THE STORY CHAPTER 6

Wanderings

October 15-16, 2016

Appearing on the Big Screen…

**Wrong Turn @ Kadesh**

The Lord said to Moses,“Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

*Pg.74, Numbers 13:1-2*

“If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

*Pg.76, Numbers 14:8-9*

But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

*Pg. 76, Numbers 14:10*

So tell them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say:  In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.  As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected.

  But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’

*Pg.77 Numbers 14:28-34*

**Passing Your Driver’s Test**

1. Learn to **ask** for **directions**.

The Lord said to Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

*Pg. 74; Numbers 13:1-2*

1. Don’t be **driven** by **fear**

“And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us.”

*Pg.76; Numbers 14:9*

1. Remember **others** are in the **car** with you.

“Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness…”

*Pg.77, Numbers 14:33*

THE STORY CHAPTER 6

Wanderings

Randy Frazee

Oak Hills Church, San Antonio, TX

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**To view The Story Chapter 6 sermon video,** [**CLICK HERE**](http://media.oakhillschurch.com/default.aspx?page=3679&item=546)**.**

**Introduction**

One night a man was driving home on a road he was very familiar with. As came to the stop sign, he slowed down, but didn’t come to a complete stop, whereupon the police officer pulled him over. “What difference does it make if I slow down or stop?” he said to the police officer. The officer said, “Let me give you a demonstration.” He pulled out his billy club and began to beat the guy, and he said, “Tell me. Do you want me to slow down, or do you want me to stop?”

Turn to your neighbor and tell them if you’re the person who comes to a complete stop at a stop sign, where the car literally rocks back, or are you the kind of person who slows down and rolls through? Remember, it’s not good to lie in church.

*Allow time for sharing.*

We get into so much trouble on the road when we’re not paying attention. We get into so much trouble on the road when we don’t obey the rules. Now, turn to your neighbor and tell them about the last time you got a ticket.

*Allow time for sharing.*

Some of you said, “Never!” You make me sick! I am a rehabilitated man. I have not received a ticket now for 8 years. I moved here from Chicago a little over 8 years ago, and my last ticket was on one of our access roads here, and I was speeding. You know that awful feeling in the pit of your stomach when you see the lights in your rearview mirror, and you think, “Could it possibly be me?” I was the only one on the road, so I knew it was me!

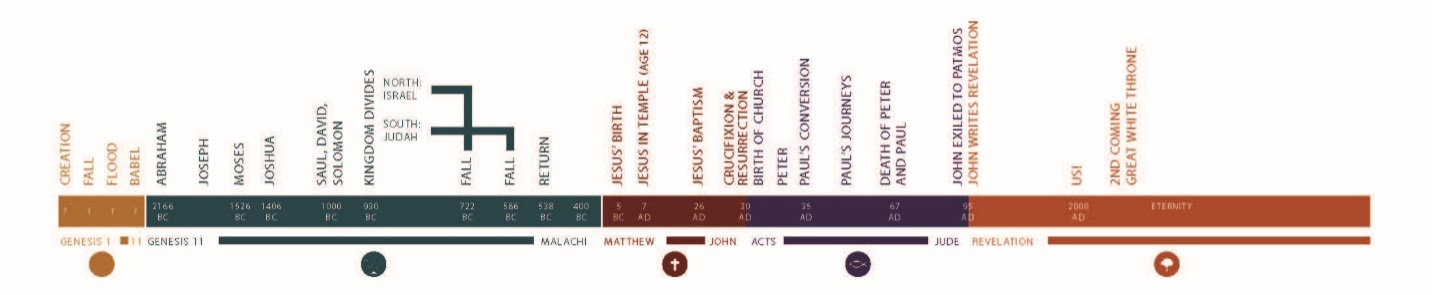
I pulled over, and when the police officer said, “License and registration, and why would you be going so fast?” I thought to myself, “I’m getting out of this one!” So I said, “Officer, I’m a pastor. I was just in a counseling appointment with a person whose life was hanging by a thread. It took a lot longer than I anticipated, but with much prayer and consternation, we pulled him through and I think he’s going to make it. But unfortunately it made me late for a golf tee time with David Robinson (true story!), so I was doing the best I could to honor David Robinson!” *(At the time he played center for the San Antonio Spurs.)*

The officer went to his car, and when he returned he said, “Pastor, I just want to tell you how much I appreciate you helping hurting people, and how cool it is you get to golf with David Robinson. Here’s your ticket. Have a nice day!” $256 later I decided I am no longer going to speed, and I haven’t gotten a ticket since.

**Road Trip**

Well, today we have come to Chapter 6 of *The Story* and they are on just such a road trip. On this trip they are going to get themselves into a heap of trouble. This road trip they are on began back here with a man named Abraham.

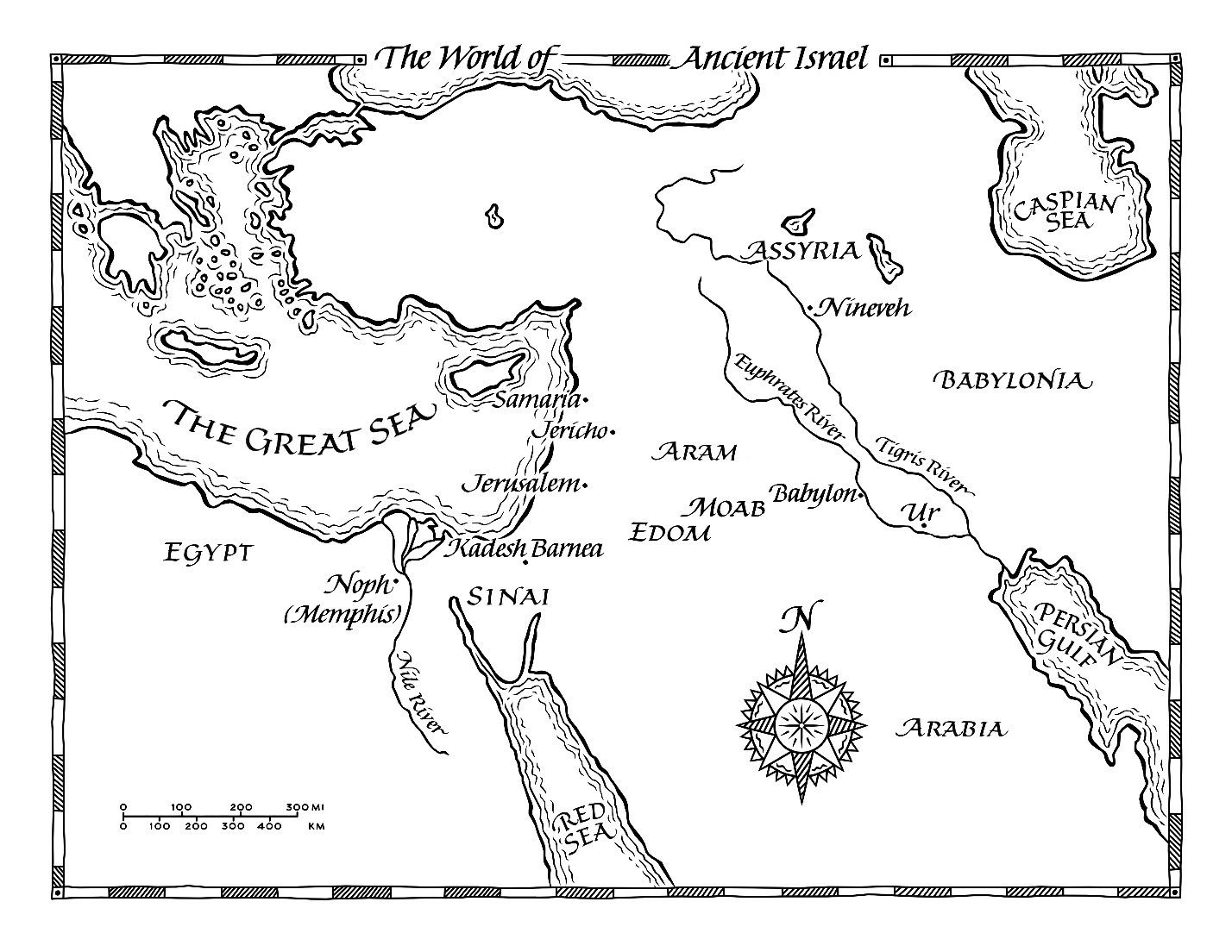
*Refer to Timeline poster*

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God promised Abraham that his offspring would one day inherit the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey.

645 years later, Moses is the driver of the car, and the children of Israel are in the back seat. They are driving out of Egypt and slavery, across the Red Sea, through the desert of Sinai, and they have come to a city called Kadesh Barnea. If you have your copy of The Story, you can turn to the inside flap and see Kadesh Barnea on the map of the Old Testament lands.

*Maps from the book are provided in the Resource Library, on the Weekend Services page, in the file called “Maps to use as sermon visuals”*

It is sort of like driving across west Texas to get to the Rocky Mountains. Instead of four kids in the back seat, Moses has somewhere between 1-3 million kids. And every 20 minutes they’re shouting out, “Daddy Moses! Are we there yet?”

**Wrong Turn @ Kadesh**

When they get to Kadesh Barnea, Moses turns around in the driver’s seat and says, “Well children, actually we’re really close.” It’s in Kadesh Barnea that the Lord speaks to Moses. On page 74 of The Story, or Numbers 13:1-2:

The Lord said to Moses,“Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

*pg.74, Numbers 13:1-2*

These 12 leaders, who are the drivers for their families, their tribes, are taking them to the final destination of Canaan. So they are going to explore the land God is promising to give to them.

The bottom of page 60 or Numbers 13:25 tells us they are gone for 40 days before they give their report to Moses. They tell him that the land is awesome, and it truly is flowing with milk and honey. In fact, they brought back with them a cluster of grapes that was so plump it took two men to carry it back to Moses. “But,” they said, “we have a problem. There are people already living there who like it just fine, and there are a lot of them, and some of them are giants. So even though the land is awesome, we do not recommend we try to take the land at this time.”

Then Caleb, who was one of the 12 spies, speaks up. He silenced the people before Moses and said on page 75 or Numbers 13:30, *“We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”*

But of the 11 other spies, only Joshua sided with Caleb. The other 10 men said “no way we can pull this off, it’s not safe,” and spread a bad report in the camp and convinced the people it was not a good idea.

Moses gathers the people together and he tears his clothes in frustration and pleads with them on the bottom of page 76 or Numbers 14:8-9.

“If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

*Pg.76, Numbers 14:8-9*

Question: How did the people respond to this impassioned speech of Moses? How did they respond to this man who gave up everything to go back to Egypt to lead them out of slavery, across the Red Sea, over the desert, who is now pleading with them for their life and their future, how did they respond? The answer is found on page 76 of *The Story*, or Numbers 14:10:

But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

*pg. 76, Numbers 14:10*

This is where they made their wrong turn.

God told them to turn left at Kadesh Barnea, and they turned right. This is where the nation of Israel decided not to trust in God’s strength over the giants in Canaan. God is operating from a GPS, not a Global Positioning Satellite but a “God Positioning Satellite.” He can see the big picture from beginning to end. But the people have a different hunch, and they said ‘no’ to him, and failed to make the left turn.

On page 77, *The Story* tells us that God says back to them, *“Recalculating.”* Because of their lack of trust in God, God is going to have them make a hard right back down south again, along the Red Sea back deep into the wilderness. Here is what God says to them on page 77 or Numbers 14:28-34:

So tell them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say:  In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land **I swore with uplifted hand** to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Pause here for a moment. God has created here a courtroom scene. He is saying, “I have placed my hand on the Bible, I have lifted my hand before the judge, and I have said, ‘I swear to tell the whole truth, nothing but the truth, so help me, Myself.’”

As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected.

  But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’

*Pg.77 Numbers 14:28-34*

What does this story have to do with your lives today? I would like to give you 3 practical principles on how you can pass your spiritual driving test.

**Passing Your Driver’s Test**

1. **Learn to ask for directions.**

And all the women said…*AMEN.* You want to make sure your life is heading in the right direction. To do so, you need to learn to stop and ask—in this case God—for direction. You’re asking God not just how to get there, but where *there* even is.

This is a very foundational principle in living the Christian life. It simply involves living in the will of God, or aligning your story to his story. It is waking up every day, and asking God the fundamental question: God, what is your will for my life? He will honor you if he sees a tender willingness in you to move in the direction he is calling you to go in. If I were to pull you over for spiritual driving, every time I am going to want to ticket you with a DUI: *Driving Under the Influence…of the Holy Spirit.*

Israel knew this was God’s will for them. It was the next major step in the unfolding of God’s story.

*Refer to Timeline poster*

It began at *Creation* when we rejected God’s vision, and the Story is unfolding, taking us to this pre-determined destination *(point to Eternity)* where those who receive this gift of salvation in Jesus Christ are once again going reside with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a garden. We discover that the story ends where the story begins…God wins, and he has restored what was lost. All these stories in-between, including *ours (point to US!)*  and that of the children of Israel *(point to Moses),* are moving the story to this destination. He told them this was his will. Remember?

The Lord said to Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which **I am giving** to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

*Pg. 74; Numbers 13:1-2*

God has told us where to go. He has revealed his will to us, just like he revealed his will to Moses and the children of Israel. It’s in his Word. For example, in the area of marriage and family, God said, “It is my will for you to stay sexually pure until you enter into a marriage covenant.” Some of you would say, “I can’t believe God would want to keep me from being happy.” That’s not what he’s doing. He is saving you for the ultimate joy. The question is, will you turn left, or will you take a hard right. This is why I respect men like Tim Tebow. It’s pretty exciting the way he is standing and trusting God for the right person. He, like me, is a very good-looking man and could have any woman in the world. But he is saving himself for the one woman God has for him, like God did for me.

God also says, “It is my will that you do not divorce. I hate divorce.” For you that have experienced that, I’m not being insensitive, you know more than anybody that divorce is not a pretty thing. So he says to you, while you are married, make sure you nurture that relationship. Don’t let it get out of balance. Humble yourself. It takes a lot of humility to form oneness in marriage. Make a personal commitment to grow spiritually to become like Jesus so you can offer that up for your mate. Do your part now to prevent a divorce later. Now, the truth is, sometimes your mate doesn’t come along in that, and you are put in a no-win situation and a divorce happens. But if you at least do your part today, because you trust that this is God’s best direction for you, when that all happens, you’ll know you did your part. I believe just like Joshua and Caleb did their part, God will provide grace for you.

God says, and you don’t have to debate this, it is my will for you to raise your children to honor the Lord. So I congratulate you. You are here today, or you’re online. You have your children gathered around you. They’re in Bibleland. You are demonstrating that raising children in the Lord means becoming part of a spiritual community that is collectively moving in the direction of God’s will. But there’s even more than that. When you leave this building, you need to model this relationship with the Lord before them the other days of the week. It doesn’t mean you’re perfect, it means your children see you struggle to live the will of God. Even when you stumble, you talk about it with them. You let them see how much you fret and how much you love and how much you want to follow the will of the Lord. That authenticity in modeling following God’s will before them will be a great blessing to them.

In the area of rhythm and balance, God said, “You don’t need to debate this. It is my will for you to experience a Sabbath rest.” We’re like vacuum cleaners. We were not made with a commercial-grade engine. We were created with the residential grade, so we cannot run 24/7. Our bodies were not designed for that. God tells us, “You have a residential grade engine in you, so you can run 6 days, but then you have to take a day off to replenish. In that replenishment of your engine, focus your attention on replenishing in me. If you do that, you will be blessed. If you don’t do that, one day you’re going to find yourself in the wilderness, and it will be because you did not take a left turn when it came to practicing the Sabbath.”

When it comes to the area of finances, God says, “I have revealed my will for each of you. First, be careful with debt, because if you get too far into debt, you will become a slave to the lender. You will be in Egypt in your finances. Second, I want you to be satisfied with me and not with things. If you’re satisfied with me, you won’t be tempted to go into debt to buy things that cannot satisfy. Only I can satisfy. Third, I want you to give the firstfruits of everything I have given you. Every cent of money you have made, everything you have, I have declared it for you, and now I’m asking for the first portion to be given back to me. That is my will.”

When we fail to make the left turn at our Kadesh Barnea, we put ourselves in danger of wandering in the wilderness. I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to wander in the wilderness. I don’t want to waste any of my years in the desert – unless the desert is the will of God for me. Sometimes it is the will of God for us to be in the wilderness, to learn to trust in him. But if it’s not the will of God for me to be in the wilderness, I don’t want to be there, not one minute. I’d rather spend my time in the land flowing with milk and honey.

1. **Don’t be driven by fear**

Israel knew this was the will of God, so why didn’t they go in? Because they were afraid. It was fear that kept them from heading north. There were giants in the land and they just couldn’t see from their lower story perspective how **they** could overcome them. So, they stayed in their safety in the wilderness.

Here’s a principle: *If it is God’s will, he will make a way*. God clearly told them, “I am giving this to you. If you just head there I’ll take care of the rest.” Joshua and Caleb saw this. Remember they said,

“And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us.”

*Pg.76; Numbers 14:9*

Church, hear me out. God is bigger than any giant you are facing or will ever face. He will devour them if you will but move in his direction.

In the area of giving, you may say, “We have a tight budget. We are living paycheck to paycheck. There is nothing left over after paying all the bills. I am afraid if we gave money it would collapse our financial house. So we just can’t do this. It’s not prudent.” God says, “I don’t want your leftovers. I want the first cut, before you pay all of those bills.” You might say, “Randy, you’re crazy!” Yes! But God even says, “I want you to test me on this. And if you test me on this, you’ll see I will open up the gates of heaven on your behalf.” Does anyone want to see God open up the gates of heaven on your behalf? Then you must first turn left at Kadesh Barnea and give him the first cut of everything that comes in.

One more…

1. **Remember others are in the car with you.**

Do you remember when God laid down the consequences for their failure to move into the land that he said,

“Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness…”

*Pg.77, Numbers 14:33*

The children had been through a lot. They lived the lives of slaves in Egypt. That had to be hard. Now they were in the desert as nomads. But in just a few shorts days or months they would be settling into their own land and houses and safety and dignity. This was God’s provision for them. But because the parents said “no” to going in God’s direction, the children would spend the rest of their childhood and young adulthood in the wilderness.

Our decisions don’t just affect us. They affect everybody in the car with us.

I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to wander in the wilderness, and I don’t want to be responsible for dragging other people into the wilderness with me because I didn’t have the courage to stand up to the giant fear in front of me because I wouldn’t trust in God.

So, here’s the point. Take the left turn at your Kadesh Barnea, and head into the Promised Land, the place of his will for your life.

Fast-forward 40 years. We see the graciousness of God. All of those 20 years and older have died in the wilderness and he is now giving their grown children the opportunity to decide for themselves. They find themselves back at Kadesh Barnea. Moses has passed away in the wilderness and Joshua is now in charge. Here’s something interesting. The last time, under the leadership of Moses, he sent in 12 spies to explore the land, and 2 came back saying “we can certainly do this” –Joshua and Caleb. Now it’s Joshua’s turn to lead; guess how many spies he sends in to explore the land. Answer: Two. Committees never make courageous decisions. This is just a formality in the strong leadership of Joshua. They come back and say, “The land is still awesome, and it’s still flowing with milk and honey. There are more people there than there were 40 years ago, and the Jerichoites must be putting risers in their shoes because they’re bigger than our parents said they were. It will be dangerous, but God can certainly do this for us.” And they said yes, and they turned left, and they went into the land of God’s promise, the land of living in the center of God’s will for their life.

This is how I want to live. If God says “stop,” I want to stop. If God says “turn left,” I want to turn left. If God says, “I want you to rush forward,” I want to put the pedal to the metal. Why? Because I don’t want to take a beating with a billy club, and I don’t want to spend one day in the wilderness that I’m not called to spend. I want to spend my life in the Promised Land, not only for me but for my children, and for the people I’m called to serve at this church.

*PRAY*