

## DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

*Walking by Trusting God... By Billy*

READ: NUMBERS 13: 17-20; 25-33; 14: 1-10

- *The life of the Christian is described in various ways: as a walk, a race and a journey, all of which imply a forward movement and a progression.*
- Looking back at the history of God's providence to Israel we can see that there is a clear reference to a journey, beginning with Abram and continuing with the departure of the 12 tribes to Egypt.
- God's repeated command, 'Let My people go' was eventually heeded by Pharaoh and the Exodus began.
- Every journey has its unexpected twists and turns and we are reminded daily of the tragic turns. (Moville family day out)
- We are learning to live with a new reality and there is always the tendency to fear the unknown outcome of Covid19.
- This can lead to a place of spiritual numbness in which the sense of God's nearness is not as keen as it once was.
- We don't hear His voice so clearly because fear and dismay have somehow gained control. I believe that our reading today truly represents this dilemma and there are 3 parallels worthy of consideration. There is the command to go forward.
- It is interesting to note that this desire to spy out the land was the desire of the people of Israel in the first instance. (*Deut. 1:22-23*)
- There is this deep-seated yearning within each heart to break free from the mundane existence. So the spies entered the land incognito in order to discern some of its key features.
- Were the people weak or strong, were they few or many? Was the land fruitful or barren? Were the cities fortified or not?
- Every journey needs forward planning and this was no exception.
- Tendency to self-preservation. The journey was intended to inspire preparation not self-preservation.
- The majority reported that the land was rich and fertile, that it flowed with milk and honey BUT it was not worth the risk. The inhabitants were too strong and tall. The fortifications were massive. This bad report spread like wildfire.

*(Continued next page...)*

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Week 35

- ‘A land that devours its inhabitants, we became like grasshoppers in our own sight’ (v.31-33). Panic ensued. Faced with the choice of going forward- they chose rather to go back to Egypt under new leadership.
- Proven outcome of trust in God. Caleb and Joshua were of a different spirit. They insisted that they should surely overcome and take possession.
- God brought them through the Red Sea out of the bondage of Egypt and His favour was upon them.
- To fear the people of the land is to rebel against the Lord because God has removed their protection. (*Heb.11:30, Josh.1:1-9*)

- APPLICATION

- We are not commanded to inhabit a physical territory but a spiritual one. Indeed we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. (*Eph.1:3*)
- We are called to press on to maturity and be daily filled with the fullness of His love, His peace, His wisdom and His righteousness.
- The command is always to go onwards and upwards to fruitfulness and to conquest of sin and of self.
- The tendency to self-gratification and self-preservation is very strong and there is a reluctance to journey into unknown territory although God has already proven Himself to us to be safer than a known way.
- We invent reasons not to trust God, not to pray and not to be too conspicuous by our spiritual lifestyle.
- Rather than live humbly with childlike faith in what He says He will do we opt to cry wolf and fear the giants in the land.
- A great tragedy is that many who have tasted the fruit of the good land and who do not deny its reality, still have chosen to remain as they are.
- Some have even found new leaders to take them back to Egypt.
- Beware of this strong tendency to fear the unknown. There is nothing hidden from the Lord and He will guide us through the darkness.
- There is always the other side of the storm where there is a safe haven. Fears are dispelled when Jesus calms the storm.
- The night will turn to dawn and weeping will turn to joy for the one who trusts.
- Ultimately He is the first and the last and He tells us not to fear- not even death. ■