



**Wednesday: October 28, 2015**

*And my righteous ones will live by faith, But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away." But we are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved.*

**Hebrews 10:38-39 (NLT)**

We love great stories — epic stories. In particular, we love stories of overcoming. There is something about the drama of facing enormous odds with unwavering fortitude that does something to us. Whether the story takes place in a novel, autobiography, homemade video or on a movie screen, there is something within us that resonates with the exuberant triumph of persevering faith. I think the reason that it resonates so much within us is because we are designed to deeply long for that sense of significance.

I have never had a conversation with someone who was sincerely content to not matter, to make no impact or to not be remembered. There is a deeply engrained need for us to belong to something not only significant, but something much larger than ourselves. It is how God created us. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that, "...we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." We were created to accomplish the grandness of God's work.

Not only that, each of us was created in a certain way to be a unique and integral part of God's work. As you read this, realize that God created you in a way that no one else was created. You are absolutely and unequivocally unique. Your uniqueness exists by God's design for God's wondrous, extravagant purposes. That is the part of our story that we love — the triumph and victory.

Still, there is another critical part of our individual stories with God that precedes the triumph that feels less glorious. This part of our story with God seems to take place in the tentative hours of restless nights, in the midst of transparent conversation or under the compulsion of a driving burden. This critical moment is the moment of choosing faith. This moment occurs when we evaluate a call or

sense of burden that seems too great to overcome, requiring a sacrifice of great cost in light of the greatness and faithfulness of God.

In this moment, there is no one cheering a victory or celebrating an achieved goal. It is a moment of personal and resolute solemnity in which a believer chooses to be what God has called him or her to be regardless of the inherent requirements. It is within this moment that the believer echoes the declaration of Hebrews 10:39, *“But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.”*

In the nation of Israel, we have both a positive and negative example of doing this — we’ll focus primarily on the positive. Their initial arrival at the outskirts of the Promised Land recorded in Numbers 13-14 resulted in the Israelites assessing that the task of taking the land, which God had promised to them, was too great for them to handle. Therefore, instead of trusting God to do something in them that was greater than they could do in their own strength, they shrunk back. As a result, the nation of Israel was sent to wander in the desert for 40 years until that generation of leaders perished.

In Joshua 1:1-9, the people have returned to the outskirts of the Promised Land. The generation that was the nation’s children upon their last visit, are now its leaders. Moses’ leadership is to be succeeded by that of Joshua. Once again the people of Israel are at the crossroads of faith. In these nine verses, God speaks to Joshua about the tremendous faith step that he is to undertake. He can either believe that God will do what He has already promised to do or he can shrink back as their fathers did. As we trace through this pivotal moment, we’ll be able to discern some crucial elements of taking faith steps to do great things in the power of God.