

Possess Through Faith

UNBELIEF & PERMANENT CONSEQUENCES

Numbers 13

25 And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.
26 Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.
27 Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.
29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."
30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."
31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."
32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.
33 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."

Numbers 14

1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.
2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!
3 Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"
4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

- The land was prepared and set before them. God had been faithful and true in all that He had promised. It was a land for growth and prosperity.
- There was however a work to be done. Wickedness and ungodliness needed to be removed.
- A little leaven (pride/unbelief) leavened the whole lump! Do we look to The Lord or to those around us?
- Israel saw only failure and defeat. They saw the size of the enemy and the greatness of the battle. They saw a fleshy striving, not spiritual victory.
- Israel saw the land of Grace but not through Faith. They were in fear, doubt and unbelief and God's wrath was stirred!

Numbers 14

22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice,
23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.
...
28 Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:
29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.
30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.

- The sin of unbelief is the most abhorrent to The Lord. It is to doubt His credibility and character and question His ability.
- Consider what actually happened and the consequences. They complained, they murmured, they questioned. They doubted.
- The consequences were severe! No promised land, no home, death by wandering in the wilderness! The rest of your life wandering aimlessly.
- It is possible to lose the promised blessing! Unbelief will cause us to be barred from possessing the blessing that was for us!
- Let's look at their response...

Numbers 14

39 Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly.
40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!"
41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed.
42 Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you.
43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."
44 But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp.
45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

- This is a hard truth and reality to face. There was no opportunity to correct their mistake or to make it right!
- For a heart of unbelief, the promised was removed from them! In the flesh it was a short lived, inconsequential sin, But the blessing was gone.
- The Lord does not tolerate or excuse sin! "what fellowship can righteousness have with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14
- Let's look at a stark example...

Numbers 15

30 'But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people.
31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.'
32 Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day.
33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation.
34 They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him.

35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.

- The consequence for sin was severe! There is no excuse or reasoning. There is no sympathising or wrist slapping.
- Sin caused a complete cut off from communion, fellowship and family. It caused death, the final separator!
- What is your opinion to picking up sticks? Really... Think about it. Consider what excuses you would make on behalf of that man. Then realise and accept how far our thinking is from The Lord's.
- God longs for His children to obey His commands. Truly it is those who obey Him that love Him back. His commands are not grievous or harmful!

Deuteronomy 5

29 Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

- The "Oh" of God. His longing for His people!
- This is not just Old Covenant Teaching.

1 Peter 1

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;
15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,
16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."
17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;
18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,
19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

- We have been commanded to live holy lives. Holy and circumcised in our hearts to bear the fruit of holiness in our conduct and conversation.
- More light means more exposure. More opportunity to decrease...
- GOD HAS NOT CHANGED! The God of the Old Covenant is the same God of the New Covenant. His heart and character do not change.

Hebrews 10

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
26 For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.
28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

- These passages are sobering and direct. God's Word, as a sword, dividing between light and darkness, flesh and Spirit.
- We are so quick to make excuses. We think so little of "picking up sticks". But God does not think like us.

May we be careful how we think about the "little things" for Holiness is no "little thing". Not out of fear but in serving reverence and love. May we be often confessing and keeping our hearts right before The Lord. There is a reality of living in God's presence that we ought to know more about.

SEDUCTION AND INFLUENCE

Numbers 25

1 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab.
2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.
3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

- They were cordially invited/welcomed. They were accepted. They were made welcome and comfortable. Not actions of an enemy.
- The Moabites were so appealing. They were curious. It was just a meal. It was friendly, it was harmless... It was a slow poison.

Revelation 2

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:
13 I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.
14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.'

- We are so easily given to distraction. Distraction is inviting. It's an invitation to give more of yourself...
- We need to be so aware and alert to what we are distracted by. The sin seems so welcoming, so harmless, so small, hardly the work of an enemy... But the fruit is lust, adultery and arrogance.
- The consequences are death!

Numbers 25

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."
5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

- There was no room given for excuse or reasoning. There was no explaining. No sympathising. Do we recognise that in ourselves?
- Have we joined ourselves to something of the world? Have we given in to distractions and invitations and now find ourselves joined to friendship with the world? (James 4:4)

Our flesh will always make light of sin. It will seem so natural, so small, so refreshing, relaxing... It will be a welcome to the flesh!

POSSESS OR BE DISPOSSESSED

Numbers 33

50 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying,
 51 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan,
 52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places;
 53 you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess
 ...
 55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.
 56 Moreover it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them."

- You shall! It is not an option or a mere possibility. It is a command and a promise! It is a responsibility that we must fulfil!
- Just like crossing the Red Sea. We must move first!
- If you do not. If you doubt or disobey, if you neglect to go, if you despise the promise... Then the consequence is clear.
- DO NOT SAY I CAN'T!
- DO NOT THINK YOU DESERVE!

Deuteronomy 9

1 "Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven,
 2 a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?'
 3 Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.
 4 "Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you.
 5 It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 6 Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.

- We are commanded to go in and possess the land that The Lord has won for us! We are to possess these lives! We are to go forward to take land in our flesh and in our lives!
- Not because of our righteousness! But that we may decrease and HIS life may increase! That Jesus would be seen!
- So look around, spy out the land. Be aware of what there is to gain and the enemies that need to be cast out! TAKE POSSESSION and hold your body under subjection!
- Take that workplace, take that home... in Jesus name for His name!

Deuteronomy 11

10 For the land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden;
 11 but the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven,
 12 a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.
 13 'And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul,
 14 then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.
 15 And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.'
 16 "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,
 17 lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

- Our lives are cared for by The Lord.
- So long as we walk by faith, in obedience to His Word.

That Promised Land is our spiritual life in Jesus Christ. We can all agree that the promise is for a life flowing with milk and honey. A spiritual land for growth, sustenance and prosperity. So let us be stirred up in our faith to go in a possess it! We have been promised victory in every area!! Rejoice!!
 Praise The Lord! Lift up His banner and claim His victory!

Be careful of distraction. Be careful of what influences you. Do not be led by those around you but by The Lord and His Word.

and we have all that we need to know His victory as the children of Israel! We