

Moses Sins

(Numbers 20:1-13)

Introduction

Ask: Do your parents discipline you when you are naughty? Why? What do you think might happen if there were no consequences for doing wrong?

Ask: Do you think that God punishes people when they disobey Him? How does He punish people? Do you think that is fair?

Today we're going to learn about a time that Moses sinned against God. And, find out how God punished him for his disobedience.

Opening Prayer

Father, You expect us to follow the Ten Commandments that You gave Moses in the desert. We want to be obedient to You. We want every thought, word, and deed that we do to please You. You say in your word that every sin must be punished. Help us to learn to take that seriously. Thank You that You still love us even when we sin. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Lesson

For almost forty years, thousands of Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness! They should have been in the new land many years ago.

Ask: Why weren't they in the new land as Moses had promised?

Remember what happened when Moses sent the 12 spies into the Promised Land? Ten of the spies scared the people by telling them that there were giants in the land and the cities were too well fortified.

They convinced most of the people that they couldn't conquer the new land. They chose to believe those ten doubting spies instead of trusting God.

The journey from Egypt to the Promised Land should have taken only a few months, but the children of Israel were forced to wander in the desert for another 40 years until all of the people who had not trusted God died, all because they didn't trust and obey God.

Well, as we pick up the story line today, once again the people ran out of water and they began to grumble and complain. They blamed Moses and Aaron for bringing them out to the desert.

They did not learn from their mistakes. They kept forgetting God's punishment for doubting Him and not trusting Him. All they did was grumble and complain. They didn't remember how good God had been, how He had provided for them and protected them for 40 long years while they wandered in the desert.

Numbers 20:2-5

There was no water for the people to drink at that place, so they rebelled against Moses and Aaron. ³The people blamed Moses and said, "If only we had died in the LORD's presence with our brothers! ⁴Why have you brought the congregation of the LORD's people into this wilderness to die, along with all our livestock? ⁵Why did you make us leave Egypt and bring us here to this terrible place? This land has no grain, no figs, no grapes, no pomegranates, and no water to drink!"

They cried against Moses and Aaron, accusing them of trying to kill them! Moses and Aaron went to meet with God at the gate to the tabernacle.

Numbers 20:6

Moses and Aaron turned away from the people and went to the entrance of the Tabernacle, where they fell face down on the ground. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to them,

God heard their prayers.

Numbers 20:7-8

*and the LORD said to Moses, ⁸"You and Aaron must take the staff and assemble the entire community. As the people watch, **speak to the rock***

over there, and it will pour out its water. You will provide enough water from the rock to satisfy the whole community and their livestock."

40 years earlier, the people came to this very same rock and they complained against Moses because they had no water. [Briefly review Exodus 17:1-6.]

Ask: Do you remember what God told Moses to do the first time they came to this rock in Exodus 17:6? (Strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.)

Ask: What did God tell Moses to do this time in Numbers 20:8? (Speak to the rock, and it will pour out its water.)

Let's see if Moses did what God told him to do.

Numbers 20:9-10

*So Moses did as he was told. He took the staff from the place where it was kept before the LORD. Then he and Aaron summoned the people to come and gather at the rock. "Listen, you rebels!" he shouted. "Must **we** bring you water from this rock?"*

Moses got the rod out of the Ark of the Covenant and called the people to gather together at the rock. But he was very, very angry...

Numbers 20:11

*Then Moses raised his hand and **struck the rock twice with the staff**, and water gushed out. So the entire community and their livestock drank their fill.*

When you're angry you don't always think straight, do you? Moses was so angry he didn't speak to the rock as God had told him to do; he struck the rock with the rod, not once, but twice!

God loved the people so much he made the water gush out of the rock so that they and their animals could drink. But Moses had disobeyed God.

Ask: Do you think that God would have to punish Moses for disobeying Him?

Yes! All sin must be punished. Let's see how God punished Moses and Aaron for being disobedient.

Numbers 20:12

*But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, **you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!**"*

Not go into the Promised Land! After all those years of traveling over dusty sand! Moses must have wept many bitter tears. How he must have regretted not obeying God!

Even though Moses obeyed God many times before, God expected him to set an example for the people he was leading.

God expects you and me to set a good example to others, too. When you do naughty things, that brings disgrace to God's name. You are not being a good example to others. God wants you to lead others to Him not discourage them from following Jesus.

Ask: Do you think that God loved Moses less for being disobedient?

God still loved Moses even though he had sinned against Him. God loved him with a Father's love; just like He loves you.

There is always forgiveness with God. If you do anything that displeases God all you need to do is go to Him in prayer and ask Him to forgive you. Then you must stop doing those things that are not God pleasing.

You have to understand, that even though God forgives you for your sin, sin must be punished. There are consequences to your sin. Some sins have bigger and longer lasting consequences. For Moses, he was never allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Ask: Was that fair of God? [Discuss with children.]

Ask: Did Moses throw a fit and quit serving God because he couldn't go into the Promised Land?

No! Moses knew he had done wrong and kept right on loving and serving God. He knew God was fair and trusted Him with his life.

In accepting his punishment without complaint, he became a good example to the people following him. He showed people that he still believed in God and trusted Him. Moses knew God was good.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that there is forgiveness with You. I know that You said that all sin must be punished! But, praise You for sending Jesus to come and take my place on the cross. Thank You, Jesus, for taking my punishment! I owe You my life. Please give me the power of the Holy Spirit so that every thought I have, word that I speak and thing that I do will be pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why did it take 40 years for the children of Israel to get from Egypt to Israel? (Because they didn't trust God)
2. Why did the Israelites keep grumbling and complaining? (They didn't trust God.)
3. When the people complained against Moses and Aaron, where did they go to meet with God? (The gate to the tabernacle.)
4. What did God tell Moses to do? (Speak to the rock and tell it to pour out the water.)
5. What did Moses do instead of obeying God? (He struck the rock twice with his rod.)
6. Did water come out of the rock even though Moses disobeyed God? (Yes, it gushed out and all the people and their animals had their fill.)
7. Do you think that God had to punish Moses for disobeying Him? (Yes, all sin must be punished.)
8. How did God punish Moses for disobeying Him? (He didn't allow Moses to enter the Promised Land.)
9. Was God's punishment fair to Moses? After all, Moses had faithfully led the people through the desert for 40 long years. (Yes, all sin has consequences.)
10. Do you think that God loved Moses less for being disobedient? (No! God loved him with a Father's love; just like He loves you.)
11. What should you do if you do anything that displeases God? (Go to Him in prayer and ask Him to forgive you. Then you must stop doing those things that are not God pleasing.)
12. If you ask God to forgive you when you sin, do you think you should NOT get punished? (Even though God forgives you for your sin, sin must be punished. There are consequences to your sin.)
13. Do you think it was fair of God to keep Moses from entering the Promised Land? (Yes, all sin must be punished.)
14. How did Moses react when God told him he couldn't go into the Promised Land? Did he throw a fit and quit serving God? (No! He kept right on loving and serving God. Moses knew God was fair. He trusted God's punishment as being right and fitting.)

15. How did Moses show the people that he still believed in God and trusted Him? (He accepted his punishment without complaint.)

16. What are the staff, the rock and the water pictures of?

[Teacher, the staff is a picture of the cross, the rock is a picture of the Jesus, and the water is a picture of the Holy Spirit. Refer back to Lesson #10 for a fuller explanation.]

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