

Living by God's Grace in the Old Testament

by Bob Hoekstra

Living by God's grace involves trusting in His promises and sufficiency, rather than relying on human resources.

Scripture: Numbers 13:27, Numbers 14:6, Psalm 118:8, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:31, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 13:6

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Faith And Trust"

Description

Bob Hoekstra preaches on the story of Joshua and Caleb, who relied on God's grace and sufficiency when faced with the challenges of entering the Promised Land. Despite the majority's negative report based on human sight and capabilities, Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes in distress, emphasizing their trust in the Lord's promises. They warned against rebellion by fearing man over God, highlighting the importance of remembering God's commitment to His people and His ability to fulfill His promises.

Transcript

And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes . . . "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us . . . Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land . . . the LORD is with us." (Numbers 14:6, 8-9)

Throughout the Old Testament, we can find examples of people living by the grace of God. They may not have been able to describe their experience in terms of grace. Yet, their reliance upon God to work on their behalf was just as valid as ours. Living by grace involves God at work in people's lives. Even though they may have been born under the law, they could not live by means of the law. The law supplied no resource for life. Without God at work, the only resource is from the flesh, from natural human sufficiency. This has always been inadequate for living as God intended. Joshua and Caleb were two men who realized that God's sufficiency (His grace) was the only reliable hope.

Twelve Israelites had just returned from spying out the Promised Land. Ten of them had a similar perspective. "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey . . . Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large . . . We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we" (Numbers 13:27-28, 31). Their bad report was based upon what they saw, measured against their own resources. By this evaluation, they concluded: "We are not able to go up against the people." They were comparing two sets of human resources. "They are stronger than we."

Joshua and Caleb were deeply distressed by this inappropriate evaluation. "And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes." They knew that this outlook ignored what God had promised and what God could do. "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us." They realized that this majority report, which was based on human sight and human capabilities, was actually a form of rebellion against the Lord. "Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land." Their rebellion was in fearing man and not trusting God. All the children of Israel needed to do was remember the Lord was committed to them. "The LORD is with us." The Lord was willing and able to give them the land.

Lord God almighty, I am reminded that the majority report is so often based on human sight and earthly resources. Help me to be like Joshua and Caleb. I want a perspective that is based upon what You have promised and what You are able to do, Amen.

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