

Journey to the Promise: Don't Look Back - Moving Forward in Faith

Dr. John Carmichael

[Num 14:1-10 NASB95] 1 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3 "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt." 5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. 6 Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us a land which flows with milk and honey. 9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them." 10 But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

- There are moments in life when fear makes the past look safer than the future. That's exactly what happened in Numbers 14. The people of Israel stood on the edge of their promise, but instead of moving forward in faith, they wanted to go backward into bondage.
- Does God call us to come back to things? Yes, at His direction. I am talking about when you know that God is calling forward in faith, but you want to retreat in fear.
- Too often, we do the same, longing for what's familiar rather than trusting God for what's promised.
- But hear me, Church: God never calls His people to retreat in fear - He calls them to advance in faith. The Holy Spirit is moving us forward. Don't look back - look ahead in faith!

What can we learn about not looking back but moving forward in faith from Numbers 14?

Here are three lessons about not looking back but moving forward in faith from Numbers 14.

I. Looking Back Is Rooted in Fear, Not Faith

- a. V. 2 - All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!
- b. They forgot the slavery, the beatings, the chains—because fear distorted their memory. Fear paralyzes progress and glorifies the past.
- c. [2Ti 1:7 NASB95] 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.
- d. [Luk 9:62 NASB95] 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
- e. When God calls you forward, don't let fear become your historian.

II. Looking Back Rejects God's Promises

- a. V. 3 - "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"
- b. God had made covenant promises to them, but in crisis, they doubted His intention and His goodness.
- c. [Jer 29:11 NASB95] 11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

Journey to the Promise: Don't Look Back - Moving Forward in Faith

Dr. John Carmichael

- d. [Heb 10:23 NASB95] 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
- e. When we look backward, we question God's character. Faith looks ahead with confidence in God's Word.

III. Looking Forward Requires a Different Spirit

- a. V. 6-10 - 6 Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us a land which flows with milk and honey. 9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them." 10 But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.
 - b. [Num 14:24 NASB95] 24 "But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.
 - c. Joshua and Caleb saw the same giants but had a different posture—one of faith and fire.
 - d. [Rom 4:20-21 NASB95] 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.
 - e. [Gal 5:25 NASB95] 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
 - f. We need the Holy Spirit to give us Caleb's boldness—to see through the lens of faith, not flesh.
- **Israel's failure wasn't because the giants were too big—it was because their faith was too small. While the people cried and crumbled, Joshua and Caleb stood tall. They knew faith isn't about how we feel—it's about Who we trust.**
 - **Friend, it's time to stop looking back. God is not in Egypt. He's in the Promise. The same Spirit that filled Joshua and Caleb is available to us through Jesus Christ. The land is still before us. Let's rise up in the power of the Holy Ghost and move forward!**