

Let the Power of My Lord Be Great

Num 14:17-21

17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:

21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

I. Introduction

1. There is something about the power of God that is fascinating.
2. We associate God's power with creation. How remarkable was it that God said let there be, and then it came to pass and was?
3. We think of God's power when He delivered Israel from slavery by overcoming the mighty Egyptian Pharaoh and his army. How amazing it was that this people who had been the servants to Egypt for 400 years watched God defeat the enemy, drowning them in the bottom of the sea.
4. That is a powerful God.
5. There were many encounters that the kings of Israel or Judah had when they faced enemies that were much stronger, yet when they trusted in the power of God, they watched God defeat their enemies.
6. Then there was God in flesh, called the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah, who demonstrated the power of God over demons, over nature, and over sickness, and totally transformed the world by the power of His Word.
7. Yes it was amazing to read of how the Word of God spoke all of creation into existence.
8. But do you know what I think is even more amazing?
9. It is how when how the same power of God became the Word in flesh and dwelt among men, and how He transformed the world once again, but this time, one human life at a time.
10. What started with a few poor fishermen in Galilee in the first century, continued with crowds in Jerusalem, and has since spread throughout the world until the power of God changed you and me!
11. Well I say, let it continue! Let the power of my Lord be great!

II. The Power of the Lord

A. History of Num 14

1. The children of Israel were about to receive the promise that God had made to Abraham 400 years earlier. At the time that it was only Abraham and Sarah and no children, God

- promised him that his descendants would inherit the Promised Land. He didn't have one child at the time and his wife was barren.
2. But Abraham believed God's promise, regardless of how impossible the promise sounded.
 3. And now, 400 years after Abraham had passed on, his family was 1 million strong and they were on the border getting ready to cross into that promised land.
 4. And God told Moses to send some scouts to check out the lay of the land and the bounty of it.
 5. So with these words, Moses sent the scouts on a mission:
Num 13:18-20
18 And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;
19 And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;
20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.
 6. Moses did not send them in to discover IF they could conquer the land, but to learn of the lay and bring out the fruits of it.
 7. After seeing the good of the land, Moses wanted to get a strategy of HOW to conquer, because this was a big thing to God—it was about Him keeping His promise.
 8. God had done the heavy lifting by destroying their enemy and taking them on a treacherous journey through the wilderness to get put miles between them and the enemy.
 9. And it was up to them to take what God had given them and possess the promise by God's great power.
 10. But something happened next that turned this time of great celebration of God's great power upside down.
 11. Some who didn't understand the concept of partnering with God in life's struggles, thought it was up to them and their strength to take the promised land.
 12. And when they saw the size of the enemy, all they could see was their own size in comparison.
 13. Yes some saw themselves as **well able to overcome**, but the majority message that caught on and spread among the people was focused on their weakness before the obstacle in their way:
Num 13:31-33
31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.
*32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof [**no, God wanted them to occupy and eat up the land**]; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.*
33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

14. They projected their weakness to their enemy so the enemy saw them as a bug to squash.
 15. It was their complete rejection of God's promise of victory that caused them to meet God's anger.
 16. God told Moses, I'm ready to smite them with pestilence and to disinherit them as my people. Further, God told Moses I'll take you and make a mighty nation of you instead.
- B. God is a God of great mercy
1. Interestingly, in Num 14:13-16, Moses asked God a question that is a great example for how to pray in crisis.
 2. "What will people think about you if your people are destroyed? They say you were not powerful enough to take them to the Promised Land."
 3. Personalize that when you are facing a major defeat. Pray, Lord, I don't want anything that happens to me to tarnish your good reputation.
 4. That is when we get to our text for tonight:
Num 14:17-18
17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,
18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.
 5. God is patient. He is a God of great mercy who forgives iniquity and transgression.
 6. Notice that He does not clear the guilty. Repentance is necessary to get this right. God does not bless sin, and the effects of sin continue to trouble generations following you.
 7. Do you want cause children to suffer? Continue playing with risky sins and it will happen. That is a promise. It is only by the grace of God that we can escape that.
- C. God is a God who pardons
1. And what goes along with mercy is pardon. If your heart is repentant, humble, fearing God, asking for pardon according to His mercy, not according to your skillful defense or your greatness:
Num 14:19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.
 2. I like how Moses coupled his request for pardon by referring to examples of God's past mercy that has brought them forgiveness ever since the journey began.
 3. I often think of how amazing God's mercy has been to get us through our past.
 4. I didn't deserve it, but it has been God's grace that has sustained me up until now.
 5. Notice how the Lord responded to that humble petition for pardon, mercy, and forgiveness:
Num 14:20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:
 6. That shows how important it is to speak the right words when seeking pardon. Rely on God's mercy. Being defensive with God won't yield mercy.
- D. Earth filled with His glory

1. Notice what looks like a condition of that pardon He just gave:
Num 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.
2. There is something very important in this verse. We are preaching tonight from Moses' words when he said: "Let the Power of my Lord be great!"
3. Moses did not ask that because he wanted God to make him, Moses, look great.
4. No. His prayer request was about making God to look great.
5. That is an important distinctive we need to address in our petitions to God as well.
6. Why do you want to get that job? Is it to make you look better than your brother?
7. Why do you want to get that car or house? Is it to raise the opinion others have of you?
8. No. Moses' petition was answered with one qualification—*as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.*
9. Make sure you give God a praise when that request is answered.
10. Don't make that a time to retreat from God because the stress of the moment left when God answered your prayer.
11. Return to Him over and over with praise!

III. Conclusion: Save yourself

1. Yes, God is a God of great mercy.
2. Yes, God is a God who pardons.
3. And yes, He want this whole earth to be filled with His glory as we spread this gospel message to as many as we can.
4. Well, let the power of my Lord be great by spreading God's glory with your life.
5. Did He save you from something? Did He bring you our of a pit of miry clay?
6. Did He place your feet upon the rock to stay?
7. Did He put a son in your soul today? Yes, a song of praise, hallelujah!
8. You see, when my heart was distressed 'neath Jehovah's dread frown, and low in the pit where my sins dragged me down; I cried to the Lord from the deep miry clay, Who tenderly brought me out to golden day!
9. Then He placed me upon the strong Rock by His side, my steps were established and here I'll abide; no danger of falling while here I remain, but stand by His grace until the crown I gain.
10. Has God delivered you? Live like God has delivered you!
11. I want to close with the way Peter closed his message on the first day of the church:
Acts 2:38-40
38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
*40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, **Save yourselves from this untoward [perverse] generation.***
12. There is a mess out there in this untoward generation. But there is enough of the great power of the Lord to still save a life.
13. And it is through those saved lives that the whole earth will be filled with His glory.