



Sermon Discussion Questions
October 6, 2024
In the Wilderness

EXPECT GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

Numbers 13

1. Opening Discussion Questions: (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)

- a. We've probably all heard someone say, "I've got good news, and I've got bad news – which do you want first?" What is your reaction to such a statement? Do you usually want to hear the good or the bad first? Is there a time when you were offered such a choice that was particularly memorable?
- b. How easy is it for you to stand up and say what you believe when everyone seems to disagree? Do you tend to be more inclined to avoid confrontation or to stand up for what you believe? When has this tendency created problems?
- c. If you have seen the Kendrick Brother's movie "Facing the Giants" take a few minutes to describe the plot to any in your study who have not seen it. In your opinion, what was the most memorable scene? What enabled Coach Taylor to fight on in the face of seemingly overwhelming opposition?

2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. Most of the Spies Saw Good News but Were Overwhelmed by Bad News.
 - i. Through Moses, God commissioned a team to explore the promised land.
 - ii. The spies reported both good and bad news.
 - iii. The spies debate what should be done.
- b. When Looking to the Future, Expect Both Good and Bad News.
 - i. In Christ, we know the ultimate future is awesome!
 - ii. The future between now and then will be a mix of good and bad.
 - iii. In other words...
- c. In Christ, We Are Well Able to Overcome the Giants that Lie Ahead.
 - i. What Caleb said in verse 30 is true for us in Christ – we are well able to overcome!
 - ii. Trust God's promises and power over any of the world's giants!

3. Study/Discussion Points:

a. Sunday Afternoon

- i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
- ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
- iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
- iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?

- v. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. Monday:

- i. Read Numbers 13 twice. The first time read quickly as you would a novel just to get the big picture. Then go back and read it a second time making note of as many details as you can.
- ii. In your view, what facts or events stand out as most significant?
- iii. Why do you think God wanted us to know all of the detail that is included in this chapter?
- iv. Before going further in the study of Numbers 13, what possible applications to a Christian's life do you see in the chapter?

c. Tuesday:

- i. Read Numbers 13:1-3.
- ii. What is surprising, perhaps even strange, about God's instructions to Moses in verse 1?
 - 1. Did God need the information that spies could gather? Since as God He already knew everything that could be known about the land and the people living in it why do you think He gave this command?
 - 2. Read Deuteronomy 1:19-25. How does Moses' description of the events expand on what was provided in Numbers 13?
 - 3. In your view, what does the desire of the people to send spies reflect about them and their relationship with God?
 - 4. What is surprising about what the people wanted the spies to learn (see Numbers 9:15-23)? From whom and to whom does it seem that they may be turning for leadership?
 - 5. How does James 1:5-8 seem to relate to this event? How might events have differed if the people had asked for God's wisdom and guidance rather than trying to collect information through human means? What does Numbers 13:3 suggest about where Moses was turning for guidance and leadership?

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read Numbers 13:4-16.
 - 1. Why do you think that one spy was selected from each tribe?
 - 2. Compare the names of the spies, who "were heads of the people of Israel", given in verses 4-15, with the names of the "heads of the clans of Israel" given in Numbers 1:5-15 (also in Numbers 2 & 7). Why do you think the names are different? What about the upcoming spy mission might have caused Moses to select others than had been named earlier in Numbers?
 - 3. What principle do you see at work that has application to the Church today? How would Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Peter 4:10-11 apply?
- ii. What names do you recognize from the list? How many would you not recognize if you had not just read the passage? What does that say about those who are faithfully

obeying God?

1. We will see more about Caleb in the coming weeks – while this is the first time, his name is mentioned 31 additional times in the Old Testament. For now, focus on Hoshea son of Nun. Why do you think Moses renamed him Joshua? If you have access to a Bible dictionary look up the meaning of Joshua.
2. Read Exodus 17:8-16. While the Bible does not tell us when Hoshea was renamed, why would it have been appropriate immediately after this event?
 - a. What can we conclude about what Moses' opinion of Joshua was when he selected him to lead the army?
 - b. Note verse 14. Why do you think God would want Joshua to know this particular fact in the future?
3. Read Exodus 24:13-14, 32:15-18, 33:7-11, and Numbers 11:26-30. Based on these brief glimpses into Joshua's life how would you summarize his character, training and relationship to Moses?
 - a. What does it say about how important Moses felt the mission was and what he felt about Joshua that he chose to send his own aide on this spy mission?
 - b. Do you see an application in this to churches today, especially in the area of church planting?

e. Thursday:

- i. Read Numbers 13:17-25.
 1. Access a good Bible map and locate as many of the places mentioned as you can. Some Bible atlases will have a map showing the probable route the spies took. If yours does study the route. About how far did they travel in this 40-day mission?
 2. Given the nature of the journey they were taking what can we conclude about the physical qualifications of the twelve men?
- ii. What were the three general categories of information Moses asked the spies to collect?
 1. Read Genesis 15:17-21. What information about the land is already known because God had provided it centuries earlier? If they had stopped to recall this event, how might it have changed their actions?
 2. Read Exodus 3:7-10. What did Moses already know about the land? Which of the questions he asked the spies to answer was completely unnecessary? Why would he have asked it (consider particularly the last part of Numbers 13:20)?
- iii. Of the places named in Numbers 13 Hebron stands out with particular significance. Read Genesis 13:14-18, 23:1-4, 35:27-29, and 37:12-15. Based on these passages what was significant about Hebron?

f. Friday:

- i. Read Numbers 13:26-33.
 1. How would you summarize the majority report from the returning spies?
 2. What is the *good news*?

3. What is the *bad news*?

- ii. Looking back over Moses' charge to the spies in verses 17-20, which of his requests for information did they answer? Which did they not answer? What information that was not requested did they focus on?
 - 1. What appears to be the primary motivation of their report?
 - 2. How did Caleb's report differ? What seems to be his primary motivation?
 - 3. After 40 days behind enemy lines, it is certainly possible that the 12 spies had become a "band of brothers". What does it say about Caleb's character and priorities that he took the stand he did despite how it would impact his relationship to the other spies?
 - 4. Compare the spy's declaration in Numbers 13:31 with that of Daniel 3:17. Which faced the greatest immediate danger? What enabled these very different responses?
 - 5. Consider what Paul says in Philippians 4:13. How does his statement bring this event into focus as an application to how we should live?
 - 6. Elsewhere we are told that Joshua concurred with Caleb but the record in Numbers 13 does not record him speaking. Why might he have remained silent? From what you know of Joshua does God hold it against him (see Numbers 14:30)? What truth might we learn from his silence about when we should remain silent?

g. *Saturday*:

- i. Read Numbers 13 slowly meditating on truths God has revealed to you throughout the week.
- ii. Read Romans 4:19-21, 14:23b, and Hebrews 11:6. Then skim through the Gallery of Faith in the verses that follow Hebrews 11:6 until you get to verse 29. Read verses 29 and 30 carefully. Where do the events of Numbers 13 fall? What lesson do you think God was trying to teach the people? How important is that same lesson to us today?

4. Application:

- a. A committee has been defined as "a group of people who individually can do nothing and collectively decide nothing can be done." Consider prayerfully this week if your walk as a Christian is influenced more by what the majority say or by what God tells you in His Word. One way to judge this is to consider how you spend discretionary time – is it listening to others (including various forms of social media) or in His Word and prayer?
- b. Not only does the author of Hebrews tell us it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6), Jesus tells us that with faith we can do seemingly impossible tasks (Matthew 17:20-21). Our society, like the 10 spies and all the people, places great emphasis on self-reliance and ignores what God can do through us if we have faith. Pray that God will grow your faith to the point where you are willing to do whatever He asks.

5. Prayer Points:

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications – Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19