

# Fear or faith?

## sermon discussion guide

based on **Numbers 13-14** from 2/9/18

which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/moses---reluctant-leader](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/moses---reluctant-leader)

*This was the last of our summer series looking at some of the life and times of Moses.*

Intro: What's your favourite spy movie / TV programme / book?

*Background: the Israelites (about 2 million of them) have come out of slavery in Egypt, come through the desert, and are within striking distance of Canaan – the land God had promised them centuries earlier (Genesis 15:18-21). The journey has taken 6 weeks so far. Now it's time to spy out the land, to check it really is 'flowing with milk and honey' and decide how best to conquer the land.*

### **Read Numbers 13**

When the spies return with their report, what are the positive things they report on?

What are the negative things?

Try to put yourself in the people's shoes (sandals?). What would you be feeling?

### **Read Numbers 14.1-24**

Why was going back to Egypt (v4) a ridiculously bad idea? Why then do you think the people suggested it?

What strikes you about Moses' prayer for the people? What encouragements about prayer can you take away?

The 10 spies and the 2 spies (Caleb and Joshua) saw exactly the same things but came to different conclusions.

Dan suggested the pattern of the 10 spies was: *focus on the obstacles → fear → disobeyed God → missed out on God's blessing (experienced God's judgment).*

Try to trace that pattern through the story.

In contrast, the pattern of the Caleb and Joshua was: *focus on God → faith → obedience to God → experienced God's blessing.*

Try to trace that pattern through the story.

For Caleb & Joshua, focussing on God included focusing on his promises (eg Genesis 15.18-21), his faithfulness (he'd done great things in Hebron before) and his presence.

Hebrews 3.16 – 4.2 refers to this event and makes a clear link between faith, obedience and experiencing God's blessing.

Can you think of times when you've focused on obstacles more than God's promises, faithfulness and presence?

What would it look like at the moment for you to be a person of faith rather than fear?

What would it look like for us as a church to be people of faith rather than fear?

How does this passage speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?

*[We have a 'Caleb Group' at church – everyone in leadership of small groups and church ministries. Pray that they would be people of faith like the person they're named after!]*