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Deuteronomy 2&3 "Learning Where Victory Is Found" March 2, 2016

Let's open our Bibles this evening, shall we, to Deuteronomy 2 as we continue in our favorite book of the Bible and join Moses who is 120 years old now.

It is 1407 B.C. or so, and Moses is down to his final few weeks before heading home to glory. He has run the race well. He has finished well. He comes to the finish line kind of hobbled but determined. And he sets before a second generation a review of their history in lessons that he wants to be sure they've learned from watching their families (the first generation out of Egypt) die in the wilderness and what God wants to do with them now going forward.

We mentioned last week that this is a book delivered in forty days. We know that from the day they entered into the Promised Land and the day that Moses began this book. So, forty days of teaching. I don't know how many sessions or how many hours he spent with them going over this. Thirty days after he was taken by the Lord home (mourning before) Joshua then took the people into the land.

Sometimes people call the book of Deuteronomy a book of remembrance, and that's okay if you were nineteen years old when you were turned away at the door. But a lot of these kids had been born during those forty years in wandering in the wilderness, and for them, it's not really a rehashing but just a teaching of some of the things that they were supposed to remember.

So the book is really Moses' last comment to a nation that he doesn't want to turn around again. And it's an easily-outlined book. Chapters 1-3 are all a look back - it's all about what has gotten you to this point, this second generation that is now back on the border. Chapters 4-26 are all present tense - this is how you should live your life now, this is what God requires of you now. And then the rest of the book, from chapter 27 through 34, is a preparation for the future - what now God expects you to begin to do as you go forward. So it's what God has done, what God is doing and what God will do.

Numbers give us the history (this book that we just finished) of the first generation getting to a border town called Kadesh Barnea. It was the place that the spies were sent out from. It was the place that, six weeks later almost, the nation balked, and the judgment of God was proclaimed. But once you get that

story out of Deuteronomy, there is virtually no report at all of the $38\frac{1}{2}$ years that the nation wandered in the wilderness; $38\frac{1}{2}$ years because they spent a year at Mount Sinai, and by the time they got there and were settled and then made the trip here, it covers the other six months. So it's forty years in all, but it was $38\frac{1}{2}$ years of just wandering, and nothing is reported to us except maybe the last year, which we will get to tonight. So, like Moses, He's silent about those thirty-eight years of judgment, and the reason is there was nothing to report. The people were going nowhere.

But Moses, in chapter 2 now, picks up the story, if you will, as God begins to prepare them for what lies ahead. It is probably about January or February, if we try to guess from the Scriptures. The weather is warm in the desert. They are sitting on the border. It is mid-winter. They have seen God's hand. And what we are going to read tonight is something that took place about the last nine to twelve months when God is bringing them towards the Kadesh Barnea area again, and He takes them from south to north all along the Jordan; but on the eastern side, not having yet entered into the Land of Promise. So chapters 2 and 3 are the rehearsal of their really near history, if you will. "Here's what God did - the last ten months, twelve months. Now we're going to go into the land. Let's not forget what we've learned this far." And it is a laying out of all of the victories over the east side of the Jordan - monuments in their history. These are victories that will be repeated for generations to come. It's the first group (after getting out of Egypt) that has really begun to experience God's victory through faith. And it is mentioned lots in the Psalms. "Look how faithful God is. Look how true to His Word He has been. You can count on Him. The victory is yours." And then this ever-present quote, "Go possess your possessions." It's an interesting concept, but it breaks down to this - God has given you lots, but He's not just going to hand it to you. You're going to have to go in and get it by faith. He's promised you peace, but if you don't rest in His Word, you may never have peace. But it's not that it's not available. You're just not wanting to go in and get it by faith. And all along, there's that undertone to the nation, "Go in and get what God has prepared for you. But you're going to have to walk by faith."

So we begin tonight, in chapter 2, as the children of Israel had refused to enter into the land. They had been turned back due to their lack of faith, to their determination that God could not be trusted. "We can't trust the Lord. We can't follow Him. We can't believe that He can overcome the giants in the land." And so they have gone out, because of the spies and all, and for thirty-eight years the

whole generation has died. Nothing is said in the Bible about it at all. What we do get is when the thirty-eight years are up and they begin to head again towards the land that God picks up the story because now they're moving forward again with Him. So chapter 2 really jumps thirty-eight years ahead to their call to return here by battling up and down the Jordan and learning about His abilities in them.

So let's start chapter 2. We're going to try to do chapters 2 and 3 tonight. I think we'll be all right. Verse 1 says this, "Then" (Moses said) "we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, as the LORD spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days." "Many days." Wasted days. Actually those "many days" turned out to be thirty-eight years and a little bit. Wasted days. Right? Can you imagine knowing the Lord and spending most of your life, just because of a lack of obedience, going nowhere? In fact, they walked in circles (in many ways) just kind of around and around and around, just waiting to die. God had great plans for them, but they weren't going that direction. This is a perfect description of life in the flesh - going nowhere fast; and that years pass without any significant growth, no land to claim, no possessions to hold onto. Everything that the flesh wanted the flesh took, and no progress is seen. There's no mention of the death march. It's just thirty-eight years. But that time, now, is up, and Moses skips over that entire thing, and so does the book of Numbers. God doesn't tell us much about it at all because it literally is an example of a life lived where you know the Lord, but you don't do anything with that knowledge; you don't walk with God. So they walked around. They skirted Mount Seir; around and around they went "for many days." And then we read, "And the LORD spoke to me, saying: 'You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward.'" So the Lord, through Moses, quietly passes over these thirty-eight years of wandering and silence, nothing to report, and He now jumps ahead to the end of that sojourning where the Lord says to him, "All right. Let's try this again." This final moving again to Kadesh, which is the jump-off spot, if you will, for the children of Israel will be presented to them, and it'll be kind of a spiritual road map. And Moses is going to take them through the last year and say, "Look how we've gotten here this time." Baby steps - God preparing them for the big battles that lie ahead. But I love verse 3, where the Lord says, "You've skirted this mountain long enough. You have been wandering around long enough."

And I wonder sometimes how much the Lord would like to say that to you and me. Right? "You've sat there long enough. You've just done nothing long enough. You made promises you haven't kept long enough." Because God has so much available.

You know, years earlier, when they were camped before the Lord at Mount Sinai, where God kept them for a year - not to punish them but so that they would know Him - it wasn't remedial, it was God wanted to reveal Himself. It was another "R" word; reveal not remedial. But after a year (back in chapter 1:6), the Lord said to them there, "You've dwelt long enough in this mountain. Now let's go. You've learned everything you need to learn to begin to walk with God. But now it's remedial. You've been wandering around doing nothing and wasting time long enough. Now it's a new generation." And I wonder sometimes if the Lord hasn't been saying that to some of you. "You've been wandering around aimlessly in your spiritual relationship with God." Oh, you're around, but truth be told, you're not doing much. You know? You're just kind of surviving the thing, and maybe it's time to quit playing church, and go forward by faith, and quit pretending or spinning in place. What a horrible way to ten years after you got saved you're still in the same seat doing the same thing - which is nothing - as before. That's not God's best, certainly. He has much more available to you. Certainly He has much more He'd like to do in your life. I mean, I can't read my Bible but just begin to read that God has great plans, and He has great works that He wants to do, and those that walk with Him get to be a part of that.

So they had determined, these last ten months or so, to listen to what God had to say, to follow the Lord and to obey. And so He tells them to go north. Now if you'll just, in your mind, get a picture of Israel on one side and Jordan on the other, it's called the Transjordan area - the eastern side of the Jordan River, all the way down to the Red Sea and all the way up to the Sea of Galilee. That's where all these battles would take place. So they would go from south to north, and they'd end up kind of in the middle of the country, coming into the land at Kadesh, near Jericho.

So, a couple of things to note. Verse 3, He says to them, "You've been here long enough. Let's get moving. Go north." Headed now again for this land. Verse 4, " 'And command the people, saying, "You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink." ' " Now, a couple of things I find to be very interesting. The Lord, in sending them this last year towards those experiences that would develop their

faith, begins by saying to them, "They're going to be afraid of you." Which is pretty interesting because if you go back and read (Numbers 13), the spies had said, "We're afraid of them." And the people greatly feared. "There were giants, and there were walled cities, and they were bigger than we were, and they're going to kill our children. Oh, man, we're going to be afraid of them!" But just the opposite was true. In fact, here's God's solution. He would put the fear of them in the heart of those who opposed God, and we're going to read that oftentimes in the Scriptures tonight as they head that twelve-month trip from south to north and back to the middle, if you will, on the other side of the Jordan. The fear of God was in their hearts, and that's the way it should be. The church shouldn't fear the world; the world should fear the church because we're God's people. The other thing I find interesting, and you may not have noticed, is that it appears, from verse 6, that the manna and the water from the rock were no longer a regular practice. Not sure of that, but they were told to buy bread and to buy water - which is interesting. So God wanted them to begin to be responsible. They're very close to the land now, and they would have to do their part as they acted in faith and be responsible.

Now the first, notice, people that they encountered were Esau's descendants. "Though they fear you, don't meddle with them. The land that they live in is not for you. Don't mess with them. Don't touch them. Even though you could take advantage of them because they're fearful of you, don't. I'm not giving you any of their land." And I love the fact that even Esau, Jacob's twin, as far as I know biblically, didn't have a spiritual bone in his body - I mean this is not the example of a man who loved the Lord. He was still given a promise by God (back in Genesis 36) that God keeps. He keeps His Word even to the unfaithful. Right? God is still faithful. And so, "Move by them. Though they fear you, it is their land. I've made a promise to them that they can keep it. It is not to belong to you. You're not to touch it or to go after it. And so, just leave it be."

And then He says, in verse 7, " ' "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing." ' " God knew their plight. But it's interesting. On the heels of, "I've given them a promise even though they are not godly folks," the Lord says to you, "You know the work of His hands, and He knows what you've been going through. But God has been faithful to you. You've lacked nothing." I don't know how you take 2½ million people into the wilderness for forty years and then say to them, "Anybody lack

anything?" and everybody goes, "No. We're good." You know, you can't take three people to dinner and hear that. "Oh, well, the dessert wasn't really up to my standards." You know, we get pretty dissatisfied. They lacked nothing, though their frequent complaints might have said that they felt otherwise. But to the unfaithful God had been extremely faithful, and He had even made their way (trudging) easier by His provision. He never left them though they turned from Him time and again. God blessed, and He knew His own; and, "God has been with you, you have lacked nothing; God has taken very good care of you; learn that now."

Verse 8 - the next battle or the next people that they would run into, "And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by the way of the Wilderness of Moab. Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.' (The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them). Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered.' So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered." So first stop, Esau - brethren. "Leave him alone." Then they come to this next stop, and the Lord said, "I don't want you to mess with the children of Moab either because I've given that land, the land of Ar, to the children of Lot." God had promised another piece of land to another descendant. Now notice that Moses uses both Mount Seir and Moab to say to the children of Israel, "Just go forward, as both of these lands have giants living in them. You were worried about coming into the land. There were giants there." But, look, God even gave the land that He had promised to people who didn't walk with Him. Lot certainly didn't walk much with the Lord; either did Esau. But the point is God is faithful. Right? God is faithful. Even to the unfaithful, God is faithful. "So don't touch their land. I've made a promise to them, and I intend on keeping My promise to them. The land is theirs, and it is in their hands, and they have it." Even ungodly folks who hadn't been faithful - God had been faithful to them.

And again, notice in verse 14, Moses talks about the wasted time. He says, "And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war was

consumed from the midst of the camp, just as the LORD had sworn to them." So God made promises to Esau (He kept it) and to Lot (and He kept it). And He promised judgment, and He kept that. Verse 15, "For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed. So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, that the LORD spoke to me, saying: 'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession. (That was also regarded as a land of giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day. And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza - the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place).' " So, third reference. First, Esau; then Lot, and now these folks as well. The third reference, again - the Amorites, which God was giving to the descendants of Lot. And then three times the Lord says, "Hey, by the way, a bunch of giants live there, too." You know, you get the idea that the Lord was just kind of going after the very thing that had turned the people away. Go back, and read what the spies said. "There are giants in the land. We cannot overcome them. They are stronger than we are." And at every point the Lord goes, "Yeah, and then we're going to go there, but don't touch them. Hey, by the way, the Lot guys live there. The giants used to live there, but I gave it to the guys from Lot, and so they were able to go in and take it away from them." And you're thinking they don't even walk with God! Yeah, but it's not about them. It's about God. God is faithful to His Word. And Lot was able to take it, and Esau was able to take it, and Lot got this other piece of property from the Amorites. "So, hey, we're going to send you into the Land of Promise. Yeah, there're some giants there, but let's face it. What are giants going to do when God's with you?" And that's really Moses' argument, if you will, as he lists for them these names (that maybe you have a hard time pronouncing or you haven't looked up on a map). The bottom line is the giants were there again, and they were dispossessed because God is faithful. And they're all object lessons to do one thing to 2½ million people - build up their faith, as they would soon head into the Land of Promise. So, often God will put us in places where we see (the very things

we fear) Him overcome. Then we, "All right. I guess I can trust the Lord. I didn't think I could, but I must be able to." It's the same kind of lesson, if you will, here.

Verse 24 says the Lord said, " 'Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand' " (now so far He's just said leave everything alone - three countries, three boundaries, three people groups - leave them alone, I've made promises to them; now He says I want you to go forward, and I have given to you - past tense - I have given into your hand) " 'Sihon the Amorite, kind of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle. This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.' " So, this is the first battle now that they engaged by faith. They were told what not to do. Now, thirty-eight years later, they were told what to do. And God will begin to give them, literally, entire land from south to north. All of it along the Jordan will become a part of Israel's possession at this time. They had to learn to go fight by faith. So God wasn't sending them into the big Promised Land yet, but He's picking off one after the other. Tough people. Tougher than they were but not as tough as the whole thing. So God was taking them forward in baby steps so He could build up their faith.

I think God has something for us. I love verse 24. Look at the end of verse 24. The Lord says, "I've given it to you" (past tense) "so go in and begin to possess it," (present tense) "and you're going to have to engage them in battle to get it. And just know that I'm going to put the fear of God in them. That's where the fear of God comes from. They're going to tremble because of you, but you've got to go in and possess the land, and you're going to have to fight for it." Which is pretty interesting because on the one hand, everything comes from the Lord, but on the other hand, you've got a part to play in all of this. Right? It's not like fold your arms, and, "I'll just wait for God to get me a job." No. You probably should go knock on some doors. Fill out some applications. Turn in your resume. It doesn't mean God doesn't lead and guide and provide. But there's no place in the Bible where God's people ever just sat back, unless the Lord wanted to make a point - like at Jericho, and He said, "Just sit back. Check this out. In fact, blow a trumpet. That'll be good. That'll be helpful. And march around a little bit." But otherwise, there's no place that God wants His people to just sit. So, God provides joy to those who believe His Word. Stand on it! God provides for people who trust Him. Trust Him! God will bring you rest in your heart if you just let Him have your life. So do that! Don't come to church complaining, "Man, I have no peace at all."

That's not God's fault. You can't blame Him. "I don't have any peace." Really? Bad God. Bad God. No, God's good! "I will give you rest." Why don't you have it? "I don't know." Well, then, begin to battle. Begin to possess. Take a step in the right direction. Start hanging on to what God says. That's the whole issue behind growing and going forward - is appropriating what God has promised. But it's an important verse because you don't possess it all at once. You begin to possess it, and in order to do so, you have to engage in the battle, and then you have to know that God will go before you to give you victory. You'll be invincible in His name, but you'll still have to go face the enemy kind of face-to-face, if you will. Go forward and possess your possessions. On this side of the Jordan - not into the Promised Land yet. They were going to experience God's work. But I want you to notice - stand to fight and then believe. In fact, here's what I think you could almost write across the verse - they were not fighting for victory because God said, "I've given it to you." In other words, that's done. Right? They weren't fighting for victory as much as learning to stand in victory. And there's a big difference. One depends on you, the other depends upon Him. "Let's fight and beat them." No. You just stand in the Lord, and learn to stand in His promises.

So verse 25 is a sure work of God on their behalf and for their sake. You remember when the spies came back (at the end of Numbers 13), and they said (of the people), "We are not able to stand up against them because they are stronger than we are. The land is beautiful, but man, we are like grasshoppers in the sight of these men of great stature. And we saw the Anak, the Anakim." We've seen them mentioned here three different times. "We were like grasshoppers in their sight, and everybody wept all night." And yet God said, "I'll give it to you." The promise hadn't changed. But the hearts of the people had. This generation was going to at least, initially, go forward in faith. The last generation just saw big people, saw the difficulties. And yet the Lord says what? Had they gone forward, God would have put the fear of the Lord in their hearts. But they didn't go forward. They missed out. Not because God wasn't faithful but because they didn't believe His solution. They would have said, "Lord, how can we beat these big giants?" And you may say, "How am I going to overcome the fear that I have or the anger that I have or the sorrow that I feel?" And the answer's the same. I have to go and trust the Lord and His promises. The spies didn't see the Lord, they saw themselves; and they gave an untrue report to the people. Ten guys led 2½ million people astray. They lied about God. "Oh, we're dead meat!" Well maybe if the Lord's not here. But he said, "Go." And Caleb and Joshua tried to make the argument. "God's been with us, man. Remember what He did in Egypt for nine

months? Remember how He's been feeding us in the wilderness? Remember what's happened for a year?" They couldn't get through. Do you remember, and I'm sure that you do (and we'll get to it as we get to Joshua), when Joshua got into the land, and they were going to go in and fight Jericho, he sent two spies in. He didn't sent twelve. Since only two came back faithful, I figured he just figured we just needed two. He sent two guys in, and you might remember (there in Joshua 2) that they came to Rahab, who was a woman of the night who lived on the wall of the city of Jericho. And she said to these men, when they encountered her, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and the terror of you has fallen upon us. We have been terrified for years. You guys hanging out....we were wondering when you were coming. All of the inhabitants of the land," she said, "are faint-hearted because of you. We heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt." That was forty years ago. And for forty years, they'd held terror. Could the children of Israel have gone in and won? Yes, of course they could have. Then she brings it up to just a year or so earlier. She said, "We've heard what you did to the two kings of the Amorites on the other side of the Jordan - Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And when we heard these things, our hearts melted. No courage remained in any of us for the Lord, your God, He's the God in heaven above and on the earth beneath. We can't fight you and your God." That came from a woman who probably didn't need to worry too much. She wasn't a warrior. She wasn't trying to fight people off. She was just trying to survive in the society. But she was sure that Israel's God was terrifying and couldn't be stopped. What does the Lord say to these folks a year before they get there? "Hey, I'm going to go before you, starting today, and folks are going to have the fear of God in their hearts." So God had done what He had said, but they believed the original ten spies. Hopefully this next group would believe the promises of God.

So, instead of go around them, this time the Lord says (in verse 26), "And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, 'Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.' But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day. And the LORD said to me, 'See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess it,

that you may inherit his land.' " So remember that term as you go through, especially this lesson - possess your possessions. "Begin to possess it. Engage him in battle. You may inherit the land." Now, look, inheritance, by definition, is when somebody leaves you something that didn't belong to you. Right? God is leaving this land for them, but they're going to have to go get it. God has a plan for Sihon. His days are numbered. God's about to judge him. His hammer is the nation of Israel. It doesn't make Israel more righteous; it just makes God right. And He uses an unrighteous people, for the most part, to beat down an unrighteous people. But for some, judgment has come; for some, mercy is still available. And so here comes God's destruction.

In fact, verse 32, "Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. And the LORD our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took." Now you read that, I know, and your natural response is, "Man, that sounds kind of cruel!" the wholesale destruction of a generation of people. The problem is God had waited for generations for these folks to repent. When the Lord first made a promise to Abraham and to his descendants and all, and then to Jacob, it was, "I'm going to take you into the land," but the fullness of their sin isn't there yet. And God waited 430 years, plus 430 more. So they'd already been in the land 430 years when that promise came. It was almost 900 years of waiting for a nation to repent, and God said, "That's enough. I'm wiping them out." Why would He wipe them out? Well, they were sacrificing their children in the fire. There was more abomination. The nation, had they been left to themselves, would have internally corruptly destroyed itself. The Canaanite behavior is so wicked, if you read anything at all, historically. I don't think you could read five pages of it in church - out loud. I mean, it was that horrifying. So the Lord was gracious. It's like a rabid animal. You have to get rid of it, or everybody dies. So the Lord did not allow them to go in and just kind of go, "Oh, we'll just play nice." I mean, the people that they placed nice with turned out to be the infecting influence upon their life. So, instead of going around this group, the Lord tells them to go through them. And when he refused to let God's people pass, God hardened his heart, prepared him for judgment and sent in His people who were learning about the goodness of God.

Notice in verse 24 and again down in verse 31, " 'And the LORD said to me, "See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess it, that you may inherit his land." ' " Begin to possess it. Verse 24 He said the same thing, right? "Go in, and begin to possess it, and engage him in battle." I think that has to be the lesson that you can't lose track of and lose sight of. There's really nothing more that God could say to us than, "Here's everything I offer to you. Now come in and take it." But you're going to have to take it by faith. You're going to have to believe that God means what He says. And rather than worrying, you pray, and you leave it with the Lord. Worry is a fleshly act. Faith is a spiritual one. Do I trust God enough not to worry? Well, maybe not. Well, then begin to possess the land. Spend two hours a day not worrying and twenty-two worrying. Now you're possessing the land. You're two hours into it, right? You've got a whole day to work on, but you're moving forward. So God demanded the destruction of this entire nation. They only took the livestock to feed themselves.

And then we read in verse 36, "From Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and from the city that is in the ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; the LORD our God delivered all to us. Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon - anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us." The bottom line is - for the first time, this nation is doing what God says. "Leave these people alone. Take these people on. Stay away from these cities." And whatever the Lord told them to do, they were doing. I love verse 36. We read, at the end that "there was not one city too strong for us; the LORD our God delivered all to us." Stay away from what God told you not to be involved with, and go after everything God sets before you. And, obediently, they did it. And, like I said, you can read through Numbers and the details of these battles. Just look for the names; and the people groups are listed there in order and some of the difficulties that they faced as they went forward. So, east of the Jordan, overpowering, overpowered little enemies and making progress as God directs them. "We've experienced His power. Our forefathers didn't. So now let's go forward." So that was the first encounter.

"Then we turned," chapter 3:1, "and went up the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei." Again, another enemy stronger than they. "And the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.' So the

LORD our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we attacked him until he had no survivors remaining. And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many rural towns. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves." So, God dispels Sihon. He turns His attention to Og. He, too, utterly deposes him - delivers judgment. And God begins to bless these folks. Now Moses is just sitting in front of these guys who, in this last year, have experienced this and says, "You remember what happened last year. You remember how we saw God work." And more victories awaited their people as they headed for the Land of Promise. But here's the deal - they were experiencing God's hand as they were obedient to Him and willing. I'll say that to you again. God will do what He says if you're willing to be obedient and follow. You'll have peace. You'll have joy. You'll see His provision. You'll have His boldness. There'll be rest. You'll be a life that is fruitful and God-pleasing, and you'll be satisfied in that life. But you're going to have to keep your eyes on Him. And notice in verse 37 (chapter 2), "We stayed away from whatever God forbid." Pretty good advice, right? "We stayed away from everything that God forbid." So they realized that, even when they were outnumbered and outdone, they were never outmatched when God was on their side. And notice in verse 1 (chapter 3), when the enemy came out, they turned to the Lord to see what He would have them do. "What do you want us to do, Lord?" It's quite a bit different from that first generation, don't you think? So they moved forward.

Og, the king of Heshbon, was overthrown by God's people on the move - 2½ million people. But this is not a fighting army. These were guys just wandering around, looking for food. They came out of bondage for 430 years. They weren't trained. They'd been trained on how to prepare a lamb for sacrifice, how to worship, how to keep the feast days. They had a lot of that going for them. But, "Come on, buddy. We're going to fight with swords!" They had no idea. They were ill equipped. Just like so often I think the church looks ill equipped. But if Jesus is with us, who can be against us? And sixty cities - walled and fenced - that was the problem, wasn't it, back in the first go around? They came back (the spies) and went, "Oh, man, the cities have walls, and they're big, and we can't get in," and the Lord's going, "Yeah, let Me just give you sixty walled cities and some rural towns, and you'll learn that I'm with you. You're going to be just fine."

Verse 8, "And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon" - Mount Hermon is in the extreme north of Israel - "(the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion and the Amorites call it Senir)," - so if you're reading through the Bible, and you want a little guide, there you go - "all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit." So victories continued, and all this is doing, this is just a big summary chapter that says from the north to Mount Hermon, which is on the border of Syria and Lebanon and Israel - there's one ski zone in Israel, it's Mount Hermon. You can go skiing there all year almost. But be careful what side of the mountain you ski down - you can end up in the wrong place. You can get to Israel, but you might end up in Syria, too. "Oops," too late to get back in the chairlift. It is one of the three major sources for the Jordan River water. So it's highly contested and protected. But all that Moses is saying to the people is, "Look, all the way from north down to the south, we've had victory over everyone, and we took out the last remaining giant as far as we know." And verse 11 comes with the biblical definition of a true king size bed - 13½' long, 6' wide, made of iron. That's a king size. That's bigger than a California king size bed. And he went down in a heap. God was with His people. The biggest guy, the strongest guy, the fiercest man, the one most worrisome - no worry at all. Why? "Because the Lord was with us." And that's the lesson they needed to learn when Joshua said, "Let's go across" - that they could rely upon a God who had brought them this far.

Verse 12, "And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the River Arnon, and half the mountains of Gilead and its cities," Moses said, "I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites. The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, with all Bashan, was called the land of the giants. Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, as far as the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and called Bashan after his own name, Havoth Jair, to this day). Also I gave Gilead to Machir. And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave from Gilead as far as the River Arnon, the middle of the river as the border, as far as the River Jabbok, the border of the people of Ammon; the plain also, with the Jordan as the border, from Chinnereth as far as the east side of the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea)" - or the Dead Sea, if you will - "below the slopes of Pisgah. Then I commanded you

at that time, saying: 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel. But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall stay in your cities which I have given you, until the LORD has given rest to your brethren as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.' " Now, on this eastern side of the Jordan, God began to divide part of the land - the division of Mount Gilead. Mount Gilead, today, is the Golan Heights in Israel, if you're looking at a map. Chinnereth (in verse 17) is the Sea of Galilee. Bashan and the Jordan plains were made available to the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh; so two and a half of the twelve tribes, if you will. And Moses agreed with them (Numbers 32) that they should keep that land because they had a lot of livestock, and it's great livestock - farming kind of land, if you will. And this would be theirs. But here was the caveat. "You can have it, and your kids can stay here, and your wives can start to live in the cities that we've taken, but you can't hang around here. You've got to go fight with your brethren until the land is in their hands as it is in yours. And then, when that's done, you can come back to your families. So, if you're willing to do that, then I'm willing to let you have this land." And that was the agreement that they made. Now, I should tell you there isn't any other place in the Bible that God disagrees with this or says, "That's not the right thing to do." We presume, and I will just set this in front of you as something to think about, that it does appear that these two and a half tribes may have, in some way, settled for less than God's best because they still aren't in the land. They're in the land that God has given them victory over. That's new. But they aren't across the Jordan yet, into the Land of Promise. Does the Lord rebuke them for this? I don't think so. I don't find it anywhere. There's no real word from God like, "That's a bad idea." In fact, Moses just wanted them all to be responsible. Having said that, when the attacks came against the land, and there were plenty of them in the years to come, guess who the two and a half tribes were that were always whooped first? It was these guys. They were right on the border, you know? They were far away from the center. They were far away from the protection of the fellowship. They were far away from the prophets, oftentimes. They were out here. Now God would set up some refuge cities in these areas for them. So He took care of them. But, being so far removed, we can only wonder whether this was a good idea or not. Like I said, I can only tell you that biblically God doesn't speak against them being here. In fact Moses even says, "I know you've got a lot of cattle, and this is prime land." I just wonder if the Lord didn't have better

ideas for them had they been willing to go into the land because what you see is what you get, and maybe faith sometimes isn't what you see. You've just got to wait upon the Lord to see what you get; and that His choices are the best. So, just something to keep in mind, I think. But the bigger lesson is small steps help you take bigger steps of faith.

In fact, in verse 21 we read this - this is pretty cool, "And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.' " I love the lesson. Moses knows that Joshua is the next Moses. Right? He's on deck. He's in the box. He's going to be the leader of the people. And he says to him again, "Look what God did for us. Don't fear man. Fear God. God fights for you. You don't have to be worried about what man's going to do. You don't have to be worried about who you're going to face. You've seen what God.....He did it twice. He can do it 102 times." Right? "Just learn this, Joshua, because you're going to have to lead these people."

In all of this excitement, imagine Moses at 120. He spent forty years with Pharaoh. He spent forty years out in the desert, getting ready. He spent forty more years leading a bunch of complainers to die in the wilderness. Now he's got a generation of people that are actually going, "Let's go do this thing!" 120 years old, and I think he's probably excited for the first time in years. He's got some people actually praying and listening to God and obeying. And now he says to Joshua, "Check it out, man. Have you learned it? Do you see it? Do you get it? God's good. He's for us. You're going to be just fine." I think he got so excited because the next few verses tell us that Moses said, "Oh, Lord, come on. Let me go in with them." I think he was just finally tasting and seeing what he'd hoped for, for years, and he wanted to be a part of what came next. He wanted to see what God was going to do.

So we read in verse 23, "Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time." See, God had given them such victory. The people were walking with the Lord. " 'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.' " "Oh, God, I just want to be a part of that. If I could just go with them." I love the fact that, at 120 years old,

he's ready to go. Most people at half that age are ready to stop. "I'm ready to quit. Oh, I'm pretty well done here." Well, not.....Moses, at 120, goes, "I can do this. I've got some shoes that haven't worn out." But he's so excited for God's work and for the life and for the walk, and, I don't know, sometimes it seems to me your best years are your later ones because you know enough now to really walk with God.

So Moses was willing. "But," verse 26, "the LORD was angry with me" (and Moses said, for the third time, by the way, in three chapters) "on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter.'" I don't want to talk about this anymore. You know, the fact that Moses wasn't allowed to go into the Land of Promise had nothing to do with Moses' disobedience because there wasn't a more meek man, a more faithful man, a more godly man than Moses. He was the leader of the people. But the people needed to learn - like their predecessors or their family, their descendants - that disobedience brings God's censure. And if you disobey God and turn from God, you aren't going to get what He would want you to have. And God made Moses that example. Right? As faithful as he'd been, man, disobedience brings censure. It brings difficulty. And so Moses said, "For your sake, I can't go in. Oh, I was pleading. I want to be a part of this thing, man. This is the movement I've been waiting for!" And the Lord said, "I don't want to talk about this anymore. You're not going!" And Moses said, "Yeah, it's because of the people, right? You want them to learn that." He became the example through which God would make Himself known. "No. I don't want you to pray anymore." Disobedience has lasting effects. This is another generation. So God won't listen to Moses. The answer is "no."

But, verse 27, the Lord says, " 'Go up to the top of Pisgah,' " (you can read about it in chapter 4, as well) " 'and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes,' " (the Promised Land) " 'for you shall not cross over this Jordan. But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.' So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor." So the Lord says to Moses, "You can't go in. But I'll tell you what. Climb the mountain." And if you go to Mount Pisgah today, if you get there on a clear day, you can see all of the land from north to south, all the way over to the Mediterranean. You can literally see like you were in an airplane - the entire land that God had promised.

Now Moses will eventually get to the land. You know that. He will sneak in. Well, I don't know if that's the right word. But he'll have to wait until the New Testament, where he will meet on the Mount of Transfiguration. That's in the land. Moses will meet with Jesus and with Elijah, and they will talk there about Jesus' death. He'll make it because God's taken his faithfulness, and he's going to bring him in. But, for the purpose of example (can you imagine), that's how important it was to the Lord that the people get through their heads disobedience brings censure, brings judgment. Faithfulness, trust, obedience bring blessing. And Moses is just driving, in these two chapters, that concept home. For now, God told Moses his job - until he was to go, and it wouldn't be long - was to keep strengthening the new guy for the task because strong, faithful leaders usually are not born. They are called, and they are trained by the encouragement of others. So, we need to be encouraging to our young folks to get involved, make room for them wherever they want to serve. We see a lot of our folks in worship and teaching and missions. It's good. That's what you want. God gives us many to carry forward.

So, Moses, that was it. "All right. I'm not going to go." But he's just on the border, right, and there're only a few weeks left. And, "Oh, I want to go, too. But it's too late for your sake." The leader takes the hit for the people so that they might learn it well.

Well next week, we will pick up where we left off. I don't know how far we'll get next week because there're so many good verses. I don't want to just rush by them. So maybe we'll do two verses. (Laughing) No, I don't know how many we'll do. But read ahead. Keep at it. Just keep in mind where this is and what's taking place so that you keep it in its context.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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