

Godly Optimism

Num. 13:26-31

Introduction:

- A. Israel's God-given task: Conquer Canaan.
 - 1. Pessimistic spies said, "We are not able." (vv. 27-28, 31).
 - 2. Optimistic spies said, "We are well able." (v. 30).
- B. Our God-given task: Conquer hearts of sinners for Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-6).
 - 1. Pessimists say, "No need to preach, the obstacles are too great."
 - 2. Optimists say, "Great need to preach, gospel will work."
- C. We can "take the land" with same *companions of optimism* that Israel needed to take Canaan.

Discussion:

I. Faith.

- A. Israel's self-defeating lack of faith. (14:11-12).
 - 1. Hindrances seemed more powerful than God. (13:27-28, 33)
 - 2. Delayed 40 years (14:32-35).
- B. Our own self-defeating lack of faith.
 - 1. Pessimistic about preaching — little faith in power of gospel. (Rom. 1:16).
 - 2. Pessimistic about planting and watering — little faith in God's increase (1 Cor. 3:16).

II. Holiness.

- A. Israel's separation from the nations of Canaan (Deut. 7:1-6).
- B. Our separation from the world (2 Cor. 6:14, 17).
 - 1. Distinctive in doctrine, practice and life.
 - 2. Unwilling to compromise (Gal. 2:5).
 - 3. Pessimism compromises — optimism endures.

III. Patience.

- A. Israel needed patience (Deut. 7:17-23).
 - 1. God was in control.
 - 2. Progress would be "little by little."
- B. We need patience to avoid:
 - 1. Quitting from discouragement.
 - 2. Extemporizing for speed.
 - 3. Lowering standards from numbers.
 - 4. Gospel preachers becoming mere promoters.

Conclusion:

- A. Godly optimism goes with faith, holiness, and patience.
- B. Ungodly pessimism goes with fear, compromise and impatience.