



Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the Lord showed him the whole land... The Lord said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants;' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there." Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, at the Lord's command. — Deuteronomy 34:1-5

It was really tough to watch. Back in March my daughter, who is the head softball coach at Ashland University, gathered her players after a hard fought 2-1 victory over Slippery Rock, and told them the awful news. The NCAA had decided to cancel all spring sports, effective immediately. Everything they had worked for had come to an unexpected and abrupt end. Players were sobbing. The seniors collapsed into a seemingly terminal embrace. Parents were blanketed in disbelief and sorrow for their daughters. Coaches swallowed their own grief to comfort their players.

This was just the beginning of what has become a long line of disappointments due to the deadly COVID-19 virus. Events stricken from the calendar. Loved ones quarantined. Jobs furloughed or lost altogether. Small businesses closed. Vacations erased. Weddings postponed. Graduation ceremonies "altered." Proms gone. Favorite restaurants and bars shut down. Recreation centers locked down. Family gatherings put on hold. Visits to elders limited to waves through the window. Church services relegated to Facebook or Vimeo. Funerals pushed to an unknown time and place. Elective surgeries put on the back burner. You want baseball? Maybe mid-summer. How about a good old fashioned Fourth of July picnic with fireworks, or a nice summer festival? Probably not going to happen. Looking forward to college football or the NFL? Uh... not likely. Planning to travel? Very risky.

Maybe this is a good time to recall the biblical story of Moses, who faced so much disappointment that it's a miracle he didn't just throw in the towel at some point. He was disappointed in others, in himself, and yes, even in God. The Israelites did nothing but moan and complain. They told Moses they wished they had never left Egypt. At least they had three square meals and a place to sleep. And when God provided manna, they griped because they couldn't order from the menu.

What must Moses have thought after spending forty days on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments, only to find the Israelites partying and paying homage to a golden calf? And... after all that... after remaining faithful... Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land. It does seem a bit unfair, doesn't it?

But what did Moses do in times of disappointment? He turned to God. Every. Single. Time. Now, those conversations weren't always pleasant. There was some serious venting going on. Tough questions were asked. In the midst of honest conversation, Moses didn't mince words. But he TRUSTED that God would see him through.

What are we doing with our disappointments? I hope we are taking them to God. I hope that, like Moses, we are being faithful and trusting. Our God is a God who can turn disappointment into joy. Just think about the women who went to Jesus' tomb on that first Easter morning.

What sorrow or sadness do you need to take to God? What hole in your heart needs to be filled by the grace and mercy of God? What discouragement could be turned into hope by the God who raised Jesus from the dead? Whatever it is, have faith that God will hold you in his infinite love.

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Gracious God, these days are easily filled with disappointments that weigh heavily on our hearts. Like Moses, help us to bring these burdens to you, trusting that you will walk with us, and that you will one day turn our sorrow into joy. Amen