

Bible Study #35
Community Lutheran Church
11/4/2020

1. Exodus 17

a. Its about the water again...

i. The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?" But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" 17:1-7

1. Massah means testing

2. Meribah means quarreling

3. They still don't trust... and we struggle too. This is our story

b. God helps the Israelites against the Amalekites in an interesting way...

i. The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. 17:8-13

1. Keep your hands and staff up Moses!

2. The Amalekites are major enemies of Israel.

a. They fight them again in the book of Numbers

b. King Saul is asked by God to "wipe them out" in 1Samuel (he doesn't)

c. Haman in the book of Esther is an Agagite (descendent of the king of the Amalekites in the time of King Saul) and he

tried to kill all the Jews of Persia but Esther thwarted his plan.

2. Exodus 18

a. Moses makes it “home to Midian”

- i. Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, “I have become an alien in a foreign land”; and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, “My father’s God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.” 18:1-4

1. Zipporah and her two sons go to see her father...
2. Another explanation for Moses and Zipporah’s sons names.
3. Midian is in the Arabian Peninsula and not the the Sinai

b. Moses camps by Mount Sinai/Horeb and Jethro comes to see him and Moses recounts everything that happened since Moses left. They also worshipped God with an offering. 18:5-12

c. Moses goes to work...

- i. The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and laws.” 18:13-16

1. Moses serves as judge for the whole nation of Israel
2. This is more than a full time job.

d. Jethro speaks up about this arrangement...

- i. Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.” 18:17-23

1. Appoint judges and Moses can be the “supreme court” and a teacher.
 2. The job was not sustainable for Moses.
 3. Jethro knows what he is talking about.
- e. Moses listens!
- i. Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country. 18:24-27
 1. Reorganization that is sustainable and healthy.

3. Exodus 19

- a. 3 months passed to get to Sinai from Egypt... and God speaks to Moses...
 - i. In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on the very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” 19:1-6
 1. A call to obedience.
 2. Keep the covenant (so far the Passover and circumcision)
 3. God lays a special claim on Israel
 4. Very monotheistic statement (the whole earth is mine)
 5. This is a proposition for the people of Israel
 6. And God is getting them ready for something more.
- b. Moses pitches the offer to the leaders...
 - i. So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, “We will do everything the Lord has said.” So Moses brought their answer back to the Lord. 19:17-8
 1. They agree with the terms of God’s proposal
- c. God responds...
 - i. The Lord said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you.” Then Moses told the Lord what the people had said. 19:9
 1. God is building Moses’ authority by doing this
- d. A solemn instruction from God...

- i. And the Lord said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day, because on that day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, ‘Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. He shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on him. Whether man or animal, he shall not be permitted to live.’ Only when the ram’s horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain.” 19:10-13
 - 1. This is clearly a holiness thing
 - 2. Put on your Sunday best...
 - 3. God is completely different than humanity... stay clear
- e. To be continued...