

“All in Favor, Say Aye”
Numbers 13:25 – 14:4

Introduction:

A watershed moment for Israel. They've left Egypt and are on the brink of entering the Promised Land. A land flowing with milk and honey. Peace and prosperity within their grasp. 12 spies sent out to scout the land. Upon return, 2 say go, 10 say no. All in favor, say aye?

1) The difference between an obstacle and an opportunity has only to do with God's plan.

- 12 men see the same situation, 10 decide it's hopeless, 2 decide they should go. A difference in perspective.
- Why did God allow there to be giants? Perhaps because when giants are slain, God gets the glory.
- God doesn't always provide us with an obvious, easy and clear path. That's where we need the eyes of faith. That's where we need to depend on God.
- What are you doing right now that you could only do if you had to have faith in God?
- How do you know the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity? *Your daily walk with God.*

2) To fail to seize a God-ordained opportunity, even in the face of great difficulty, is to rebel against God

- Not every difficult situation is an opportunity. But as we're convinced that God does desire for us to move ahead, fixing our eyes on the difficulties rather than on Him is a both a lack of faith and a denial of God's power.
- A slippery slope. What started as self-preservation ends up as rebellion against God and a denial of His character and power.
- Failure to do what God wants us to do is sin! We are told in James 4:17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.
- Israel never seemed to remember what God had done time after time in their midst. Do we?
- As with Israel, our emotions can trump what we know to be true, and we can often form scenarios that include things that will not happen.
- There is great freedom in obedience. Golden Retriever illustration.

3) Failure to obey in faith can have grave consequences for ourselves and others

- An entire generation died in the wilderness.
- God is not obligated to present us with the same opportunity again and again until we get it right
- What are some of the consequences of *our* disobedience?

4) Spiritual leadership and effective leadership are not necessarily interchangeable terms

- Were the 10 spies bad men? Or bad leaders? No! They actually carried the day!
- Spiritual leadership has to do with knowing God's heart and following His plan, regardless of the consequences.
- You and I ARE leaders! Family, roommates, friends...
- Leading people towards selfishness and self-preservation is always easy. Leading them towards greater faith and a challenge is difficult.

Conclusion

- We are most often more like the 10 than the 2. But this is not a surprise to God!
- No “Bad Dog Sermons” preached here. God forgives and is gracious to us again and again. There may be consequences, but God continues to love and guide us.
- They DID end up in the Promised Land. God's will will be done. Just a question of what it looks like between now and then. Ps 32:8-9
- If you don't know Christ, consider living for something more than yourself. This is an adventure and your life counts for more than your own best interest.
- Jesus is building His Church, and Jesus is building THIS church!