

The Glory of God - Part 2

by David Platt

The church is called to risk everything to fulfill its mission of declaring the glory of Christ to all nations, rather than retreating into comfort and security.

Duration: 9:12

Scripture: Numbers 13:31, Numbers 14:20

Topics: "Gods Glory", "Mission Evangelism"

Description

This sermon delves into the story of the Israelites standing on the brink of the promised land, sending spies who brought back a negative report, leading to fear, rebellion, and a desire to retreat. Despite God's forgiveness, they were left to wander in the wilderness. The sermon draws parallels to modern times, highlighting the urgent need for believers to embrace the mission of declaring Christ's glory to all nations, risking comfort and convenience for the sake of the gospel.

Transcript

Numbers chapter 13, verse 31, you remember the story. The people of God are standing on the brink of the promised land, the land He has promised to give them. They send 12 spies out to look over the land that God had promised to give them, and they come back, and what do they say? Numbers 13, 31, the men came back and said, we cannot attack those people.

They are stronger than we are. 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. We saw the Nephilim there, the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.

And that night, listen to what the people of God did. On the brink of the promised land, all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. 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, why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder.

Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt? And they said to each other, we should choose a leader and go back to Egypt. They were retreating. The mission in front of them to take this land for the glory of God.

And they're saying, we wanna go back. We don't trust God. And so amidst their rebellion, Moses intercedes for them.

And God answers Moses' prayer. I want you to hear how God responds to Moses' prayer. Numbers 14, verse 20.

The Lord replied, I have forgiven them as you asked. Nevertheless, verse 21, nevertheless, as surely as I live, and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth 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 10 times, 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.

It gets even more severe than in verse 32. This is God speaking to his people. He says, you, your bodies will fall in this desert.

Your children will be shepherds here for 40 years, suffering for your unfaithfulness until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For 40 years, one year for each of the 40 days you explored the land, you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you. 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. Don't miss it.

God forgave them. He had bound up his glory in their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. He was not about to let them go back.

This is God's grace, his forgiveness, and yet here in Numbers chapter 14, we see a picture of God with his people, leaving them to wander in the wilderness until they died. They had retreated. The story is repeated all throughout redemptive history.

Once they're established in the promised land, they retreat from ridding the land of the Canaanites and the foreign gods as God had told them to. They defame the holiness of God among the nations. Once they're established, they reject God as their king.

Say, we want an earthly king to rule over us. In the process, they defame the majesty of God among the nations over and over and over again. This is the story of God's people.

God calling his people to mission and his people retreating. And so we fast forward to the book of Hebrews, and that's the picture we have here in Hebrews chapter 13. We have the people of God with the mission of God to declare the glory of Christ to all nations at the risk of their lives, and we see them retreating.

And so I invite us tonight to fast forward a couple of thousand years to June 22nd, 2009. And here's what I see. I see a world suffering from catastrophic natural disasters.

Over the last year, over a quarter of a million people have been killed almost instantly by cyclones in Myanmar, earthquakes in China and Pakistan, floods in Nepal and Bangladesh. Most of those quarter of a million people had never heard the gospel. And as we know, they're joined by a billion others who at this moment still have not heard his name.

I see a world where half of the population is living on less than \$2 a day while we sit here tonight, all of us, extremely rich compared to the rest of the world. I see the nation of India where there are more people living below the poverty line than there are people in the United States altogether. I see a world where today alone, 25,000 people have died of either starvation or a preventable disease.

I see our dogs and our cats eating better than our brothers and sisters in the Sudan. We realize last fall in one week alone, in one week alone last fall, 50,000 people died of AIDS. 100,000 children died of hunger-related diseases.

Thousands of other children were trafficked around the world for human sexual exploitation. Hundreds were killed in an earthquake in Pakistan. All that in one week and our greatest concern was how our football team played.

On top of all this, I see thousands upon thousands of our brothers and sisters in China and North Korea and Laos and Saudi Arabia imprisoned and killed today because of their faith in Christ. I see all of these things and then I look back in the church we have created and the church we are leading and there is so little risk for the mission. We have retreated.

We have retreated into our nice big buildings where we sit in our nice cushioned chairs, where we are insulated and isolated from the inner city and the spiritual lostness of the world, where we have given a tip of our hat to world missions and evangelism while we go on designing endless programs that revolve around us. And when we should be on the firing line for God, the majority of our members are still in the nurseries of our churches drinking spiritual milk. And we stand today at our Kedesh Barnea and we have two options.

We can retreat from the mission of declaring the glory of Christ in all nations. We can retreat into a land of religious formalism and wasted opportunity or we can risk everything for the mission that we have been created for. And I want to say to you tonight, let's risk it all.

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