

# Joy in the Possibilities

(Numbers 13)

Yearly Theme: *“Joy is...”*

Series Title: *Joy in the Wilderness*

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

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## Something to think about:

Some of the most difficult, and challenging times in life are what we often call “wilderness experiences.” When we face hard times, it feels like we are all alone and wandering in a wasteland, so to speak.

As we start a new series today, we will be exploring what it means to find joy in the wilderness experiences of life. How is it possible to find the positive in the midst of a ton of negative experiences?

As we move along in our Scripture reading plan for 2020, we come to the book of Numbers in the Old Testament. One specific passage relates the kind of joy and optimism that we can have in the face of impossible circumstances. Follow along with me...

**Turn in your Bibles to: *Numbers 13:1-33; 14:1-12,***

How do you think you would react if you were one of the spies? What would you do if you heard the report from the spies, and only 2 of the 12 were positive about the report of the land?

The key point this morning is this...

**Key Point: *“Joy can only be experienced by those who see through eyes of faith and possibility.”***

Where is faith evidenced in this passage of Scripture? Let’s take a look...

1. **The person who believes what God says doesn’t see obstacles they see opportunities.**

*Numbers 13:30 (NLT), But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at once to take the land,” he said. “We can certainly conquer it!”*

2. **Sometimes the challenge of following God’s plans seems overwhelming, but for the person who trusts God in the wilderness there is joy in overcoming the impossible.**

*Numbers 14:1-12 (NLT), <sup>6</sup> Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. <sup>7</sup> They said to all the people of Israel, “The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! <sup>8</sup> And if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>9</sup> Do not rebel against the LORD, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don’t be afraid of them!”*

## Something to take home:

I may not know what you’re facing this morning, but God knows your situation completely. He knows it inside and out, and has a plan to walk with you through whatever you’re facing. But, you have a choice to make. You can be like the 10 spies that came back after exploring the Promised Land that God was giving them, and wilt under what seems impossible or too difficult, or you can be like the two spies, Joshua and Caleb, and remember that God is with you and will see you through the challenges you face. It’s the difference between looking at things on a human level, versus looking at things on a supernatural level.

Do you trust God? Have you surrendered your life completely to Him? Have you allowed fear and anxiety to rule over you and keep you from fulfilling what God has called you too? Are you willing to take a chance and believe that God is able to do abundantly more than you could ever ask or imagine?

Moving mountains sometimes happens one pebble at a time!

And, there’s always joy in the journey when God is leading!

Finally, remember...

**Key Point: *“Joy can only be experienced by those who see through eyes of faith and possibility.”***



# Joy in the Possibilities

(Numbers 13:1-33)

Series Title: "Joy in the Wilderness"

## KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ How do you define the word "possible"?
- ⇒ Describe a time in your life when you thought something was impossible, but it became possible...

**SCRIPTURE:** (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Numbers 13:1-33 (NLT),

<sup>1</sup> The LORD now said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve ancestral tribes."<sup>3</sup> So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He sent out twelve men, all tribal leaders of Israel, from their camp in the wilderness of Paran. <sup>4</sup> These were the tribes and the names of their leaders:

Reuben — Shammua son of Zaccur

<sup>5</sup> Simeon — Shaphat son of Hori

<sup>6</sup> Judah — Caleb son of Jephunneh

<sup>7</sup> Issachar — Igal son of Joseph

<sup>8</sup> Ephraim — Hoshea son of Nun

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin — Palti son of Raphu

<sup>10</sup> Zebulun — Gaddiel son of Sodi

<sup>11</sup> Manasseh son of Joseph — Gaddi son of Susi

<sup>12</sup> Dan — Ammiel son of Gemalli

<sup>13</sup> Asher — Sethur son of Michael

<sup>14</sup> Naphtali — Nahbi son of Vophsi

<sup>15</sup> Gad — Geuel son of Maki

<sup>16</sup> These are the names of the men Moses sent out to explore the land. (Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by the name Joshua.)

<sup>17</sup> Moses gave the men these instructions as he sent them out to explore the land: "Go north through the Negev into the hill country. <sup>18</sup> See what the land is like, and find out whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many. <sup>19</sup> See what kind of land they live in. Is it good or bad? Do their towns have walls, or are they unprotected like open camps? <sup>20</sup> Is the soil fertile or poor? Are there many trees? Do your best to bring back samples of the crops you see." (It happened to be the season for harvesting the first ripe grapes.)

<sup>21</sup> So they went up and explored the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. <sup>22</sup> Going north, they passed through the Negev and arrived at Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi—all descendants of Anak—lived. (The ancient town of Hebron was founded seven years before the Egyptian city of Zoan.) <sup>23</sup> When they came to the valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it on a pole between them! They also brought back samples of the pomegranates and figs. <sup>24</sup> That place was called the valley of Eshcol (which means "cluster"), because of the cluster of grapes the Israelite men cut there.

<sup>25</sup> After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned <sup>26</sup> to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land. <sup>27</sup> This was their report to Moses: "We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. <sup>28</sup> But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! <sup>29</sup> The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley."

<sup>30</sup> But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. "Let's go at once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!"

<sup>31</sup> But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!" <sup>32</sup> So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: "The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. <sup>33</sup> We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that's what they thought, too!"

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. In a couple sentences, explain what's going on in this passage of Scripture:  
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2. Of the 12 spies that went into the Promised Land to scout it out, how many came back with a positive report of the land (Numbers 13:25-29)? How many spies were positive they could go in and take the land (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9)?  
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3. What were the 10 spies afraid of in the Promised Land, and why didn't they believe they could go into the land that God had promised to give them (Numbers 13:31-33)? Have you ever been so afraid of something that you didn't even try? Can you explain it?  
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4. The only two spies to come back from the Promised Land with, not only a good report, but with a "can do attitude," were Caleb and Joshua. Why do you believe they were confident and bold in the face of impossible circumstances? Has their ever been a time when you had the courage to take a risk when the odds seem stacked against you? Can you explain it?  
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5. Why is it so difficult to maintain a positive attitude when things seem so dire and bad?  
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6. What does it take to have the courage to rise above the challenges you face and overcome what seems impossible?  
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7. Have you ever regretted not taking a risk to do what seemed impossible to do only to find out that the consequences of fear have left you alone in the wilderness of doubt (Numbers 14:26-30)? Explain...  
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8. Many times God calls people to do impossible things in order to see if they really trust Him as Lord of their lives. The other reason is to prove that He is more than able to overcome our most difficult situations. What are you facing now that you need to conquer in your life? What is God calling you do, but you have doubts and fears about?  
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## SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **DO YOU TRUST GOD?** Have you surrendered your life completely to Him? Have you allowed fear and anxiety to rule over you and keep you from fulfilling what God has called you too? Are you willing to take a chance and believe that God is able to do abundantly more than you could ever ask or imagine?
- ⇒ **MOVING MOUNTAINS** sometimes happens one pebble at a time! And, there's always joy in the journey when God is leading!
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** Numbers 13:30 and Numbers 14:7-9.