**Relaxed Mental Attitude, No. 5 – BD13-02**

The facet of a relaxed mental attitude. We’re going to pick up the story where we left it off last Sunday morning. Israel has been freed for one year, you will recall, from her slavery in Egypt. She is now at the port of entry to the Promised Land at Kadesh Barnea.

Open your bibles to the book of Numbers, chapter 14. God has told Moses to send out a recon patrol of twelve leading men who went out for forty days to secure information about the terrain of the land, the inhabitants, and their fortifications. When the patrol returned, the whole group agreed that God told the truth indeed about the fertility of the land. There was however a majority report of ten spies and a minority report of two spies. The majority report declared that it was impossible to take the land from the inhabitants. They compared themselves as grasshoppers to the people who lived in the land. The minority, Caleb and Joshua, disagreed.

Now because the people lacked this quality of spiritual maturity that we’ve been studying over the last few weeks: faith rest on the basis of the promises, the doctrine, and the prophecies of the word of God. Because the people lacked faith rest, they believed the majority report.

So you remember that we read in the first verse of Numbers 14 that the congregation lifted up their voice and cried and the people wept that night. Now this was in the category of sinful weeping. We looked at some weeping which is legitimate, and some weeping which is sinful. It is always to weep for an extended period of time without terminating it and picking up the threads of life and going on.

Now these people were guilty of negative volition toward the Word of God, and there is nothing worse. Negative volition, I remind you, creates a spiritual vacuum in your soul as per Ephesians 4:17-18. It creates a spiritual vacuum in the soul. This causes human viewpoint to be sucked into your mentality about the various giants in your life. The result is that Israel could have been in a position where she was not worried about the giants or the warriors or the fortifications. But once human viewpoint has been drawn in, then we develop callouses on our mentality and on our emotions and on our will, so that we’re insensitive and unresponsive to the plan of God, and that’s the condition of these people. They went on negative volition. They would not operate on faith rest, and immediately there was a hardening in their soul as Ephesians 4:17 tells us.

Now faith rest requires information for you to function. It requires doctrine which explains how God operates, his modus operendi. It requires promises which stress the essence of God. And it requires prophecy which reveals the plan of God.

So we pick up the thread of the story here in verse 2 of Numbers 14. The people have cried all night. Now it’s the next day. And verse 2 says, “And all of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron,” against the leader and against the high priest of the people. Sinful weeping is usually followed by frustration which in turn produces mental attitude sins which bring on self-induced misery. This is because sinful weeping drains a person’s mind so he’s open to sins of the mind.

Now these people here responded with the particular mental sin of bitterness. They actually suggested that God had brought them from Egypt to die by violence in the Promised Land. Verse 3 says, “Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword that our wives and our children should be a prey.” Now faith rest would have preserved them from frustration over the giants, over the chariots, over the armies, and over the fortifications. But when they became bitter, as when we become bitter, they lost their spiritual poise, they lost their ability to think with discernment, to relax, and to orient themselves on the basis of what the Word of god had to say to them.

And, as often happens when we are frustrated and bitter, we look around and say, “Now I wonder why this is.” And we look around to see who or what we can blame for it. So they had someone. They looked for someone to blame for their situation, and it was natural to zero in on Moses and Aaron.

Now there was nothing really wrong with the situation they were in. But the lack of faith rest in their own being convinced them that they had a disaster on their hands when they had no such thing. People are easily convinced, and these people were easily convinced, because of their lack of faith rest, that there was a bull to be taken by the horns and to be dealt with.

Now they were going to discover in a very short order as we shall see, that the only bull around was themselves as they barged into the china shop and created a problem that really didn’t exist. They created a bad situation—one so bad that there was no retreat from it. This is what’s unfortunate when you decide to play the role of the bull in the china shop in reference to the plan of God rather than acting by faith rest. Here’s where they came to.

Numbers 14:22 says, “Because all those men who have seen my glory and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have put me to the test, now these ten times, and have not harkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land which I swore to give unto their fathers; neither shall any of them that provoke me see it.” They went so far in tearing the china shop that God says, “There’s no retreat. You will never see the land. You had no bull whose horns had to be taken hold of. You created one, and now you’re going to suffer and live with what you created, for there’s no return.”

Verse 40 says, “And they rose up early in the morning.” They wouldn’t listen now to what they were told. So they said, “Oh, we were wrong. We’re going to go in.” So, “they rose up early in the morning and went up into the top of the mountain saying, ‘Lo, we are here and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised, for we have sinned.’” All of a sudden they stood there and they looked around the wreckage of the china shop and they said, “What kind of no-good fools are we anyhow? We didn’t have any problem. We had no critical situation. We had no bull to take the horns ahold of. And what we have done is destroyed what God was really working because we were going to go big time. We were going to make it different than what it has always been. We were going to advance ourselves, instead of letting it stay in the kind of the littler rinky-dink operation that God has brought upon us.”

Moses says, “Forget it. You’re through. What you barged in (upon) is never to be restored.” Four hundred years they waited for this beautiful moment. Four hundred years of slavery they were waiting to come out (of). And now the moment had come. And without faith rest they tore it to shreds.

Verse 44 says, “But they presumed to go up into the hilltop. Nevertheless the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites who dwelt in that hill, and the smote them and routed them even unto Hormah.” And their bodies were strewn across the countryside.

Well, the principal of modern psychology is that a person’s tension has to be released—the tension which has been created by his own wrongdoing. So the way to do this is to blame someone else for the tension that’s in him and the condition of his wrongdoing, or to blame it on his environment. You know the old story about the ad that you hear on the radio about the person who leaves his keys in his car and this good boy comes along and steals the car. It’s not the boy’s fault—it’s the fault of the one who left the keys in the car. Now the idea here is to release pressure by absolving from responsibility for your current situation. You’re not to blame for the situation that you’re in, is the thought that is projected. Now this is a false concept because the fault for any situation that we are in is the result of the wrongdoing of our own sin nature. And our sin natures operate in the present, not in the past. This is a totally deceptive psychological concept. People are responsible for what they do. The Word of God always makes you responsible for what you do. And the result in your life and the situation with which you are surrounded is the result of your own decision-making mechanism.

So what these people did is murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the word “murmured” means “open verbal abuse,” and they’re good objects to blame for the disaster that they thought they faced. Now this is not unusual for leaders to become the objects of blame and attack of a spiritually disoriented people. Moses after all had simply responded to the Lord all along. So what’s to criticize? What should he have done better if he was responding to the Lord all along? As a matter of fact, if it hadn’t been for the responsiveness of Moses to the Lord, the Jews wouldn’t even have been standing there … (in) freedom. They’d have still been slaves back in Egypt if it hadn’t been for the faithfulness of Moses. It is always pathetic to see people who are going to rise up and grab the bull by the horns in order to straighten out something that they wouldn’t have even had to consider had it not been for somebody who had been responsive to God’s leading in the first place before they ever showed up on the scene or were able to respond to it.

Now these people simply hadn’t caught up to a perceptive and a discerning godly leader, so in their human viewpoint they were absolutely certain that they should complain about what he was doing. When in reality, something else was going on in the mind of God, because God was taking a look at this people. He took a look at Israel and He saw something as they moved through that year in the wilderness. He saw that this gang was the most unappreciative ungrateful group of ingrates that you could have ever found on the face of the earth. There was something in this group of ex-slaves that they did not have the capacity to appreciate what God was bringing them to. And I suspect that God sent the patrol out to survey a land that He had already committed to them. They could have gotten it without the patrol’s reconnaissance. He sent the patrol out, I suspect, in order to bring into the open the incapacity, the spiritual lack of capacity on the part of this people to appreciate the Promised Land, and thereby to remove them from the privilege of that land.

You and I have giants in our lives today. There’s no need for me to ask you to tell us whether you have giants in your lives. If we could have listened in on your secret conversations, on your private conversations, heaven forbid, we would have very readily discovered all kinds of giants that you have been dealing with in your life this week. I tell you this morning that it is necessary that we identify the giants in our lives that prevent our entering our spiritual heritage of grace. So stop sending out a smokescreen that enables you to hide the giants and live on some self-delusion basis of something that you are not. Any time we break down in this technique of faith rest, Satan brings the giants up. Our fears, our worries, our anxieties, our resentments, and our restlessness are our lot instead of the peace and happiness of the Word of God.

The constant potential presence of these giants make it absolutely essential that we learn how to live by faith rest. That’s why we’re spending so much time on it. The Jews had been given a year of examples in order to enable them to come to this point where they could rest upon God in this way—a year in the wilderness of all kinds of demonstrations of God’s provision, and yet they lacked the spiritual quality to appreciate what they saw, and to rest upon Him and to anticipate the joys of the land. So God removed them from the land. For 39 more years He sent them back out into the wilderness to wander around because the wilderness was a fitting state for people in their spiritual condition.

Now many a Christian today—and you’d better listen carefully lest you join their forces. Many a Christian today has gone from a milk-and-honey local church ministry to garlic and leeks. Like a pig heading for his wallow, exhilarated by what he thinks he is returning to that is so much better and so much more satisfying. And in his spiritual condition, the wallow is more satisfying. That’s the pathetic part. These people were completely happy to return to the leeks and garlic of Egypt and they just wished they were there. And they would have been so overjoyed. Over the hill lay the land of milk and honey where real happiness and real satisfaction was to be found.

Well Satan brings the giants out to plague us in order to drive us from the real thing. Negative volition to doctrine, breakdown of faith rest, callouses on our soul—all these things destroy our capacity to appreciate a truly productive and a quality ministry, and to embrace instead some phony backscratching operation.

I’m kind of hot on this subject this morning because I had a couple of experiences this past week in operations that just depressed me. Just walking around the facilities depressed me. Let alone what was going on in the program of Christian activity. And in the pathetic site of seeing boys and girls, men and women, like dumb slaughter sheep, being given a phony backscratching religious experience and pouring their life and pouring their money and pouring their efforts into a cornball honkytonk operation. You wonder how people can be that stupid. Why they would not rise up and say, “Never. I am a child of God.” It was just depressing to the point where I almost felt like I wanted to sit down and cry. Just depressing. And yet it happens all the time.

Here’s a Christian with ample experience, as were the Jews here with a year in the wilderness—ample experience in the genuine working of the Lord, and when the time comes they descend to their own true level. How come? Well people are released often from a temporary restraint by vested interests. God knew the caliber of these Jews and He knew they were unable to rise to the happiness of the Promised Land. They couldn’t appreciate it. You can justify people all you want, and you can justify all your good friends who are Christians that you want, who should know better, but who are wondering around in the desert wilderness of some big church operation. It would be kinder to pity them when you meet them than to kid yourself that they have suffered no loss, because discipline, a phoniness, has become their lot, by their choice.

They have lost very frequently a ministry that prods them to sound doctrine, to the use of promises, to the grace techniques, to service which produces divine good, to genuine fruitfulness, because we see our own true character, freedom from the taste of the fake image and the inane stereotype. If you get out and see the operations that are conducted under the title of local church ministry, if you’ve got any sensitive spiritual quality, you’ll be depressed too, and some of them teach the Bible too.

People have vested interests. They have a certain level of lack of appreciation, but they’ve got children. So they’ll come to a place that is productive for their kids, but while they’re sitting there, you notice that they have a tendency to be buddies with all the rebels and all the … incompetents and all the stiff-necks. And you wonder how come there’s this comradery with offbeat characters. Well their children grow up but they have a vested interest of ministry. They have opportunities for creative expression of their being. They can’t find someplace else so they kind of grind along and stay with it. But finally they retire and they get out of the swing of things or something happens. Their vested interests are gone, and they descend to their own level. You would have thought that two million people in this wilderness, after what they saw that God had done in bringing them out of Egypt, that they would have never turned from that high plain and gone back to leeks and garlic, even if it was in a dignified, cultured, seemingly sweetness-and-light surrounding.

What did they decide? Well the people decided that they wished that they were dead. Numbers 14:2 says, “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said unto them, ‘Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God that we had died in the wilderness.’” Now notice that everybody’s in on the act. It’s the whole congregation.

I want you to notice a Proverb that we have called your attention to before that it would seem fitting to remind you of once more. Proverbs 24:6 says, “For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war and in multitude of counselors there is safety.” “In multitude of counselors there is safety.” Now this is not a good translation and it gives a totally false impression. Here the whole congregation of Israel was dead wrong but they were unitedly mistaken in their sincere error. The proper translation here should be “Victory is in the greatness of the one counseling.” That’s what the Hebrew says. “Hebrew is in the greatness of the one counseling.” And “greatness,” how do you get great? That’s a matter of possessing positive volition toward doctrine.

Notice Proverbs 24:3. “Through wisdom (Bible doctrine) is a house built, and by understanding (positive volition) is it established.” Verse 4 says, “And by knowledge (divine viewpoint) shall the chambers of the human spirit be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.” Then verse 5 says, “A wise man is strong. Yea, a man of knowledge (a full knowledge grasping the word) increases in spiritual stamina and strength.”

Now here you have a group of people in Israel who are totally united in what they think. And they’re wrong. These people decided that they wished that they were dead, but they can’t die because God has brought them out of Egypt. They can’t die in Egypt, rather, because God has brought them out by grace, and what grace does you can’t undo, and that’s eternally secure. They want to die in this desert, and they will.

Numbers 14:2c, the latter part of verse 2, says they wished that they had died in this wilderness. They’re speaking from a disoriented mind. They don’t really mean this. If they really wanted to die they could have walked into the land and let the giants do the job for them. Not believing doctrine, being negative to doctrine is very very bad on your judgment and on your discernment and your consistency. These people simply mistrusted God and it spell their own doom.

And I want you to notice verse 3, that it was embarrassing to them to say, “We don’t trust you God.” And while they were returning as bulls in the china shop to their own level of spiritual capacity, where like somebody has a terrible itch on his back. And he just doesn’t want to touch it, and he’s told not to scratch, it just doesn’t look nice, and finally he just gives in to it, and he can’t stand it any longer. That’s the kind of an itch of a low spiritual mentality that eats away at people amazingly who can be in a gold mine of spiritual opportunity for a long time. But it’s not very complimentary to say, “I’m kind of going down to where I can get my back scratched.”

So one of the things people often do is use their children as the purported reason for their refusal to enter a place of happiness. Verse 3 of chapter 14 says, “And wherefore hath God brought us into this land to fall by the sword that our wives and our children should be a prey.” (This is) the old device of trying to dignify departure from a spiritual oasis for a spiritual desert. The real reason was found in a certain fouled up condition of their spiritual life. The children that they are here whining about are thirty-nine years later going to defeat the very giants that they could have defeated.

Numbers 14:31 says, “But your little ones whom ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in and they shall know the land which ye have despised.” If you were twenty years old and up, you were held responsible, and you were dead, for this reaction against God.

Now you have excuses, don’t you? Why you can’t bring your kids to church and to prayer meeting. Well, someday you won’t have to worry about that because they won’t be coming, and you’ll have other reasons to be thinking up excuses. These people were worried about falling by the sword, but their mental attitude, the sin of cowardice, had already doomed them. “The Lord brought us,” notice in verse 3a. They became so warped. They said, “Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land.” They became so warped that they actually blamed God. They impugned the motives of God for the condition that they found themselves in.

Well, the worst is yet to come. We have not yet begun to fight. Because I want you to notice now if you will, in verse 4, the decision of this people. Now have you got the picture? They have spent all night crying. They’re all mentally drained. Their minds are open to mental sins. So in comes bitterness. Bitterness causes them to draw in human viewpoint. They harden in their souls so they’re insensitive to responding to the plan of God. They express their bitterness by attacking God’s leader and God’s high priest. And they long for going back to the leeks and garlic of Egypt, to descend to their own real spiritual level. The report of the spies has actually shown what was corrosively eating away on the inside that nobody for years had suspected was there. But now all their friends are going to try to justify and to veneer this over, that this is really a fine upright straight Christian. Instead of pitying for heading out into a desert dryness of spiritual backscratching.

Now they have a decision to make. Now notice the mentality of this people. “What we need is to elect a new leader.” They said to one another, “Let us make a captain and let us return into our wallow in Egypt. Let’s get a new leader who will lead us back to all that Egypt stands for.” Now have you got the picture of what they’re saying? “Let’s get another leader who’s going to take us. This leader wants to take us over the hill into the land of milk and honey, the place of happiness. Let’s get ourselves a leader who will give us all of the paraphernalia of religious life and of human social interrelationships, but who will dignify our retreat back to leeks and garlic. And while we have the stench upon us, we will meet one another, and we will smile upon one another, we will have comradery with one another, and we will rejoice in what we are wallowing in. That’s the comparison, that’s the difference in what they were asking for.

And you notice that they “said one to another.” Here you’ve got a bunch of spiritually disoriented sheep and they’re advising each other, fully confident of their qualifications to do so. And they decided to have someone else take over the operation so that things could be done right. So that all would not be lost. So what were they going to do? They’re going to elect a leader, mind you, in place of the one that God had appointed to grab hold of their imaginary bull for them.

Now who were they talking about, dear friends? You just think of whom they are speaking here. They’re talking about Moses. Moses who’s had forty years of training and experience in government and leadership. That’s the man they’re talking about. And what are they going to elect in place of God’s appointed man? What have they got to choose from? Some slave with one year’s freedom out of Egypt.

This is a fantastic passage of Scripture. When you stop and meditate and think about it, you read it over again and say, “I can’t believe this. This cannot be what I’m reading here.” When a people let someone disorient them from God’s mind through the rejection of faith rest as they face some problem, they go unbelievably mad in the zeal to take over and make things right. Though someone may appeal to you and me, that doesn’t qualify for spiritual leadership in God’s eyes. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. That person that you may look at that may be very impressive to you outwardly because he plays the ball game right with people may be so filled with human viewpoint and be so conning you in his religious operation that it’s pathetic. His techniques are to use the human devices and sneak around to do them.

Now in the Lord’s work, it’s only divinely given authority that counts and you’re wrong if you think it isn’t. It’s not election by the people.

Now how did Moses respond to this? Well what would you do if you were in Moses’ place? Well for one thing, you notice, he did not argue back, but he used faith rest. Because Moses operated on the principal that David did years later when he faced the giant Goliath. I remind you of this precious statement in 1 Samuel 17:47. David said, “And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth, not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give you into our hands.” “For the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give you into our hands.

Any time church rebels want to start taking over, this is the verse they should learn first of all. They would learn not to fight on human basis techniques. They would learn that the battle is the Lord’s. I’ve seen more church rebels delivered into our hands because they made the mistake of thinking they could operate just like they do in their business out in the world, in the institutions of the world, and they forgot that God plays a different kind of a game.

Well Moses didn’t argue back. He said, “The battle is the Lord’s.” Instead, he and Aaron went on their faces in prayer, as the people should have done, and put it in the Lord’s hands to direct them in what they should do next in getting things right.

In Numbers 14:6, Caleb and Joshua were horrified. They were the minority report. They’re horrified by what they have heard, so they try to turn the tide of the attitude of the people. “And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunah who were of them that searched the land tore their clothes.” Joshua and Caleb expressed their grief in the ancient manner of tearing the clothing. Things were clear to them because of their divine viewpoint. It was as clear to them as it was confused to the people because of their human view.

Verse 7 says, “And they spoke unto all the company of the children of Israel saying, ‘The land that we passed through to searcheth, it was a very good land.” What they were telling the Jews was, “Look, friend, across the hill. That’s where happiness lies. All you’ve got to do is believe God and get moving. Don’t go back to leeks and garlic. Don’t go back to some lower grade ministry and think that you’re going to improve your lot. That’s not the way to meet your giants that are eating away in your own being.”

Verse 8 says, “If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey.” It requires faith on our part to accept what God has. “Milk and honey” is an idiom for an agriculturally fruitful land. Now this was the promise of the Palestinian Covenant. They had long been told this when God made this agreement with them concerning the land of Palestine, that it would be this kind of a fertile land (Exodus 3:8, 17:13, 33:5). All of these were promises of the kind of a land that God had for them.

So Caleb and Joshua in verse 9 said, “Rebel not ye against the Lord. Neither fear ye the people of the land for they are bred for us. (We’ll eat them up.) Their defense is departed from them. The Lord is with us. Fear them not.” Now do you notice what he called them? What he termed what they were doing? When you do not act in faith rest and you proceed to take charge on your own you are a rebel, and you are rebelling against God. You have no right to refuse to enter the land just because you can’t see you way clear to success. They were not to fear because fear is a mental attitude sin. The enemy would be eaten up by them as bread.

Verse 10: Now I want you to notice that these men have stood up and they have made an appeal to change the direction of this people because much was to be lost permanently for them. Now here are two godly men who stand up and tell it to people like it is. Now how are they going to respond? Well they’ve got two courses of action. They can say, “You’re right. We’re disoriented and we’re going to get back to a right course of action.” Or they could have ground their teeth and gone after Caleb and Joshua, which is what they did. They proceeded to kill them. Proceeded to try to kill the two men who were speaking the only brains that that whole group of people had in that moment.

“And all the congregation demanded to stone them with stones.” Now this is S.O.P—Standard Operating Procedure. When a preacher says what you don’t like to hear, the procedure is to silence him. Now I want to tell you how to silence a preacher. (There are) three techniques.

1) Get rid of him. That’s simple. Then you’re no longer disturbed by what he has to say. Because if you get rid of the preacher you can get somebody else who will really tell you the truth, you see.

2) Flee to another church. If you flee to another church, you won’t be exposed to yourself. You can find a church where the preacher isn’t forever blowing away the smokescreen that you placed around your character. That smokescreen we call our personality.

All of us are born with certain innate temperaments. Our environment and our experiences take our inherited genetic temperament and it creates a certain character. We look at this character which is the functioning expression of the old sin nature within us, and we don’t like what we see. We’re not very proud of it. So we say, “My goodness, I can’t walk out into the world. I can’t leave my house looking the way I am. This is the character I am. The kind of things I think. The kind of things I do. The kind of feelings I have. The kind of expressions I use. The whole bit of what I really am. The sneaky, the underhanded, the purported, the front. So what do we do? Well we put on a little clothing outside we call our personality. If you have the kind of mouth set for it, you get a mouth set full of teeth, and you use the “brother” and “sister,” and you praise the Lord, and you move out into a certain little climate that you create, and you butter people up and all that goes with it. So now you project a personality.

But if you sit in church and somebody keeps blowing your personality away, that’s terrible. And you’re sitting there trying to cover yourself up because you’re looking around to see whether everybody else has noticed what you really are. Which doesn’t matter, because God has. So you want to flee to another church where somebody’s not going to blow away your personality smoke screen.

3) And a third way is to cut off funds so that you put pressure to tone down what the preacher has to say. Now that’s good human viewpoint. It just doesn’t work when God’s in the picture, and God came into the picture while they’re picking up the rocks to bash out the brains of the two men that told it to them in truth. The glory of the Lord suddenly appears in the tabernacle.

Verse 10 says, “But all the congregation demanded to stone them with stones, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.” Verse 11 says, “And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘How long shall this people provoke me, and how long will it be before they believe me for all the signs which I have shown them?’” The lack of faith rest in these Jews. It provokes divine discipline.

(After) all the signs during that year in the wilderness and they still haven’t learned. It’s a monstrous thing to ignore, when you see God blessing in the past, to pretend that it never was an experience of blessing. When you ignore the fact that God has blessed in the past, this is when you get pushy and start trying to muscle your way in to improve. This is when you start going around saying, “I’ve never seen it change. It’s always been like this. In all the time I’ve been here this is how it has been. Now we’re going to get this thing rolling and get it big time.”

**Large Ministries**

The further I go in the ministry, the more I tend to—I’m not absolutely sure this is true—but I have increasingly a sneaking suspicion that you cannot have a genuine in-depth quality ministry and get very many people functioning in it. As soon as you get a few hundred people, you have to start accommodating to such a multiplicity of demands and personality fronts that quality of ministry goes down the drain.

And I suspect that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer must have discovered this too, and was inclined to think this when he founded Dallas Seminary, and that’s why he insisted that the constitution of the seminary include the statement that it could never have more than 100 men studying there at one time. It’s not true of it today. But I wondered why he put that in, and I’m beginning to think that I have some idea of why he did it. Numbers are destructive of spiritual quality for some reason.

Verse 12 says, “I will smite them with a pestilence and disinherit them and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.” “Pestilence” is disease of plague-like proportions. “Disinherit” means that God would remove them by death. “Make a greater nation.” Now here’s a spiritual temptation to Moses.

When Moses went back to Egypt, his wife left them. His wife broke the marriage responsibility of going home to her father. She took the two kids with her as a matter of fact. Moses never saw those children again after one visit. (He) never saw the wife, never saw the children. And he had to move out into the Promised Land without his wife, without the family, never to see them again. Now that wife needed to listen to some tapes on marriage because she was way out of line in leaving him and refusing to go with him. She was way out of line in making decisions, that she could decide where to go and where to come. She didn’t even have a right over her own body. That was her husband’s right now, as it was her right over his body. But we won’t get into that subject this morning. But here’s a prime example of people who needed to know something about divine principals of marriage. We’re revising those tapes. You can get them if you think you need them. And somebody has told me recently that some of you think you do.

But here’s a tempting opportunity for Moses to say, “Now, I can get a new family. I can start over again. I can build right, and I will be a great nation.” But I want you notice this great man Moses—what he did.

“Moses said unto the Lord, ‘Then the Egyptians shall hear it. For thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them. And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, for they have heard that thou Lord art among the people; that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them; and that thou goest before them by daytime in a pillar of a cloud, and a pillar of a cloud by night. Now if thou shalt kill all these people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, ‘Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore to give unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness,’ and now I beseech thee to let the power of my Lord be great according as thou hast spoken, saying ‘The Lord is longsuffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgressions, (but) by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.’ Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of these people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven these people from Egypt unto now.’” That’s a magnificent speech.

Moses had accepted the divine call to be responsible for this people. So he pled in their behalf. A great man does not walk out on his congregation even though they’re rebels to divine viewpoint and they’re walking out on him. Moses preferred to appeal to the grace of God, and if the people went down, he says, “I’ll go down with them.” He was concerned with what the heathen Egyptians would be able to say if God did not come through for Israel. God who brought them by grace out of that land. He was concerned for God’s glory and the benefit of the people.

I know it is common practice for the ministry, and we’ve got seminary students here this morning who are going to have to learn how to deal with this in their own life. It is common practice in the ministry to walk to ever higher professional status and bigger churches, to walk there over the backs of one congregation after another. Any church that finds itself in a position where it’s constantly switching pastors every few years has got some serious spiritual disorientation, or it would sit down and take a look at itself and say, “Now just a minute. Something has got to be wrong here. Why are we the stepping stones and the springboards of some professional minister forever walking on our backs in order to step up to a higher professional position for himself?”

**The Tenure of Ministers**

When God calls a man, he doesn’t call him for two, three, four, ten years. He calls him there for extended periods of time, and He gives them a commission and He gives them a performance. You just look around and find where the smokescreens are being blown away. Those are the ministers that you find that are staying. The boys who aren’t blowing smokescreens around and out of the way, so people can see themselves, are the ones who are climbing on peoples’ backs to step up to the next status position.

**Answers to Prayer**

God says, “I’ll disinherit. I’ll kill all of them.” But Moses says, “I’m concerned of your fame and what is common knowledge.” So Moses prays. How does he pray? He says, “God, this is what you have said. I remind You of Your Word. Your pattern of dealing since we came (out of) Egypt was forgiveness, forgiveness, forgiveness; I ask you to do it again.” So verse 20 says, “And the Lord said, ‘I will pardon according to thy word.’” Moses used Bible doctrine in his prayer. And God is always true to His Word. If you use doctrine, promises, and prophecy in your praying, those are prayers that will be answered, because God cannot deny Himself.

So our prayer life has to function on the faith rest technique of believing doctrine, promises, and prophecy which you can’t believe if you never took the trouble to be pretty regular in church to learn them in the first place. Faith rest. A lurid vivid example here of what happens when a people forget it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971