

SEEING WITH THE EYES OF FAITH

Numbers 13-14

Happy New Year everybody! I hope your year is starting well and good. If you don't know it yet, this is a very important year for us, for this church. What am I talking about? This year is when we celebrate 30 years since this church was started. Praise God! That happens on November 17 but we celebrate on November 7, Saturday night. So, mark your calendars.

Anyone who has been here since the start? None? That just proves to show that people come and go but God's church remains. Amen? It's not about us, it's about God who builds his church.

So, it's almost three decades already. We're about to enter a new decade. And so before we enter it, I hope and pray that all of us will be able to tackle the challenges we're going to face in this new year individually and corporately. Perhaps some of you are already facing a challenge or this challenge is a carry-over of last year's challenge. How do you meet this challenge or the challenges in the weeks ahead?

Now, let me tell you, the single greatest influence on your life for this year, the number one thing that determines whether you are happy or you are unhappy this year, whether you succeed or whether you fail this year, whether you grow or whether you stagnate this year is how you look at things. It is your perspective. Your perspective determines your purpose. Your perspective determines your passion. Your perspective determines your place in history. It's how you see things. I'm talking about everything – how you see God, how you see yourself, how you see life, how you see money. Everything that you have in your life or do in your life or want to be in your life is controlled by how you see it, by your perspective.

The Bible tells us that there's a direct connection between seeing and believing. That faith and perspective are very closely related. The Bible says, *"Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."* (Hebrews 11:1) You don't see it from a physical viewpoint; you see it from a spiritual viewpoint. So, today our message is entitled, *"Seeing with the Eyes of Faith"*.

One of the best examples of this is the passage we're going to look at today which is in the book of Numbers, chapters 13 and 14. Numbers is the fourth book, the book written by Moses. The background of this story is Moses has led the children of Israel out of Egypt. They had been slaves for 400 years. They spent two years crossing the desert. It shouldn't have taken them that long but when you're moving a million people at once it takes a while. Plus the fact that they were stubborn. They get up to the edge of the Promised Land, they've been two years in the wilderness, and they're ready to go in to Israel, the land that God has promised them.

Moses says, "Before we go in I'm going to send some spies in to spy out the land and see what it's like." So he selects twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. He sends them in and they go in and they look at everything. He gives them very specific instructions. Then they come back and they report.

Now, there's a majority report and a minority report. Ten of the spies say, "Yeah it's beautiful but it's filled with enemies and we cannot do it." They're seeing with the eyes of fear. God's already done all these miracles in Egypt but they've already forgotten this. And they're afraid and they say we can't go in and possess the land God has promised.

And then, there's a minority report. Two of the spies say, sure we can do it. They see with eyes of faith. Their names are Caleb and Joshua. Later, they're the

only two guys of that entire generation who get to go into the Promised Land. The rest of them for the next 38 years they wandered in the desert until all of them died.

I don't want that to happen to you in the next so many years of your life. I don't want you to get stuck in the wilderness for the rest of your life. Many of you have been in the wilderness for months or even years. And it is the way you see your future, with eyes of faith or eyes of fear, that's going to determine whether you get to go in and possess all that God has planned for you in the future or whether you miss it.

Let's start the story in Numbers 13:17-20, *"When Moses sent them to scout out the land of Canaan, he told them, "Go up this way to the Negev, then go up into the hill country. See what the land is like, and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. Is the land they live in good or bad? Are the cities they live in encampments or fortifications? Is the land fertile or unproductive? Are there trees in it or not? Be courageous. Bring back some fruit from the land." It was the season for the first ripe grapes."*

That's the way I want you to prepare for this coming decade in the life of this church and in your personal life as well. I want you to enter it boldly with faith and confidence. *"Be courageous. Bring back some fruit from the land."*

Now, here's what happened. *"So they went up and scouted out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob near the entrance to Hamath. They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, were living. Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. When they came to Eshcol Valley, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes, which was carried on a pole by two men. They also took some pomegranates and figs. That place was called Eshcol Valley because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut there."*

This really is a bountiful country. It's full of gigantic fruit like they've been feeding it Miracle Grow. Notice it says a single cluster of grapes are carried on a pole by two men!

That sounds good. Then it says in verse 25, *“At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses this account: ‘We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit.’”*

All this sounds really good. Great property, great fruit, very bountiful country. But ten of the spies saw the land with eyes of fear and only two saw it with eyes of faith. So they gave a negative report. After hearing the negative report, the people decide, “We can't go into the Promised Land. We give up. We're afraid.” And they die in the desert.

As I said, I don't want you to do that in the next ten years. So, we're going to look at today six things that happen when you look at your future with eyes of fear instead of eyes of faith. Then we look at how to fill your eyes with faith so you can move into God's plan, God's promise.

What happens when I look at my future with eyes of fear? There are six things that happen we see in this story.

1. I get stressed by conflicting information.

Throughout your life you're going to hear good news and bad news and what you focus on will determine what you do with your life. You can focus on the negative or you can focus on the positive. If you don't look with eyes of faith you're going to get stressed every time you hear... This happens all the time. One minute you read the newspaper and it says stocks are going up. The next minute you read it and it says unemployment is going up. What are you going to look at?

Verse 28, *“However, the people living in the land are strong, and the cities are large and fortified. We also saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites are living in the land of the Negev; the Hethites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the Jordan.”* Who are the descendants of Anak? They are often referred to as the Anakim, known for their great size and strength. They were very large people. Over six feet tall. Some were seven feet tall. They were 200, 300 pounds. For a small middle easterner, these guys looked like giants.

Notice they said, *“It’s a magnificent land... but the people living there are powerful.”* See the conflicting report? Good news... but. Good news... but. You know, the biggest problem that’s going to keep you from experiencing God in the next ten years is your big but!

If you’re going to let God use you, if you’re going to go into the Decade of Destiny, you’ve got to let go of the big buts in your life. Of the big excuses, the big problems, the big reasons why you think “I could never do this.”

The second thing that happens when I look with eyes of fear at my future is...

2. I develop a scarcity mentality.

I not only get stressed more when I’m looking with eyes of fear but I also develop what I call a scarcity mentality. What is a scarcity mentality? It’s the idea that there’s no room for us. There’s not going to be enough for everybody so I better hold on and hoard what little I’ve got. I shouldn’t give it away. I shouldn’t expand myself. I shouldn’t take any risks because of the scarcity mentality.

This is what happened to these guys. They said there’s no room for us. Verse 29, *“The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”*

What are they saying? This is supposed to be our Promised Land – it’s already filled with people! And these people are enemies and they don’t want us moving

in. There's no room for us. Why did God bring us here? There's just not going to be enough land for everybody!

You know, when you see with eyes of fear you get this scarcity mentality and you start saying, "All the good jobs are already taken. How in the world am I ever going to get a job in this economy? All the good women are already taken. How am I ever going to get married?" I was in my late 30's and that's what I thought. What did I do? I kept looking and kept hoping and kept praying. And sure enough, there was still someone. God is faithful.

Maybe that's what you need to do. To just keep looking. To just keep hoping. To just keep praying.

The third thing that happens when I look with the eyes of fear, and this goes with the one before it

3. I fulfill my own self-defeating prophecies.

What do I mean by that? I mean that the person who says, we can do it, and the person who says, we can't do it, are both right! If you say I can and if you say I can't you're right either way. Because you're going to end up fulfilling what your attitude is.

There were only two guys of these twelve guys that went in to spy the land that said, we can. They're the only two guys that got to go into the Promised Land 40 years later. God let Joshua and Caleb go into the land. Everybody else said we can't and God said you're right – you can't. You're stuck in the wilderness the rest of your lives. Because of your unbelief you don't get to go into the Promised Land.

Verse 31, *"But the men who had gone up with Caleb said, 'We can't [there's that negative] attack those people; they are stronger than we are.'"* We can't take any risks in an economy as bad as this. I can't finish this project, there are so many

obstacles. You're going to fulfill your own self-defeating prophecy and you'll miss God's blessing for your life.

If that wasn't bad enough, when I look at my future with eyes of fear I infect everybody else with my negativity.

4. I infect others with my negativity.

It doesn't just affect you; it affects everybody else around you. We spread it around.

Verse 32, *"And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored."* Pretty soon the whole nation is worried. The whole nation is fearful. The whole nation is discouraged. Your negativity is contagious.

Not only do I infect others with my negativity, the fifth thing is...

5. I see myself as inadequate for my challenges.

This is a sad thing that happens. People who have the ability to do something with their lives, I've seen it over and over again, are stymied and stopped and barricaded by their own negative attitude. I see myself as inadequate for my challenges.

This is what they said in verse 32: *"The land we explored devours those living in it!"* Really? Isn't that a little exaggeration? Just eats them up, devours them. *"All the people we saw there are of great size!"* Really? Everybody there? No, not really. "Everybody's in debt." No, not really. *"All the people we saw are of great size! We saw giants there!"*

You know what happens when you worry about something? It gets bigger. Have you noticed that? When you worry about something it gets bigger. The more you think about it, the bigger it gets in your mind. And pretty soon you're facing a giant problem simply because you willed it, you worried it into a giant format.

The land devours the people, everybody's big size, we saw giants there. *"We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes..."* (v. 33) Oh really? Note "in our own

eyes.” That’s perspective. They’re seeing with the eyes of fear. Seeing with the eyes of negativity. Then they said, “...and we looked the same to them.” How do you know how you looked to them? You don’t.

Here’s a fact of human nature. We always tend to project our fears onto other people. So if you think you’re inadequate, you think everybody else thinks you’re inadequate. If you think you’re unattractive, you think everybody else thinks you’re unattractive. They don’t think that at all. But because you do you project it on them. If you think you’re uncoordinated or klutzy, then you think everybody else thinks you’re uncoordinated or klutzy. They don’t. The fact is you don’t know what other people think about you. But you allow your own fears to be projected on other people and you think everybody thinks that way. They don’t. But it is your own eyes of fear that have caused you to miss what other people see.

The sixth thing is,

6. I make myself miserable.

If I don’t look at my life and I don’t look at my future with faith eyes I just make myself miserable. Nothing is more miserable than to be around somebody who is scared, negative, against it all, thinking it’s not going to happen.

Numbers 14:1-2 is what happened after they gave this negative report. *“That night all the members 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 wilderness!”*”

What happens is when I get negative, I throw myself a pity party. Everybody hates me, nobody loves me, I’m going to go eat worms! Many of you are having a pity party right now about your life.

What’s the antidote? The antidote is to learn to look with faith. I need to learn to look at everything with faith. Look at myself, look at God, look at my husband or my wife, my boyfriend or my girlfriend. Look at my future, look at my

finances, look at my health, look at my giving, look at my witnessing. I need to look at everything in my life with faith because faith trumps fear. Faith creates confidence. Faith gets you moving.

This is what Caleb did. In verse 30, *“Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.’”* These are the eyes of faith. We should go at once and we should do it right now.

I defeat my fears with movement. That’s a very important principle of life. I defeat my fears with movement. I don’t argue them away. I don’t discuss them away. I don’t wish my fears away. He says, right now we should go. We should move against our fears. We don’t discuss it, we don’t focus on it.

Here’s what I want us to get today. If you don’t get anything else I say, get this: If you want God’s best in your life in 2026 – you need to stop listening to your feelings. You need to stop looking in fear. And you need to start living in faith.

The Bible says you believe God will help you and he will help you and then you will see a miracle. You believe and then you see. People say I’ve got to see it to believe it. Actually it’s the opposite. I’ve got to believe it to see it. You believe God will help you and then you will see the miracle. You don’t see the miracle and then believe it. No. You believe it and then you see it.

Remember Mary and Martha? They had a brother named Lazarus. Lazarus got sick. So sick that he died. Mary and Martha were grieving and Jesus shows up and they said, Lord if you’d gotten here sooner you could have healed him. And he says, I’m here on time. I didn’t want to heal him. I wanted to raise him from the dead. I let it get worse than you thought it should get because I wanted to do a bigger miracle.

That’s true in your life. He wants to do a bigger miracle in your life. But you’ve got to trust him. Jesus said this to Mary and Martha after their brother died,

John 11:40: **“Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”**
You’ll see it if you believe it first.

Here’s my question to you, as your pastor. How badly do you want to see God’s glory in your life in 2026? How badly do you want to see God’s blessing on your life in the next decade? How badly do you want to see God bless each area of your life?

If you want God’s blessing, if you want God to use you, you want to see the glory of God in your life, you’ve got to stop nursing your worries, stop feeding them by thinking about them on and on. You’ve got to make some faith commitments in whatever areas you need to make them. And you’re going to need to step out and move against the fear in faith. When you do that the boogeyman vanishes. And you go, what was I thinking? Why didn’t I trust God sooner? You need to say, Lord, I want you to open my eyes. The Bible calls it the eyes of your heart, seeing with spiritual eyes. Open the eyes of my heart. There’s a song about that! Open the eyes of my heart; help me to see this next year and this next decade with eyes of faith and not eyes of fear.

How do I do that? **How do I see God’s plan**, God’s purpose for my life, my destiny? How do I see it?

Let me give you three starter steps. There are more than these but these are the starter steps to get you going.

1. First I need to invite Jesus into every room of my life.

Your heart is like a home with many rooms in it. You need to know that every room that is not filled with Jesus is filled with worry. Because when Jesus enters a room he fills it with peace. So any area of your life where you’re worried, any area of your life where you’re upset, any area of your life where you are anxious and nervous, that’s the area of your life you have not given to Jesus Christ. Because when Jesus walks in the room he fills it with peace.

So your worries reveal to you the areas of your life that are not under Christ's control. You worry about finances? It's not under Christ's control. You worry about your job? It's not under Christ's control. Whatever room is not filled with Jesus is not filled with peace; it's filled with fear, worry and anxiety.

Jesus said it like this in John 3:3, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can **SEE** the kingdom of God unless they are born again."* If you want to see from God's viewpoint you have to get God in your life. And there's not a better time to do it than the first weekend of a brand new year. So let's start it right. Let's start it with Jesus in our lives.

When you are born physically God gives you a set of five physical senses – hear, taste, touch, smell, see. With your physical eyes, you're able to see physical things. Spiritually, when you are born again, God gives you a new life spiritually. You get a set of spiritual senses and that includes spiritual eyes. With spiritual eyes you see things you wouldn't normally see before. Like sometimes you're reading the Bible and go, I've read that ten times and boom! It just stands out to you. Wow! I've never seen that before. God just opened the eyes of your heart at that moment. You saw with spiritual eyes. And you get those when you open your life to Christ.

How do you open your life to Christ? It's by believing in your heart that he died for you, he was buried for you, and he rose again from the dead for you. When you sincerely believe these things, you are born again. Born spiritually. In short, you are saved from your sins. Because the Bible says our sins condemn us and we're headed straight to hell. No amount of good works, or being religious can save you. Only the death of Jesus on the cross can save you. That's step one – invite Jesus into my life.

The second thing you have to do

2. I need to take a step of faith in baptism.

A lot of people don't realize how important baptism is to unlocking God's power in your life. Baptism is the way that expresses my faith in Christ publicly. Step two is publicly saying "I'm not ashamed to identify myself with Jesus Christ".

This is serious and should not be delayed. I'm not talking about being baptized as a baby. Many of us were dedicated or christened or baptized as babies. Jesus was dedicated as a young infant. But then when he was 30 years old, as an adult, he went down to John the Baptist at the river Jordan and was baptized in the Jordan River, under water. Why would he do that? Because he wanted us to do it. If Jesus didn't want you to do it believe me, he wouldn't have done it. He modeled everything. He was saying, yes, I was dedicated, I was baptized, I was christened as a baby but that was my parent's commitment. Now, this is my commitment. So he goes down as a thirty year old adult when he was baptized.

Why is this important? Jesus says this: *"Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."* (Luke 9:26) Not being baptized blocks God's power in your life because you're ashamed of identifying with Christ.

The third thing you need to do is

3. Do whatever God tells me to do.

Obedience is the third thing that unlocks the power of God in your life. Here's an example, Numbers 14:6-9, *"Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh...said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good...do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."*

You know all that stuff you're worried about? It doesn't stand a chance against you if you will obey God, if you'll do what he says. The Lord is on our side. The Israelites had forgotten that God had been preparing the Promised Land for

hundreds of years. Then he did miracle after miracle after miracle in Egypt, defeated the most powerful nation in the world, brought them out, miraculously fed them manna and quail every day for all this time and now they're afraid to go in to the Promised Land that God's given them. That's a big, big fail.

You know what to me is the saddest verse in the Bible? It's this verse, Hebrews 3:19 talking about these people, *"So we see that they were not able to enter [they didn't get to go into the Promised Land. They didn't get what God had promised. They missed the blessing that God had planned for them. They missed their destiny.] because of their unbelief."*

Folks, to claim God's promises, to claim your destiny, this year, this new decade in your life, you've got to learn to see with eyes of faith. Don't be afraid because our God is an awesome God, Amen? Be like Joshua and Caleb who were not afraid of the giants in the Promised Land because they knew they would conquer in the might and power of God. After 40 years in the desert, while everybody else died, they were still standing and took possession of the land.

The Bible says, *"You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!"* (Psalm 68:35). That's our theme verse for the year and our theme is *"Our Awesome God"*.

God is awesome and he is ready to work in your lives this year and beyond. Amen?