



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sermon Title: A Vision to Expand Christ's Kingdom
Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer/ February 24, 2019

The setting is the Promised Land. Joshua is set to divide the land to the 12 tribes of Israel- and a man named Caleb steps from the crowd.

Joshua 14:6-15

Caleb **was** not content to remain in his comfort zone. There was more to do.

Big Idea: Expand the territory of God's Kingdom influence.

How? Several essentials

Essential #1. Ask, "What's Next"

Caleb asks, "What's next?" If we don't ask, "What's next?" we slouch toward stagnation. Several factors make us reluctant to ask "What's next?"

Satisfaction. Our memories of the past outshine our dreams of tomorrow.

Fatigue. "Let the younger folks do it."

Fear. "Feels risky." And we live in a culture that is increasingly hostile to our message. But **2 Timothy 1:7** *The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid...*

The proposed merger with BC is a result of asking God, "What's next?"

Essential #2. Believe God for More (than they Can Do)

45 yrs earlier when Moses sent 12 spies for a reconnaissance mission into the land. 6 weeks later they reported back. 10 considered the risks greater than the rewards. (**Numbers 13:28**). As a result they basically said, "We can't pull this off. Let's just stay where we are." (**Numbers 13:32**)

But Caleb spoke up. (**Numbers 13:30**) We've forgotten the names of the nay-sayers- but we name our sons Caleb.

Leading 1 church in 2 locations- the challenges are huge. But so are the rewards.

Essential #3. Choose Opportunity Over Ease

Joshua 14:12 *Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised...*

The hill country meant that would be fighting uphill- and against giants.

Joshua 14:13 (NIV) — 13 Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.

When we talk about taking the hill country, we're not talking about laying siege to Bethlehem Church. They are one with us. Another tribe... but we're one people. They are not enemy territory conquered. They are comrades-in-arms who will make us stronger for the cause of expanding Christ's Kingdom influence. And the opportunities are numerous.

Essential #4. [People who] Are Fully-Invested

Numbers 14:24 *Because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.*

Through much prayer and fasting, waiting, investigating, listening for prophetic words from the Lord, the Grace leadership wholeheartedly believe we must take this challenge to expand Christ's Kingdom influence to establish 1 church in 2 locations. The Lord has presented us with the opportunity to revitalize and expand a work of Christ in a sweet spot that overlaps our current ministry area. It is a direct answer to an intense and diligent seeking of the Lord.

But it will require people who are "all-in". What does that mean?

- **Vote on March 31 to join Grace & Bethlehem to become one church in two locations.**
- **Attend Grace Bethlehem (100-200)**
- **Pray Diligently for both campuses**
- **Serve / leverage your gifts & abilities**
- **Give**

Without these, we will not be a prevailing church.

What changes can you expect to see?

When we shift 100-200 people to the Bethlehem Campus, we will also shift our worship services

Worship Services NOW

Grace Church Netcong				Grace Bethlehem
8:15 AM	9:45	11:15	6:00 PM	10:00 AM
Same worship team leads all 4				

Worship Services AFTER MERGE

Grace Church Netcong				Grace Bethlehem
9:15	[FELLOWSHIP]	11:15	6:00 PM	10:15 AM
Same worship team <u>initially</u> leads all 4 at <u>both</u> sites				

Who will be the Teaching Pastor?

Teaching Team: Armin, Segun, Reuben, Scott McCrea, Cameron

At present:

Netcong AM Services: Armin is primary teacher

Netcong 6:00 PM: Segun is primary teacher

After Merge:

Netcong AM Services: Armin is primary teacher

Netcong 6:00 PM: Segun is primary teacher

Bethlehem AM Services: Scott will preach about ½ the time

Bethlehem will have a campus pastor who will be present most weeks and will be the primary contact person to coordinate ministry at Bethlehem campus. Bear in mind that the Bethlehem campus will NOT be a separate church. We will coordinate, optimize, and synchronize ministries as much as possible at both locations.

God is calling us to expand the territory of Christ's Kingdom influence. Look what Caleb says to Joshua and the people of Israel who were reluctant to enter the land. (**Numbers 13:30**) — Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- How do you anticipate this merger will personally affect you?
- Caleb and Joshua believed that God was with them, therefore they could take the promised land even though it was occupied by Giants. Have you ever attempted something so intimidating that the only way to conquer it was with God's help? Explain
- How do believers know whether or not something is God's will?
- 2 Timothy 1:7 says: *The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power.* Are there any circumstances where it is acceptable for believers to have fear?
- The Israelites had to wander the wilderness for 40 years because they failed to trust God would deliver them into the promised land. Undoubtedly, they had many times of regret. Did God ever ask you to attempt something great – yet you chose not to obey? Do you have any regrets about the situation?
- What spiritual gifts talents and skills do you have that you willing to use as we pursue becoming one church in two locations?
- As a group, spend some time sharing creative ideas about how we can promote positive interactions among our combining church communities.