

Talk Notes

Title: Facing your 'Rocky's'

Meeting: Freshwaters

Date: 15/10/2017

Introduction

While away this week I have been reading a book by Tony Miller entitled 'Journey of Significance' – early on he describes a situation faced by a group of explorers led by Lewis and Clark – let me read you a couple of extracts.

'Journey of Significance by Tony Miller P28 2nd par & p30 1st par.

The Rockies are an immovable object, you can't go around them - the only way is through, over the mountains, negotiating the passes, surviving the dangers.

- Who has ever felt that they were about to complete the race only to realise that they have only just begun? You've reached your Rockies.
- Who has felt that they have given every last drop of energy and faith, only to discover a new obstacle or obstacles in their life which seem impossible to overcome - you've reached your Rockies.
- Who has found that no matter which way we turn, it appears that we cannot move forward, there is always something in the way - you've reached your Rockies.

We are not alone

Those of us who find ourselves at our Rockies are in good company - many of the great characters in the bible faced their Rockies –

- For Noah it was the flood
- For Joseph it was his brother's rejection, then slavery, then prison - how many times did he feel that's it, now I've made it, now my dreams are going to be fulfilled - only to find the next mountain range to cross.
- For Esther it was facing potential death by going into the presence of the king.
- For David it was Goliath - then Saul's jealousy, then his own sin with Bathsheba, then Absalom's rebellion.
- For Elijah it was facing his fear brought on by Jezebel
- For Jesus it was facing the cross, despising its shame.
- For Peter it was facing his own weakness and betrayal of Jesus.

These are just a few, there are many more - so what do you do when you face your Rockies - when you feel you just can't go on any further.

Three Choices

When you recognise that after all the struggle, perseverance and determination you are just at the foothills of the Rocky's, you have 3 choices, as did those in that small expeditionary force.

1. **Turn back** - for Lewis and Clark it was a 2 year journey back, if they could have made it back - and they would only have been known as the ones who gave up, who turned around. - Jesus disciples faced this choice, when Jesus had been saying some very strange things about eating His flesh and drinking His blood many of His disciples left Him, then He asked the 12 if they wanted to leave (and by implication return to their old life) lets read from **John 6:60-71**. Peter, speaking for all of them, said in effect 'we have come too far to turn back' – we must go forward with you whatever it may lead to. Little did they know that just at the point when they felt they were making real headway – they found themselves at the foot of a new mountain range, as Jesus was arrested, tortured and crucified. At that point they did try and return to their old lives – but then the resurrected Jesus had other plans. We could turn back – but Jesus has other plans for us on the other side of the Rocky's, let us not be those who turn back.

2. **Camp at the foot of the mountain.** For me one of the saddest episodes in Israel's history - and there were many - was when they had the invitation to climb mount Sinai and meet with God, but their fear prevented them and they sent Moses in their place. **Exodus 19:10-13; 20:18-21**- Don't let fear paralyse you, don't lose your opportunity to encounter God is a new way. Don't settle for what you have - there is so much more.

3. **Climb it!** Recognise that something lies beyond those mountains that is worth the journey - that God has brought you this far and He won't let you down now at your greatest time of challenge.

Help is at Hand

If you decide to climb then you need help – and the great thing is that help is at hand.

I had a picture early on as I recognised the Rocky's that I am facing at the moment – it was of Jesus leading me by the hand through this unfamiliar mountain range.

Psm 139 is a really encouraging Psm to call to mind when we find ourselves in the foothills of a new challenge, let me read it to you.

Listen again to **verse 10** - '**even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.**'

God will hold us by the hand and lead us through.

Then again **Psm 37:23-24** says:-

‘The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand’. – What better picture could there be of Jesus leading you through this new mountain range of challenge.

But there’s more – not only is there help from the Lord – but we are also called to help one another, **Ecc 4:9-12 says ‘Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. 10 If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. 11 Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? 12 A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.’**

We can help one another – if you are stumbling call someone to help – if you see someone stumbling offer to help. It might be practical help, it might be emotional support – someone to talk to, someone who cares – it may be spiritual help, someone you know is praying for you and will pray with you.

At different points we all face our ‘Rocky’s’ but we don’t need to face them alone.