

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-17-15 AM NOTES  
"THE FAITH OF A KINGDOM-FOCUSED CHURCH"  
NUMBERS 13, 14  
#3 in Series "A Kingdom-Focused Church"

Review: "The Marks of a Kingdom-Focused Church," "The Members of a Kingdom-Focused Church"

**Hebrews 11:6a (NKJV)** "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*..."

**1 John 5:10b (NKJV)** "...he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son."

**Numbers 14:11-12 (NKJV)** "<sup>11</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses: 'How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? <sup>12</sup> I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.'"

**Matthew 13:58 (NKJV)** "Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

**Mark 6:6a (NKJV)** "And He marveled because of their unbelief."

**Hebrews 3:12-13 (NKJV)** "<sup>12</sup> Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; <sup>13</sup> but exhort one another daily, while it is called '*Today*,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

I. The Reasoning of Unbelief (Numbers 13:25-33)

A. Wrong Reasoning About Problems

B. Wrong Reasoning About Power

**John 15:5b (NKJV)** "... for without Me you can do nothing."

II. The Reasoning of Faith (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9)

A. Biblical Reasoning About Problems

**Romans 8:31 (NKJV)** "What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?"

B. Biblical Reasoning About Power

"There is a God. He has spoken in His word. He means all that He has said, and He will do all that He has promised."  
□Hudson Taylor

III. The Result of Unbelief (Numbers 14:1-4; 28-34)

A. Discouragement (Numbers 14:1)

**John 10:10b (NKJV)** “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.”

B. Discontentment (Numbers 14:2-4)

C. Defeat (Numbers 14:28-34)

IV. The Result of Faith

**Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV)** “<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**”

A. Encouragement

“Would you like for me to tell you what supported me through all the years of exile among a people whose language I could not understand, and whose attitude toward me was always uncertain and often hostile? It was this, ‘Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ On these words I staked everything, and they never failed.”

□Dr. David Livingstone (1896)

B. Contentment

C. Victory

**Joshua 14:14 (NKJV)** “Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.”

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When we are completely surrendered to God He will always call us (as individuals and as a church) to tasks that are above and beyond our capacity to accomplish in our own strength. Therefore obeying God will always require that we walk by faith. Walking by faith means that we look to Him and believe Him to accomplish through us what He leads us to do. To believe God, trust in God, rely upon God, and to walk by faith in God are different ways of saying the same thing. **Hebrews 11:6a (NKJV)** “But without faith *it is impossible to please Him...*” Now if believing God is so important, you would expect that unbelief is one of the most serious sins an individual or a church could commit. When we examine the Scriptures, that is exactly what we find!

There is no sin with more serious consequences than the sin of unbelief. Let me just give you some of the consequences of unbelief. First, unbelief accuses God of being a liar! **1 John 5:10b (NKJV)** “...he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.” Unbelief says, “Lord, I know what You said, but I don’t believe You.” That is no minor sin! Look at what God says to Moses about the Israelites and their unbelief in **Numbers 14:11-12 (NKJV)** “<sup>11</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses: ‘How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? <sup>12</sup> I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.’” God was deeply angered at their unbelief because unbelief questions the very character and trustworthiness of God. Second, unbelief hinders the exercise of the power of God. **Matthew 13:58 (NKJV)** says, “Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” How much of the mighty power of God do we miss because of our unbelief? How much is He willing to do through us if we would just believe Him? Third, unbelief caused Jesus to marvel or be astonished. **Mark 6:6a (NKJV)** “And He marveled because of their unbelief...” With all that Christ has done how could anyone having His Spirit in them manifest unbelief, and yet we often do. Fourth, unbelief causes us to be hardened toward God. **Hebrews 3:12-13 (NKJV)** “<sup>12</sup> Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; <sup>13</sup> but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘*Today*,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” The opposite of hardness is intimacy with God. There is no joyful walk with God when unbelief reigns in our life.

When we refuse to believe God, we will no longer hear His voice or have His word opened to us. Unbelief brings about a lifeless, boring, joyless life that does not glorify God nor see His supernatural work in and through us. For a church that refuses to believe God and step out in obedience to His leading, there will be deadness and boredom and no joy. They meet and go through the motions but there is no touch of God. A church that does not operate by faith will be like the church one man wrote about to his friend. He said, “Pray for our church; the fire is out but the blower is still blowing.”

Let’s bring this home to us. I am convinced that God is calling us to launch out into even deeper waters than we have already been swimming in. I look back over these last 29 years and see how God has called us out of our comfort zones to step out in faith time after time. Each time to do what we sensed He was leading us to do seemed impossible. Yet, time after time we have seen Him work. We are now in another of those times where He is calling us into waters over our head. He is calling us to re-define what the church in America sees as “success”. Typically in America, church success is measured by bodies, buildings and budgets. I am not belittling the importance of any of those. A healthy church is always reaching people with the Gospel. A healthy church is always seeing its members grow in their willingness to be obedient stewards with the resources He has given them. There will always be a need for buildings. But we believe that God is leading us into the deep waters of church revitalization in our area and church planting in some of the most Gospel starved places in North America. He is leading some of us to be willing to leave the relative comfort of this body of believers and invest ourselves in a church that is struggling to stay alive or to invest in a re-plant of a church that has died and is willing to give its facilities to another church that is willing to invest money and people so that that neighborhood can have a vibrant, Spirit filled, Jesus loving, Great Commission driven church. Our success will no longer be measured in how many people are gathered in the buildings here at 7706 Ewing Road, but how many

people have been obedient to move out into water over their heads and be a part of something new that God is doing.

Let me be clear that God is not going to lead all of us, not even the majority of us to physically leave this location. Our desire is to see this home base broadened and deepened and that we would be an equipping center where new spiritual births are continually happening and spiritual growth is taking place and Knox County is being saturated with the Gospel. At this home base we will need to see God's people here step up in giving – sacrificial, radical, priority shaking giving. We need to see senior adults willing to invest their time as well as money in revitalizing a church in a changing, economically challenged neighborhood and go to heaven, not from a life of ease with no challenge, but from a life of sweating, sacrificing, and living with abandon in the tough neighborhoods making disciples until they go the mansion He has prepared for them in Heaven. That is all just the introduction!

Let me set the scene for our text. In Numbers 13 & 14, we find Israel at an important crossroad. They have been miraculously delivered from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. They have seen the power of God in the plagues God brought on Egypt and how He opened up the Red Sea and made an 8 lane highway for them to cross. When the Egyptian army followed them, He caused the water to come over them and drown them. These people had seen the manifest presence of God on Mount Sinai as He gave the law to Moses. Now, they have come to a place close to the land that God has promised them through their ancestor Abraham. In order to see what they were up against, God told Moses to send 12 spies into this Promised Land. The task of these spies was not to determine if they should go into the Promised Land; that was already settled. God had told them to go. Their task was to simply bring back a report as to what was there in preparation for the entrance of the whole nation of Israel. When these 12 spies returned, the sin of unbelief reared its ugly head. I pray that this sin gets no foothold in our lives. Let's see what happened when the spies returned.

#### I. The Reasoning of Unbelief (13:25-33)

The spies divided into two groups when they returned. There were the 10 who focused on circumstances and refused to believe God, and there were the 2 (Caleb and Joshua) who focused on the promises and the power of God and urged obedience. Let's look first at the 10 who chose unbelief.

##### A. Wrong Reasoning about Problems

Twelve men went to the same place at the same time and saw the same sights, but oh what different conclusions they came to. There is a principle here that the majority is not always right. Ten were ruled by their unbelief and two were guided by their faith that God was telling the truth when He said that the land was theirs. Basically, the ten who were ruled by unbelief said, "It's everything that God said it was. Ah, but look at the first word of verse 28, "Nevertheless". Then they begin to focus on the obstacles and the challenges and they totally left God and His promises and His power out of the picture. All they saw were the walled cities, the giants, and the seeming impossibilities. Unbelief arises when we leave God out of our calculations. "What if there are no churches that are willing to be revitalized?" "You can't revitalize a church whose people don't think they need to be revitalized." "What if the money doesn't come in? Times are still hard for some, and the economy isn't that great still." "What if a church is willing and there are not enough people willing to go?" "What if too many want to go and we are left with inadequate resources and inadequate people here at the home base." There are no answers to those questions but this: When we follow God's guidance, our God is faithful to provide where He guides.

The life of faith is a realistic life that recognizes the problems, the obstacles, and even the human impossibility of the situation. The life of faith factors God into the equation! Unbelief has faulty reasoning because it chooses to leave God out of the picture.

##### B. Wrong Reasoning about Power

Here is the basic error of the ten unbelieving spies. They saw the solution in terms of their power and not God's power. **Numbers 13:33 (NKJV)** "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." They had a "grasshopper complex". They looked at the giants and then at their size and abilities and resources

and came to the conclusion that they were inadequate and insignificant. If you view the challenges you face in obeying the leading of God in light of your natural abilities and limitations you will always be overtaken by unbelief.

There are actually two ways that unbelief overtakes us. Some people (like the ten spies) have a “grasshopper complex”. They say, “I am just not adequate; I just don’t have the strength or the ability”. That is unbelief that leaves God and His power out. Ah, but there are some who suffer from a “Superman complex”. These folks have such confidence in their abilities and their intelligence and their resourcefulness that they charge ahead in the power of their own flesh and try to “do something for God”. That is just another form of unbelief. Jesus said in **John 15:5b (NKJV)** “...for without Me you can do nothing.” That which is done in the power of the flesh cannot please God. God always guides us to that which requires us to believe Him and trust in His enabling power to accomplish what He guides us to do. When we begin to walk by faith we will not be limited by our own abilities whether we think of ourselves as a grasshopper or Superman.

## II. The Reasoning of Faith (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9)

It seems that of the two spies who believed God, Caleb was the spokesman. God Himself had an interesting description of Caleb compared to the ten. **Numbers 14:24 (NKJV)** “But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.” “Spirit” as it is used here is not the Holy Spirit, but Caleb’s approach and attitude toward obstacles and problems. When you follow Caleb’s life all the way through Joshua 14, you see that He always had a “different spirit” from those around him. He believed God and thus wholly followed the Lord.

### A. Biblical Reasoning about Problems

Caleb and Joshua didn’t sweep the problems under the rug and proceed with what I call “goofy optimism”; they simply brought God in on the problems **Numbers 14:9b (NKJV)** “...the Lord *is* with us. Do not fear them.” When they saw the walled cities and the giants compared to God, there was no comparison. God had promised them the land; what’s a bunch of man made walls and human big people? I love what Caleb said in 14:9, “... for they are our bread...” He said, “We’ll eat them for breakfast!” Joshua and Caleb about lived about 1400 years before God inspired the Apostle Paul to write Romans. However what they said is almost identical to what Paul wrote in **Romans 8:31 (NKJV)** “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?”

### B. Biblical Reasoning about Power (14:8)

It is not about our power; it is about God’s power. Once Caleb and Joshua settled the fact that God had promised them the land of Canaan and that it was His will for them to take the land, then the power of their enemies was irrelevant. I know I speak so often of the pioneer missionary to China, Hudson Taylor. I have been deeply impacted by Hudson Taylor’s philosophy of life that I have adopted as my philosophy of life: “There is a God. He has spoken in His word. He means all that He has said, and He will do all that He has promised.” Joshua and Caleb had that philosophy of life long before Hudson Taylor.

## III. The Result of Unbelief

Our decision to believe God and thus act like He is telling the truth and our decision to proceed in unbelief both have consequences. The people of Israel followed the ten (the majority) and no doubt felt that they were taking the safest way. Let’s look at the result of their unbelief.

### A. Discouragement (14:1)

When we play it safe and refuse to launch out believing God and go with the lust for being comfortable, there is always discouragement. Unbelieving, “play it safe” people have lost their reason for existence. Our reason for existence is to glorify God. We were made a new creation in Christ in order to join God on His mission to reconcile a lost world to Himself, and when we refuse to believe Him, we become discouraged and joyless. If you refuse to jump in to water over your head and decide to stay in your

comfort zone, you will miss seeing Him supernaturally provide and you will have passed up a great opportunity to glorify Him. That is discouraging!

#### B. Discontentment (14:2-4)

What were they thinking? They were slaves in Egypt! Unbelieving, play it safe people tend to have complaining as their hobby. They have the spiritual gift of griping. In any church, the most discontent, complaining people tend to be those who sit on the sidelines and play it safe. These Israelites longed for “the good old days”. The only problem was that the old days were not good! Those who refuse to believe God tend to live in the past and remember it as being better than it really was.

#### C. Defeat (14:28-34)

Unbelief carries a heavy price tag. Someone has done some calculating. If there were 1,200,000 adults (and that is an estimate on the low side) then it works out to 7 funerals per hour while they wandered in the wilderness. That is ultimate defeat – to die with a shriveled up heart, discouraged, discontent, filled with complaining because we refused to believe God and step out in total trust obeying Him. They were safe in the desert with a dried up heart and no joy. That’s the consequences of unbelief.

### IV. The Result of Faith

In the Great Commission, Jesus not only gave a commandment (a commission); He also gave a promise. **Matthew 28:19-29 (NKJV)** “<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” When you believe God, it will never be an easy, trouble free life, but here is what you will experience.

#### A. Encouragement

There is the encouragement that God is with you. When I say “with you”, I don’t mean in reserve just in case you need Him. I mean with you to walk with you and empower you and lift you up. In 1896, Glasgow University conferred on David Livingstone the missionary to Africa the degree of Doctor of Laws. When Livingstone rose to speak, he was gaunt and haggard as the result of years of hardship and the harsh African sun. His left arm hung limp at his side as the result of a mauling by a lion. Yet he announced to them that he would be returning to Africa. Listen to what he said to this college audience. “Would you like for me to tell you what supported me through all the years of exile among a people whose language I could not understand, and whose attitude toward me was always uncertain and often hostile? It was this, ‘Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age’. On these words I staked everything, and they never failed” [Olford, “Going Places with God”, P70]. There is encouragement.

#### B. Contentment

If we follow Caleb and Joshua’s life through the book of Joshua, you find two men who were content. They didn’t take part in the complaining of the people or the rebellion against Moses. They walked with God in less than ideal circumstances.

#### C. Victory

When we trace their lives out, Joshua was named as Moses replacement and led the Israelites (the new generation) to victory in the Promised Land. Caleb fought faithfully and at 85 years old asked for the prime piece of Real Estate (Hebron). It was where the spies had gone 40 years earlier where they saw the giants and the fortified cities. **Joshua 14:14 (NKJV)** says, “Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.”

### CONCLUSION

When you compare a life of unbelief with a life characterized by believing God, there is no comparison. I want you to believe Him. My favorite description of believing God is this: “Believing God is simply acting like God is telling the truth”. He is!