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### **Four Phases Of Existence Part 4c - The Wrong Side of Jordan By Mark Gorman**

In last week's teaching, we saw where the leaders of two tribes of Israel, Reuben and Gad, came to Moses and asked permission to settle on "this side" of Jordan, instead of in the "Land of Promise" with the rest of the Israelites.

When they approached Moses, to broker this agreement, for the land on the East Bank of Jordan, they were basically slapping God in the face, saying, "We don't believe You. We trust our judgment more than we trust You."

And think about it, if it's a Land Of Milk & Honey, where there will even be enough flowers growing wild, for bees to make honey, what kind of grass do you think there would be, for their cattle? Duh!

Isn't it fun, to look at other people's mistakes? Doesn't it bring a smile to your face, when you see that somebody else screwed up a lot worse than you? Ha!

What are the most popular publications at the supermarket checkout line? It's the tabloid newspapers and magazines, which detail every misstep made by a celebrity, or a famous person. Isn't it sad, that our society derives such pleasure from learning of the failures of others?

Whether you want to admit it or not, it's true. We live in a world which seems to take great delight in the shortcomings of others.

But let's take a look in the mirror for a moment, and see how this relates to us.

This story actually offers examples of 2 of the 4 Phases Of Existence.

The first group, who had balked at the prospect of entering the Promised Land 40 years prior, were Self-Destructive. By virtue of NOT doing the right thing, they did the wrong thing. In fact, the last verse of Hebrews chapter 3 says, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Isn't that amazing? The only reason they were not allowed to enter into the Promised Land was that they didn't have faith in God.

I mean, think about it. Have you ever gone to a lot of trouble, working like crazy, to surprise someone with something nice?

You haven't?

What a jerk!

Oh, I'm sorry. I misunderstood. So, you have? Great.

Well, try to imagine what it would be like, if you had been planning for a long time. I mean a really long time - not a few days ahead, or even a few months ahead, or even a year ahead. I'm talking about planning more than 500 years in advance.

Talk about anticipation! And you thought you had a long wait, just to get the ketchup out of the bottle! Ha!

After all that waiting, don't you know how eager you would be to see their reaction, when they finally get to see what you've been planning for them?

And, imagine how you'd feel if you told them about it, going into lots of detail to describe how wonderful and amazing it is, and they said that they didn't even believe you? What if you brought them right up to the door, and told them that you had something amazing for them on the other side of that door?

How would you feel if they said, "You're lying. I don't believe it, and I refuse to even open this door, because I'm convinced that it would be more trouble than it's worth."

That's basically what the first group of Israelites did. After having seen all those amazing miracles – not heard about them – they saw them, they still didn't believe God, that they could possess this Promised Land.

These people were very much aware of God's miracle power. Remember, they had been slaves in Egypt, and they were liberated from slavery after God sent several plagues to show Pharaoh that God was on their side. They saw each of those miraculous demonstrations of God's power and might, as He sent plague after plague.

Then, they saw God's power demonstrated again at the Red Sea. They watched as God parted the waters, and they walked across on dry ground. Then, they turned around to watch as Pharaoh's army and horses were drowned by that same sea, which now covered the dry land where they'd just walked.

God had provided them with food, water, and so many other miraculous provisions. And yet, after having seen all those amazing, wonderful miracles, they doubted that God could help them to take possession of the land that He'd promised to their forefather, Abraham, more than 500 years prior.

So, they missed out. That's SELF-DESTRUCTION. They were denied entry into the Promised Land, not because of something they did. It was because of what they did NOT do. They didn't believe. And as we know, my belief determines my actions. So, when they didn't believe, they didn't act. (I could talk a LOT about BELIEF, but we'll save that for another time.)

Then, 40 years later, their children and grandchildren were once again offered the opportunity to enter this abundant, fertile land. And, although they didn't refuse, like their forefathers, they negotiated a deal to allow them to settle for the sure thing, on the wrong side of Jordan, instead of really believing God, and taking possession of this "prize" that He'd been so anxious for them to have, for hundreds of years.

And, the crazy thing is that, although they didn't ever live in the Promised Land, Moses told them that they had to go BEFORE (ahead of) all their "bretheren", as they went into battle, to take possession of the Promised Land, on Jordan's West Bank. Isn't that amazing? They still had to fight for it, even though they didn't receive any of it.

But, that was their choice.

So, now we see an example of the second of the Four Phases Of Existence, Survival, but NOT Success.

Do you see? They were NOT interested in having the best. Good was enough for them – not best. They settled.

Consider these two groups. The first group died in the wilderness, without ever experiencing the Promised Land. Why? It was NOT because of anything they did. It was because of what they did NOT do.

How many times have we heard people say, "What did I ever do to deserve this?"

What are they saying? Basically, they feel as if they're being punished for something they didn't do. They don't understand that Self-Destruction is NOT just what we do, but it's also the result of things we don't do, which we really should have done.

The second group didn't mind helping their brothers to get moved into the Promised Land. They just wanted a guarantee that they could return to this side of Jordan afterward, to settle here, on the WRONG SIDE OF JORDAN.

Isn't that crazy? They still had to do the same work as those who DID inherit the Land of

Promise, but because of their small thinking, they settled for much less than they could have had, if they would have only trusted God.

So, this second group represents the Second Phase Of Existence, Survival.

Yes, it's much better than Self-Destruction. In fact, their parents died in "Self-Destruct Mode". Sad.

But they would rather to SETTLE FOR GOOD, than to PRESS FOR BEST.

I truly believe that most people live their entire lives on the WRONG SIDE OF JORDAN.

The Promised Land represents all of God's promises for you and me – promises which we can rightfully enjoy. But, we must have faith. We've gotta keep telling ourselves, THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

That's why I talk so much about the importance of our dreams. They give us the ability to close our eyes, and see in our mind, the amazing possibilities that lie ahead, if we just won't quit.

I love the verse in Galatians that says, "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

The key is to hang in there until the right "season" comes. Life is a series of cycles and seasons, and if you don't like the way things are going, stick around, another cycle is coming – another season is around the bend.

Blessings,  
Mark Gorman

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