

## Discipleship Evening 2: - (“An Obedient People”)

### Last Time: A Disciple is: Mark 1:17:

“Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men”

Someone who follows Jesus

Someone who is being changed by Jesus

Someone who is committed to His Kingdom Plan

Yet the Lord doesn't call us – then say “see you in heaven”- the Bible speaks about **Obedience & Maturity:**

What comes to mind when you think of the word “OBEY”?

*Verb: Comply with the command, direction, or request of (a person or a law); submit to the authority of.*

[Matthew 28:20](#)

and **teaching them** to **obey** everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

[John 14:23](#)

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will **obey** my **teaching**. My Father will love **them**, and we will come to **them** and make our home with **them**.”

What comes to mind when you think of the word “Maturity”?

*“the quality or state of being **mature**; especially: full development – online Websters”*

### Both together: Hebrews 5:7-13:

<sup>7</sup> During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup> Son though he was, he **learned obedience from what he suffered** <sup>9</sup> and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation **for all who obey him** <sup>10</sup> and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

#### Warning Against Falling Away

<sup>11</sup> We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. <sup>12</sup> In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! <sup>13</sup> Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is **for the mature**, who by constant use have **trained** themselves to distinguish good from evil.

*Comply with the command, direction, or request of (a person or a law); submit to the authority of.*

*“the quality or state of being **mature**; especially: full development – online Websters”*

It often helps to look at others (we find it easier!) – how much did they ‘comply with’, ‘submit to’, ‘fully develop’

Looking at THREE ‘churches’: **ECCLESIA** means "church." **Ecclesia** is a community gathering around a single purpose” – so we want to ask this evening – how well were the people ‘around’/focussed on their single purpose?

**Kadesh Barnea Baptist Church – Numbers 13-14**  
**Gilead Evangelical Church – Numbers 32**  
**East Jordan Free church – Joshua 1**

**Kadesh Barnea Baptist Church: Numbers 13-14:**

**Background:**

**What had God’s people experienced before this?**

**(Had seen Moses confrontation with Pharoah & heard God’s promises of deliverance: Exod 6:1-9, Exod 7-12 (plagues), Exod 12 (Passover), Exod 14 (Red Sea – Ex14:13-14), Exod 16 (The Lord’s provision – Manna & Quail), Exod 20 (became a Covenant people), Exod 25-35 (Building project – Tabernacle – Exod 25:1-9), Exod 40 (new Pastor – Exod 40:13)**

**Read Numbers 10: 11-13, 33-36:**

**Questions: Was time to change – but what was the catalyst? WHO were they looking to?**

**They were looking to the Lord, the cloud, the Lord’s command – when God moved – they moved (The cloud – God’s guidance, The Ark – God’s presence)**

**They started well – how might they have felt (been about a year at Sinai)?**

**Nervous? Apprehensive? Insecure? Expectant?**

**Read: Numbers 13: 1-3, 26-33:**

**What assurances does the Lord give them? - (vs1 – His Word, vs2 – which I am giving – His promise)**

**Starts well (vs3 – they go out)**

**They had been in the desert for some time, this following years of oppression and waiting for deliverance – so how ‘good’ must the land have sounded in vs 26-27?**

**Q? What sort of things does the Lord want US as His people to enter into, to go forward and ‘enjoy’? (a daily dependant walk, lives changed around us...)**

**Vs28-29 - But what PERSPECTIVE did the majority of the people have? (gloomy!) – We often look through the ‘wrong end’ of the telescope – when God can seem ‘small’ compared to the task ahead.**

**Q? What ‘tasks ahead’ or issues ahead do you see where we will need to have God’s perspective?**

**AS THIS IS ABOUT OBEDIENCE, THAT COMES THROUGH MATURITY (IN HIS WORD) – How is DOUBT starting to creep in (remember God’s promise in vs1)? (Which I am giving...)**

**Doubt is a close relative of disobedience – what *evidence* did the people have to doubt God’s Word?**

**What evidence do you/we have to doubt His Word and promises today?**

**Vs30 – Caleb (& Joshua) are minority voices – how discouraging can this be?**

**Vs31-33 – how did the naysayers start to exaggerate the task? (the land we explored devours those living in it – vs32 – well they’d survived!)**

**THIS IS NOT ABOUT BEING RIGHT, THE MAJORITY OR MINORITY – IT’S ABOUT TRUSTING GOD AT HIS WORD AND OBEYING HIM.**

**Numbers 14:1-38 – DECISION TIME!:**

**VS1-4 – Mutiny – what does the ‘yeast’ of negativity produce? – grumbling, lack of confidence in the leadership, disunity, lost perspective (wish they had died in Egypt/wilderness), forgotten their great salvation/deliverance, leadership wars (a new leader?...), looking back not forward (we were better off then) – EVER KNOWN A CHURCH LIKE THAT?**

**Vs5-9 – One last sermon attempt – what and who did they exhort the people to look to? – The Lord – His leading, His provision, His power, His presence.**

**How did the Members meeting go? – vs10a**

**Vs10b-12 – Who were they *actually* rebelling against?**

**Q? In what ways might WE rebel against the Lord? – doubt His Word/calling or ability to work**

**Vs13-19 – Moses – although upset – intercedes for the people – we all (especially the leaders) need to be bringing the people before the Lord**

**Vs20-38 – the Judgement & consequences – what were they? (not enter the land) – this is not ‘heaven’ – it is Canaan – a ‘satisfying place of experiencing the Lord’s provision and presence’.**

*There is a very important observation to be made here. This entire generation of Israelites (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb) will not be allowed to possess the land of Canaan.<sup>5</sup> But while they cannot enter the Promised Land, God has assured Moses that their sins are forgiven. There are consequences for their constant grumbling and rebellion, but their sins have been forgiven. Thus, we should be very cautious about jumping to the conclusion that “failure to enter the land” is the equivalent of “failing to enter heaven.” There are temporal consequences for the nation’s sin, but God assured Moses that their sin was forgiven.*

**Q? How much do you think churches/individuals ‘suffer’ today or in some ways have restricted God’s presence and purpose in their lives – due to disobedience and unbelief? – is that a reasonable interpretation?**

**What does the Hebrews writer say: Hebrews 3:7-19 & Hebrews 4:1-12:**

1. Listen and pay careful attention to God’s Word (Psalm 95:7b; Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4).
2. Don’t become hard hearted and disobedient due to unbelief (Psalm 95:7-11; Hebrews 3-4).
3. The consequence of unbelief is failure to enter into God’s “rest” (Psalm 95:11; Hebrews 3:11,18).

**What might be OUR rest? – John 10:10 for example**

**Q? What privileges have we had in the past? How have we seen the Lord work before?**

**How often do we look through the ‘wrong end’ of the telescope at the issues before us?**

**How might we fail to enter fully into all that the Lord has for us?**

**How might a church be disobedient?**

**Gilead Evangelical Church: Numbers 32:**

Things had gone well: Numb 21:21-35 – Amorite Kings defeated, Numbers 31 – Midianites defeated:

Vs1-5 – what was the request of the two and a half tribes?

What were their issue (s)? – They liked it were they were (vs5), they were comfortable (vs4).

Q? How easy is it to focus on our own comfort and circumstances – and to forget God’s bigger Kingdom purpose?

Can churches get comfortable? In what ways?

Vs7 – what impact can focussing on our own lives and comfort have on others? (can discourage them)

Vs8-11 – Moses reminds them of the previous generations failure to take hold of all that God had for them

Vs8 – Moses reminds them of Kadesh Barnea Baptist – there is a saying *“if we learn from a defeat – we haven’t lost”* – to what extent do you agree with this?

Vs12 – The people at Kadesh Barnea BC were ‘followers’ – but what was Moses’ criticism? (they were not wholehearted)

Vs13 – the ‘wilderness years’ were long (40 years) – why is Moses rebuke to the two and a half tribes so passionate? (does not want a repeat!)

Q? Are we sometimes in danger of repeating the mistakes of the past?

Vs14-15 – how do our actions potentially impact others?

Vs16-19 – How often might WE ‘negotiate’ with the Lord – ‘this far and no farther’?

Vs20-31 – the people still focussed on their own projects/demands – taking up the time of the leadership.

How might WE distract others from the corporate goal – and pull them into our issues and desires?

Q? Have some churches become places where the focus is on making the people comfortable where they are and feel better? (Pastoral centres)

**A DEAL HAS BEEN STRUCK AT GILEAD EVANGELICAL – BUT THERE IS A TENSION AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST THAT COULD DAMAGE OR AT LEAST DETRACT THEM FROM GOD’S KINGDOM PROJECT – how might this be true for Churches today (focussed on non-essentials...self-preservation...).**

## **East Jordan Free Church: Joshua 1:**

**Vs1 – There has been a change of leader (always a vulnerable time) – how can this affect God’s people? (but whose promises *are* they?)**

**Vs2 – after years of waiting, delays, failure, judgment – IT’S GOING TO HAPPEN – what must Joshua and the people felt like? (‘get ready to cross the Jordan’)**

**Vs1-5: The Lord encourages Joshua and the people with His *Word* and promised *presence* –**

**Q? How does the Word of God encourage you? Do you give Him daily/regular opportunity to encourage you through His Word?**

How does knowing that we have His continued presence change our perspective on the challenges ahead? (Individually & as a Church?)

**Vs6-9 – 3 times the Lord exhorts Joshua (and thus the people) to be strong & courageous – when the Lord says something three times – He’s trying to tell us something!**

**Q? Is strength and courage needed in predictability and comfort?**

**Vs7 – what is the KEY to success and Kingdom progress? (Obedience)**

**Vs8 – What is our main daily source of encouragement? (His Word)**

**Vs10-11 – Joshua is confident in the Lord – so he encourages the people**

**Q? How often do we encourage others to realise all that the Lord has for them?**

**Vs12-15 – Joshua acknowledges the issues of the two and a half tribes – but does not allow it to detract from the vision**

**Q? How important is it to work through our issues openly with a view to a positive, God-honouring outcome?**

**Vs16-18 – The best members meeting ever (incl the two and a half tribes!)**

**Vs16 – “Whatever & Wherever – I’m In!”**

**Vs17 – As they all go forward together – what will be their TRAIT? (Obedience)**

**Vs18 – How important is God’s Kingdom purpose and plan to the people? (matter of life or death)**

**Vs17-18 – The people bless and encourage Joshua with God’s Word (a very different exchange from the meeting at Kadesh Barnea! Numb 14:10a).**

## **SUMMARY:**

### **Kadesh Barnea:**

- Had experienced great things – a great pedigree
- Had the promises and assurances of the Lord
- Had the command to “go”

#### **Yet:**

- Doubted God’s Word & power
- Were looking through the ‘wrong end’ of the telescope
- Saw the issues to be bigger than their God
- Were not wholehearted
- Turned inward on the leadership & each other
- Suffered as a result

### **Gilead Evangelical:**

- Had experienced great things also
- Had the promises and assurances of the Lord
- Had the command to “go”
- Had the hindsight and ‘lesson’ of their ‘father’s failure’

#### **Yet:**

- Some wanted to compromise
- Some were distracted by their own projects and desires
- Were in danger of discouraging others
- Distracted the leadership from the core Kingdom task
- In danger of becoming ‘inward’

### **East Jordan:**

- Had experienced some changes – particular in leadership
- This was ‘their time’ to “go”
- Were encouraged with the Word and promised presence of the Lord
- Would need strength and courage for an unpredictable and maybe even uncomfortable (but exciting) Kingdom journey
- Were given the *key* to success – Obedience

#### **And so they:**

- Encouraged one another
- Acknowledged the issues but did not let this detract from the vision
- All desired a God-honouring outcome
- Experienced an exciting unity
- Were willing and flexible – “whatever & wherever!”
- Wanted ‘obedience’ to be their trait
- Knew how important it was
- Blessed and encouraged their leaders

**FOR REFLECTION & PRAYER:**

Think of the life and witness of each 'church'/group of God's people.

What characteristics of each stand out for you?

Which Church would you rather be a member of?

Spend some time praying for your Church, its direction, leadership; and your participation & contribution to that. Perhaps attitudes from the past need to be confessed, visions need to be re-aligned, personal desires and projects need to be put into perspective? Ask the Lord to give you a desire to obey His Word and leading; to be encouraged daily by His Word and 'pass it on' – and to encourage others – above all, to realise all that the Lord has for you and His local expression here, in His Kingdom purposes.



**“If God is for us – who can be against us?” – Romans 8:31**