

## Life Group Notes 3/10/2024

### Pastor Mark Warren The Journey to Freedom Week 8

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[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 3/10. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On the giants in the land.](#)

\*\*\***Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. \*\*\*

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Pastor Mark began with a recap of the business meeting from last week, 3/3.

1. Did you go?
2. What struck you?
3. He read off statistics from the previous year. What thoughts did you have?
4. What defines success for a church?
5. The founding pastor of Grace Capital Church, Peter Bonanno, once said, "If it is not growing it's dead." Do you agree?
6. Define growth in a church.
7. Pastor Mark said, "Our job is to disciple well, and Jesus brings the increase." Explain.

Pastor spoke of the fear factor.

1. Did you ever watch the show?
2. How does fear impact you?
3. The Bible says "Fear not..." three hundred sixty times. Why?
4. How does fear prevent you from walking toward freedom?

Look at this list of names from Numbers 13:

Shammua, son of Zaccur;  
Shaphat, son of Hori;  
Caleb, son of Jephunneh;  
Igal, son of Joseph;

Hoshea, son of Nun;  
Palti, son of Raphu;  
Gaddiel, son of Sodi;  
Gaddi, son of Susi;  
Ammiel, son of Gemalli;  
Sethur, son of Michael;  
Nahbi, son of Vophsi;  
Geuel, son of Machi.

1. Whom do you recognize?
2. Why do we only recognize two of these famous names?
3. How did fear prevent ten out of twelve from entering the land?

Look up Numbers 13: [1](#)And the LORD said to Moses, [2](#)“Send out for yourself men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each of their fathers’ tribes send one man who is a leader among them.”

[3](#)So at the consent of the LORD, Moses sent them out from the Wilderness of Paran. All the men were leaders of the Israelites, (See the list above.)

[16](#)These were the names of the men Moses sent to spy out the land; and Moses gave to Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.

[17](#)When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he told them, “Go up through the Negev and into the hill country. [18](#)See what the land is like and whether its people are strong or weak, few or many. [19](#)Is the land where they live good or bad? Are the cities where they dwell open camps or fortifications? [20](#)Is the soil fertile or unproductive? Are there trees in it or not? Be courageous, and bring back some of the fruit of the land.” (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)

1. What do you see?
2. What is the purpose of this mission.
3. How thorough and detailed does the report need to be?
4. What else would you like to know about the land to which you are being sent, and which you have been promised?
5. What will these spies have to do to gain this knowledge?
6. What do their days look like? Where will they sleep?

[21](#)So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo-hamath. [22](#)They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, dwelled. It had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.

[23](#)When they came to the Valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes, which they carried on a pole between two men. They also took some pomegranates and figs. [24](#)Because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut there, that place was called the Valley of Eshcol.

1. Where did they go?
2. What did they see?
3. See the [footnote on the giants, below](#). Who are the descendants of Anak, the “Anakim?”
4. How big is a single cluster of grapes that has to be carried on a pole by two people?
5. If they gathered grapes, pomegranates and figs, what is the time of year this took place?

[25](#)After forty days the men returned from spying out the land, [26](#)and they went back to Moses, Aaron, and the whole congregation of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They brought back a report for the whole congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.

[27](#)And they gave this account to Moses: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and indeed, it is flowing with milk and honey. Here is some of its fruit! [28](#)Nevertheless, the people living in the land are strong, and the cities are large and fortified. We even saw the descendants of Anak there. [29](#)The Amalekites live in the land of the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the Jordan.”

[30](#)Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We must go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly conquer it!”

[31](#)But the men who had gone up with him replied, “We cannot go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are!”

[32](#)So they gave the Israelites a bad report about the land that they had spied out: “The land we explored devours its inhabitants, and all the people we saw there are great in stature. [33](#)We even saw the Nephilim there—the descendants of Anak that come from the Nephilim! We seemed like grasshoppers in our own sight, and we must have seemed the same to them!”

1. What do you see?
2. How reasonable are the concerns of these men? Would you have listened to them?
3. How long was this excursion into the land?
4. What blessings and benefits were found in the land? (List the good points.)
5. What obstacles and opposition were apparent? (List the bad points.)
6. Answer Pastor Mark’s question: Why would God promise a land that would set people free, and then fill the land with obstacles and opposition?
7. Did God, in fact, fill the land with difficulties?
8. Look at what God had told Abraham four hundred years prior to the exploration of the land: Genesis 15: [13](#)Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. [14](#)But I will judge the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will depart with many possessions. [15](#)You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a ripe old age. [16](#)In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Why does God wait until “...the iniquity of the Amorites...” be complete? Talk about His patience with us.
9. Look up 2 Peter 3: [8](#)Beloved, do not let this one thing escape your notice: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. [9](#)[The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.](#) How patient was God toward the Amorites? How horrible was their iniquity?
10. Did the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham, know of this encounter that their father Abraham had had with God?
11. How bad does it have to get before a people be judged?
12. How bad was it in Canaan, four hundred years after Abraham, when Moses sent in the spies?

13. Look up Exodus 23: *28 I will send the hornet before you to drive the Hivites and Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. 29 I will not drive them out before you in a single year; otherwise the land would become desolate and wild animals would multiply against you. 30 Little by little I will drive them out ahead of you, until you become fruitful and possess the land....* What do we learn from this of the principles of freedom and spiritual warfare?

14. How do obstacles and opposition become an act of mercy?

15. At what point is giving up or giving in an option?

Pastor Mark says, "God took them from a place where they were in slavery to Egypt and He brought them to a place that required something of them."

1. Explain.

2. Who made the decisions when they were slaves in Egypt.

3. What will be required of them here? Who's in control?

4. What does being in control involve?

5. Contrast life in Egypt with the new life being offered here.

Pastor points out that twelve people all saw the same land and enjoyed the grapes, figs and pomegranates. They all saw the same thing.

1. Why were ten full of fear and only two full of faith?

2. Would you be in the faith camp or the fear camp?

3. What did Caleb and Joshua have that the other ten "forgettables" did not have?

4. Define faith, as exhibited here.

5. Pastor says, "Maybe God was giving them an opportunity once again to recognize God as their provider." What do you think?

6. Have you ever wanted to do something, but fear kept you from doing it? Do you have a testimony?

Look closely at what Joshua says in Numbers 14: *6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the whole congregation of Israel, "The land we passed through and explored is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD delights in us, He will bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and He will give it to us. 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, and do not be afraid of the people of the land, for they will be like bread for us. Their protection has been removed, and the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them!"*

1. What are the conditions Joshua outlines?

2. How does Joshua know "their protection has been removed?" (Look again at what God told Abraham in [Genesis 15](#), above.)

3. Why is it always good to pay attention to God's Word?

4. What is the difference between the impact of telling a crowd, "We are like grasshoppers in their sight," and telling them, "They will be like bread for us."

5. Which side understands better the situation?

Pastor says, "When we come to a place where we can see the plans that God has for us (and the things that God has for us are great), there will be, in that plan, opposition and obstacles."

1. Do you know what those plans are?

2. Look up Jeremiah 29: *11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you....* What do you see?

3. How does this promise sound to you?
4. How does this promise from Jeremiah fit in with what you're experiencing today?
5. Does this promise help in any way to adjust your thinking?
6. Do you have a testimony? How are you doing?
7. What are the biggest obstacles you are facing today?
8. Did God know the plans He had for the Israelites?
9. Could they have known them too?
10. Who DID know the plans God had for them? How do you know?
11. What are you saying today? Do you sound more like Joshua? Or more like the other ten forgettables?

Pastor says, "Unmet expectations drive disappointment."

1. Explain. What happens when things don't turn out the way you had hoped?
2. Do you have a testimony?
3. Look up Proverbs 13: [12](#)Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life. Explain the contrast between a hope deferred and a desire fulfilled.
4. Imagine Joseph in Pharaoh's dungeon. How was his hope deferred?
5. Why did the Israelites lose patience before they even stepped foot in the land?

Pastor says, "God doesn't promise us this land without any challenges in it."

1. Look again at [Exodus 23 above](#). How do we know that Pastor Mark is correct here?
2. Why do the challenges remain?
3. At what point do challenges and obstacles go away?
4. Some might say that the ten nay-sayers were the "voice of reason." What do you think?
5. When does the voice of "reason" fail?
6. How were Joshua and Caleb so much better informed and more reasonable than the majority report? What did they know that the others had forgotten?
7. What proof did they have of God's protection and of His guarantee?
8. What proof do you have?

Look up Isaiah 55: [9](#)"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. [10](#)For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return without watering the earth, making it bud and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, [11](#)so My word that proceeds from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and it will prosper where I send it."

1. What does this say?
2. Do we have to know everything?
3. Does God have to explain His ways to us?
4. Has He explained His ways adequately, so that trust is possible?
5. So again, what proof do we have of God's protection?
6. How far can we trust the Word of God?
7. Look up Proverbs 30: [5](#)Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him [6](#)Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and prove you a liar. What do you see? How trustworthy is a word from God?
8. Who is the Word of God?
9. How far can we trust Jesus? How far did He go to earn our absolute trust?

10. Does our salvation depend on our faith in Him? Or does it depend on His faith in us?

11. How do you know? Which is the stronger faith?

12. Why is that good news? Why is the gospel such good news?

Pastor Mark says, "Fear of the unknown steals your ability to pursue freedom." The spies came back laden with fruit, and with an eyewitness account of the giants of the land. What they saw with their eyes stole their ability to continue on their prescribed course into the land of freedom.

1. What happened?

2. Why are we told to "...walk by faith and not by sight?"

Look up Hebrews 13: [5](#) *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, for God has said: "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."* [6](#) *So we say with confidence: "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

1. Answer the question. What can man do to you?

2. What assurance do we have that the Lord is our helper?

3. How much confidence do you have?

4. Why do you keep your life free from the love of money? What is the love of money the root of?

5. Is what you have all that you will ever have? How do you know?

Pastor says, "Death is not the worst thing that can happen to you. Death *without faith* is the worst thing that can ever happen to you."

1. Explain.

2. All who were with Moses on this day died in the desert without ever again seeing the promised land, except Caleb and Joshua. Why is that a grievous fate?

3. Joshua and Caleb were the two survivors who made it into the promised land. Did they have a free faith walk? Or did they face obstacles and opposition like every member of the next generation whom they led into the land? Why did they still have to face obstacles and opposition?

4. Explain the principle illustrated in this history in terms of a free lunch.

5. How has this journey to freedom become internal and spiritual in your own day?

6. What giants do you face?

7. What do you say of these giants? Are you a grasshopper? Or are they bread for you?

Pastor speaks of the roadblocks that we set up in our life that prevent us from taking the "land" where freedom is just outside of our grasp. He says this is the land that God wants you to experience and explore.

1. Do you have a testimony?

2. Have you seen giants fall?

3. What giants are your neighbors facing? Take a moment to pray for one another.

Pastor says, "Looking at your own strength and resources, you will not find the strength to get you to the place God wants you to go." Look closely at these verses from Proverbs 3: [5](#) *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;* [6](#) *in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.* [7](#) *Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil."*

1. What do you see?
2. How well do you do on your own?
3. What changes when you trust in the Lord with all your heart?
4. What is the promise? What will He do?
5. What does a straight path look like?
6. What were the people actually trusting in, when facing the land and its giants?
7. What fruit comes from saying, "I don't have what it takes?"
8. What fruit comes from saying, "...but God has taken their protection away. They are like bread for us?"
9. Mark says, "God wants to be our deliverer. God wants to be our provider. He wants to be the warrior fighting for us." How could the Israelites have known this? Did God make this clear to them prior to the spies being sent out? Where?
10. How did the Israelites miss it?
11. What are we missing in these days?
12. What created the expectations in the Israelites?
13. What created the expectations in Joshua and Caleb?
14. To whom do you listen?

Pastor Mark foreshadowed the next message, describing a "careless faith." "I'm going to go. I'm going to conquer. I'm going to go after this..." This is something that fear could prevent that would be beneficial in the long run. He says, "Fear can prevent you from doing things that could actually hurt you."

1. What is the difference between faith and presumption?
2. In 1 Samuel 15, Samuel told Saul, "[22But Samuel declared: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to His voice? Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, and attentiveness is better than the fat of rams.](#) [23](#)For rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and presumption is like the wickedness of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king." Why is traditional religion such a danger, and no replacement for a relationship with God?
3. What is the difference between faith and presumption?
4. Follow Pastor Mark's reasoning: The LORD had called for the spies to spy out the land. What should they have understood from this assignment?
5. Looking at what Samuel told Saul in the above passage, why were the Israelites not grasping what should have been obvious?
6. Are we at risk as well?
7. Mark says, "God wants to fight your battle for you, and give you the land of freedom." Explain.
8. Look at Deuteronomy 20: "[1](#)When you go out to war against your enemies and see horses, chariots, and an army larger than yours, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, is with you.[2](#)When you are about to go into battle, the priest is to come forward and address the army, [3](#)saying to them, 'Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle with your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be alarmed or terrified because of them. [4](#)For the LORD your God goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.'" Explain.
9. What does the land of freedom look like for you?

10. Do you acknowledge God in all your ways? What would that cost, if you decided to do so?

11. Pastor observes, "We trust Jesus with our eternity, but we have difficulty trusting Jesus with our own life." Is this true?

12. Why do you think this is? Do you have a testimony?

Pastor says, "When you hear His voice, and you come face to face with the opposition or the obstacle, avoid the temptation to crumble before fear."

1. What did this remind you of?

2. Look up Hebrews 3: [7](#)Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear His voice, [8](#)do not harden your hearts, as you did in the rebellion, in the day of testing in the wilderness, [9](#)where your fathers tested and tried Me, and for forty years saw My works.[10](#)Therefore I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known My ways.' [11](#)So I swore on oath in My anger, 'They shall never enter My rest.'" [12](#)See to it, brothers, that none of you has a wicked heart of unbelief that turns away from the living God.[13](#)But exhort one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. [14](#)We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly to the end the assurance we had at first. [15](#)As it has been said: "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as you did in the rebellion." [16](#)For who were the ones who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?[17](#)And with whom was God angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? [18](#)And to whom did He swear that they would never enter His rest? Was it not to those who disobeyed? [19](#)So we see that it was because of their unbelief that they were unable to enter. What prevented the Israelites from entering into the promise for forty years?

3. What are the consequences of fear and unbelief?

4. How are rest and freedom synonymous?

5. Is it OK to say, "I don't have what it takes?"

6. Who has what it takes? Can you answer this out loud?

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### **The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.

2. List the giants you're facing, and pray. Keep track of God's answers.

3. List the giants a friend is facing and do the same thing.

### **Take the time to pray.**

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#### **Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On the giants in the land**—There is a curious passage in Genesis chapter 6 that raises questions both archaeological and biological to this day. [1](#)Now when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, [2](#)the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took as wives whomever they chose. [3](#)So the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days shall be 120 years."[4](#)The Nephilim were on the

*earth in those days—and afterward as well—when the sons of God had relations with the daughters of men. And they bore them children who became the mighty men of old, men of renown.* Beyond this passage, no clue is given in the biblical record as to who the Sons of God (*beni Elohim*) were. It is known that they made illegal union with women. Jude refers to this event, as does Peter in his second epistle, but there is no clear explanation. Curiously, this event is recounted by cultures around the world, as is the existence of their offspring, the giants. The giants reappear in biblical accounts well-known and obscure. Everyone knows of Goliath. Many remember Og, the giant king on the eastern shores of the Jordan. These are listed as the descendants of the Nephilim, and they're given several different names. More and more archaeological studies are discovering more and more details, around the world. Here are two fascinating articles concerning the historic evidence of "giants." <https://www.jpost.com/christianworld/article-696572> and <https://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-americas/anakim-0014551>

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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Genesis 15:13-16
Tuesday: Exodus 23:28-30
Wednesday: Deuteronomy 7:21-23
Thursday: Numbers 14:6-8
Friday: Numbers 14:9-10
Saturday: Jeremiah 29:11-14
Sunday: Isaiah 55:9-11

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.