The Mystery of God's Plan
02/19/2017

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Deuteronomy 31:1-8

When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 2 he said to
them: 'I am now a hundred and twenty years old. I am no longer able to get
about, and the Lord has told me, "You shall not cross over this Jordan."
3 The Lord your God himself will cross over before you. He will destroy these
nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua also will cross
over before you, as the Lord promised. 4 The Lord will do to them as he did
to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he
destroyed them. 5 The Lord will give them over to you and you shall deal
with them in full accord with the command that I have given to you. 6 Be
strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your
God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you.' 7 Then Moses
summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel: 'Be strong and
bold, for you are the one who will go with this people into the land that the
Lord has sworn to their ancestors to give them; and you will put them in
possession of it. 8 It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he
will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.'

1. My Friend and Dave Klotzbach

When I was in middle school I had a friend who was a very devoted Christian. He would often tell me he wanted to become a pastor. I didn't go to church at the time and didn't know about God or Jesus. I didn't know what a pastor was either and why my friend wanted to be one. When we came back to school in the fall, I didn't see my friend at school. I later learned that he drowned in a river and died during the summer. I didn't have Christian faith. But I couldn't understand why God didn't save him from drowning.

I found myself in the same situation last week with the passing of David Klotzbach. I wondered what God was doing when David needed help. Dave was a very dedicated part of our church community. He helped with Vacation Bible School over the summer and made the children feel welcomed and start the day with joy with his openings. When I met with Dave in November last year, I learned that Dave was passionate about supporting missions and had been using a large portion of his income to help missionaries each month. Dave was looking forward to Easter

because he promised to play an Easter drama for us. I am so saddened that we lost the opportunity to see his God-given talent. Do you happen to know that he would have been 65 tomorrow? He wasn't old by any means. So, I wondered why God didn't let Dave stay with us and his family a little longer. I found myself asking what God's plan was for him. Truly it is one of the mysteries that we have in Christ.

2. Moses is Forbidden

Deuteronomy 31 talks about Moses' sudden death. Moses was about to cross over the Jordan to bring the Israelites to the promised land. Although he was 120 years old, he was still active. Deuteronomy 34:7 says, "**Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone**." Moses was a hero for the Israelites, and he and his people would have never thought that they would enter the promised land without him. He is one of a few people in the Bible whose life is described from the beginning of birth to the end of life. If Moses was that important, why did God not allow him to accomplish his mission? If God had been using Moses for 40 years in the wilderness, isn't it fair for God to let him take the people into the promised land? The Israelites had been waiting for 40 years to enter the land flowing with milk and honey. But in verse 2 God says to Moses, "**You shall not cross over this Jordan**." God says "Your mission is over. Joshua will be your successor."

What would be going through your mind if you were Moses? A lot of different emotions might be going through your mind. Yet, we notice that Moses didn't say anything. Scholars explain the reasons for Moses' actions in several ways. In Numbers 20:12 God says to Moses, "**Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.**" When the Israelites were in Kadesh, there was no water for them. The people complained against Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron went to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on the faces. God spoke to Moses, "**Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and your brother Aaron, and command the rock before their eyes to yield its water**" (20:8). God says to Moses to speak to the rock, however, Moses strikes the rock twice. The miracle happens, yet God says to Moses that Moses did not trust the Lord enough to demonstrate God's holiness to the people of Israel so he would not lead them into the promised land.

In Deuteronomy 1:35 & 37 there is a different explanation why Moses is forbidden to enter the promised land. When the Israelites leave Mr. Sinai and reach Kadesh Barnea, Moses commands the leaders to go up and take possession of the land of the Amorites. But they want Moses to send men ahead to spy out the land for them and bring back a report about the towns. When the spies come back they say, "**It is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us**" (Deut. 1:25). However, "**the people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there**" (Deut. 1:28). So, the people are not willing to go up and complain saying, "**the Lord hates us; so he brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us**" (Deut. 1:27). God says to Moses, "**Not a man of this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your forefathers... Because of you the LORD became angry with me also and said, "You shall not enter it, either**" (Deut. 1:35 & 37). God was disappointed by their lack of faith. So, God decided not to allow anyone over 20 years old to enter the promised land. Moses would be included in this group. In both explanations, we see that the people of Israel do not honor God, and they lack faith. However, the more fundamental reason would be that God's plan for Moses and the Israelites is different from their wishes.

3. God's Plan for My Daughter

What kind of plan do you think God would have for each one of us? Let me talk about my daughter's case. Last September, my daughter Ahreum shared with Christine and me that she was planning to return to the States from Korea after her graduation from seminary. We were looking forward to seeing her more often and were preparing for her to come back. But when she came home, my daughter shared with us that she felt God's call to stay in Korea and support the missionaries in Asia. As parents, we were concerned because we see a lot of potential for her here in the States. But we could not say that she should come back to the States since she had a clear sense of God's call. Jeremiah 10:23 says, **"I know, O Lord, that the way of human beings is not in their control, that mortals as they walk cannot direct their steps."** In other words, he says, God is in control and God directs our steps.

Throughout the Bible we find people who gave up their own plans to follow God's plan. Moses is one of these people. Jesus and his disciples also gave up their plans for God's plans. Proverbs 16:9 says, "**The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps**."

4. Life is Short

We are reminded this morning that throughout the thousands of years of the Bible, from the creation of man till today, God has always had a plan for each and every person. We should live our lives within the context of God's plan and remember that our lives are very short. That's why each moment is precious and we are called to spend our time wisely, guided by God's Holy Spirit. James 4:13-15 say, "**Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.'**[14]**Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.** [15]**Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that**." If we put God's desires at the center of our planning, the Lord will never disappoint us.

God gives us dreams and visions for our lives and for our world. God's plan is perfect, even when it doesn't always make sense to us. And God's plan is for the good of his people and for the glory of his Kingdom.

5. Conclusion

As Moses prepares to leave the people of Israel, he encourages them in verse 6 and 7 by saying, "**Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you**." Moses knew that God would take care of the people even when Moses would not be there for them. He knew that God loved his people and that God had the better plan for them and for the future of the people of Israel. God's plan for Moses would be better too.

6. Application

When Dave Klotzbach came to meet me in November last year, he asked me what kind of plan I had for our church. I told him I didn't have a specific plan. But my hope was that our church would pursue the plan that God had set forth for us and for our community. As we remember the amazing things that God has done in Dave's life and continue to try to make a difference in our church and our community until we see Dave again, I pray that we all continue to listen and ask God for his plan in our lives and the lives of those around us. Isaiah 46:11 reminds us, "**What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do**." God will do His plans through us. We give thanks to God for having plans for us and inviting us to participate in His plans. May we celebrate God's perfect plans for us, for our church, and for our world. Praise God! Amen.