

## **Bible Reading Together during this Covid-19 Shutdown**

### **December 13-19: Read Numbers 13-14 & Gospel of Mark 8**

#### **Numbers 13-14**

The Hebrews are at the southern entrance into the Promised Land. They decided to send out the spies (one from each of the twelve tribes) and have them assess the situation. Two spoke positively with divine possibilities. The rest spoke negatively with human reason. The majority vote won out.

#### **Further Study & Discussion**

- You need to understand the weightiness of this chapter. If they acted in faith, they could have avoided the 39 years of desert wandering! This is a really important turning point in this community. But they failed to live up to the hype. They weren't people of faith and positivity, but bitter complainers. See if you can stand on each side of the issue. Can you justify the complainers? And the people of faith?
- Let's say you are one of the spies. How do you think you would have reported back? Would you have been one of the two or one of the ten? It's easy to say you will stand with Caleb and Joshua, but you witnessed powerfully equipped armies that looked like giants to you!
- This is also a test on Moses, the faith leader. When he charged the spies at the beginning (13:17-20), what instruction did he include? Did you notice that he didn't add the faith component? Did Moses think he alone could make the faith decision? Can Moses share the blame for the negative report?
- The negative report destroyed Moses' credibility among the people. Moses had promised them the Promised Land. But the report of the spies convinced them that the Promised Land cannot be taken. With his leadership being challenged (14:4), what does Moses do?

#### **Gospel of Mark 8**

The Gospel of Mark contains 16 chapters of which this is the middle point. Jesus begins to speak about his suffering death...to the shock of Peter who dared to rebuke Jesus.

#### **Further Study & Discussion**

- After the story of the feeding of 4,000, Jesus mentions the "yeast of the Pharisees" (v.15). What is this yeast? Why was it important for Jesus to speak about it with his disciples? And how are we to watch out for this yeast in our lives?
- This is the chapter that contains this very odd twice-healing of the blind man (v.22-26). What is going on, and why did it require Jesus to heal twice? There is a reason why Jesus did this – a teaching moment. How can this be applied in our own lives?
- Peter is asked, "Who am I?" So we ask ourselves. Who is Jesus Christ to you?