

Come thou with us

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Preacher: Rev W.R.Mackay

[0 : 00] The second portion of Scripture read, the book of Numbers, the 10th chapter, and reading again at verse 29.

And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place at which the Lord said, I will give it you.

Come thou with us, and we will do thee good. For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.

And he said unto him, I will not go.

I will not go. More than two years had passed since that eventual day when Moses had led the children of Israel out of the captivity of Egypt.

And they were years which would not be readily forgotten. Because of the memorable events which had taken place. And which must have been indelibly inscribed upon their minds.

[1 : 19] They could recall, for example, the wailing of the mothers in Egypt when they realized that their firstborn had been slain.

They could remember how when they themselves terror-stricken had been held up at the Red Sea. God had opened up a wonderful way whereby they were able to pass through while the Egyptians, seeking to follow them, perished in the waves.

They could remember also how God spoke to them from the burning mount. And how angry he was, as it was also his servant Moses, when he came down from the mount and found the people engaged in an act of idolatry.

For they had prevailed upon Aaron to build for them. A golden calf. And they could remember also that it was during that time that a tabernacle was built.

A place of worship was set up for them in the wilderness. A church, so to speak, that was to follow them in their wandering.

[2 : 40] A place where they could come together and where they could meet with their God and meditate upon his word. These then were some of the memories which must have been passing through their minds when the time came that they had to leave the place where they were and move camp.

For the cloud, which was their guide by day, had indicated that it was God's will that they should move on on a further stage of their journey.

And as they were ready to move, Moses, their leader, came to his brother-in-law, Hobab. And he said to him, we are journeying on to the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you.

Come now with us and we will do thee good. For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, I will not go.

Now Hobab, we are told, was the brother-in-law of Moses. And you will remember from that short passage which we read from the book of Exodus, how when Moses had fled from Egypt after he had slain the Egyptians, he came across the daughters of the high priest, busily engaged in watering their father's flock.

[4 : 16] And he went to their assistance when there were people there who were hindering them. And out of gratitude for that, Moses was brought into the household, that household at Midian, and he was given one of the daughters for his wife.

And so there was established a relationship between that family and between the children of Israel. And what was more natural than when the children of Israel, the whole lot of them, should come over into that area once more, that they should make contact with the relations of Moses.

And it would appear as if during the time of their sojourn there, there were very close relationships had been established. But as we noticed a moment ago, the time had come when the children of Israel had to move on.

And Moses was anxious that his brother-in-law should come with him. That one of his kids and kin should come and share in their journey. Because he had great faith in what was going to happen. And so he makes this great affirmation. He says, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it to you. Now whatever doubts, whatever doubts there may have been in the minds of those children of Israel, there was absolutely no doubt in the mind of Moses that God was going to be as good as his word.

[5 : 50] that having promised to bring them to a land of promise, he would fulfill abundantly that which he had promised to do. And that same faith by which Moses chose affliction rather than endure the pleasures of sin in Egypt, that same faith by which he forsook Egypt, by which he kept the Passover, and which brought him safely through the Red Sea, that same faith is again demonstrated as they look forward to that long, wheeliesome journey.

But he hasn't a moment of doubt that at the end the journey will be worthwhile and that God will fulfill that which he has promised to do.

And it is well for us to remember, is it not, as we journey on, that it is still that same thought which spurs on the Christian as he journeys through time to eternity.

We take a look at the world around us. We see nothing to encourage us. We see nothing but darkness and uncertainty and wickedness and lasciviousness.

And we say, what's where is it all going to end? And then we turn to the word of God. And we remind ourselves that our God knows the end from the beginning.

[7 : 20] That our God has a plan and has a purpose for the lives of his people. And that one day he is going to take them to be with himself. When all their troubles shall be passed.

When they shall be beyond the reach of pain. beyond the ridicule of those who would seek to make fun of them. Beyond all the hardships and the handicaps of this present life.

And they will reach that land of which he has said, I will give it you. What a wonderful declaration that is.

And how wonderful is the faith of those who can ascribe to it. and who can join themselves in that we we are journeying on.

Do you know where you're journeying tonight? Have you got that faith? Which makes you believe that although you have your difficulties in your trials just now yet the end is sure.

[8 : 23] Sure not because of what you have done but because you have your trust in God and God never fails. what a difference it makes in life when a person can say that he or she knows where they are going.

Knows where their journey is to end. How many people there are tonight who are journeying blissfully through life hoping for the best with no real aim or destination in view but hoping that everything is going to turn out all right at the world.

How tragic it is that it should be so. But God forbid that that should be true with any who are here. Because you have heard the word.

You have received the invitation. You have been given the promise. You have been given the assurance. Can you then say tonight we are journeying to the place of which the Lord said I will give it to you.

A declaration like that makes all the difference in the world as we journey through the perplexing pathway of life. But let us turn for a moment now into the invitation which Moses gave.

[9 : 49] The invitation which he gave was for Hobab to throw in his lot with God's people. Hobab was no stranger to Moses as we already noticed.

He was united to him by the ties of nature. He was his brother-in-law. Moses had known him before the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt and he had got to know him better still during their sojourn there because their association evidently had been very close.

Now Hobab had heard of God's wonderful dealings with the children of Israel. He had heard of the plagues, he had heard of the Red Sea, he had heard of the manna and of the quails which were provided for their use and now Moses said to him, Hobab, he says, I want you to cast in your lot with us because what God has done for us he will assuredly do for you if you put your trust in him. That was the substance of the invitation which he gave. God will be able to do for you what he has done for us and the people of God can invite not only their relation but their neighbors and their friends tonight to new experiences.

As they say to them with that same confidence as Moses spoke of old we are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said I will give it you come thou with us and we will do you good.

[11 : 35] Now what were some of the experiences which Hobab could look forward to and which others can look forward to if they throw in their people if they throw in their lot with the people of God to begin with they can be found sheltering under the redeeming blood.

Hobab had heard about the Passover the Passover which was instituted on that night when God delivered Israel from Egypt.

He had no doubt learned all the details how wonderful it was as the people there believing in God knew that because the blood had been shed and because it had been sprinkled upon the lintels of the door pulse they would be safe when the destroying angel passed over and indeed it was so but you see it didn't mean just the same to Hobab because he hadn't experienced it for himself he hadn't been there but now he was invited to become a partaker of this wonderful right whereby he was to be found sheltering under the blood of the covenant he was invited to unite himself to ally himself with the people of God Hobab could join in the feast in the days to come and he could understand its significance and you see tonight my dear friends those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ can give the same invitation to you they can say we want you to shelter under the shadow of Calvary in that place where you shall be safe I don't need to remind a congregation like this that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God I don't need to remind you that you are under condemnation as are all men because you have heard it from years you thought but I do draw your attention to the necessity that you should be found sheltering under that blood which flowed on the cross of Calvary for it was there that God in his wondrous love and in his mercy allowed his firstborn to be slain not one of the firstborn of Egypt but God's only begotten son and he was slain so that the blood might be sprinkled on the lintels and on the doorposts of your life and at mine so that when the destroying angel passed over then we would know that all was well you see the tragedy in so many lives is this you know the story you know the way you know the conditions and you believe them but you've never never taken the great step of faith you've never sprinkled the blood and you're still under condemnation truly says our

Lord it shall be more tolerable for tyrant fighting in the day of judgment than for you and tonight in the love and in the mercy of God you are invited even as Hobab was invited of old to join himself to the people of God and to shelter under the redeeming blood and then too you are called to a life of total dependence upon God the children of Israel received their manna every day there was no day when the manna wasn't provided for them every day God made provision for them they had their manna and they had their water and the same God still cares for his people his grace is sufficient no matter no matter no matter what trials you may have to endure no matter what hardships you may face

[16 : 25] God's grace is sufficient my grace he said is sufficient for thee and he will make provision for your every need and he invites you to cast your burden upon the Lord but more glorious still if you join yourselves to the people of God you have the assurance that one day you will see the promised land that was the promise which was given to Hobart you join in with us we're on a journey but we know where we're going and we know that God will bring us there at the end of the day and if you join in with us you too will find yourself there at your journey end you will be able to cross the Jordan and you will be able to enter on your inheritance and let us not be forgetful of the fact tonight my dear friends that there is a better land beyond the

Jordan of death did not Jesus say to his disciples before he took his leave of him as he went to the cross let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid in my father's house are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also what a wonderful promise and that's a promise which by the grace of God you can claim and save tonight and then you too will be journeying on with a destination in view knowing where you are going and knowing what is waiting for you at your journey's end but we notice too that there is also here an invitation to service in the 31st verse

Moses says leave us not he says I pray thee for as much as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness and thou mayest be to us instead of I instead of I now you see Hobab from living in the wilderness was accustomed to its ways he knew what to expect he knew how to deal with difficult situations the children of Israel were strangers to this way of life and here was someone

who could be of some help to them and that was another reason why Moses wanted to Hobab to ally himself with them and I wonder if it has ever occurred to you my dear friend that there are those who are adherents in the church of Christ those who I believe by the grace of God have had their hearts touched and yet perhaps because of their very timidity have never taken upon themselves the responsibility of making an open profession of their faith and coming to the

Lord's table have you ever thought of your responsibility in this matter that there may be some gift some talent which you possess which could be so much more useful if you were to consecrate it to the service of Christ and if you were openly to make your profession and pursue that talent to the praise and to the glory of his great name remember our responsibility in this case that is looking at it from the other side so to speak that how true it is that we are called upon to lay our gifts to lay our talents upon the altar of God's service so that we may be useful more useful in the advancement of his kingdom all have their different gifts and notice this too

Hobab was a relation of Moses and Moses thought his highest good and Moses was anxious that the gifts of his friend of his relative should be given over to the glory of God and surely there is nothing more wonderful nothing which rejoices God's heart more and the hearts of God's people too but to see Christian households each one each one dedicated to the service of God each one leading his or her gift upon the altar of God's service oh it's good to see one in a household following in the footsteps of the master it's good to see the head of the household following in the footsteps of the master but how much more wonderful it is when we find husband and wife and their children when they come to that age following in the footsteps of Christ and being able to say we are journeying on to the place of which the

[22 : 16] Lord said I will give it you but now we come to something which is very sad and something which is very solemn what was the response which Hobab made to that invitation of love and he said unto him I will not go I will not go nothing could be more definite than that could he didn't say well I think over it perhaps someday I'll make up my mind and I'll follow on and I'll join you no he didn't do that he said I will not go I wonder what the reason was we're not told perhaps it was that he didn't want to leave his own friends for undoubtedly he had his friends there would have been a small community at least there where he was living the ties were so strong he didn't want to break them whether that be true or not

I do know that there are many who resolve that they are not going to follow in the footsteps of the master because the ties which bind them to the world are so strong and let me remind you tonight my friends that those ties no matter how strong they may be are one day going to be broken they're going to be cast asunder you'll have to leave them whether you want to or not and when you leave them where will you be going having not joined that glorious company who are heading for heaven where will you be going are you going dare I say it are you going to a lost eternity because the ties of the world were so strong that they were like fetters which bound you and you couldn't break them and you refused to join the people of God or is it possible that there was another reason

Hobab may have said well I'm not going to join the children of Israel because they're not a very attractive people and alas that was very true in many respects you will read an account of their history as they journey through the wilderness for example and time and time again they proved themselves to be a rebellious people a difficult people a trying people they were finding fault with God they were finding fault with Moses nothing he could do was right and is it true sometimes and what a solemn thought it is for those of us who name the name of Christ is it true sometimes that we are not as attractive as we might be in seeking to win others for the cause of Christ there is so little of the spirit of the master about us we have our own little squabbles and our own divisions and the worldling looking at us saying they're not any better than we are

I'm better where I am what a sad reflection if that should be so we should seek to live as close as we possibly can to the master so that we do not deter him from taking his yoke upon them I don't know what reason it was that persuaded Hobab but he made up his mind but I do want to ask you tonight here we leave this building is your life to be lost for God because the ties of the world are so strong people or because the people who profess the name of Christ are not sufficiently attractive that excuse is not going to stand you in good stead at the end of the day or perhaps it may be that you are saying you are afraid the journey will be too much for your weak faith but it wasn't to be an easy undertaking to go through the desert there were many years way ahead of them before they reached the promised land and the same thing still holds true the same conditions are still there we may have our trials and we may have our tribulations but we have this sure word of promise

I will never leave you nor forsake you I will be with you even to the end of the journey certainly he says I will be with you I'm not going to leave you to yourself the one who begins the good work will assuredly complete it for it is his work from beginning to end that then is the story of Hobab the story of a man who was challenged by God who was servant is there somebody here tonight who has been challenged what is your answer going to be you're not going to say are you like Hobab did of old I will not go God forbid that it should be so but rather dependent upon the grace of God looking to him for needed strength will you lay yourselves at his feet tonight acknowledging him as your lord and as your master saying my lord and my god by thy grace

[28 : 57] I will serve thee even unto the end and if you do that then you know not through your own striving but by the grace of God that the end is sure that you will find a home in that house of many mansions God grant that by his grace we may all meet there someday let us pray oh lord our god who of old didst safely lead thy people through the wilderness and who didst bring them to their journey then we thank thee that thou still hast a people and that that people are journeying along the road of life conscious of their own weakness and of their own insufficiency and of their own failure but nevertheless resting upon the promises of God thou art the searcher of hearts oh lord and thou knowest the thoughts which are passing through our hearts as we bow in thy presence at this moment lord speak to us in thy love in thy grace and in thy mercy make the way of salvation plain to some who may be seeking and oh lord we pray that they may be given no rest and no peace until they enter into an experience of the peace of god that peace which passeth all understanding so do thou part us with thy rich and thy enriching blessing help us at all times to make our witness for thee and forgive the multitude of our transgressions we ask it