

Wednesday 18th November

Numbers 14:1-12

Key verses 14:10-11

10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites. 11 The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?"

When Harry was small there was nothing I loved more than going exploring carrying him in a backpack. It was still fun when Jack and Luke came along though I occasionally had to have one on my back, one on my front and one on my shoulders. (Actually I think Lynda may have helped!!). They were as close to my heart then geographically as they still are emotionally!

In Dt 1:31, Moses paints the same picture of God's relationship with the Israelites. '...the Lord carried you as a father carries his son...'

Verse 32 says, 'In spite of this, you did not trust the Lord your God.' As a father I can understand how desperately sad this must have made God!

The root cause of the rebellion in chapter 14 is unbelief. It is a human problem that re-occurred with Jesus throughout his ministry. Despite his wisdom, power and miracles, he still had to say to his disciples, 'You of little faith...' (Mat 8:26)

Read Psalm 106:24-27 to see how this episode was so serious that it reverberated down through Israel's history. Even Paul refers to it in 1Cor 10, as does the writer in Hebrews 3: 16-19 which ends with the solemn words, '...they were not able to enter ("his rest" or heaven), because of their unbelief!'

Much is written about it in the Bible because we are all capable of unbelief! This is more than, 'Does God exist or not!' Even the devil knows that. This kind of unbelief implies a lack of trust.

Whilst we may be able to celebrate all that God has done in the past, are we equally able to trust him with our future? Unbelief can slide unnoticed into our hearts. Do we still give God the credit for our daily blessings? Has unbelief prevented us from telling people about Jesus or made us prize financial security? Do we truly believe the promises of his Word?

The Israelites witnessed God's physical miracles on a daily basis but slipped into unbelief. Let's not kid ourselves that we are any better!

I was quite happy if and when the boys wanted to get down and walk a bit on their own but they trusted that, on any journey, Dad would be there to carry them when the going got tough!

(Well, at least until they were about 7 or 8!!!)