

Lenten Devotional February 20, 2021

Scripture

Deuteronomy 7:17-26

17 If you say to yourself, "These nations are more numerous than I; how can I dispossess them?" 18 do not be afraid of them. Just remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, 19 the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. 20 Moreover, the LORD your God will send the pestilence against them, until even the survivors and the fugitives are destroyed. 21 Have no dread of them, for the LORD your God, who is present with you, is a great and awesome God. 22 The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to make a quick end of them, otherwise the wild animals would become too numerous for you. 23 But the LORD your God will give them over to you, and throw them into great panic, until they are destroyed. 24 He will hand their kings over to you and you shall blot out their name from under heaven; no one will be able to stand against you, until you have destroyed them. 25 The images of their gods you shall burn with fire. Do not covet the silver or the gold that is on them and take it for yourself, because you could be ensnared by it; for it is abhorrent to the LORD your God. 26 Do not bring an abhorrent thing into your house, or you will be set apart for destruction like it. You must utterly detest and abhor it, for it is set apart for destruction.

Devotional

The Rev. Jeanine Haven '00

It is so easy to get caught up in the "big picture" of Deuteronomy 7:17-26 and to read it as a message of divine retribution. But sometimes in exploring specific verses, we discover what they may be saying to us today. So here, let's consider Deuteronomy 7:22: "The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to make a quick end of them, otherwise the wild animals would become too numerous for you."

Yes, it's easy to discount this verse as being simply about God's plan for his people in entering Canaan and therefore not applicable to life in the 21st century. But consider the fact that God tells the Hebrews not to try entering all at once, rather, little by little. And note the divine reminder that God will be present as they travel on this great new adventure—present to give guidance, strength, and encouragement every step along the way.

Now, think of all the times you have witnessed God's helping someone little by little. The determined infant who keeps stumbling and finally, triumphantly, takes a first step! The cancer patient learning he's in remission after going through rounds of treatments and multiple "clean" tests.

When we have a "life event" that initially seems overwhelming, if we take it one step at a time we have the potential to get through it successfully. We just need to remember that God is with us in each *little* step along the way!

Prayer

God of grace and love, help us to realize that it is okay to lean on you. When we feel overwhelmed by life's obstacles, remind us of your presence as we explore each new day little by little. We thank you Lord for your loving support! Amen.