

Enjoy the Desert (July 7, 2019 by Rev. Anthony Menzel)

It is very important that ministries are covered by multiple people...

A ministry that only depends on one person is very weak...

That's why today Lorena and Leandro are being trained to do the musical worship...

July 21 María and I will be at a wedding, and Rev. Luís and Juana will be on a trip...

Now that we are in a new building, I, as the Senior Pastor, have to make sure that every area is covered...

Scripture 1: Exodus 18:13-23

¹³ And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. ¹⁴ So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone ^[f]sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?"

¹⁵ And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶ When they have a ^[g]difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

¹⁷ So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. ¹⁸ Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. ¹⁹ Listen now to my voice; I will give you ^[h]counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. ²⁰ And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. ²¹ Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. ²² And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. ²³ If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

The title of today's message is "Enjoy the Desert."

In the Bible, Egypt represents bondage to sin...

Scripture 2: Exodus 13:3

And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of [b]bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this *place*. No leavened bread shall be eaten.

In a sense, we are like the Israelites when they left Egypt...

Even though we left everything completely clean, even though we offered to follow our rental agreement to the letter, our departure still was displeasing to the leadership of the place we left...

Even though I signed my farewell message "May the Lord Jesus bless you all always," the response I received was that the leader [could not wish us God's blessings](#), "as he is a limited human being who cannot do that, to one who after 8 years leaves in the middle of the night, and behind the back of the other."

However, I am at peace because in the Bible, even Joseph and Mary fled by night without having a conversation with anyone...

Scripture 3: Matthew 2:7-16

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the [b]wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." ⁹ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹² Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

The Flight into Egypt

¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

¹⁴ When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵ and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

Massacre of the Innocents

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

In addition, I was concerned, based on the times the Episcopal priest had yelled at me and others, that he was capable of throwing us out of the church without giving us even one more chance to meet or the opportunity to take our things out of the building in an organized fashion...

Now that we have left Egypt, where are we?

We are like the Israelites in the desert...

The Israelites did not know where they were going when they left Egypt...

Scripture 4: Exodus 13:17-22

¹⁷ Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them *by* way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, “Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.” ¹⁸ So God led the people around *by* way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁹ And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely ^[e]visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.”

²⁰ So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. ²¹ And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as

to go by day and night. ²² He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

God was like a GPS...

He did not tell them all of the steps of the journey they were going to take...

He took them step by step...

Sometimes God leads us the long way to make sure that we do things the right way...

Also to make sure that we appreciate things...

Scripture 5: Numbers 9:15-23

¹⁵ Now on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the Testimony; from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire. ¹⁶ So it was always: the cloud covered it *by day*, and the appearance of fire by night. ¹⁷ Whenever the cloud was [h]taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. ¹⁸ At the [i]command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped. ¹⁹ Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not journey. ²⁰ So it was, when the cloud was above the tabernacle a few days: according to the command of the LORD they would remain encamped, and according to the command of the LORD they would journey. ²¹ So it was, when the cloud remained only from evening until morning: when the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they would journey; whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud was taken up, they would journey. ²² *Whether it* was two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain encamped and not journey; but when it was taken up, they would journey. ²³ At the command of the LORD they remained encamped, and at the command of the LORD they journeyed; they kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

In this wilderness, in this desert, we should enjoy being led by the Lord in a special way...

We don't know where we are going, but we know that the Lord Jesus is with us...

Scripture 6: Matthew 5:3-12

"Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.

⁵ Blessed *are* the meek,
For they shall inherit the [a]earth.

⁶ Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.

⁷ Blessed *are* the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.

⁸ Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.

⁹ Blessed *are* the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰ Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In this desert, we need to avoid complaining...

Scripture 7: Numbers 11:1-9

Now *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard *it*, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp. ² Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was [a]quenched. ³ So he called the name of the place [b]Taberah, because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.

⁴ Now the mixed multitude who were among them [c]yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? ⁵ We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶ but now our

whole being *is* dried up; *there is* nothing at all except this manna *before* our eyes!”

⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. ⁸ The people went about and gathered *it*, ground *it* on millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, cooked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. ⁹ And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it.

Let us not look back to the provision we had in Egypt, but let us enjoy the provision of the Lord here in the desert...

In many ways, for example, meeting at the house of one of our attendees is easier for us...

We do not have to take out our things or put them away anymore...

I believe God is preparing us for our own building, where we can leave things in one place, where we won't have to focus on moving equipment around...

My goal is that our time in the desert would be minimized...

But in order for that to occur, we have to be people of faith...

We have to speak life...

Scripture 8: Numbers 13:1-2, 26-33

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.”

²⁶ Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ Then they told him, and said: “We went to the land where you sent us. It truly ^[g]flows with milk and honey, and this *is* its fruit. ²⁸ Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land *are* strong; the cities *are* fortified *and* very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.”

³⁰ Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”

³¹ But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they *are* stronger than we.” ³² And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies *is* a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it *are* men of *great* stature. ³³ There we saw the ^[h]giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like^[i] grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

Scripture 9: Numbers 14:2-4, 6-9, 28-45

² And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why has the LORD brought us to this land to ^[a]fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” ⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”

⁶ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *who were* among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; ⁷ and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: “The land we passed through to spy out *is* an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’ ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they^[c] *are* our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us. Do not fear them.”

²⁸ Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the LORD, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: ²⁹ The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. ³⁰ Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I ^[g]swore I would make you dwell in. ³¹ But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall ^[h]know the land which you have despised. ³² But as *for* you, your^[i] carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your sons shall be ^[i]shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for

each day you shall bear your ^[k]guilt one year, *namely* forty years, and you shall know My ^[l]rejection. ³⁵ I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.' ”

³⁶ Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, ³⁷ those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. ³⁸ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

A Futile Invasion Attempt

³⁹ Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. ⁴⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, “Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!”

⁴¹ And Moses said, “Now why do you ^[m]transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. ⁴² Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD *is* not among you. ⁴³ For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you.”

⁴⁴ But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp. ⁴⁵ Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

Scripture 10: Deuteronomy 1:1-2

These *are* the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the ^[a]plain opposite ^[b]Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. ² *It is* eleven days' *journey* from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.

Kadesh Barnea is the southern entrance to the Promised Land...
Horeb is the mountain where Moses received the Law from God...
It is also known as Mount Sinai, and it is currently part of Egyptian territory...

I do not want our time in the desert to be 40 years...

I want it to be 11 wonderful days...
So let's enjoy this time in the desert...

The same in our own lives...
Do not focus on how big your problem is; focus on how big your God is...
If you are scared, go to the Lord Jesus with your fears instead of complaining...

Scripture 11: **Proverbs 18:10**

The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower;
The righteous run to it and are ^[e]safe.

Scripture 12: **Philippians 4:13**

I can do all things through ^[f]Christ who strengthens me.