

Kingdom Vision: “Choose Well”

In the book of Hebrews, chapter eleven, there is a verse there that I have always found interesting. It says that Moses chose to suffer ill treatment with the children of God. Well anyone who is a pastor ought to connect to that story in some fashion or another, because at some point or another when we love God’s people, it can be suffering ill treatment with God’s children.

I often wondered, what was it like for Moses to live with those people in those early days. And then it dawned on me, I actually had an experience that should help me understand what he went through. When we lived in Taiwan, we lived in the capital city called Taipei, which is a concrete city and I’m not a concrete city kind of person. I like the woods and I like the outdoors and I like sportsman kinds of things. So the longer we were in the city, the more eager I was to get our three children out of the city and experience the surrounding mountains of Taipei. I decided rather than do that just for our three, we would get other missionary kids and we even got some Chinese families and their children to join us. So about six adults and about twenty-seven children, we all got our stuff together and I remember getting excited as we had to get all the water boiled because there’s not potable water in Taiwan and we had to get all our food prepared and we were going to climb up Seven Star Mountain, which was a full days hike up, camp over night, and a full hike down the next day. We had to carry our own wood if we were going to cook anything because we would be above the tree line. We had to carry our own lime because we had to put lime around the tents otherwise cobras would come in and snuggle with you during the night, and they don’t make particularly good tent mates in the camping experience.

So we gathered all our material and we got the twenty-seven children on the city bus and we got six or seven of us adults and we rode for an hour and a half out and we got to the base of Seven Star Mountain. I was so excited when I stepped out of the bus, because I could smell that fresh mountain air. We started walking up the mountain, hadn’t gone three steps and I had this one little girl say, “Mr. Upton, I’m thirsty.” I said “Well, drink some of the water you brought with you in your canteen.” She said, “Well, I drank it on the bus, the bus was hot.” I said, “We’re going to be forty-eight hours, what are you going to do for water?” She said, “I’m going to drink yours, can I have some of your water?” So I said, “Here, have some of my water.”

Three more steps up the mountain, “Why do I have to be the one to carry the lime?” said one of the children. “The lime burns my skin, its hot; I don’t like carrying the lime.” Another kid broke in and said, “Why are you complaining about carrying the lime, I’m having to carry all this wood up the mountain and its sticking me in my back and in my arms and in the back of my leg and I don’t want to carry this wood.” Another kid spoke up and said, “Mr. Upton, my mothers going to be really mad at you.” And I said, “Why is your mother going to be mad at me?” She said, “Because my mother doesn’t like for me to get my clothes dirty and I’m getting real dirty climbing this mountain.” A little

ways up the kids were complaining, “You didn’t tell us there would be bugs out here, we didn’t know there would be bugs.” Then other kids were saying, “How much longer? Are we there yet? I’m tired. I don’t want to do this anymore.”

That went on for forty-eight hours. I made some commitments on that trip that I want you to know that I have lived up to. Then I stopped to think, I did that with twenty-seven children for forty-eight hours. Moses endured that with one million of God’s children for forty years. The call to love God’s people is a call to be patient, and it’s a call of endurance, and to think, Moses chose to do that. I hope you’re choosing to love God’s people the way they deserve to be loved amidst all their complaining.