing was granted more in spite of Israel than because of Israel. And this is always the case.

We receive God’s gift of salvation not because we’ve earned it or deserved it, because none of us are good enough to earn God’s favor. It’s God’s grace that is poured out to us! **Titus 3:4-7 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that**

having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It's not about what we've done, it's what He's done!

5 It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.

Stiff-necked means “obstinate or stubborn”. Israel, like a rebellious animal, would stiffen its neck against the yoke God would put upon it. The people refused to submit to God's direction in their life. Doesn't this describe so many people we know?

Is there a chance this morning this could describe us?

7 “Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.

God commands the attention of the nation with one word- “Remember!” God wanted to remind Israel of their rebellions and their failures, not as a way to discourage them, but so they would recognize their own weakness and trust in Him.

Now the nation is about to go on an uncomfortable trip down memory lane.... Moses is going to remind them of their rebellions after God had miraculously freed the people from Egyptian slavery and Pharaohs control.

8 Also in Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry enough with you to have destroyed you.”

9 When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. They say the human body can survive at least 40 days without food, but only 8 days without water. Obviously, the fast Moses undertook was supernaturally permitted by God.

10 Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11 And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. Moses was given the 10 commandments.

12 “Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image.’ Remember these were the same people who had witnessed miracle after miracle...the waters became blood, the plagues, the Passover! Yet because Moses was out of sight for 40 days, they decided to worship a calf. Exodus 32 tells us the detail. **Ex 32:1** Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

13 “Furthermore the LORD spoke to me, saying, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. 14 Let Me

alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.’ This was quite the offer. God says to Moses ‘I’ll wipe out the Israelites and make a new nation.’ It could’ve been out with the Israelites – in with the Mosesites.

15 “So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. 16 And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf! You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17 Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes.” Moses holds the distinction of being the only person in history to break all Ten Commandments at a single time .

Most folks think Moses broke the 10 commandments in a fit of rage. Anger surely played a part, but Moses broke the tablets to symbolize the nation breaking their covenant with God.

18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me at that time also.

Moses loved these people, and he interceded, or intervened with God on their behalf. Moses begged God to spare Israel.

20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

21 Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it and ground it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended

from the mountain. Moses crushed the golden calf and ground it into a fine dust, demonstrating the futility of the idol the people worshipped. Then Moses threw the dust into their water supply, which was clear picture to the people that you become like what you worship.

Now we would think that the nation would've learned its lesson from their foolishness of worshipping the golden calf, but that's not what happened. Moses reminds them of 3 other times the 1st generation rebelled against God...

22 "Also at Taberah and Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath. Taberah means "burning" This is in Numbers 11:1-3 1 Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. 2 Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. 3 So he called the name of the place Taberah,[fn] because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.

The 2nd example listed in verse 22 is Massah, which is in Exodus 17 where the people complained about no water and God brought water out of the rock

The 3rd example is Kibroth Hattaavah (or "graves of craving")

Numbers 11:31 Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. 32 And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. 33 But while the meat was

still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. 34 So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah,[fn] because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

At all these places the nation “provoked the LORD to wrath.” This pattern of rebellion continued until the 1st generation was ready to enter the promised land...

23 Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, ‘Go up and possess the land which I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and you did not believe Him nor obey His voice. Kadesh was the place where the 1st generation refused to enter the Promise Land. Kadesh was the peak of their rebellion, and their failure. And the consequences of their rebellion were steep-the entire first generation, except for Joshua and Caleb died in the desert.

And it’s a reminder that faith takes courage. Faith involves risk.

God’s calling on our lives has little to do with comfort and convenience.

In verse 24 Moses sums up Israel’s attitude with these words,

24 You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you. Ouch. Painful, but true. Yet despite of their failures, God wasn’t finished with the nation.

25-29

25 “Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you. 26 Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: ‘O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness,

whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin, 28 lest the land from which You brought us should say, “Because the LORD was not able to bring them to the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness.” 29 Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.’ Moses was concerned about God’s reputation among the Egyptians. He didn’t want the pagan nations to assume that God was unable to finish what He started with the nation.

CHAPTER 10 1-3

1 “At that time the LORD said to me, ‘Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.’

3 “So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. Pause here. Don’t let these verses pass you by. Moses is commanded 2 make 2 tablets, and carry them up the mountain.

SHOW PIC 2

Mt Sinai is traditional known as Jabal Musa, a mountain on the Sinai peninsula of Egypt. It is more than 7,000 feet in elevation, and Moses has to climb it with 2 stone tablets in his hands.

CLOSE PIC 2

Folks, serving the Lord can be very hard sometimes. There's sweat involved. There's a time commitment involved. Serving Jesus is not always comfortable.

It's easy to get a little grumpy serving the Lord when things get difficult. But we must remember-we're following our Savior who bled and died on the cross. Why on earth would we ever think serving Him would be easy?

But oh, the blessings that come by serving Him!!

4-9

4 And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. 5 Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me.”

6 (Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. 7 From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water. 8 At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. 9 Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.) We studied all of this in our study of Leviticus and Numbers

10-13.

10 “As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, and the LORD

chose not to destroy you. 11 Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, begin your journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.’

12 “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?”

SHOW PIC 3 Here’s what God requires of His people – both then and now... “To fear the Lord” – to respect God and give Him the honor He’s due.

“To walk in all His ways” – adopt His attitudes - see life from His perspective.

“To love Him” – give God our attention and our affections.

“To serve the Lord with all your heart and soul” – passionately do His will.

“To keep the Lord’s commandments” – study, and obey, and apply the Bible.

CLOSE PIC 3

Here is God’s will for your life...

Fear God... Walk with God... Love God... Serve God... Obey God

14 Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. 15 The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. Even though heaven and earth belong to God, He set His focus and attention on Israel, beginning with their fathers.

Recognizing God's love for them, Moses gives them this instruction in verse 16...

16 Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. All males among Israel had to be circumcised eight days after they were born. The operation cuts back a fold of flesh - but the symbolism speaks of the humbling of the heart.

To be circumcised was to make oneself weak, and vulnerable, and exposed. This was the attitude and conduct the Hebrews needed to maintain before God.

17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. Notice, here Jehovah God is called "Lord of lords".
Revelation 19:16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Obviously, there's only one Lord of lords – which means Jesus and God are the same person: a proof of Jesus' deity.

18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. 19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. God desires that we show justice, compassion, and reverence, to lend to the poor because these are aspects of God's own character, demonstrated by His faithfulness to Israel.

20 You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. 21 He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

Moses said. “Look what God has done, look how you’ve grown,”. Seventy people became a mighty nation of three million.

I encourage you this week to take some time travelling down your own memory lane. In spite of all of our failures, and boy we have lots of them don’t we, look what God has done!

He’s done great and glorious things in us, and with us, and through us despite of all of failures—all because of His mercy, His goodness, His grace.

Each one of us has breath in our lungs this morning, and it’s only because He’s allowed it. And He’s not done with us. Let’s make sure we remember what the Lord has done.