

140817 Faith Is A Choice

Introduction:

- Facing Fear with Faith - first sermon of this month.
- “God does not always answer our ‘why questions, but He does understand us asking them.” For example:
 - Moses asked: ‘Lord, why have you brought trouble to this people?’
Gideon: ‘Why then has all this happened to us?’
Naomi said: ‘I went out full, and the lord has brought me home again empty. Why?’
Nehemiah: ‘Why is the house of God forsaken?’
Job: ‘Why have you set me as your target?’ (In fact, there are over 300 questions in the Book of Job, most of them unanswered.)
David: ‘Lord, why do you cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?’
Jeremiah: ‘Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable?’”
- Application: We don't have to have all our questions answered up front before we can choose to trust God/choose to walk in faith. Knowing God can be trusted should be enough.
 - You can ask the question “Why?” and still be in a place of faith.
 - But you cant doubt and still be in faith. All these people I just mentioned asked why but they never stopped walking with God because of doubt and unbelief.
- Numbers 14:1-4, 24.

I. Observe the Promise

- A. God would have us begin with the end in sight! This is how God began creation (Is 46:10). This is why the prophetic spirit of the Lord is so important to the church today. The prophetic is to keep us connected to what is important to the Lord so that we see His designated end. The prophetic nature of God keeps us alerted to where we are going and to what end he has called us. The promises of God give us a glimpse of the end. This helps to empower us to choose faith!
1. Read Numbers 13:1-2. Send men to explore. “Why explore?” So that the end is kept in sight and to realize that whatever is on that side of the river it is not bigger than Egypt! Why explore the word of God? To keep the end in sight.
 - a) Find out what the land is like 13:18 Here is what I want for you.
 - b) Find out what the enemy is like. 13:19 They are nothing compared to Egypt.
 - c) Bring back a sample of its fruit. 13:20 Taste and see that I am good. This is an appetizer!!!
 2. God wanted the spies to bring back the report so that they and the people would see what He and Moses have been talking about all this time. Fruitful land a land of milk and honey. Look at this sample of fruit that was brought back.
 - a) It was to remind them of the end that God was taking them to!
 - b) It was to remind them that while slaves, God defeated the Egyptian Empire!
 - c) It was their designated end.
- B. When 10 spies gave their opinion. They had the right report but the wrong interpretation. All twelve saw the same thing but only two agreed with God - Joshua and Caleb. Two doors were before the people - a door of blessing and door of curse.
1. Caleb said, “We can take them!” That was the choice of faith! Caleb saw God’s intended end for his family and for the nation of Israel. It was a door of blessing. Did it mean that life would be easy? No. It just meant that this was where God was taking them. It was why he freed them.
 2. Ten spies said we can’t! This was a choice of unbelief. And they spread a bad report. Heb. *dibba* slander, defaming. It often precedes plotting.
 - a) The 10 were speaking in order to influence a nation! They were slandering God.

140817 Faith Is A Choice

- b) “The enemy would like to tunnel into your life, kidnap your promise, and fire thousands of rockets over your life to create fear and anxiety... while the accuser of the brethren (satan) fills your mind with propaganda trying to convince you that it is all your fault.” (Elijah list)
 - c) The only thing that will keep you from your promise is if you refuse to enter in.
- C. Believe today that the Lord is exposing every shadow of death that has been lurking over you. This is a time of opportunity, yet a time of danger. We must determine to see with eyes of faith, or else our promise could be seen like the spies who went to see the Promised Land.
1. Two out of twelve had eyes of God to see the yield of the land. The other ten had a heart to return to the familiar and not advance. This delayed a manifestation of the promise and positioning of God for 40 years. May all unbelief delays be broken today!
 2. The "land" which Caleb's descendants would inherit was the city of Hebron - but he would have to wait forty more years for them to do so. Ten of his fellow spies, terrified by the giants they had seen there, gave an evil report which succeeded in turning the people's hearts away from God's promises. Are you listening to and believing and evil report today? Doubt gives rise to unbelief.
 3. When we read the Bible what we see the redemptive activity of God. Deuteronomy reminds the people that the Spirit of God had been with them from the time of their deliverance from Egypt. The key was total belief and trust in God.

II. Choose Faith

- A. Observing the promise leaves us with a choice. When we choose faith we operate two doors at once. The door of doubt is closed and the door of opportunity/promise is opened. One path leads to life the other leads to death. Because you choose faith does not mean that you choose the trouble free path - it simply means you have chosen the path with a different end in sight. Being able to see that end is encouraging.
- B. Moses chose faith. As a prince in Egypt he chose to identify with his people rather than the Egyptians. He knew that this choice has would probably mean suffering but he also knew that it was best to believe God. That was faith...he chose to stand with God. What was its end?
1. He saw some of the greatest miracles recorded in the Bible.
 2. He participated with God in liberating Israel.
 3. He stood with Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration.
 4. Mt 7:13-14 Jesus presents two ways (a choice) one is broad and leads to death, the other narrow and leads to life. It is a choice with the end in sight. So many choice are being made today without the end being considered. People are only looking at what is at hand. Ie. Moses could have had pleasure and treasures immediately but his choice took him through some ‘interesting’ journeys.
- C. Joshua and Caleb chose faith. 14:7-9. They had God’s desire end in sight.
1. They chose to trust God. They did not slander God. They took God at His word in spite of the giants in the land.
 2. When they did they closed a door of destruction.
 3. Se we must observe the promise, Choose Faith and Keep on Walking.
- D.
- Keep your faith alive.
1. Feed it the word of God. Feed you faith and starve your doubts.
 2. Grow in relationship with God.

140817 Faith Is A Choice

- E. Joshua and Caleb's faith did not instantly take them into the Promised Land. They had to keep walking. Heb 6:12 *through faith and patience we inherit the promises*. Heb 10:36 *But you need to stick it out, staying with God's plan so you'll be there for the promised completion*. Amplified Bible.
1. 40 years in the wilderness. One year for each of the days the spies spent walking the promise land. 40 years of delay.
 2. They watched their grand parents, and parents die in the wilderness.
 3. They paid for the choice of those who entered into doubt, slandered God, and chose unbelief. 14:33.
 4. In spite of all that they kept on walking.
- F. Keep Fighting for the promise. When it came time to take the promise land they still had to believe God in the presence of their enemies. And they had 'to do' something as an act of faith. Go to Jericho, March around it, blow trumpet, shout.

Conclusion:

- Observe the Promise, Choose Faith and Keep on Walking!
- In the month of Av you can receive a curse, continue in a curse or break a curse.
- A whole generation that came out of Egypt, experienced freedom, and died under a curse in the wilderness. They were destined for the promised land but in unbelief opened a door to a curse.
- And a curse opens the door for the devil to attack you - relentlessly. Ie. sickness, poverty, emotional distress, failed marriage, accidents, premature death etc.
- How do those doors get opened?
 - One: Anti semitism - Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.
 - Two: Robbing God. Mal 3:10
 - Three: Robbing and lying man Zechariah 5:1-4
 - Four: Dishonoring parents. Dt 27:17
 - Five: Idol words and self cursing
 - Six: Covenant breaking. 2 Sam 21:1-ff a famine comes to Israel because of covenant breaking of Saul.
 - Seven: Broken relationship between generations. Malachi 4.
- To get out from under a curse we have to realize: Gal 3:13,14 Jesus became a curse for us. Repent and renounce the sin. Receive the promise.