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Heavenly Father, thank you for your love, thank you for your forgiveness, your patience and your long-suffering. Please help me to say the right words today. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, I don't know if it's just my poor counting abilities, but it looks like there's a few less people here this week than last week, and I hope it's not because of my embarrassing interpersonal exercise. I promise you won't have to speak to your neighbor today. I'm sure it's just the rain. I got a lot of scripture today, so let's just jump into it. I forgot to bring up a bulletin. Alright, starting in the book of Numbers. This is Exodus Leviticus Numbers, chapter 14 verses 1 through 4 and 26 through 35. "That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud." This is the children of Israel. "All of the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly said to them, 'If only we had died in Egypt or in this desert, why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?' And they said to each other, 'We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.' " Skipping to 26, "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites, so tell them as surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you in the very things I heard you say. In this desert your bodies will fall every one of you, twenty years old or more, who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home except Caleb, son of Jethana and Joshua, son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected, but you your bodies will fall in the desert. Your children will be shepherds here for 40 years, suffering for your unfaithfulness until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For 40 years, one year, for each of the 40 days you explored the land, he will suffer for your sins and you will know what it is like to have me against you. I the Lord have spoken and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community which is banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert, here they will die." Now I know that sounds kind of sad and depressing but hang in there. Okay we're skipping over to chapter 20 verses 7 through 12. "The Lord said to Moses, 'Take the staff and you and your brother Aaron, gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.' So Moses took the staff from the Lord's presence just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, 'Listen you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?' Then Moses raised his arm and struck the walk twice with his staff. Water gushed out and the community and their livestock drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, '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." Then we're jumping to first Samuel 8. When Samuel grew old he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Rama. They said to him, 'You are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king to lead us such as all the other nations have. But when they said, 'Give us a king to lead us,' this displeased Samuel. So he prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him, 'Listen to all that the people are saying to you. It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them, but warn them solemnly and let them know the king who will reign over them will do.' Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. He said, 'This is what the king who will reign over you will do. He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to the commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your maidservants and manservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen and the Lord will not answer you in that day. But the people refused to listen to Samuel. No, they said, we want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles. When Samuel heard all that the people said he repeated it before the Lord. The Lord answered, listen to them and give them a king. And Samuel said to the men of Israel, everyone go back to his own his town. And finally we're jumping over just one page to Samuel 10 verse 8 where Samuel is telling Saul, go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do. Then we jump to chapter 13 verse 8 where Saul is at Gilgal. He waited seven days. Saul did. The time set by Samuel but Samuel did not come to Gilgal and Saul's men began to scatter. So he said, bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offering. And Saul offered up the burnt offering. Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived and Saul went out to greet him. What have you done? asked Samuel. Saul replied, when I saw that there were men scattering and that you did not come at the set time and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmosh, I thought now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the Lord's favor so I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering. You acted foolishly, Samuel said. You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. If you had, you would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time but now your kingdom will not endure. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people because you have not kept the Lord's command. Okay, so the theme of all four of these stories is that God loves his people, loves his children and has blessings in store for them. But if they are not obedient and obey by faith, the means, the commands that he has for them to follow, then they can not only give up these blessings but they can also bring on themselves a curse. Proverbs 14 12 I think sums up all four of these stories which says there is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death. God has given us logical minds and he's put us in a logical universe. There are laws of physics, there's gravity, there's mathematics. It is good for us to have logical brains and to obey those logical brains helps us out time and time again. But sometimes God calls us to obey something that does not sound logical. And at that moment he is testing our faith. For example, he told Abraham I'm going to make you the father of many nations and then he said now take you the son that I've given you and sacrifice him. Or he said to Joshua I want you to march around this city for seven days and then scream and that's how you're going to defeat them. Or you look at Jesus who could have come down to earth and just sat himself in the throne and become king of the world but instead he went to a cross. Logic is well and good but when God has other plans we need to obey those other plans. Now I have not tried very hard to obscure or hide what I'm actually talking about here and that is the situation going on with Keith and Marg. For those of you who haven't read this yet or who don't even have a mailbox, what has happened is that Marg needs another year's worth of treatment and that treatment is free in Australia and very expensive here and so they cannot come to take the office of pastor before October of next year. And my logical brain at that moment says wow that's just really long time to wait I don't know if we can wait that long maybe we should start making plans maybe we should find something else I don't know you know my brain just starts freaking out. But I also at this moment realized that I'm not just a normal human a normal person in normal circumstances I am a child of God and this situation affects his church his bride and I'm absolutely certain that he has something to say about this situation. So rather than allowing fear and impatience to rule my heart I have chosen instead to go in prayer to God and seek his will for what he what he thinks that we should do here. And I'm I think I've gotten a leading on that but I'm not going to tell you what my leading is because what's most important here is for each one of us to go to God and to get our own leading and to hear what it is he has to say because it's times like this when God teaches us how to listen to him how to seek him and his will how to die to ourselves and walk in faith. 1 Corinthians 5 7 or I think it's 1st Corinthians we walk by faith not by sight and you know when I look at this when I use my sight to see this situation it doesn't make a lot of sense to me and I see that we we prayed long and hard and we carefully sought and picked out this person and we all felt like this was who God was leading us to and so to see our plans suddenly get tossed around is very confusing and causes a lot of turmoil in our hearts but we can't we have to walk by faith we have to seek God. 1 Corinthians 2 14 says the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned and chapter 1 verse 25 says the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men that's why our sermon today is called the foolishness of God because even if God were capable of doing something foolish even that foolish thing would be wiser than anything that mankind could do. So what I'm asking today is that you're going to feel panic and apprehension in your heart I'm asking you to rein that in and take it before the Lord and say God what's going on here what do you want us to do and in a couple weeks we have monthly meeting and that'll be a great time for everyone to come together and to share what God has put on their hearts about this situation but his thoughts are not our thoughts and his ways are not our ways and I has not seen and ear has not heard nor has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him. What I see in those four stories we read even though they all ended up in tragedy was that there was such blessing in store for those people if they had been faithful and maybe maybe God wants us to say you know he we can't wait he's gonna come for the visit whatever we decide so so I'm looking forward to meeting him and I'm looking forward to spending that time seeking God's will on this whole situation but he knows that there's no strings attached he knows that we may rescind our offer and he's given us permission to break our promise but maybe that's what God wants or maybe God wants us to be faithful and wait and if God wants us to be faithful and wait I know he's going to take care of us but the most important thing is for us to seek God's willingness and to trust him to trust and obey because there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but trust and obey. So let's pray. Heavenly Father we are in a time of confusion and turmoil but we know that in situations like this that these are a blessing you have brought this turmoil into our life to teach us how to look to you and to trust you and to be more obedient children to seek out your will for this church and for our lives. So God please help us to contain the anxiety in our hearts help us to lay it down before you help us to set aside our logical minds and listen to you to listen what you have to say please confirm in us over these next two weeks what what your will is what your plan is for this church and if we need to find someone new we trust God that you will have someone new in store but if you want us to wait we trust that this church is going to be just fine and is going to be taken care of until Keith is able to take his office so whichever way it goes God we know that you are in control and we declare right now in faith that we will be okay because we have chosen to trust and obey you we praise you and thank you right now for taking care of us no matter what happens it is in the name of your son Jesus Amen