

STEDFAST

THE LESSON: NUMBERS 13+14

Starting out on a journey can be daunting. But many of the challenges we face along the way can be just as hard: causing us to doubt, causing us to want to turn back, to give up all the ground we have gained. But remember this: even “if we are faithless, God remains faithful” (2 Timothy 2:13). We can trust him even in the most hopeless of situations, for “he will establish you and guard you against the evil one” (2 Thessalonians 3:3). And with these promises in mind: *press on.*

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The story is a familiar one. The people of Israel were slaves in Egypt. God appointed Moses to lead them out of their bondage, performing many wonders along the way. God promised the people that he would bring them to a land “flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8), but because of their disobedience they spent many years wandering in the wilderness first. When Moses died, a young man named Joshua succeeded him and led the people of Israel into that promised land. Again God performed many wonders, which are recorded for us in the Hebrew scriptures (the Old Testament).

The text that we’re going to look at today comes in the middle of this larger story. It tells what happened when the Israelites stood on the doorstep of all that had been promised to them. Check it out.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Are you – or is someone you know – facing an uphill battle, and concerned about remaining faithful till the end?

Take some time to bring that concern to the Lord. Close your time with the following prayer:

O Lord God, when thou givest thy servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory; through him that for the finishing of thy work laid down his life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

(A PRAYER FOR STEDFASTNESS, BCP P. 635)

Do you find at the end of the day that you feel overwhelmed by all that you have not been able to accomplish? Take some time to bring that concern to the Lord. Close your time with the following prayer:

O Lord, who hast pity for all our weakness: Put away from us worry and every anxious fear, that, having ended the labours of the day as in thy sight, and committing our tasks, ourselves, and all we love into thy keeping, we may, now that night cometh, receive as from thee thy priceless gift of sleep; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR FREEDOM FROM WORRY FROM FAMILY PRAYERS, BCP P. 730)

STEDFAST

NUMBERS 13+14: **GRASSHOPPERS, REBELS + OVERCOMERS**

13 ¹The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel...²⁵At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. ²⁶And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people 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. ²⁷And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large...”

³⁰But Caleb quietened the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” ³¹Then 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 are.” ³²So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. ³³And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

14 ¹Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. ²And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 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! ³Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” ⁴And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

⁵Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. ⁶And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes ⁷and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, “The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. ⁹Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”