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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Pinchas – Why Discipleship Matters

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Pinchas, and it goes from Numbers 25:10 to Numbers 30:1.

This Torah portion discusses the covenant of peace and the covenant of a perpetual priesthood given to Phinehas, a second census of the people of Israel, questions about inheritance, Moses appointing Joshua to succeed him, and instructions regarding offerings for the feast days.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about the need for discipleship.

In our Torah Portion this week, YHWH informs Moses that he will soon die (Numbers 27:12-14). Moses’ response to this news is perhaps not what we might expect. Here is what he says:

Numbers 27:15-17

Moses spoke to the Lord [YHWH], saying, “Let the Lord [YHWH], the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord [YHWH] may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.”

Moses’ immediate response to the news that he was going to die was to ask YHWH to appoint someone to replace him as the leader of Israel. Moses was concerned about Israel being left without leadership—someone to care for the people like a shepherd cares for his flock.

This passage reveals a lot about Moses’ heart. He truly loved the congregation of Israel and he wanted to make sure they were taken care of in light of his imminent death.

Who did God appoint to lead Israel in Moses’ place? Well, let’s keep reading:

Numbers 27:18-19

So the Lord [YHWH] said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight.

YHWH appointed Joshua to be Moses’ replacement. But why was Joshua chosen? Well, there are logical reasons for this.

In addition to having the Spirit of YHWH within him, Joshua was Moses’ “assistant” (Exodus 24:13). You might call him a disciple of Moses. He spent time with Moses, learning from him, and growing as a leader by studying Moses’ example. If anyone was equipped to take over Moses’ leadership position, it makes sense that it would be a close follower of Moses who assisted him in his ministry.

Now, even though Moses clearly cared about God’s people, and he willingly transferred his authority to Joshua, handing everything over to him probably wasn’t easy emotionally. We do see later in the Torah that Moses struggled with God’s decision to let Joshua lead Israel into the Promised Land instead of him (Deuteronomy 3:23-29). How could he not struggle? Moses poured his life into this mission and these people!

Ultimately, though, Moses came to terms with the fact that it wasn’t about him, but about God’s Kingdom and purposes. He continued to teach the people throughout Deuteronomy, but eventually, he gave everything over to Joshua, who then led the people into the Promised Land.

You always know the difference between someone who’s building God’s Kingdom and someone who’s building their own kingdom. If someone is building their own kingdom, there’s no discipleship. When they die, the ministry is dead, the congregation falls apart, and it doesn’t move forward. But if someone is building God’s Kingdom, then they recognize that it’s not about them. God can take them at any minute, and that’s okay. Why? Because there is another generation—a Joshua generation—that picks up where they left off.

Let’s make sure we are training disciples to take our place someday. Let’s make sure we are training our children in the ways of the Lord. Let’s make sure we are teaching others to be able to teach others:

2 Timothy 2:2

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

We must make disciples. And when it’s time to step aside, we can rest assured that the Kingdom work will move forward and God’s people will be taken care of.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

*Remember, continue to test everything.
Shalom!*

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Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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