**NEVERTHELESS**

**NUM. 13:26-28; LK. 5:4-5; MT. 26:39**

The Power of a Made-up Mind

 The Power of a Submitted Will to the Spirit of God

 David said, “*My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:*”

 In the English vocabulary, there are a handful of words that can change the entire context of a *sentence*, a *conversation*, even the *outcome* of an entire situation.
 In our text today, a single word has changed, in a multitude of ways, entire *dialogues*, entire *situations*, and even an entire *world*, simply by the power of one simple word. It is a word that is used 97 times in the Bible. That word is: NEVERTHELESS.

 In the Old Testament, the original Hebrew means, strangely enough, “*a ceasing, an end, a finality.*” Something is about to end.
 In the New Testament Greek, in Luke’s writing, the word “nevertheless” is used (and I quote from Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Abridged): “*after negative sentences*”, and “*serves to mark a transition to something new*”. Something is about to begin, transpire, or happen.

 Finally, from the American Heritage Dictionary, 4th Edition, in today’s English grammar, the word simply means, “*In spite of all that…*”

 What I want to do today is point out to us, both as individuals, and as a church body, the power and strength that lies in a simple word: NEVERTHELESS.

**I. THE TWELVE SPIES**

 Numbers 13:26-28, “*And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.* 27 *And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.* 28 ***Nevertheless*** *the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.*”

 45 years later Caleb, one of the 2 good spies, would look back in remembrance at that unfortunate turn of events and say in Joshua 14:7-8, “*Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.* 8 ***Nevertheless*** *my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*”

 That 1 little word changed a positive situation to a negative one.

 Those people went from *assured* victory to being *altogether* vanquished.

 It was a situation that was full of *promise* and *potential* that got changed to one which was full of *despondency* and *despair*. (435 years in Egypt)

 You would have thought they would have wanted a place of their own.

 You would have thought they would have been willing to do anything.

 You would have thought that by now they would have *learned by experience* to trust in God!

 You would have thought that they would have realized God had their *best interest* at heart.

 Follow the story of the 12 spies, and you’ll discover that, to a man, every one of them experienced the wonder of Canaan.
 It wasn’t just Joshua and Caleb that *pulled down a bunch of grapes*.

 Grapes that were so heavy that it took 2 men just to carry a pod of them. One old commentator said that certain travelers have reported seeing grape bunches in Palestine and Syria weighing 25 to 45 pounds each and with grapes the size of plums.

 It wasn’t just Joshua and Caleb that *ate the fruit of the land*, the pomegranates and figs, ‘til juice was dripping from their chin, but the other 10 as well.
 However, in 10 of the spies, there was a “***nevertheless***” that changed the entire picture. (a negativity, no way/ cost is too great)

 God had brought them to the very verge ofCanaan, but they could not enter unless their will *united* itself to His will,unless they chose to *go on* in His name and strength.

 What is He dealing with you about?

 Where does He want to lead you?

 Their **future** was atthat hour in their own hands, and they *wrecked it* because they did nottrust God, because their faith was *too weak* to pass into obedience in theface of serious discouragement.

 There is an old song entitled “*I Did It My Way*.”

 We need somebody to write a new song entitled, “*I Did It Thy Way!*”

 A Promised Land of blessings.

 Even so are our eternal fortunes placed in our own hands.

 **Holiness** and **heaven** are set beforeus, brought within our reach in Christ; the “*rest which remaineth*” is ours,to be entered on now, today; and God calls upon us to enter, andencourages us by the *voice* and *experience* of those who have made trial ofit. (a great cloud of witnesses)

 **Great things happen because of making the right small choices.**

 And note that as this crisisonly happened once to Israel inthe wilderness.

 So it is in our lives, sometimes we only get **one opportunity** to make a *bold* and *decisive* advance in our spiritual life.

 And if we shrink from taking it because it is *hard*, or because we think we are *not worthy* or *prepared* for it we will end up**forfeiting** the rest prepared for us, and doom ourselves to a **fruitless** *wandering* in dry places.

 The 12 spies *witnessed* God’s Promises, but *couldn’t trust* His protection.
 God did not lead them to this point just to leave them wishing, “*If only*”.
 But 85% of the spies used THE POWER OF NEVERTHELESS’ to change a positive “*we saw*” into a negative “*we can’t*”.

 Their attitude was “*Yes, there’s plenty of promise in the land that we spied out, but in spite of all that…*”

 There were giants in the land.

 The way was *rough* to get there.

 Because they hadto “*go up*” (work is too hard) to get there because the ascent was necessarily **steep** (Num. 13:21,22). It would have taken some effort. It wasn’t just some downhill slide to get there.

 Acts 14:22 says, “*that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*”

 We have seen the blessings of God in our grandparents. We have heard the stories.

 Isn’t it time to start *fighting* and *progressing*?

 It was this “***Nevertheless***” that became “*an end, a ceasing, a finality*”, because it stopped what GOD wanted to do for Israel.

 A few days later, after God rebuked them, some of them set out alone to conquer Canaan, and ended up dying because their opportunity was gone.

 DON’T MISS YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

 Do not *sit* back, *hold* back, *wait* on others. Take the land!

 Don’t miss your opportunity in a service to yield to God. To do *more*, give something *up*, etc.

 That generation had to wander around the *barren wilderness* until they all died out, and their *bleached bones* dotted the desert.

 Every *day* of spying cost Israel a *year* of wandering.

 Walking by sight is expensive work.

 Don’t end up like the 10 spies!

 The story of the man who fell in a well and held on to the rope and screamed for help. He held on till he could hold on no more.

When he fell he dropped only 6 inches. (right in the hand of God!)

 God is saying let go, follow Me, Canaan’s Land is just in sight.

 Quit holding on to whatever you are holding on to.

 Keep *following* the Father, *seeking* the Son, and *heeding* the Holy Ghost!

**II. THE SERVANT—SIMON PETER**

 Luke 5:4-5, “*Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.* 5 *And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing:* ***nevertheless*** *at thy word I will let down the net.*”

 In Luke’s recording of the miracle of the fishes, we experience THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’ changing a *negative* situation to a *positive*.

 A *fruitless* night to *full* nets.

 Simon Peter really didn’t want to throw his nets out again.
 He’d just spent the morning *cleaning* and *mending* them. (Luke 5:2)
 He was a fisherman by trade, and knew the **waters**. He knew the best **time** was at night. He knew that the proper **place** was to cast out the net near the shore.

 He didn’t need some “carpenter” to tell him how to fish!

 All night, and nothing; what could there be in the morning?

 His own expertise told him there was *no reason* to try again.

 And he even went so far as to inform the Lord that “*we have toiled all the night*”. “*We’ve already tried…*” “*Lord, we have already* ***been there*** *and* ***done that****.*”—Don’t you understand that? (have you said that?)

 God, I’ve tried to get the Holy Ghost.

 God, I’ve tried to get rid of this besetting sin.

 God, I’ve tried to dispose of the chains of these weights that have held me back.

 Yet Jesus said, “*Launch out into the deep*.”

 Revival is not in the shallows.

 It is time to get out of the wadding pool!

 When Jesus asks someone to do something, it is not just for the sake of doing it.

 He doesn’t just give “Busy work”.

 But rather He has a specific purpose in mind.

 He is giving us an opportunity to *deepen*, and *enlarge* our faith and walk.

 This time God wants to do it with and through you!!!

 However, Simon used THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’ to change a *negative* to a *positive*.
 You see, Simon had tasted *futility*, but trusted in the *faithfulness* of the Master.

 When you can’t *see* His hand, *trust* His heart!

 “*Nevertheless*,” said Peter —that is, not *because of success*, but *in spite of failure* — “*at thy word I will let down the net.*”

 Not because of what *I* want, but because of *Your* Word!

 Peter is going to do this because he has confidence in his Christ.

 He doesn’t believe Jesus will send him on a fool’s errand.

 So Peter says, “*Lord, we’ve worked these waters all night long and haven’t caught the first thing…but in spite of all that AT THY WORD.*”

 We need to *remember* Whose Word it is! The power of that Word!

  **“At Thy word” — here is the cause of causes, the beginning of beginnings of the creation of God.**

 “*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made,*” and by that word was the present constitution of this universe settled as it stands.

 When the earth was fruitless and dark, Thy voice, O Lord, was heard, saying, “*Let there be light*,” and “*at Thy word*” **light leaped forth**.

 “*At Thy word*” **day** and **night** took up their places.

 And “at Thy word” the **waters** above were *divided* from the waters below by the firmament of heaven.

 “At Thy word” the **dry land** appeared, and the **seas** *retired* to their channels.

 “At Thy word” the **globe** was *mantled* over with **green**, and *vegetable life began*.

 (You might not understand it, but do it!)

 “At Thy word” appeared the **sun** and **moon** and **stars**, “*for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.*”

 “At Thy word” the **living creatures** filled the *sea*, and *air*, and *land*, and **man** at last appeared.

 For you see, by faith we know that the worlds were framed by the word of God.

 Peter said, “We have tried it all night, BUT at Thy Word…”

 ***“At Thy word” has been the watchword of the saints*:** Saints have *acted upon* these three words, and found their marching orders in them.

 An **ark** is built on dry land, and the *vulgar* and *lewd* crowd gathers about the holy patriarch, laughing at him; but he is not ashamed, for, lifting his face to heaven, he saith, “*I have built this great ship, O Jehovah, at Thy word.*”

 **Abraham** quits the place of his childhood, leaves his family, and goes with Sarah to a land of which he knows nothing and enters upon a country possessed by the Canaanite, in which he roams as a *stranger* and a *sojourner* all his days, **never possessing any of it**, but a graveyard. If any scoff at him for thus renouncing the comforts of settled life, he lifts also his calm face to heaven, and smilingly answers to the Lord, “*It is at Thy word.*”

 And even when his brow is *furrowed*, and the *hot* tear is ready to force itself from beneath the patriarch’s eyelid, as he lifts his hand with the knife to stab Isaac to the heart, if any charge him with *murder*, or think him *mad*, he lifts the same peaceful face towards the majesty of the Most High and saith, “*It is at Thy word*.” At that word he joyfully sheathes the sacrificial knife, for he has proved his willingness to go to the *utmost* at the word of the Lord his God.

 **HOW FAR WILL YOU GO?**

 God’s Word will never fail, or steer you wrong!

 **Moses** lifts his rod in presence of haughty Pharaoh, “*at Thy word*,” He doesn’t lift that rod in vain at Jehovah’s word, for *thick* and *heavy* fall the plagues upon the people of Egypt.

They are made to know that God’s **word returneth** not to Him void, but fulfilleth His purpose, whether it be of *threatening* or of *promise*.

 If God tells you to do it: He will help you to do it.

 Yes, the wilderness is *large*, and Pharaoh is *mighty*, but in spite of all of that…

 See Moses *lead* the people *out of* Egypt at the Word of the Lord.

 **Obeying brings better benefits than the cost you pay!**

 God gives you more than you bargain for!

 If in, after days, you find **Joshua** compassing Jericho, and not *assailing* it with battering rams, but only with one great *blast* of trumpets, and the *people’s* shouts, his reason is that God has spoken to him by His word.

 And so right on, for time would fail me to speak of Samson, and Jephthah, and Barak, and David, these men did what they did at God’s word; and, doing it, the Lord was with them.

 Do you see how powerful God’s Word is?

 We need to realize that when Christ commands, the most unlikely time is *likely*, and the most unpromising place becomes *hopeful*.

 **It was this “Nevertheless” that, in the Greek form, “*served to mark a transition to something new*”.** Luke 5:6-9, “*And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.* 7 *And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.* 8 *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* 9 *For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:*”

 If the great catch of fish wasn’t enough look what happened next.

 Luke 5:10, “*And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*”

 It was here that Jesus called His disciples to become “*fishers of men*”. They received a higher calling, all because of one word.

 There is no telling what God will do *with*, *for*…

 God has a higher calling out there for you.

 He has higher planes for you to tread.

 Are you *lacking* motivation? Are you *stale* spiritually?

 \*\*Will you say “nevertheless”?

**III. THE SAVIOUR—JESUS**

 Matthew 26:39, “*And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:* ***nevertheless*** *not as I will, but as thou wilt.*”

 This word can take you from the carnal to the spiritual, from the natural to the supernatural.

 Finally, the story that we’ve read in Matthew 26 tells us how THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’ was able to change an entire world.

 You see, friend, Jesus Christ was GOD wrapped in humanity.
 He knew what awaited Him in the remaining hours of His life on this earth, and His *human nature* did not want to *comply* and *submit*.
 He understood the *pain*, the *emptiness*, the *agony* that faced Him as He knelt in that garden.

 I know Scripture tells us “*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame*” (Heb. 12:2).
 However, there was an ***internal*** ***crucifixion*** He had to go through in that garden *before* He ever allowed Judas to meet Him with a kiss. He had to crucify the flesh there in the garden of Gethsemane.

 It was there He felt the sins of the world on His back as if He had *committed* them. As if He had *failed* the Father.

 His **human** nature did not want to go through the *agony* of a Roman crucifixion.

 His human nature did not want to suffer the *loss* of his friends when He needed them the most; that’s why He went to them 3x.

 His **spiritual** nature did not want to experience in the Garden of Gethsemane the sense of sin: *shame*, *guilt*, and *despair*.

 He who was *loved* by His Father, before the foundation of the world didn’t want to feel His Father’s wrath.
 His soul *recoiled* from wanting to drink that bitter cup.

 The word “***cup***” is frequently used in the Word of God to point out *sorrow*, *anguish*, *terror*, and *death*.

 It seems to be an allusion to a very ancient method of punishing criminals. A cup of poison was put into their hands, and they were obliged to drink it.

 Socrates was killed thus, being obliged by the magistrates of Athens to drink a cup of the juice of hemlock.

 To death, by the poisoned cup, there seems an allusion in Hebrews 2:9 where it reads, “*…****that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.***”

 The whole world are here represented as standing *guilty* and *condemned* before the tribunal of God; into every man’s hand the deadly cup is put, and he is *required* to *drink* off the poison.

 Jesus enters, takes every man’s cup out of his hand, and drinks off the poison, and thus tastes or suffers the death which every man otherwise must have undergone.

 **ILLUS**. (act like Jesus is in line as an innocent victim, but says, “Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done.”

 “*Let this cup pass from me:*”

 His human nature sought any other means---ANY OTHER---to accomplish the will of the Eternal Father.
 Yet because of THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’, you and I enjoy the Presence of a Holy God;
 Because of THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’, you and I have come face-to-face with Amazing Grace!

 Jesus Christ wept bitter tears of opposition to what the world truly needed.
 Jesus was saying “*…yet in spite of what I want…*”
 And through THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’, you and I can taste of the Grace and Mercy of a Saviour that surrendered His own will.

 DO WE LOVE GOD ENOUGH?

 I wonder what God has before us: what **spiritual lands** to conquer; what **blessing** to bestow upon us; what **changes** we can make in our world if we will but say, “*Nevertheless at thy word I will*.”

**CON:**
 THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’ has the ability to change everything:
1. It changed a dialogue, a situation, and ultimately, an entire

nation, from a positive into a negative *by becoming a finality*.
2. It changed a dialogue, a situation, and a person, from a negative into a positive *by becoming a transition point*.
3. And ultimately, it changed a dialogue, a situation, and an entire world, *by becoming a point of surrender and submission in the Garden*.
 In spite of *foes*, *feelings*, *failures*; of what I have to *face*.

**Caesar's Rubicon! "No Turning Back"**

 In Roman days, the Rubicon, a stream in north-central Italy, *marked* the boundary between Italy and Gaul. By law, Roman magistrates could bring armies into Italy only by permission of the Senate. By marching his legions across the Rubicon in 49 B.C., Julius Caesar committed himself to a *showdown* with Rome itself.

 For 9 years Julius Caesar and his army had served Rome loyally and well. But Caesar had many enemies at home, people who *feared* his ambitions and *envied* his accomplishments, people who cringed every time they heard Caesar called a great hero.

 He called the soldiers of his favorite legion together and told them about the plot that had been made for his ruin. The veterans who had followed him through so many perils, and had helped him win so many victories, declared they would not leave him. They would go with him to Rome and see that he received his due rewards.

 At last they came to a little river called the Rubicon. It was the boundary line of Caesar's province of Gaul; on the other side laid Italy. Caesar paused a moment on the bank.

 He knew that to cross the stream would be to declare war against Pompey and the Roman Senate. It might involve all Rome in a fearful strife, the end of which no man could foresee.

 “We could still go back,” he told himself. “*Behind us lies safety. But once we cross the* **Rubicon** *into Italy, turning around is impossible. I must make the choice here.*”

 He did not hesitate long. He gave the word, and rode boldly across the shallow stream.

 “*We have crossed the* **Rubicon***!*” he cried as he reached the far shore. “*There is no turning back.*”

 The news was shouted along the roads and byways leading to Rome: Caesar had crossed the Rubicon! People from every town and village turned out to welcome the returning hero as he marched through the countryside.

 Finally Caesar and his army reached the gates of the city. No troops came out to challenge them, and there was no resistance when Caesar marched into the city itself.

—James Baldwin—Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations

 Some of you need to cross the Rubicon of *reluctance*, *rebellion*, *relentless pursuit*, *righteousness*.

 WHERE YOU ARE AT IS LEADING YOU NO WHERE!

 It is decision day! Time to get off of the fence.

 Are you tired of the ordinary?
 THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’ can change things for us as individuals and even as a church body.

 There are those who have said, “*It looked promising at first, pastor, but in spite of all that all I see now is…*”
 But I choose to say, “*Lord, the pews may not be as full as I’d like for them to be right now, but in spite of all that…*”

 THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’—you **hold it within your own hands** as to what sort of difference it will make.

**What is God trying to say to you today?**

 Is He asking you to *launch out* into the deep waters of faith?

 Is He calling for you in your present situation to *trust* Him *more*?

 Does He want you to not be afraid to *attempt* the impossible?

 Is He asking you to finally *forsake* all and *follow* Him as the Lord of your life?

 *However*, and *whatever* God is calling for each of us to do, no matter how *unreasonable* it may seem, I hope we can answer, “NEVERTHELESS AT YOUR WORD I WILL ...”

Sermon Seed: Steven Shubert, “The Power of ‘Nevertheless’”—SermonCenral.com

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