



Sermon Discussion Questions
September 22, 2024
In the Wilderness

MOVE WHEN THE LORD MOVES

Numbers 9:15-23

1. Opening Discussion Questions: (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)

- a. Has there ever been a time in your life when following someone didn't work out as well as you hoped? Describe the experience. What was the primary factor that led to a less-than-desirable outcome?
- b. Have you ever heard the expression "herding cats"? What is the largest number of people that you've ever tried to get to do a specific task? If you've had the experience, why does trying to get a large group of people to do something seem harder than herding cats?
- c. Clouds can sometimes be extremely beautiful and at other times very scary and threatening. Describe a situation when you saw clouds that fit into one of those categories. How did you react? Why do you remember that incident?

2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. The Israelites Only Moved in the Wilderness When God Moved.
 - i. God's visible presence was in the midst of the Israelites' camp.
 - ii. God directed their movements for 40 years
- b. Move When the Lord Moves!
 - i. God's presence now dwells in us.
 - ii. How do we know where God wants us to go?
 - iii. Then go!
- c. Otherwise, Wait Expectantly!
 - i. We often hate to wait.
 - ii. Wait fruitfully!

3. Study/Discussion Points:

a. Sunday Afternoon

- i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
- ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
- iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
- iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
- v. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?

- vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
- b. **Monday:** *The Israelites Only Moved in the Wilderness When God Moved: God's visible presence was in the midst of the Israelites' camp.*
 - i. Read the sermon focal passage, Numbers 9:15-23, several times using at least two different translations if they are available.
 - 1. What stands out to you as most important in this passage?
 - 2. Summarize the passage in a sentence or two.
 - 3. What had to happen before the events of this passage could occur (see verse 15)?
 - ii. Read Exodus 40:16-38.
 - 1. In Exodus 25-28 God gives Moses the explicit instructions for how the Tabernacle and its furnishing were to be built. In Exodus 36-38, the construction is described. But based just on the verses you just read how much work do you think had to be done just to set it up?
 - 2. When a phrase is repeated in Scripture we should pay attention. What is repeated at least 8 times in Exodus 40:16-33?
 - a. What does this say to you was most important about the entire process?
 - b. If Moses had done things his way so that the eight repeated phrases could not have been included, do you think the events described in Exodus 40:34 would have occurred?
 - c. What lesson can we take from this to apply to our lives?
 - iii. God not only provided instructions for the Tabernacle He specified the way the Israelites were to arrange their camp. Read Numbers 2:1-2 & 34 – scanning the verses between.
 - 1. Where was the Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting) in relation to the tribes? Why (see Exodus 40:38)?
 - 2. Looking at the numbers in verses 2:3-33 how much of a challenge do you think it might have been to actually accomplish this (remember no cell phones or PA systems)? How many squabbles would you imagine had to be settled about who got the better spot for their tent?
 - 3. Consider verse 34 carefully – what very important phrase is included?
- c. **Tuesday:** *The Israelites Only Moved in the Wilderness When God Moved: God directed their movements for 40 years*
 - i. Read Numbers 9:15-23 again.
 - 1. What phrase do you see repeated at least seven times?

2. As you read the passage what impression do you get of the stability and predictability of the Israelites' life during this period? How does it compare with what we expect?
 3. Think about possible objections individuals, families, clans and perhaps entire tribes might have had when the cloud unexpectedly started moving. How do you think their objections differed from the excuses we make when God directs us to do something?
- ii. Compare Exodus 40:17 with Numbers 10:11. How long did God give the Israelites to prepare before testing their willingness to obey and follow Him as He led by the cloud?
 1. According to Numbers 9:1-5 what happened during this interval that would/should have prepared them to move on following God's leading?
 2. Recalling the Exodus from Egypt, what aspect of their flight would/should have prepared them to follow the Lord's leading (see Exodus 13:21-22)?
 3. What application do you see in this that might apply to our lives?
- d. **Wednesday:** *Move When the Lord Moves: God's presence now dwells in us.*
- i. Read John 1:1-18 and meditate particularly on verses 14 and 18.
 1. According to John, in what manner does the Word (Jesus) accomplish what the cloud did for the Israelites in Numbers 9 and Exodus 40:34?
 2. If the Israelites were to look to the cloud covering the Tabernacle for guidance, where should we look?
 - ii. Read these passages: John 15:4, 1 John 4:13-16, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Colossians 1:27-28, Ephesians 3:17 and Romans 8:9-10.
 1. What advantage do we have that the Israelites did not?
 2. When it comes to following God's leading why might some call it a "disadvantage" and say the Israelites were better off?
 3. When the cloud moved, who moved? When the Spirit of Christ moves in a believer's life, who moves? What is fundamentally different in the two situations according to 1 Corinthians 8:3 & 13:12, and Galatians 4:9?
 - iii. For the Israelites following God meant watching a physical presence – the cloud. For us, it means discerning God's will. According to Romans 12:2 what does that entail? How well are you doing at avoiding being conformed to the world?
- e. **Thursday:** *Move When the Lord Moves: Know where God wants us to go – then go!*
- i. Read Galatians 5:16-26 and Romans 7:14-8:2.
 1. As we seek to "know where God wants us to go" what do these passages tell us must happen?
 2. Since they also tell us we are incapable of doing so on our own what must we rely on?

3. The list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 starts and ends with some really awful sins but in between some that don't seem quite so serious.
 - a. Why is the indwelling of Christ and the Holy Spirit particularly necessary to address these more acceptable sins?
 - b. In your own life do you see Paul's predicament described in the Romans 7 passage at work?
 - ii. Given the command in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), someone has suggested that instead of focusing so much effort on trying to learn if God wants me to go, I should be going unless God specifically tells me to stay. Read Acts 16:6-10. How did Paul demonstrate this principle in his life?
 - f. **Friday: Wait Expectantly: We often hate to wait but wait faithfully!**
 - i. Start today's study differently by singing, "They that Wait Upon the Lord" – or if you prefer just read the words. If you don't know them the lyrics can be easily found online and there are many YouTube recordings to sign along with.
 - ii. Read Isaiah 40:27-31 (or better still, the entire chapter) slowly meditating on the majesty with which Isaiah describes our God. According to verse 31 what is the one "activity" Isaiah says is required of us? If God is going to provide us strength if we just wait why, as Christians, are we so often impatient?
 - iii. Perhaps no book of the Bible provides more instruction on waiting on the Lord than the Psalms. Rather than answering a lot of questions just read and meditate on these passages: Psalms 5:3, 27:13-14, 33:20-22, 37:7-8, 38:13-16, 40:1-3, 119:161-168, and 130:1-6.
 - g. **Saturday: Wait Expectantly**
 - i. Read these New Testament passages about waiting: 1 Corinthians 1:7-9 & 4:5-6, Philippians 3:17-21, Thessalonians 1:9-10 & 2:18-20, Titus 2:11-14, 1 Peter 1:13-16, 2 Peter 3:11-15, James 5:7-9, and Jude 20-21.
 - ii. What does the New Testament teach us that we should be waiting for? If we truly focused on this why would our waiting cease to be "impatient" and instead become "expectant"?
- 4. Application:** As Christians, following Christ and waiting on God requires the Holy Spirit's active involvement in our lives. When we immerse ourselves in His Word, consistently practicing proper spiritual disciplines, we open our hearts and allow the Spirit to work. Spend time this week reviewing how you are applying the principles of Five to Thrive, especially the practice of spiritual disciplines, in your life. Pray that God will open your heart and make you completely receptive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- 5. Prayer Points:**
- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
 - b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
 - c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
 - d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19