

The Power Of 'Nevertheless'

Num.13: 23-33

Luke 5:4-6

Mark 14:35-39

I. Introduction

A. 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.

B. 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: NEVERTHELESS

II. Definition

A. In the Old Testament, the original Hebrew means, strangely enough, "a ceasing, an end, a finality"

B. 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".

C. In Mark's writing, however, "NEVERTHELESS" is used as "an opposition to concession"

1. This simply means that, although the speaker does not want to yield, or concede, to circumstances, they have submitted their own will through the power of 'nevertheless'.

D. Finally, from the American Heritage Dictionary, 4th Edition, in today's English grammar, the word simply means, "In spite of all that..."

E. 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.

III. From a positive to a negative

A. In our story in Num. 13, “nevertheless” changes a positive to a negative.

1. Follow the story of the 12 spies, and you’ll discover that, to a man, every one of them experienced the wonder of Canaan.

- a. It wasn’t just Joshua and Caleb that pulled down a bunch of grapes.

- b. It wasn’t just Joshua and Caleb that ate the fruit of the land ‘til juice was dripping from their chin.

2. However, in 10 of the spies, there was a “nevertheless” that changed the entire picture.

- a. They witnessed God’s Promises, but couldn’t trust His protection.

- b. God did not lead them to this point just to leave them wishing, “If only”.

B. But 85% of the spies used THE POWER OF ‘NEVERTHELESS’ to change a positive “we saw” into a negative “we can’t”.

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

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

IV. From a negative to a positive

A. Someone once said that it takes both negative and positive to start a vehicle;

1. That may be so, but give me a positive charge any day of the week!

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

1. Simon Peter really didn’t want to throw his nets out again.

- a. He'd just spent the morning cleaning them. (See vs. 2)
- b. He was a fisherman by trade, and knew the waters.
- c. His own expertise told him there was no reason to try again.
- d. And he even went so far as to inform the Lord that "We've already tried..."

2. However, Simon used THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS' to change a negative to a positive.

C. You see, Simon had tasted futility, but trusted in the faithfulness of the Master.

1. Once again, THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS' had worked its magic:

- a. "Lord, we've worked these waters all night long and haven't caught the first thing...but in spite of all that..."

D. It was this "Nevertheless" that, in the Greek form, "served to mark a transition to something new"

1. It was here that Jesus called His disciples to become "fishers of men".

V. From the carnal to the spiritual

A. Finally, the story that we've read in Mark 14 tells us how THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS' was able to change an entire world:

1. You see, friend, Jesus Christ was GOD wrapped in humanity.

- a. He knew what awaited Him in the remaining hours of His life on this earth, and His human nature did not want to acquiesce.
- b. He understood the pain, the emptiness, the agony that faced Him as He knelt in that garden.

- i. I know scripture tells us "for the joy that was set before Him, [he] endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2)
- ii. 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.

2. His human nature did not want to go through the agony of a Roman crucifixion.
3. His human nature did not want to suffer the loss of his friends when He needed them the most.
4. His human nature sought any other means---ANY OTHER---to accomplish the will of the Eternal Father.

- a. Yet because of THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS', you and I enjoy the Presence of a Holy God;
- b. Because of THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS', you and I have come face-to-face with Amazing Grace!

B. Jesus Christ wept bitter tears of opposition to what the world truly needed.

1. His prayer became "Father, my humanity desires any possible way other than this way...yet in spite of what I want..."
2. And through THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS', you and I can taste of the Grace and Mercy of a Saviour that surrendered His own will.

VI. Conclusion

A. THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS' has the ability to change everything:

1. It changed a dialogue, a situation, and ultimately, an entire world, from a positive into a negative by becoming a finality.
2. It changed a dialogue, a situation, and an entire world, 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.

VII. Closing

A. THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS' can change things for us as individuals and even as a church body.

1. There are those who have said, "It looked promising at first, pastor, but in spite of all that..."
2. 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..."

B. It can change a dialogue, a situation, and eventually, an entire city, a nation, and yes, even a world.

C. THE POWER OF 'NEVERTHELESS'---you hold it within your own hands as to what sort of difference it will make.