

## Group Resource

# Sermon Notes – Sunday, January 26, 2014

## BOLDNESS

**Message:** “Boldness to Pursue God’s Promises”

**Scripture:** Numbers 13:1-33

- I. In Number 13, we encounter the journey of Israelites to the promised land. Moses’ words to the people were to rise up, and to seize the land. But the people petitioned him to send forth spies first to discover the best routes for making their assault successful. This seemed a reasonable idea to Moses; so he selected twelve men, one from each tribe.
- II. While surveying the land, 10 out of the 12 spies were overwhelmed by the circumstances that they faced along the path to the promise. We must ask ourselves whether we can still believe in God’s promises when the circumstances don’t immediately look promising.
- III. **We must know the promises of God**
  - a. <sup>2 Peter 1:3-4</sup> *By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. <sup>4</sup> And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires.*
  - b. God’s promises are not impacted by the ups and downs of life. Hebrews 10:23 reminds us to “hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”
  - c. What was God’s promise to the Israelites? <sup>Deuteronomy 1:21</sup> *“See, the LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”*
  - d. We have to distinguish between the promises of God and the ways that He brings it to fruition. While God’s promises are certain, He uses a variety of methods to accomplish his will.
    - i. We can ask God to accomplish His promise a certain way, but we must always be open to God using different ways than our ways. (Isaiah 55:8-9)
- IV. **We will encounter various types of opposition to the fulfillment of the promises of God in our life**
  - a. We are called to pursue God’s promises regardless of the degree of opposition.
  - b. God gives us glimpses of the looming obstacles that are along the path to the promise so that when we encounter each situation we can walk in wisdom rather than in fear.
  - c. Moses gave the 12 spies specific instructions about what they were to discover about the promised land
    - i. *When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, “Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. <sup>18</sup> See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. <sup>19</sup> What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? <sup>20</sup> How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.” (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.) [Numbers 1:17-20]*

- d. However, 10 spies didn't have a proper perspective of why God allowed them to see the obstacles to the promise.
  - i. The purpose of going into Canaan wasn't to determine whether the Lord was going to give them the Land. God promised that He would give them the land.
  - ii. The purpose of going into Canaan wasn't to see if they were strong enough to overtake their enemies. God promised that He would be with them as they went into the land
  - iii. The purpose of going into Canaan wasn't to determine whether the Land would be suitable for their needs. God promised that the land would be flowing with milk and honey.
- e. God sent the men to explore the land of Canaan so that they wouldn't falter while traveling along the path to the promise.
- f. *Does the path to the promise cause us to change God's promises? Does the presence of adversity cause us to forget what God has said to/about us?*

**V. We must have the boldness of faith**

- a. Most of the spies believed the promise of God and understood the obstacles along the path to the promise but they didn't have the boldness to believe in God's ability to bring the promise to fulfillment. They were overwhelmed by their circumstances. (Numbers 13:27-31)
  - i. We Believe - <sup>27</sup> *They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit.*
  - ii. But the obstacles are overwhelming - <sup>28</sup> *But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there.*
  - iii. AND we don't believe that God is able - <sup>31</sup> *But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are."*
- b. The NT records the story of 2 people who encountered severe obstacles to the promise of God, but boldly pursued the promises of God by faith.
  - i. In Mark 2, people had gathered in large numbers to hear from Jesus. There was no room left, not even outside the door. Four men had faith to boldly pursue God's promise of healing on behalf of a paralytic man. Since the four men could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat that the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."
  - ii. Likewise, John 5 records the life of a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" The invalid had experienced obstacles for 38 years. <sup>7</sup> "Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Jesus encouraged him to push past his obstacles and to have faith in God. Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." <sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

- c. There is a difference between counsel that advises us on the best way to see God's promises fulfilled in our lives and those who counsel us against believing in the promises of God.
  - i. The Israelites had people who were spreading a bad report and counseling others in direct opposition to what God had promised that He would do. Because of the ungodly counsel, they focused on their own strength rather than God's ability. "We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them." (Numbers 13:32-33)
- d. A hyper-faith theology relies on our ability to bring God's promises to pass. A biblical faith grounds the promises of God in His ability to bring them to fruition.
  - i. We ought to pray, *"Lord, give us a faith that doesn't just say we believe and gives up, but a faith that says I will believe and pursue your promises."*
- e. Our pattern should be: (1) Know the promises of God; (2) Acknowledge the reality of the barriers to the promise; (3) Then, in spite of the obstacles, say "I will pursue your promises." I will believe in God's promises, I will trust in his ability, I will glory in the sufficiency of His grace, I will triumph in the strength that He gives.
  - i. Don't just say "I will" when it becomes convenient, when things settle down, when it starts to feel good, when more people are doing it, or when it makes more sense. Say "I will" because God has promised it!

Group Resource

## Let's Talk Notes – Week of January 27, 2014

### **BOLDNESS**

**Message:** “Boldness to Pursue God’s Promises”

**Scripture:** Numbers 13:1-33

- 1) If you could be granted an interview for any position at any company in the world, what position and company would you choose?
- 2) As you reflect back on last weekend’s sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp? Were you challenged in any area of your personal walk with God?
- 3) **Read** 2 Peter 1:3-4. Find a promise in the Word of God. What is the promise and what does God say about how He will bring the promise to fruition.
- 4) We are called to pursue God’s promises regardless of the degree of opposition. Has God ever revealed to you the opposition that you would encounter along the path to His promises? How did you respond to the obstacles to God’s promises? **Read** Genesis 15:13-16
- 5) From Mark 2 and John 5, how did the invalid and the paralytic show boldness in pursuing the promises of God? What inspires you about their life of faith?
- 6) How can you be bolder in pursuing the promises of God? What steps should you take when you feel overwhelmed by the obstacles along the path to the promise?