

## **Week Four: Discipline**

### **Series: The Land Between**

**Date: October 24<sup>th</sup> 2010**

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

In the Land Between, God is very interested in the people we are becoming. He is willing to use corrective discipline to mould, shape, rescue and refine us.

#### **OPENING ICE-BREAKER**

Ask everyone to moments in their lives when good discipline had a positive effect on them.

#### **BIBLE READINGS**

- **Numbers 11: 18-20; 31-34**
- Hebrews 12:5-11

#### **THOUGHTS**

- When God answers the demands of the Israelites and gives them meat, he also sends a plague that results in death. Isn't this a bit over the top? We have to understand the nature of the offense, they're repeated offenders and God was trying to avert greater disaster.
- **Nature of the offence:** Numbers 11:19, '**You have rejected the Lord, who is among you.**' In their yearning for Egypt they are once again rejecting the rescuer, the provider and saying they were better off as slaves in Egypt.
- **Repeated offenders:** This is not the first time God has had to take action over their lack of trust. The purpose of the Land Between is to forge a community of trust and yet by their actions they keep replying, 'We don't trust you.' The tragedy is not that they make a mistake, but they are repeatedly making the same mistake and not learning.
- **God is trying to avert greater disaster:** God's use of pain is redemptive. He is at work to rescue something. Two chapters later, 10 of the 12 spies sent by Israel into the Promised Land return with glowing reports of the land but pessimism about their ability to take the land. Joshua's appeals for trust fall on deaf ears and once again the people say, 'We don't trust God to be with us.' God condemns that generation to wander for 40 years in the desert and miss the blessing of the Promised Land so that trust will be forged.
- **The New Testament** acknowledges that God uses discipline (Gk. *paedia*) to lovingly correct us and grow us. The writer to the Hebrews in chapter 12 uses the idea of discipline to give the Christians a new lens through which to interpret their difficult circumstances.
- **Paedia:** Through Christ God enters our lives as our perfect Father. God uses the brokenness of the world around us to affect the brokenness within us so that we are taught, woken up, strengthened, healed. He uses what might seem an obstacle as a vehicle to turn us into the image of his son, to transform us into a glorious, beautiful, strong person that he has designed us to be.
- **Application:**
  1. **In the Land Between what feels like weakening is strengthening:** Hebrews uses the word 'trained' from the Greek *gymnaso* from which we get the word gymnasium. Exercise doesn't feel strengthening at the time, but we know that it strengthens us.
  2. **In the Land Between notice what idols God is pointing out in you:** He uses these trials to point out what else we are relying on for security, self-worth and esteem.
  3. **In the Land Between be assured that God has a dream for your future:** God has a dream to use you in other people's lives, a dream for your greatness, and even the greatest assaults on that dream God can use to fulfil it.

## **Small Group Notes:** Pembury Baptist Church, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Good discipline inflicts pain in order to rescue something. How might God be using pain to rescue you?
2. What happened when the Israelites demanded meat? What can happen when we demand that God respond in our timing and on our terms?
3. How has God's discipline in the past prepared you for a challenge that you faced later on?
4. How do the events of the Israelites serve as a cautionary tale?
5. The Israelites were committing treason and were repeat offenders. In what areas are you prone to make the same mistake over and over again? Do you think God allows you to experience painful consequences in order to rescue you from something worse?
6. God was trying to prevent the disaster that occurred when the Israelites failed to trust God and Joshua's testimony of the Promised Land. In what ways does our heavenly Father use pain to grow you into the person you need to be?

### **VERSES TO LEARN**

**Hebrews 12:11** No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

### **WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

In response to this learning, is there some concrete decision or actions that God is prompting you to take?