

Moses/ Israel Relationship

Shavuot, Passover. Shavuot, when God gave his commandments to Moses on mount Sinai, Passover, when God gave his Holy Spirit to his disciples in the upper room. I just spent the last couple weeks with the kids learning about Gods great gifts, his Word and his Power. It was cute; we talked about holidays, and about having to wait for the holidays to come. Like having to wait for your birthday and how many days till then. We talked about good gifts and TT wanted spider man stuff. We talked about the Ten Commandments and rules. The kids had plenty of rules they were supposed to do. Christopher and Rosie talked about not being allowed out in the front yard by them self. And Winston threw Crayons, so we got from that the rule of no throwing crayons. Looking back I wonder how I can teach about the different aspects of Shavout, the Omer, and the Ten Commandments and the Gift God gave in his Holy Spirit, when I'm struggling with understanding the meaning of the holiday for me. When I started my sermon, no matter how I look at it, I couldn't connect the two different ways the Old Testament and the New Testament portray this Holiday. It celebrates two things, two different things. How are they connected on the same day?

I have a hard time connecting these two events, but I know God didn't. He did it on purpose. The other night I was complaining to Phil about how

difficult it was for me to understand. Sure, we're talking about G-d's people, but they are two totally different communities: Moses' followers and Jesus' followers. There's a big difference. G-d wanted a personal relationship with his People.

But in Moses' case, they were too scared, hungry, tired and busy. Running away from an army and trying to make a home in a moving group through the desert can do that. I can understand. Exodus 20:19 says; And the people said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will here, but let not G-d speak with us, lest we die." So they appointed Moses to be their link to G-d. He was in charge of their spiritual well being. He brought them the commandments and taught them how to live their lives. He was their spiritual leader and liaison. What he said was from G-d. What he said went. And lucky for us, he followed G-d and G-d blessed him. He stood between G-d and the people of Israel.

The Disciples and the other followers of Christ are different. In the upper room, they waited and prayed. Acts 1:13-14 "And when they had entered Jerusalem, they went up to the upper room where they were staying... They all continued in one accord in prayer and supplication with Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers." Verse 15 says there were about 120 of them.

These people were willing to pay the price, for their relationship with G-d, where as Moses group looks like they were afraid of the cost. They have to trust on Moses spirituality. Oh they believed in G-d, that wasn't the problem. He had proven that he existed. They had trouble believing that G-d was bigger then their problems and expected Moses to fix their problems. They were willing to follow Moses, but when Moses didn't return fast enough for them they worried about what had happened to their leader and made arraignments for another one. They couldn't live without someone to follow and they were too scared to listen to God for themselves. Then, Moses comes back and their relationship with their God is even more strained. Wouldn't you be if your own families killed people in the community because Moses said so? It would be easy to see the disciples scattered, think about it, for three years they have been following someone, now that person is gone. But they get the things done that need to be. They talk about Jesus death and resurrection; they talk of Judas' betrayal. They vote on a new disciple to take his place. And they spend time praying about it, each other, and their needs. Because of the support and dedication of the group. They don't just leave, get up and go their separate ways. They noticed the needs of their people, the crying and hurt of their members as they mourned Jesus death. They were overjoyed when word of Jesus alive reached them. They

stood beside each other through unbelief because the group would work together and accomplish what needed done and would come back to praise G-d and affirm the community. What follows in Acts and Corinthians is how they behaved after the Holy Spirit came. The amazing things they did. And I don't think G-d would have given his Holy Spirit if this community wasn't ready for it.

So you can see my dilemma. This is a holiday. But I'm not really sure what we are celebrating. Are we celebrating G-d's Gift in his word and the wonderful leader G-d has provided for us to follow or are we celebrating G-d's personal relationship with us, and the power he promised to his followers. Jesus was able to teach his followers in a way Moses never could that G-d wanted a personal relationship with his followers.

Who are we? We are not Jesus disciples; we are many generations removed. Are we more like the community that is too tired and too busy to seek a more personal relationship with G-d? That's Moses' job. Let him worry about our spirituality, that's what he's there for, what we have hired him for. It's his job to teach us, to feed us to lead us through the desert. It's his job to be our spiritual liaison, to fix our problems, to listen when we want to whine. To prove that G-d is bigger than our problems.

Or are we the community that is there for each other, the one that doesn't really look to a main leader to stand out more than the rest of us? To do everything and jump when he gives us a grumpy look? The community that moves together. G-d's power is something we are sure on, G-d's relationship with us is personal, not based on our leader's spiritual life. It's something that is a definite part of our lives. And that all the work isn't just for one person but for us all as a whole. If one person has a prayer request the person next to them is willing to pray. If one person has a need, that another has the answer to that.

Maybe we aren't either. But I'm sure we're somewhere in the middle. And the nice thing about a community is that we are all still human. We can and are allowed to be in different places. I'm not trying to undermine the need for a leader, but emphasize the importance of participation in the community.

My challenge to each of you today is to get one step closer to the second community and once step farther away from the dependent one. I'd like to pray for you all today, and as I pray I want you to ask G-d if there is anything you can do to make that one step, because if we all take one step forward, our community will be that much better.