

## The Unguarded Moment

8-8-99

Numbers 20:1-13

Martin Luther once said that, 'Satan is easy to recognize. He is the one that comes when you are tired and makes a very reasonable request.' We all have those moments. Jesus had some right at the beginning of his ministry with the temptation in the wilderness. I've often wondered about that expression at the end of the temptation, "Satan left Him until a more opportune season". Lk 4:13 We all have those opportune moments when life is just plain difficult. We are at our weakest emotionally or physically or what is most dangerous – both. I thank God for 1Cor 10:13! I memorized that a long time ago and pull it forward in my mind quite frequently.

You see, Satan would love you to believe that no one else is quite in your miserable condition. And because you are forgotten by God... under such duress, you should be allowed to sin. I mean who could blame you if they knew all you were going through. You ever heard that line? Satan uses the same tactics over and over. He has learned what our sinful nature is more apt to cling to. That is why you need to pull up that Scripture and whop him in the mouth with it. He is playing the same game as in the Garden trying to get you to doubt the goodness of God!

Verse 1 Moses was at a place of emotional and probably physical weakness. He'd been two years with these whiners and they didn't want to take the Promised Land and now he has to spend another 38 years with them. Uck! Then his sister Miriam dies. Can you believe the one who was struck with leprosy for murmuring against Moses, recently joined the rest in the rebellion to not go into the Promised Land? She had to die in the wilderness. So Moses has lost his sister. He probably didn't get to be with her much the first 80 years of his life, and now that he is just getting to know her...

Verse 2 Here is a most legitimate need. And instead of learning a lesson from their past mistakes or getting a clue as to the faithfulness in God's provision, instead of asking Moses to pray with them they decide to do the whining routine. Now before we get to harsh on them remember this is our nature. I fall into this trap whenever a string of events all seem to conspire against me. They aren't of course, God is allowing them so I can learn peace isn't about conditions its about a relationship in the conditions.

Verse 3 The rebel leaders and their families were swallowed by the earth. God sent a plague and destroyed 14,700 of the congregation and except for Aaron's intercession they would all have died. Now they are saying, "We wish we would have died with them – been part of God's judgement on sin".

Verse 4,5 Why, why, why... now you never ask God like that do you? The answer is because they refused to follow God into the Promised Land. Most of our difficulty is because we refused to obey God at some point and decided to go our own way. Then we complain because God has not blessed our plans.

Verse 6 This is their usual response to sin in the camp- fall facedown before the Lord. 5x in this book of Numbers. We would do well to follow their example when we sense rebellion against God.

Verse 7,8 God wants to meet the peoples needs if they will but ask. Instead of asking they whine and complain and make ludicrous statements. If they only realized what they were saying. "We want to go straight from here to God's presence through an act of God's judgement on our rebellion." WOE think how that would be. But there seems to be little fear of God before their eyes. We need a healthy fear of the wrath and justice of God. At the same time we need to know the Father who disciplines also wants to meet all our needs if we will but ask. The people see God as an ogre – Moses sees God as a loving Father.

Now here is a wonderful picture of Jesus. We'll gaze on it again at our Bible study but to understand what is happening here we have to skip ahead and look at the picture now. There is a rock rolling around in the Desert following them. It's Jesus! We sing about our Rock, There is no Rock like our God ...etc. 1Co 10:4 They had already received water from the Rock once when Moses was commanded to strike it with the rod. How many times did Jesus the Rock need to be struck for us? ONCE And after He was stricken by God, He never need be stricken again. Hebrews 6:4-6 warns us we cannot crucify the Son of God all over again. Once Jesus died for us we need but ask. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" He doesn't need to be smitten by God again, just ask.

Moses was asked to be part of painting this wonderful portrait of Christ. We get thirsty in this world for the Living Water. Nothing else really satisfies; and like the woman at the well we ask for the Living Water. Then notice the verse says "its water". "To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of life." Rev 21:6 Just ask- God allows you to get thirsty so you will ask and receive freely from the Rock its living water. If we understood this we would ask more. Listen... Can you hear it? The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. Rev 22:17 That is what we as Christians do – we walk through this life saying "Come! Come to the Rock! You say you're thirsty – I found the water! Come to the Rock!"

Verse 9,10 Hear the tone of his voice. Notice something wrong. Verse 8 God said, "you will bring water out of the rock" as in the case of an instrument or

tool being used by another. But here Moses says, "Must WE bring water out of this Rock".

Verse 11 NOOOOOO! It's like someone took a can of paint and threw it at a masterpiece. Moses strikes it twice! No water came out with the first hit so he hit it again. Do you wonder why God allowed water to flow at all? Moses was God's friend. Sometimes He will allow a miracle in the midst of our error because we are his friend, He upholds our relationship before the world but we will suffer the consequence still. God wants to meet our needs and sometimes He will meet it **even** when we do it our own way. The heart of God was so different from what they imagined.

Verse 12 Did Moses fear words alone would not be enough? Sometimes we act the same way. The Lord speaks to our hearts and confirms what He is directing us to do and we do something different, something that makes more sense to us. We strike the rock twice in some way. We reason how it should go. He asks us to pray and we jump into some kind of activity. **Remember Naaman's** response to Elisha's servant that told him that if he washed in the Jordan he would be cured of his leprosy? His response was anger. Jordan was dirty, and the rivers of Damascus were sparkling clear. We often think we have a better idea. **But God has something to teach us in the process He is taking us through. Since He is omniscient and omnipotent what He says is THE BEST WAY and what we come up with as an addendum is not just second best – it is no longer holy.**

This verse says he did not trust God enough to honor Him as holy. Tired and sorrowful Moses yielded to doubts and did it his own way. After all these people were always complaining. Now they are quarreling with Moses as if he was the one that chose the route. God desired to teach the people to ask for their needs. Instead in his unguarded moment Moses let his anger turn into action that displayed his doubts. Instead of showing God as a holy – set apart – and pure God, he displayed Moses' unguarded moment. Instead of putting the finishing touches on a masterpiece, **He painted another picture**, man taking things into his own hands, being the boss.

Verse 13 Sometimes we quarrel with man when our real argument is with God. We know we shouldn't get mad at God so we get mad at the man that most represents Him to us. Moses' actions showed he was upset with God too. How could Moses have understood the picture that was being painted? I don't think he had a clue. But he knew he should obey God but he allowed this moment of the flesh to keep him from the Promised Land and from leaving us the picture God intended.

Isn't that a lot like our daily life? God wants to reveal his Son in us but we act out of weakness and anger something we see as more reasonable. We justify in our mind that our way is OK - that we really didn't hear clearly from God. We

are only robbing ourselves of the rest that comes in obedience to Him, and the picture of his Son that God wants to present in your life to others. God will still bring forth the water. He will still meet the need. He shows himself holy – a God of grace and love that meets the needs of his creatures. But we miss the wonderful opportunities He has for us. Listen, obey, watch for the unguarded moment. Pray without ceasing. “Deliver us from the Evil One.” Lift each other up in those moments of weakness by prayer and fellowship. God will meet the need, show Himself holy, but He wants to reveal his Son through you. Will you listen and obey exactly what He says?