

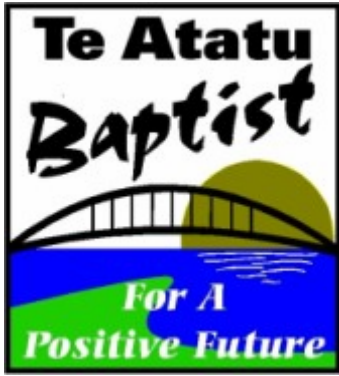
# With wings *of an eagle*

Part 8 of 12

## **The Ten Spies**

The corrosive power of negativity!





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By Fran Sciacca. Navpress – Navigators 1991

Ps Roger Spackman  
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I have something of immense truth and importance to tell you today:

God is real – and He desires to speak into *your*  
heart and into *your* life today!

Having acknowledged that, can we please turn in our Bibles to John  
10:10

Slide # 02

The thief comes to kill, steal and destroy, but I  
have come that you might have life and life in  
all its fullness!

The first thing I want to ask you – is who is the *thief* this verse is  
talking about?

?.....?

Now, if you replied with Satan, that is a *good* answer, but in the  
context of this verse – it is not the *correct* answer.

Verse 1 of chapter 10 gives us the answer.

I tell you the truth, the **man/person** who does not enter by the sheep gate – is a thief and a deceiver!

This verse – in its *true* content – is talking about *false teachers*, prophets and pastors!

The Lord is saying that the words, the teaching and the ministry of a thief – will produce death and destruction in your spiritual life and journey!

In fact the Greek word for *thief* can be translated *embezzler* or *pilferer*!

But the *true* teachers are those who speak words of life and health into your souls!

The words abundant life mean to be fully awake, vibrant, animated and exceedingly and abundantly blessed!

And so – may the words that you hear this morning be substance and sustenance to your soul and spirit.

May you experience nurture and growth today to the parched and barren areas of your heart and life.

Because the Bible is true, isn't it – when it says that Life and Death is in the power of the spoken word! (Proverbs 18:21 AV)

That means – the health, vitality and vibrancy of your personhood, your relationships, your marriage, family, business and church – is dependant upon the words that come out of your mouth!

We also know that words are the *fruit* of the *beliefs and assumptions* that reside in our heart.

And while it is not enough to simply change the words that we speak, it is indeed a *good* place to start!

For out of the heart, pour all the issues of life!

Please turn with me to Numbers chapter 13 – and just keep your finger there.

Last week Des mentioned the Israeli exodus from Egypt around 1450 years before Christ walked this earth.

Scripture and history tell us that around 600,000 men – excluding women and children set out on an epic journey from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan.

It has been estimated that the total amount travelling would have been over 2.6 million people!

Most of us know the tragic outcome of this journey – an entire generation died in the desert – wondering in the wilderness – taking 40 years to travel a route that should have taken only a few weeks.

Slide # 03

**The cause of the death of this entire generation can be traced to one tragic event and attitude.**

Which was what .....

The Ten Spies – the corrosive power of negativity!

Now, although the entire story takes over two chapters in the Bible – allow me to very briefly explain, shorten and paraphrase.

Before entering the Promised Land, God told Moses to send in 12 spies to bring back a *report* of the land – to encourage and motivate the people to go in and possess it as their rightful inheritance.

After 40 days the spies returned – showing them samples of the immense richness and abundance of the land – fruit so *large* they had to carry it on poles between them.

BUT – 10 out of the 12 spies reported how large and powerful the *fortified cities* and *warriors* of the cities were.

Only Caleb and Joshua had the faith to believe that it is God who empowers and equips for the battles of life.

Numbers chapter 13 verses 32 and 33 are significant in our lesson today.

Slide # 04

Numbers 13:32 And they spread among the Israelites *a bad report* about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. 33 We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

The outcome is revealed in chapter 14 verses 1 and 2.

1 ¶ That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud.

2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt - or in this desert!

In reply, Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes <sup>7</sup> and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good.

8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us.

9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

11 ¶ The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?

12 I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

18 'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion.

19 In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now."

20 ¶ The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked.

21 Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth,

22 not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times—

23 not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No-one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.

24 But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.

34 For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’

35 I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die."

36 ¶ So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it—

37 these men responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD.

38 Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua and Caleb survived.

Brothers and sisters – we were created to *commune* with God!

Our very souls come alive and prosper when we receive and believe the word of the Lord.

Today I come with a very intentional purpose – to impart *faith* and *hope* into *your* heart and life.

Slide # 05

The Bible says that our faith is increased as we  
listen to the preaching of God’s holy Word.  
(Romans 10:17).

Your mission today – *should you choose to accept it* – it to *continue*,  
or to begin to believe like God believes!

Your task is to view the challenges of your life with the same eyes that God sees them with.

Because, as a man believes in his heart – so he is!

Now, as we begin, we need to understand that today's Bible Workshop is NOT about Positive Thinking!

Positive Thinking is NOT the same as faith – *it is the counterfeit.*

Christian victory is NOT about God *removing* all your difficulties – rather, it is about God STRENGTHENING you and EMPOWERING you to be victorious *within* and *through* them.

Here's the challenge that faces each of us today.

Who can quote Jeremiah 29:11? (I know the plans I .....)

Can I give you some of the most important piece of advice possible when it comes to reading and understanding the Bible.

NEVER take a verse out of its *context*.

Slide # 06

When reading the Bible, we need to understand it in the light of the cultural, geographical, social and literary genre in which it was written.

For this verse, it means you don't *isolate it*, but you read the context in which it was written.

It is as easy as reading the larger paragraph, chapter and book that surrounds it.

It we were to do this with Jeremiah 29:11 – we would discover that in chapter 28 – the false prophet of Hananiah was prophesying to Israel that everything *was going to be fine*, that God was about to deliver them and set them free from the bondage of Babylon!

In response and *against* the Positive Thinking of Hananiah that God was going to set them free and deliver them – Jeremiah is quoted as saying chapter 29:11.

‘I know the plans I have for you says the Lord – plans to prosper you, to bless you – plans for a future and a hope!’

‘However, you need to resign yourself to living in captivity – so build houses, marry and have children – for your deliverance is *not* yet!’

The positive thinker was encouraging everyone that victory and deliverance was coming, but the real prophet of God was telling them that although God knows the plans and the future – one of hope and joy – the reality is that in the immediate presence – bondage and suffering would take place!

I guess what I am trying to say, is that faith is *not* about wishful or positive thinking.

Faith and encouragement is knowing that God is in control – that He has plans for us, and as we seek His face – we gain hope and strength *despite our situation* and even if it doesn’t change for the better!

Because, life and death IS in the power of the spoken word!

What you believe in your heart will come out your mouth – and that is why we are to allow the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to change, influence and mould our hearts!

As we look at the corrosive power of negativity, I wonder what Joshua and Caleb *possessed* that the others lacked – which was responsible for their different conclusions?

Numbers 13:30

Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

Slide # 07 – *verses below*

Numbers 14:6-9

6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes

7 and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good.

8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us.

9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

So – according to the above verses, what was different between Joshua, Caleb and the other ten spies?


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 The other ten spies were depending upon their *own* strength to win the battle, whereas Caleb and Joshua were relying upon the strength and power of the Lord.

 Trusting in the Lord means learning to seek His face and His will. It is knowing when to act and when not to act.

✚ There are no magic formulas with the Lord. Just because He did it one way, doesn't mean He will do it the same way again!

Slide # 08

Ten men were able to influence an entire nation of over two million people – and cause their deaths and suffering as a result. However, just as a cult leader cannot exist without cult followers (i.e. it isn't all the leaders fault!), what natural tendencies might have existed in the nation of Israel (and in humanity today) that allowed this negativity to spread so effectively and quickly?

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- ✚ Our natural and carnal tendency is to not trust God – but to see the world through our physical eyes.
- ✚ Often we tend to believe what we hear – without testing it with the truth – especially the truth of God's Word.
- ✚ The majority isn't always right!

The impact of a person's attitudes and comments on those around him is something God is very concerned about.

From the verses we are about to read out – can you give me just one central truth that relates to negativity.


Slide # 09 *verses below*

Deuteronomy 20:1,8 1 ¶ When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be

afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.

8 Then the officers shall add, "Is any man afraid or faint-hearted? Let him go home so that his brothers will not become disheartened too."

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 In any battle or situation – especially if the outcome involves other people – it is vital that we understand the issues, and that we understand the state of our own heart (self awareness). If we are suffering from fear – this will cloud our judgement. Better that we remove ourselves, rather than cause problems for others!

Slide # 10

## Learning from the ten spies!

A dozen men heard the same instructions, made the same journey, and saw the same sights.

Yet they returned deeply divided over what it all meant.

Ten were convinced they would soon be dead – along with their families and friends.

Two saw difficulties overshadowed by the blessing, provision and protection of God.

Joshua and Caleb had a different spirit (Numbers 14:24) from the other ten spies.

The negativity of the ten not only eclipsed the message of hope proclaimed by the two –

...it spread like spilled oil over the outlook of the entire nation!

Soon, the very people who has witnessed the mighty miracles of deliverance from Egypt...

...were actually wanting to return and live again in their bondage!

The murmuring and complaining of ten men eventually poisoned the hopes of millions!

The tragedy is that the poison didn't perish within the Palestinian desert.

*The greater tragedy is  
that it is still with us  
today!*

Slide # 11

Let's apply the Word of God to our lives and situation today.

You see, before the ten spies began their grumbling, they had to first let go of their understanding of God's character – and rely again on their own.

I want to list a number of possible areas where you and I might habitually grumble or complain.

Put a tick alongside the ones that apply to your life, and then write out what you've had to *neglect* about God's character in order for you to embrace your complaint.

Slide # 12 – list below

- |   |       |               |
|---|-------|---------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your health     | ..... | Job 1:21      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your job        | ..... | Col 3:23      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your income     | ..... | Matt 6:33     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your appearance | ..... | Matt 6:25     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your age        | ..... | Eph 2:10      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your friends    | ..... | Lev 18:19     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your boss       | ..... | Col 3:23      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your spouse     | ..... | 1 Cor 7:33-34 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your children   | ..... | Ps 127:3      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your pastor     | ..... | Eph 4:11      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your church     | ..... | Matt 16:18    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your status     | ..... | Pro 22:1      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your success    | ..... | Pro 22:4      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your free time  | ..... | Ecc 11:6      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your past       | ..... | Phil 3:13     |

Look back over your answers above. If you've checked more than four, it is possible that you are tempted with, and suffering from negativity.

Maybe you should ask a close friend if he or she perceives you as a negative person, and if they would be willing to help you overcome it and trust God more.

Here's a few important questions for you to consider:

Is another person poisoning your opinion of something or someone else by his or her continual negative comments (even if they sound true)? Perhaps you need to politely ask that person to stop. Here's the

thing, if someone is gossiping to you – they will also be gossiping *about* you.

Are you poisoning other people’s opinions of someone or something by your continual negativity? You need to stop. Actually, you need to repent – which means to stop doing wrong and start doing good. Write out below what you intend to do and how you intend to go about it.

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## Special Challenges

*Especially for those of us with the gift of encouragement.*

What was your reaction to the true context of Jeremiah 29:11? (Where the false prophet of the Lord had bought a message of hope and life, where as Jeremiah corrected it with a message of continual bondage and captivity (yet with hope that the Lord was with them).

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If we were to be honest, I think those of us who have the gift of encouragement – might be tempted to slip into Positive Thinking – which perhaps was what the false prophet Hananiah had done. So, in this light – why is it often difficult for those with the gift of encouragement to speak words of pain or suffering into a situation?

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Sometimes those of us with the gift of encouragement, are also the kind of person who gains their own self worth from others, and from encouraging them. It can therefore be very difficult for us to bring correction or discouragement to others, as it affects how others see us, possibly rejecting us – and hurting our own self worth.

Slide # 13 – *memory verses below*

## Memory Verses

Don't complain - Philippians 2:14-15

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe

Be thankful – 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

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