

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Increase understanding of the effects of unbelief on individuals and families.

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Read: Hebrews 3 & Numbers 13:1,2, 17 – 14:45

Q – How were the spies selected? - They were selected from the leaders of each tribe.

Q – What are the requirements of people in positions of leadership? - Maturity, judgment, wisdom and a good sense of perspective.

Q – What are the requirements of people in positions of spiritual leadership? - They are similar with one very important addition which is a strong relationship with God.

Q – What were they instructed to do? - Spy out or evaluate the land and the opposition.

Q – Where did they start from and how far did they travel?

- They began in the desert of Paran near Kadesh Barnea and traveled all the way into what is present day Syria.
- If you are familiar with the name of the town of Aleppo, which has been in the news lately, they traveled to within about 70 miles of there.

Q – How far is it from Kadesh to the region of Hamath? - About 250 miles one way or 500 miles round trip.

Q – How long does it take the average adult to walk one mile? - 17 – 20 minutes or about 3.5 mph.

Q – How long did it take them to make the round trip? - 40 days.

Q – On average, how many miles did they travel each day? – 12.5 miles per day..

Q – To put these distances into perspective, about how far had they have traveled from Egypt to Kadesh Barnea? - A little over 400 miles.

Q – If on average we can walk 3.5 mph why did it take them so long to cover this distance?

- Their assignment was not to see how fast they could cover the distance.
- They were to spy out the land.
- Size up the peoples, cities, fortifications and evaluate the suitability of the land to support an agrarian society.

Q – Did the report they came back with match the instructions they were given at the outset? - For the most part, it did.

Q – Were the facts they reported the thing that got them into trouble? - No

Q – Were some of the peoples of the land bigger and stronger than they were? - They were.

Q – What was the fundamental problem and how was it displayed?

- **(Oh, listen carefully to the answers to these next few questions.)**
- Their fundamental problem was fear and the conclusions they reached.
- Said another way, the thoughts that they gave voice to.

Q – How do we know their basic problem was fear?

- It was displayed in their interpretation of the facts.
- By their expressed conclusions.

Q – Do you believe they were aware of God's promise to give them a homeland?

- I do.
- I believe it would have been one of the things they talked about as they traveled from Egypt toward the promise land.

Q – How did they interpret the fact that there were some powerful people living in fortified cities in the land the Lord had promised to give to them?

- We looked like grasshoppers compared to them.
- They will kill us and take our women and children as plunder.

Q – Who's eyes saw the “grasshoppers”? - The 10 spies, the leaders chosen to evaluate the opposition.

Q – How much time had elapsed between leaving Egypt and arriving at Kadesh Barnea? - ~ 2 years.

Q – What significant miracles or deliverance events occurred in those twenty four months?

- Crossing the red sea on dry ground.
- A cloud by day and fire by night.
- Water from a rock.
- Manna & Quail

Q – Which of the problems the 10 spies articulated would have been more of a challenge for God than what they had already been delivered from on their journey so far? - None, nothing is too hard for our God!

Q – I normally like to place the application of principals near the end of a section of study and we're not there yet but we can't leave this section without drawing some conclusions to apply to our everyday lives.

Q - What should we take away from this discussion?

- It's not the facts or our knowledge of the promises of God that are the source of our unbelief.
 - We know that by His stripes we were (past tense) healed.
 - We know that He will never leave us or forsake us and is an ever present help.
 - We know He will meet all our needs and is always acting in our best interests.
 - We know the plans He has for us are good and not evil.
- Its our conclusions or interpretation of real-time facts that get us into trouble.
- We can hear our conclusions in the things we say to each other.
 - We see “grasshoppers” when the doctor says it's cancer.
 - We see “grasshoppers” when a significant financial challenge is on the horizon.
 - We see “grasshoppers” when our loved ones make bad choices or reject the things of God.
 - We see “grasshoppers” when we expect more people in our services than are present.
- One can even hear it at times in our prayer requests.
- We call ourselves people of faith but at times, the things that come out of our hearts betray us.

Q – How did the people react when they heard the interpretation of the facts from the 10 dissenting spies? - They wept aloud, grumbled against Moses and wanted new leadership.

Q – Listen, if we believe God is orchestrating the affairs of our lives, what do we have to fear?

- Regardless of the outcome we are in His hands.

- Let's have faith in God, He is able to deliver us!

Q – How did they propose to do away with Moses so new leadership could be established? - Stone him.

Q – What stopped them from stoning him? The Glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meetings.

Q – Who did the Glory of the Lord appear to? - Everyone present.

Q – Fear is the opposite of _____? - Faith.

- They simply did not trust God to support them in battle and deliver the land into their hands.
- They envisioned defeat and that is what they said or gave voice to.

Q – Why would they say that they would be defeated? - Because that is what they really believed in their hearts.

Q – How did Jesus put the subject of what we say into perspective?

- Luke 6:45b) For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.
- Matt 12: 36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37) For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.
- Matt 15:2) “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” 10) Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. 11) What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them. 15) Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.” 16) “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. 17) “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18) But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them.

Q – What false doctrine uses portions of these scriptures as well as Mark 11:23 as a basis for their belief?

- “Name it and claim it”.
- Mark 11:23) if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.

Q – What do we say about every good false doctrine? - It contains an element of truth.

Q – What did God tell Moses to say to them? - Numbers 14:28) So tell them, ‘Here is what I, the LORD, am announcing. **You can be sure that I live. And you can be just as sure that I will do to you the very things that I heard you say.**

Q – Have you listened to some of the things we say lately? Do we really believe the promises of God?

- No, at times our speech betrays us.
- All too frequently we display some of the same problems the dissenting spies had.

Q – What word did God use to describe His assessment of this situation with Moses? - As contempt.

Q – Why would their fear and unbelief be considered contempt?

- They were refusing to submit themselves to God's plan &
- Trust in His protection and provision.

Q – How did Moses describe their unbelief? - As sin and rebellion.

Q – To summarize unbelief is _____, _____ & _____? - Sin, rebellion and contempt toward God.

Q – How did God react when Moses asked God to forgive them? - He did so immediately.

Q – How do we know His forgiveness was immediate?

- By His use of a past tense statement.

- "I have forgiven them, as you asked."

Q – What terms or approach did Moses use to ask God to forgive them? - Numbers 14:17) "Now, Lord, show your strength. You have said, 18) 'I am the LORD. I am slow to get angry. I am full of love. I forgive those who sin. I forgive those who refuse to obey.

Q – What passage of scripture does this statement remind you of? - Psalms 103:8-14. 8) The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9) He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10) he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11) For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12) as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13) As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14) for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Q – Are both thoughts in Numbers 14:18 consistent with Psalms 103?

- They are.
- However we need to put the two halves of verse 18 into perspective.
 - 18) 'I am the LORD. I am slow to get angry. I am full of love. I forgive those who sin. I forgive those who refuse to obey. But I do not let guilty people go without punishing them. I punish the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for the sin of their parents.'
- Q - Your explanation of these statements is?
 - God is quick to forgive sin and unbelief but he honors our will and the choices we make.
 - As such, He seldom removes the consequence of sin.

Q – How do you explain the concept of the sins of the parents resulting in punishments on the children and grandchildren?

- Our attitudes, beliefs, life styles, habits, outlook and decision making skills are passed on from generation to generation.
- As I so painfully learned one day when I overheard a conversation between my then 16 year old daughter and my wife. I heard myself in tone, phrase and choice of words.
- It was embarrassing and very painful,
- I knew it wasn't something that could be easily undone.
- I had unwittingly taught things I had no intention of ever teaching to my children.

Q – What kind of "baggage" have we saddled our children with? - This is a rhetorical question but allow discussion if appropriate.

Q – How did God describe the punishment being passed on to their children? - 40 years of living in the desert.

Q – Anyone ever live in the desert without air conditioning?

- The heat can be unrelenting.
- Limited shade, limited water and the sun beating down from early morning until late in the day.
- I recall temperatures in the high 90s at 3 AM in Phoenix.
 - I remember having our AC go out one day and we couldn't get it fixed until the next.
 - We should have gone to a motel because we spent a very restless night.

Q – How did the people respond when Moses informed them that the men who had delivered the "bad" report had died of a plague?

- They mourned bitterly.
- Early the next morning they confessed their sin &
- Decided to go take the land the Lord had promised.

Q – How did they react when Moses told them their attempt to take the land would be without the support of the Lord?

- They ignored him.
- Went anyway and as Moses predicted they were defeated.

Q – How was their motivation described? - Presumption.

Q – How would you define presumption? - One definition from the web is; An acceptance of something as true without proof, or an attitude of superiority.

Q – Would you consider the confession of their sin to be repentance? - Not really, true repentance involves an acknowledged dependency on God.

Q – How did the author of Hebrews describe the cause of their rebellion? - When they heard the message of the Spirit of God they hardened their hearts.

Q – What is a major contributing factor to a hardened heart? - Unbelief, it causes one to turn away from the things of God.

Q – What kept them from enjoying God's best, His plan for them? - They chose to believe their own conclusions or interpretation of the facts instead of believing God's promises.

Q – What's the bottom line in this situation?

- They didn't believe God would do what He said He would.
- They didn't believe they could take Him at His word.
- God help us to avoid their pitfalls!

Q – What are the take away messages from this lesson plan?

- They had real time “eye witness” accounts of the scope of the opposition they would face.
- They didn't understand how God could deliver them given what they knew the circumstances to be.
 - Their finite understanding of the problems overshadowed their sense of the power of God.
 - They lost focus and began to believe the solution was dependent on human abilities.
 - Which of their problems or ours for that matter, are too hard for God?
- “My ways are not your ways and my thoughts are not your thoughts says the Lord!”
- Let's not deceive ourselves and limit God to our understanding of the problems we face.
- Let's continue to trust God even in our darkest hour because to fail to do so is unbelief.
- Unbelief is showing contempt for God and His word!
- Unbelief is rebellion toward God!
- Let's not fall into the trap of saying “if only we could see a miracle or signs and wonders we'd believe”.
- They saw miracles on a regular basis.
 - Passage thru the red sea.
 - Water from the rock.
 - Manna and quail.
 - A fire by night and cloud covering by day.
- In spite of all these signs and miracles they couldn't bring themselves to trust God.
- Have faith in God!
- He's been taking care of you and yours this far and He will until the end.
- God is faithful but He's no fool.
- If we insist, He'll allow us to learn the hard way.
- He quickly forgives our sins but seldom removes the consequence of sin.