

## "What Is Success In Ministry?"

**Text:** Exodus 17:1-7 & Numbers 20:7-12

### **Intro:**

- These two incidents are similar.
- However, we want to notice that God's instructions are different.
  - In **Exodus 17:1-7**, God instructs Moses is to "Go out **strike** the rock with a rod, water will come out."
  - In **Numbers 20:7-12**, God instructs Moses to "Go out and **speak** to the rock and water will come out."
- However, Moses disobeys God, goes out, gives a brief speech in verse **10** of **Numbers 20**.
  - Then in verse **11** of **Numbers 20**, we are told that Moses, "**smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly...**"
  - We want to note that "the water came forth abundantly."
  - That's the first thing you ought to note here- he **[Moses] was a success.**
  - The people are thirsty.
  - He **strikes** the rock and water comes forth in super-abundance, and their needs are met.
  - If you're going to look at this, humanly speaking, you'd have to say it got the job done.
- However, **it is Moses' greatest failure!**
  - I'm somewhat puzzled by that.

- I think he might have struck the rock and nothing would have happened.
- But he struck the rock and water came out.
- Were the whole nation of Israel to evaluate that you would have to say, '**There's another evidence that Moses is the servant of God.**'

→ But you know what this is?

- **It's an evidence of rebellion in Moses' heart.**

→ We need to be very careful.

- Sometimes we as believers are duped into looking at what we call 'results,' and saying -

- **'God must be blessing that ministry.**
- **Look at what is happening!**
- **People get saved!**
- **Needs are met!**
- **How can you criticize that?**

→ But keep in mind that **this is Moses' greatest failure!**

- For this sin, he will **not** go into the land of Canaan!
- All that he has done, all of his faithfulness, all of his intercession  
**... And here water is provided abundantly,** and for this sin,  
Moses is **not** going into Canaan.

→ We need to be very careful.

- It's not just the results that God's looking at.

- He wants it done **His Way**.
- The issue is not whether people get saved or not.
- **The issue is: Is it done God's way?!**
  - God can save anybody He wants, anytime.
  - What He has called us to do is do it His way. ...
  - We look and say, **'Well, things are happening. That's God's mark of approval.'**
- It is if it's happening God's way.
  - It may look great to everybody else-'**What can you say?**
  - Water-abundantly-the congregation and all their animals drank.
  - What more could you ask for?'
  - **OBEDIENCE! Moses failed - Read Num. 20:12!**
- "God says to Moses: 'The problem here, and the reason you can't go in, is your unbelief-you rebelled against Me'
- **See Num. 20:24; Psa. 106:32,33.**
- And the result is [**that God**] was not held up as holy before the people.

**Conclusion:**

- You see what happens when we rebel against God, when we don't do it His way?
- God is not exalted as holy before the people.
  - They got their water didn't they?

- It was supernatural!
- What difference did it make to Israel, whether Moses **struck** the rock or **spoke** to the rock?
- Why would that affect God's holiness?
- God's holiness is exalted **only** when we serve Him in obedience.
  - And only then can one's ministry be deemed a success!