

Week One: Meltdown

Series: The Land Between

Date: October 10th 2010

THE BIG IDEA:

In the 'Land Between' the pressures can cause emotional collapse. The vital choice we make is whether, like Moses, we face God's direction who welcomes our honest prayers.

OPENING ICE-BREAKER:

Ask everyone to choose an animal that most similarly describes them when they are under emotional pressure and ask them to explain why. The following list may help: Hedgehog (prickly), Hyena (laughing), Ostrich (head in sand), Tortoise (move extra slowly), Rottweiler (anger), Giraffe (above everybody else).

BIBLE READINGS

- **Key Verses: Number 11: 10-15**
- Exodus 4:13
- 1 Kings 19: 2-6
- Psalm 69:1-2
- Psalm 55: vv6 & 22
- 1 Peter 5:7

THOUGHTS

"You are not where you once were. You are not where you're going to be. You are in a confusing zone. Welcome to The Land Between."

1. **Moses is in meltdown; the land between is fertile ground for emotional collapse:** In Moses' prayer we see the honest cry of the overwhelmed. He feels totally exhausted. In his prayer is even a request for death
2. **From 'here' to 'there':** Any journey involved movement from 'here' to 'there'. The role of a leader is to help move something from 'here' to 'there', which Moses is doing. However, like in a marathon, the middle third of the journey is when runners 'hit the wall.' Moses has hit the wall.
3. **The desert was fertile ground for complaint:** God miraculously provided their food – called 'manna.' However, the frequency with which they had to eat manna caused strong complaints from the people. Within their complaints they say they'd prefer to be back in Egypt, in slavery. God took their complaint seriously, as rejecting God.
4. **Moses isn't the only person to meltdown before God:** Elijah's prayer in 1 Kings 19 is a similar desperate cry to God for help. Jesus in Gethsemane is also sorrowful, troubled and deeply distressed.
5. **These heroes show us the distinction between them and the 'complainers'** from week one. The Israelites were complaining *about* God. Moses is praying *to* God. This is a massive distinction. Moses, Elijah, Jesus and scripture shows us that we can turn to God with our raw emotions and be in relationship. *They are facing the right direction.*
6. **God can handle our honesty, so we must face the right direction:** in facing God's direction, God's word can be our vocabulary of emotional collapse (see the Psalm references). When we don't know what to pray, scripture shows us the way. In the Psalms and elsewhere we see words and a determination to trust that we can use when our own words do not come easily.
7. **Good news: God is always facing our direction:** Peter encourages us to cast our anxieties on God because he cares for us. Elijah wakes from sleeping in his cave to discover that God has provided him with freshly baked bread; God doesn't rebuke Elijah, he shows his care. Jesus took on our sin and experienced 'God-forsakeness' in Gethsemane and at the cross so that we can have confidence that despite our sin God is always facing our direction.

Small Group Notes: Pembury Baptist Church, 11th October 2010

QUESTIONS

1. What does the phrase 'emotional collapse' or the term 'meltdown' mean to you?
2. Do you find it encouraging that these giants of scripture had moments when they were broken and weak?
3. Is it difficult to 'face God's direction' when we are emotionally low or under great pressure?
4. Do you think Pembury Baptist Church is in danger of 'emotional collapse' in this time of transition? If so, why? If not, why not?
5. Is honesty with God acceptable?
6. Do you find the language in scripture helps you when you have no words to say?
7. What habits might we learn so that we more consistently face God's direction?

VERSES TO LEARN

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. **1 Peter 5:7**

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, choose times in your day when you can 'face God's direction' and share with him your heart and the pressures you are feeling.