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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes

INTRODUCTION

This past week my wife and I took our daughter Laura Grace down to San Antonio. We didn't want her to be the only Texan who graduated from high school without having visited the Alamo. I'll never forget what happened when Cindy and I were there a few years ago. It was actually at the Southern Baptist Convention and the Alamo was full of people. You could tell the preachers by their toupees. You could tell the preachers' wives by other ways. One obvious preacher's wife looked around in front of that whole crowd and she said with exasperation, “Well, I wonder why they wanted to build this place downtown?” For those of you who are more Texan than I am you know the cry, “Remember the Alamo!” was a very powerful, motivating force for the liberation of the Republic of Texas from the tyranny of Mexico at that time. There have been a lot of positive experiences in history, which have motivated us to do our best.

Tonight I want to talk about another experience. I'm going to challenge you tonight to “Remember Kadesh Barnea!”—and it was not a positive experience. Instead it was a negative experience. I hope you remember the mistakes made three thousand years ago at Kadesh Barnea and that you and I won't make the same mistake.

What I am going to be talking about tonight I think is the key to the “victorious Christian life.” It is the realization that Jesus Christ wants to live inside each one of us. God never expected you and I to live the Christian life, because it is impossible for you and I to live the Christian life. There has only been one man who ever lived who *could* successfully live the Christian life. His name is Jesus Christ. He never intended for us to imitate him. He always intended for us as believers to allow him to indwell in us to control us and to live his life through us. If there is anything good at all about my life, anything I have accomplished for the Kingdom of God, it was not David Dykes, because I know that within me there dwells no good thing. I struggle as a Christian. The church member I have more trouble with than anybody else in this church is my wife's first husband, because he's a pretty bad guy sometimes. So anything good that has ever been done through my life it is because it was Jesus in me doing it!

A SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHY LESSON:

1. Egypt = Lost person

We have a wonderful, wonderful example from the Old Testament of what *not* to do when it comes to allowing Christ to live in us. It happened as the children of Israel were moving from Egypt toward the Promised Land. What took place in this Exodus experience is a spiritual biography of every Christian. You might also call it “spiritual geography,” because it has to do with where they were. First, Egypt represents a lost person, and the one word that describes a lost person is *bondage*. The children of Israel, the Hebrews, were slaves in Egypt making brick and they were in bondage, they were not set free. There may be some of you here tonight who are still spiritually in Egypt you've never been set free. You've never been born again. That's a picture of a lost person.

2. Wilderness = Carnal Christian

Second, the wilderness represents what I call a carnal Christian, someone who has come out of Egypt but has not entered into the Promise of God. The word describing the wilderness is the word *miser*. A carnal Christian is a miserable person. I’m convinced the most miserable person on earth is not a lost person. I’m convinced that the most miserable person on earth is a backslidden, carnal Christian, because a lost person can go out and have fun in sin, but a carnal Christian can sin but won’t enjoy it. A carnal Christian comes to church but doesn’t enjoy that either. They feel uncomfortable in a bar and uncomfortable in a church service. They just fell out of place in both places. Their coming out of Egypt was a picture of salvation. In I Corinthians, Paul says when they went through the Red Sea it was a picture of baptism. When you came out of Egypt spiritually and you became a Christian, you were baptized, and that’s a picture of passing through the Red Sea. Then, you started on what I could call, “a wilderness experience.” There is what I would call a legitimate wilderness experience for every Christian. That is when you begin to grow as a Christian. There is a legitimate time of growth when you haven’t entered into all God has for you or you haven’t realized it. How long did they wander in the wilderness? We understand from Horab to Kadesh Barnea, it was an 11-day journey, but as best we can tell, it took them a couple of years before they got to Kadesh Barnea. God was giving them the Ten Commandments, the Law, and telling them how to build the Tabernacle. There was a legitimate time of growth but then when they came to Kadesh Barnea, God said, “Move on!” and they said, “No.” And for forty years they wandered in the wilderness—and that was what we call an “illegitimate wilderness experience.”

I became a Christian when I was 9 years old. From age 9 to about 17, I had a legitimate wilderness experience. I was growing as a Christian. I was trying to grow. I had a time of rebellion when I was backslidden and I was a hypocrite, but there was always a desire in my heart to grow and to be all God wanted me to be. I even started preaching! But it wasn’t until I was 17 that I read for the first time about the “spirit-filled Christian life,” that there was more to the Christian life than just having your sins forgiven and missing Hell and going to Heaven, that there was the possibility that Christ could live and reign inside of me. From that time my Christian life has been totally different. It’s like God brought me to Kadesh Barnea and said, “Okay, are you going to go on in?” and I said, “Yes, sir! Let’s do it!” It has been exciting since then! But the sad fact remains that there are millions of Christians who are wandering in the wilderness.

3. Canaan = Spirit-filled Christian

Number three Canaan represents a spirit-filled Christian. You can read some hymns in your hymnal. Hymns may be inspiring, but they are not inspired. Only the Bible is God-breathed, inspired. These may be inspiring, but they are not the word of God. You may be led astray, because there are some good old hymns that I grew up singing and I still love that tell you that Canaan is Heaven. “On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand and cast a wishful eye to Canaan’s fair and happy land where my possessions lie.” It’s the idea “Well I won’t ever get to Canaan until I die and then when I die, I’ll cross the river and I’ll go to Heaven.” There’s only one thing wrong with that: It’s wrong. Canaan is not a picture of Heaven, because Canaan was a time of warfare. They had to fight for their possessions. Do you think you’re going to be fighting in Heaven? No! There’s no warfare in Heaven. Canaan is a picture of a Christian who has entered into the spirit-filled life. If “bondage” is Egypt and “miser” is the wilderness, then “rest” is the characteristic

of Canaan. Now having introduced it I want to talk to you about the terrible experience of Kadesh Barnea and I want every one of us to remember Kadesh Barnea. It was the worst example of unbelief in the Old Testament. I want to say three things about unbelief.

I. THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF

Let’s talk about the tragedy of unbelief. In Numbers 13, the children of Israel were in Kadesh Barnea, which is the southern border of what we would call Palestine or Canaan. They sent twelve spies to check out the land.

Numbers 13:23. “When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs.”

Can you picture cluster a cluster of grapes so large that it takes two men to carry it on a pole between them? I’ve never seen a cluster of grapes like that. The land was so fertile that as the Bible says, “it was flowing with milk and honey.” Well, they went back with a report.

Numbers 13:26-33. “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! But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. [Anak was a giant] 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.’ Then Caleb [whose name means *follows God like a dog*] silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.’ But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.’ And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, ‘The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim [another word for giants] there (The descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes and we looked the same to them.’”

That is so wrong! The cross-reference to this is Joshua 2:8. This is what these people are saying, “We’re so little and they’re so big that we look like grasshoppers to us and we look like grasshoppers to them!” Forty years later a different set of spies went into Jericho and were talking to a lady called Rahab, the harlot. She said, “For the last few decades our peoples hearts have been melting with fear because we heard that the Israelites were out there.” Isn’t that amazing? They said, “We’re afraid of them” and those people in the land were saying, “We’re afraid of God’s people.” How wrong they were.

Numbers 14:1-4. “That night all the people 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 desert! Why is the Lord

bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

Have you ever noticed when you are afraid, fear breeds more fear? Have you ever known people who always want to talk about the worst-case scenario? "This is the very worst thing that could happen. Our wives will be plundered. Our children will be killed. This is going to be so bad! We are afraid!" In verse 9, Joshua and Caleb said, "Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

1. The Problem: Move forward

2. The Tragedy: They did not trust God

Here's the problem. God said, "Go on trust me move on move forward trust me! I will deliver them over to you!" But the people said, "Go back! We're afraid! Go back! We're afraid." There were 4 or 5 cities and Jericho was the most heavily fortified city of the ancient world. Those were big people! They were giants compared to the Israelites. There are many times when God brings you to a point of crisis in your life, where the obstacles look too big to overcome where the enemies appear to be too strong to defeat and every sense you have is screaming, "No! No! No!" and God says, "You go on! You trust me!" God is constantly bringing us to those points of crisis and the choice is this: Am I going to go on? Or am I going to go back? You could tell this was a Baptist congregation, because they appointed a committee to check it out, a twelve-person Holy Land investigative task force. They came back and the majority report said, "They're too big. We can't do it." The minority report delivered by Joshua and Caleb said, "Sure, they're big but let's go and take it! Our God is bigger than those giants!" I can just hear Moses moderating that first business meeting out there in the wilderness. He said, "All in favor of going in and taking the lands raise your hand. Joshua and Caleb and maybe some of their families raised their hands and he said, "All opposed to going in and taking the Promised Land raise your hand." The air must have been sucked out of the room when about two million hands went up. "We can't do it! We can't do it!" What they were saying was, "We don't trust God! We don't believe God!" and what a tragedy that was.

II. THE PENALTY FOR UNBELIEF

That led to the second thing I want to talk about not only the tragedy of unbelief, but number two the penalty for unbelief. God is going to pronounce a penalty upon these people but don't miss this point: These people never ceased to be God's chosen people delivered from Egypt. For forty years he's going to feed them manna. For forty years he's going to sustain them. He's still going to do miracles. He's still going to give them victories over their enemies but the victories are meaningless. They don't mean anything. What's worth the fight? Somebody said a bulldog can whip a skunk, but it's just not worth the fight. For forty years their sandals and their clothes are not going to wear out. In other words these are still the people of God. I think when we die and go to heaven, we'll find them there, because Moses is one of them. Moses never went in but he'll be there according to Hebrews 11. So this doesn't represent people who are saved and then lose

their salvation. This represents people who have been saved who come out of Egypt who have been baptized through the Red Sea. We’re talking about people who have lost their purpose. They’ve lost their direction. They’ve lost their peace. They’ve lost the joy of their salvation. They are miserable wandering in the wilderness. Let’s read about the penalty.

Numbers 14:26-35. “The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: ‘How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. So tell them, “As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneth and Joshua son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you—your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you. I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die.’”

I think that’s one of the saddest statements in the Bible. He brought them out of Egypt. He parted the Red Sea. He drowned their enemies. He gave them water in the desert. He had already given them manna to eat. He had performed miracles, yet when he called upon them to have faith, they said, “No, thank you!” God said, “Okay. Because of that for forty years you are just going to wander. Like someone said, “Take another lap around Mt. Sinai and then another lap and then another lap and then another lap.

1. Wilderness landmark: Spiritual boredom

There are a lot of Christians who are wandering in the wilderness. You can tell you are wandering in the wilderness by the landmarks you pass by every day. Landmark number one is spiritual boredom, when the things of the Christian life don’t excite you. Let’s talk about manna for a moment. God supernaturally gave them manna, a white, round food that fell from heaven to the ground. Every morning they would go out and pick it up. *Manna* comes from the Hebrew word *manhu*, which literally means *what is this?* Literally, they walked out one morning and they said “Manhu?” So they said, “Hey. This is pretty good!” The Bible says it was like a wafer of honey with a little oily taste, maybe a good kind of oil taste. I imagine it was pretty good the first few times they ate it. But can you imagine manna in the morning, manna at noontime, manna at suppertime? Seven days a week fifty-two weeks a year. Forty years of manna. The Bible says the people griped and complained about the manna. Well I don’t blame them. I have news for you. Manna was never meant to last for forty years. Manna was only meant to last until they got into the Promised Land. When they were in the Promised Land they didn’t need manna, because they had gigantic clusters of grapes, pomegranates and figs. It was a land flowing with milk and honey! The manna over forty years represents people who read their Bible and sang the songs but they were bored.

Yesterday my wife came in a little late for the service so she sat in back. She usually sits up front. She said it was amazing for her to sit there, because on one side of her was this guy who was feverishly tracing the passages and writing in the notes and everything. On the other side of her was a woman who obviously could care less. Isn't it amazing how some people have reached a state of spiritual boredom and are just bored? That is one of the landmarks of wandering in the wilderness.

2. Wilderness landmark: Constant grumbling

Number two is constant grumbling. Those folks grumbled against God. They grumbled against Moses. They said, “Let's elect our own leader and go back to Egypt!” One of the ways you can tell if you are wandering in the wilderness is that you're the kind of Christian that always wants to go back to the good old days. “Do you remember how we used to do it in the good old days?” They began talking about “those fish down there in Egypt,” and “Remember the onions and the leeks and the garlic and the cucumbers?” and “Do you remember how good it was back there in Egypt?” and they grumbled about the way it was where they were. One way you can tell you are a carnal Christian wandering in the wilderness is that you are more interested in the world than you are the things of God. You're more interested in the fads and the fashions and the tendencies and everything to do with the world than you are with the things of God. These people talked about “Oh, it was so good back there in Egypt. Let's go back to Egypt.” and they grumbled about the way things were.

Keith Green, a Christian singer who lived out here in Lindale who died in a plane crash, had a great song called, “So you wanna to go back to Egypt...” There is a line in that song I'll never forget. He said, “They once complained for something good to munch. The ground opened up and had some of them for lunch.” That's exactly what happened. They complained and grumbled about everything. I've met some people like that, haven't you? I've met some people that all they want to do is just gripe and complain about everything. You just can't please them. As I have said before if you come to church looking for something to criticize, I'll guarantee you. You won't find one thing to criticize. You can find two dozen things to criticize about on any Sunday. But if you come to church looking for God, you'll find him also. Grumbling is a landmark of carnal Christians.

3. Wilderness landmark: Relational conflicts

Here's the third landmark: Relational conflicts. In other words they were fighting among themselves. They were posturing for prominence. They were trying to see who could be the leader. Who could usurp Moses' authority? The worst testimony we give to the world is the picture of Christians fighting one another or in conflict with each other. In high school I was on the football field during the game. We were playing Red Level. One of our teammates would act hurt every time he got tired. They'd come out and he'd get a little attention. They'd take him over to the sidelines. We all knew he wasn't hurt he was just tired. It was the middle of the game and our head coach looked over and shook his head and didn't pay any attention to him. Mike's father was in the stands and Mike's father didn't like the fact that our head coach didn't go over there and nurse his little boy. So Mike's father came down out of the stands jumped over the fence ran out there spun our head coach around and creamed him one across the face. Then our

coach hopped up and he tore into Mike’s dad. Here we are over there in the huddle getting ready to look over to the sidelines to call the next play and our coach is rolling on the ground choking one of our player’s dads. I don’t even remember if we were winning at that time, but I know we didn’t win the game. We gave up. Fighting among the ranks—what’s the use of getting out on the field and fighting? When there is fighting among the body of Christ, people look at us and say, “That’s why I don’t want to be a Christian.” Carnal Christians stay in conflict with other Christians. But a spirit-filled Christian is so full of the love of Jesus Christ, they can get along with just about anybody. As I have said before, “When you are full of the Holy Spirit, some people are easy to love and others are easier to love.” but through the power of Jesus Christ you can love all kinds of Christians.

4. Wilderness landmark: Fruitless labor

The fourth landmark is fruitless labor. For forty years they wandered, they tended herds, they probably scratched a few crops out of the sand of the desert but basically they went in a circle. There was no progression. There was no direction. It was a meaningless routine over and over and over again. Have you ever noticed when you go in a circle, when you increase your speed the only thing you do is get back where you were quicker? But you feel like you need to do something. For some Christians, the Christian walk is a meaningless routine. It’s just something you’ve done the same way over and over and over again. You just keep on doing it and you just think there is no hope. There is no hope. The sad thing is they worked—but it was fruitless.

When I was a kid we used to go to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina for vacation. There is an amusement park right there in Myrtle Beach. I’ll never forget right next to the roller coaster there was this machine about the size of a semi truck trailer and it had all kinds of gears and knobs and lights that were all connected. You could sit there and watch this machine do all these things. It was just fascinating to watch it. There was a sign down at the bottom of the thing that said: This machine doesn’t do anything, but doesn’t it do it well!! That’s the story of a lot of Christians. We’re just wandering. We don’t do anything, but we sure do it well!

5. Wilderness landmark: Moral failure

Number five: Moral failure. If you took time to read chapter 25 after they turned and wandered in the wilderness, they were involved in sexual immorality with the women of Moab. I wish I could tell you that when you come to Kadesh Barnea and you refuse to go on, that you stay at that same spiritual level from then on. The truth is you usually backslide more and usually decline more. I think any Christian in this room who has ever experienced a moral failure of any kind can probably trace it back to a time when God brought you to a crisis and he said, “Trust me. Move on by faith.” and you said, “No I’m not going any further.” From that point on it was downhill. Moral failure. You see carnal Christians are the ones who fall into moral failure.

6. Wilderness landmark: Ultimate destruction

Number six—and this is the saddest of all—there was ultimate destruction. Did you notice it says their bodies just fell in the desert? Every person over the age of 20 died. God said, “I’m going to take this younger generation and I’m going to give them the promise that I gave to you.” It was

one funeral after another after another after another. Someone said, “On the plains of hesitation lie the bleached bones of millions of God’s people who on the threshold of victory sat down to consider and there they died. Let me tell you about the worst thing about being a carnal Christian and wandering in the wilderness. I don’t think it’s any of those things I just mentioned. I think the most miserable thing about being a carnal Christian is “what might have been.” They staggered at the thought of what might have been! “For forty years instead of eating this manna I could be eating those grapes! Instead of more manna I could be eating those pomegranates. If I had only trusted God!” John Greenleaf Whittier said, “Of all the words of tongue or pen the saddest words are, ‘It might have been.’” I’m 45 years old. Today, the only regret I have about making this discovery I am talking to you about is that I didn’t discover it sooner. I wonder if there are some in this room who are 50, 60, 70 and you look back and you say, “If only I had known this! If only I had allowed Jesus to live in me just think about what might have been different in my life!” The saddest thing for these people is what might have been!

III. THE REMEDY FOR UNBELIEF

The good news is there is a remedy for unbelief. This is the point of Kadesh Barnea. According to the writer of Hebrews, the reason Christians need to remember Kadesh Barnea is so we won’t make the same mistake.

Hebrews 3:7-15. “So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years they saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So, I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’ See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in rebellion.’”

Hebrews 4:1, 8-10. “Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it...For if Joshua [Jesus] had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.”

Both Churches and individuals arrive at Kadesh Barnea. There have been times when I have been pastor of a church—including this church—that as a congregation has come to Kadesh Barnea and God has said, “Are you going to go on or are you going to go back?” I thank God that since I have been pastor I think we have said as a church, “We are going to go on! We’re going to move on!” God is continuing to bring our church to a Kadesh Barnea where he wants us to be a church that truly exalts Jesus Christ, a church that truly preaches the word and obeys the word and honors Christ; a church characterized by heartfelt praise and worship. God is bringing us to that

point. In every church you have the “going-oners” and you have the staying-herers.” Churches come to Kadesh Barnea. Individuals come to Kadesh Barnea. Let me just tell you where the analogy breaks down here’s the good news!

Whoever you are as a believer, God will bring you back to Kadesh Barnea and he’ll say, “Now you’ve heard my word. Now will you go on?” If you don’t do it today, you go ahead and suffer for a while and he’ll bring you back to Kadesh Barnea again. What I have found in my own Christian life is that sometimes I walk in the strength of my flesh and sometimes I walk in the spirit of God. When I get back in the flesh and I start walking outside the fullness of the Holy Spirit, God brings me back to Kadesh Barnea and says, “Come on, David. Move back into Canaan!” So it is a repeated experience for Christians and it is not just a one-time thing! So tonight I am going to be asking many of you who are wandering in the wilderness to take a step of faith and move on into Canaan, God’s promise. How do you know you are there?” Let me just give you some landmarks of Canaan.

1. Canaan landmark: You are led by Jesus

Number one. In Canaan you are led by Jesus. By the way, it was Joshua who eventually led them in. Do you think it is any mistake Joshua’s name means Jesus? One way you know for sure you are full of the spirit of God is that you are led by the spirit of Jesus Christ. What that means is that every day, every decision, every important step you take in your life you are saying, “Jesus, what do you want me to do? Jesus, I want to follow you!” But if you as a Christian come to a place of making even what we consider to be an insignificant decision and you don’t consider what Jesus wants you to do you just consider what you want to do, you are not being led by Jesus!

2. Canaan landmark: You have victory in Jesus

Another landmark is you have victory in Jesus. They went into the Promised Land and they had battle after battle after battle after battle but they had victory after victory after victory after victory. We love to sing that song, “Victory In Jesus” but have you ever thought about it? You can’t have a victory unless you have a battle. Some of you are not even in spiritual warfare. The devil doesn’t ever bother some of you, because he’s got you right where he wants you. I have Christians sometimes who say, “You talk about the devil and you talk about spiritual warfare and attacks upon your life and attacks upon your family I don’t have that.” You have to ask yourself why? The only place they had battles and victory was when they moved into the Promised Land. If you make a choice to move on into God’s promise, the spirit-filled life, and you take a stand for Jesus Christ you’re going to find yourself in the heat of spiritual battle. So, if you are not ready to fight spiritually in the power of Jesus Christ, go ahead and wander in the wilderness until your body drops in the desert and your bones are bleached. That’s the choice.

3. Canaan landmark: You are indwelt by Jesus

Another landmark is you are indwelt by Jesus. In other words, it is the character and the personality of Jesus that lives inside of you. In yesterday’s message, I referred to Ian Thomas’s book “The Saving Life of Christ.” Thomas is one of the most respected Christian servants who

ever lived. He was a physician and a missionary to Africa. Let me just read you a brief statement from his own testimony.

“At the age of 19 training at London University to become a doctor in order to serve as a missionary in Africa, I knew my life as a Christian was ineffective. I did not know of one single soul whom it had been my privilege to lead to Christ. I engaged in more than my share of Christian activities and with genuine enthusiasm, but I knew that if I ever went as a missionary to Africa, I would be just as useless there! It was out of a deep sense of need that I despaired of my Christian life that I made the startling discovery that for seven years I had missed the whole point of my salvation. That Christ had not died just to save me from Hell and one day to get me into Heaven, but that I might become available to him for him to live his life through me. It was as if Jesus said to me, ‘For seven years with utmost sincerity you have been trying to live for me, on my behalf the life that I have been waiting for seven years to live through you.’ God gave me nothing new. I had simply discovered what I already had Christ in all of his fullness living in me! The sad thing is, that it is all too possible to become accustomed to living in the wilderness especially when we are surrounded by wilderness Christians.”

If there are any of you who decide you want to get out of the wilderness, don't be surprised if somebody calls you a fanatic. Don't be surprised if somebody starts calling you “weird,” because I think we live in a generation that has become content in the wilderness.

4. Canaan landmark: Rest in Jesus

Here's one final landmark: Rest in Jesus. You no longer work to try to get your salvation. You rest in the finished work of the cross. He is saying as he says in Matthew 29 and 30, “Come unto me all you who labor into Canaan,” you don't just flop down and say, “Well, that's it, Jesus. Live in me!” You are busier than you ever were before. The difference is you're in the yoke of Jesus. You're working in the power of Jesus and there is effectiveness.

Think about the landmarks in your pilgrimage. Are you wandering in the wilderness? Are you experiencing victory in Canaan? Is God telling you to move forward in some area of your spiritual growth? The sad thing is too many Christians have stopped between Calvary and Pentecost. You accept the fact Jesus died for you but you don't accept the fact he wants to live in you in the person of the Holy Spirit and empower you. Ruth Paxton, a great Christian poet wrote: “They came to the gates of Canaan / But they never entered in. / They came to the very threshold / But they perished in their sin. / So we are always coming / To the place where the two ways part / One leads to the land of promise / And the other to a hardened heart.”

CONCLUSION

Has God spoken to your heart and said, “I have more for you. I have joy, I have peace, I have purpose, I have power, I have victory and tonight I want you to come to Kadesh Barnea?” For some of you it might have been when God said, “Now I want you to tithe.” and you said, “No, I'm going back. I don't trust you.” For others of you it might have been when God said, “I want you to serve me.” and you said, “No, I can't do that.” It might have been when God said to some

of you, “I want you to let go of that filthy habit,” and you said, “No, I can’t do that!” It may be different things for different people. There just may be some of you are good people, as good as you know how to be, yet you are still wandering in the wilderness and you are at Kadesh Barnea.

If you are still in the wilderness, it’s my joy to lead you in a sinner’s prayer so you can trust Christ.

“Lord, you know I have been in the wilderness. You know all the secret thoughts of my mind and you know I have been lusting for the things of Egypt. Lord, I am sick of this imitation of the real thing. I do not want to wander anymore. Just as you brought me out I now want you to take me in. I want to celebrate in the Land of Promise. I thank you for dying for me. I confess that you are risen from the dead and at this moment you dwell in me. I accept your strength for my weakness, your victory for my defeats, and your riches for my poverty. I step out now in faith. I confess for me to live is Christ and only Christ. I enter into your promise for my life. Thank you, Jesus for living in me!”

If you prayed that prayer sincerely, you don’t have to have some freaky feeling. You don’t have to have goose bumps. If by simple faith you trusted God to move into the fullness of the promise he has for you, there ought to be a difference in your life. There ought to be a new sense of joy a new sense of peace a new sense of purpose and direction. It will be evident in your family. It will be evident in your business. It will be evident in your relationships.

OUTLINE

A SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHY LESSON:

1. Egypt = Lost person
2. Wilderness = Carnal Christian
3. Canaan = Spirit-filled Christian

I. THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF

1. The Problem: Move forward
2. The Tragedy: They did not trust God

II. THE PENALTY FOR UNBELIEF

Wilderness Landmarks:

1. Spiritual boredom
2. Constant grumbling
3. Relational conflicts
4. Fruitless labor
5. Moral failure
6. Ultimate destruction

III. THE REMEDY FOR UNBELIEF

Canaan Landmarks:

1. You are led by Jesus
2. You have victory in Jesus
3. You are indwelt by Jesus
4. Rest in Jesus