

ANXIOUS (FOR NOTHING)

WEEK 2: PARALYZED BY FEAR: A MILE FROM THE PROMISED LAND

1/17/2021

SCRIPTURE

NUMBERS 13:25-33a

BACKGROUND

Finally, the Israelites are emancipated from Egypt, and they are now heading to the promise land. In the Book of Numbers, we see the stories of two generations of Israelites. According to Thomas B. Dozeman, the book can be broken into three parts: (1) Numbers 1-10:10 for the revelations in the wilderness camp; (2) 10:11-21:35 for the tragic wilderness journey for the first generation; and 22:1-36:13 for the second generation of Israelites on the plains of Moab.

Today's narrative is part of the first generation's tragic journey through the wilderness. Some of the important components of the first twelve chapters of the book are about ordering this massive crowd of Israelites who are now in need of organizing themselves. They are determining who is allowed to stay in (pure) and who is required to stay out (unpure). They are defining what is acceptable (lawful) and what is not (unlawful).

It's a highly anxious environment to be in the midst of chaos, people uprising to complaint, and leadership that is in disagreement with one another (see chapter 12). With the level of anxiety rising up, just a mile away from the promise land, the Israelite spies are intimidated and discouraged. They are self-sabotaging themselves and second-guessing God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In such an anxious time in this text, the Israelites responded by _____

In such an anxious time in this text, I (or we) would have responded by _____

What are some of the triggers that we find ourselves feeling "less-than" and "small", when we are overwhelmed by inadequacy?

How is God currently calling us to respond in such an anxious time as this? _____

Why do we often find ourselves engaging in self-sabotaging behavior, especially when we get closer to the goal and we are "almost there?"

In verse 30, we see that Caleb silenced the people. The verbal root of the word "silenced" is "hāsāh" and it seems to have an acoustic character that is similar to "hush" in English. When anxiety is skyrocketing, how do we 'hush' ourselves?

Who is silencing our anxiety? _____

Where is God's voice in it? _____



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