

"Exodus: Journey of Fulfillment"

Week 4

Sermon Date 10/8/2017

MY STORY

- 1) What was your takeaway from last week's study?
- 2) From last week's study, who are you standing in the gap for?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, was there anything that caught your attention?

The Goal

This week we will be unpacking how to screw up a really great vision. We will be diving in to Numbers Chapters 13 and 14. In these passages Moses sends a group of Israelites across the Jordan River to spy out the land of Canaan. Bottom line, the land is amazing and God has promised to go before them and give the land to them. They are just over a year out from Egypt, and they have seen all the miracles of God and how He rescued them from Egypt. They have experienced His daily presence and provision for them in the wilderness, but they are still slaves to fear. The slave mentality of fear has gripped them, and they never let the *awe of God* set them free from fear. The goal this week is to unpack how to embrace God's vision for our lives.

DIGGING DEEPER

Numbers 13:25-33 (NLT)

²⁵ After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned ²⁶ to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land. ²⁷ This was their report to Moses: "We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. ²⁸ But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! ²⁹ The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea* and along the Jordan Valley."

³⁰ But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at once to take the land,” he said. “We can certainly conquer it!”

³¹ But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. “We can’t go up against them! They are stronger than we are!” ³² So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: “The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. ³³ We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that’s what they thought, too!”ⁱ

4) What did the spies find when they went through the land?

A land flowing with milk and honey, amazing produce, and the different people groups.

5) What was Caleb's response to the Israelites?

6) What did the other spies say about the land?

7) Could what the other spies did by spreading a bad report be considered gossip? Why or why not?

So, in this instance God has called the people to go spy out the land and they do. God gave them a great vision of what could be, but fear stopped them from grabbing ahold of the vision. Instead they gossiped about the vision and fear spread like a cancer through the people.

8) What is it like to hear an incredible vision and then have someone complain about it?

9) How can we be like Caleb in these situations?

Numbers 14:1-9 (NLT)

Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. ² Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. “If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!” they complained. ³ “Why is the Lord taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn’t it be better for us to return to Egypt?” ⁴ Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the whole community of Israel.

⁶ Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. ⁷ They said to all the people of Israel, “The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! ⁸ And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. ⁹ Do not rebel against the Lord, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the Lord is with us! Don’t be afraid of them!”ⁱⁱ

10) From the passage above, where did the people want to return to and why?

Egypt, because they were slaves to fear.

11) Why is the appeal to return to slavery so enticing?

Sowing seeds of fear in others can be devastating to a community. It can also be toxic to your own relationship with Christ. Fear can stop us from approaching God with our whole selves. We try to hide the worst parts of ourselves and miss His best for us.

TAKING IT HOME

In the introduction video Pastor Craig reminds us that God has a great plan for us. For some of us, fear is keeping us from answering God's calling on our lives. He points to a vision where our families are a healthy place that God calls us to lead well. Below are some questions to unpack this idea and an incredible illustration that I hope encourages you as we wrestle with fear.

12) What do you think God's vision is for your family?

Not everyone is in the same place in regard to family. We need to be sensitive to the people in our group because this topic may have some raw emotions attached to it. There are all kinds of answers here, but here are some possibilities: regular family Bible devotionals, consistent prayer for one another, family meals that are full of connection and joy, unplugging from electronic devices and playing board games together. Maybe you are single—God's vision is purity in singleness. What other examples can your group come up with?

13) What about your work place—what is God asking of you in your work?

Maybe it's to be more faithful, diligent and not so easily distracted, or maybe it's to get rest and not work so many hours. It's about finding health in these places.

In preparing this study, I ran across this story and found it so encouraging. I included it below.

Hannah Hurnard, author of "Hinds' Feet on High Places," was once paralyzed by fear. Then she heard a sermon on scarecrows that challenged her to turn her fear to faith.

The preacher said, "A wise bird knows that a scarecrow is simply an advertisement. It announces that some very juicy and delicious fruit is to be had for the picking. There are scarecrows in all the best gardens... If I am wise, I too shall treat the scarecrow as though it were an invitation. Every giant in the way which makes me feel like a grasshopper is only a scarecrow beckoning me to God's richest blessings." He concluded, "Faith is a bird which loves to perch on scarecrows. All our fears are groundless."ⁱⁱⁱ

14) What are some "scarecrows" in your life?

15) How can we shift our thinking to see God-sized opportunities instead of our fears?

CHAIR TIME TOOL

Read Numbers 13:1-14:25 and meditate on the following questions.

16) Is there a vision for your life that God has given you that you are afraid of and resisting?

17) Where does courage to face fears come from?

18) Are you or have you ever been like an Israelite wanting to return to your slavery? If so, my encouragement to you is to confess it and take one step forward into God's calling for you.

ⁱ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), Nu 13:25–33.

ⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), Nu 14:1–9.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Only a Scarecrow* by J.E. Yoder (Precept Austin, http://www.preceptaustin.org/numbers_devotionals) accessed 10/3/17 11:00 am