

FAITH STORMS

Model: Joshua and Caleb, Job

Focus: Giants

But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

"When you plan for 2023 remember this, don't plan looking at your capacity, but plan looking at God's capacity." -Daniel David

12 Spies! 10 Doubters! 2 Believers!

Ten of the twelve looked at the giants and took inventory. They sized them up and said ... They are really big ... we're not. Final analysis? We can't win! No way, not today, not ever, zero possibility of victory. They never factored in the power of God.

The problem? They spent too much time looking at the giants! When you lock in on your giant you lose sight of God's promise! **Your future successes cannot be gauged solely on observable circumstances.** The ten saw the size of their opposition and quit. They returned to camp speaking the language of fear!

New giants often breed spiritual amnesia. Just two months earlier these same men witnessed the power of God over the mighty Egyptians and the Red Sea. Yet...! That's why Scripture encourages us to ***"Walk by faith, not by sight."***

Giants have the gift of taunting! See that? Take a good look! You won't live another month; you have heart failure. You might as well file bankruptcy, you can see there's not enough money. Your child is addicted, and there's nothing you can do about it.

Somebody shout, ***"I'm going to walk by faith, not by sight!"***

Regardless how true or reasonable our fears and doubts may seem; it is dangerous to focus on our insecurities and our weaknesses and STOP THERE without moving on to consider God's power. To reflect on His greatness. To remember His promises to strengthen us to obey Him and bring Him glory.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM FAILURE TO ENTER THE PROMISE

Your promise from God will likely require giant removal.

- The bigger the promise, the bigger the giant
- It's beautiful land, but there are giants there!

Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.

A "giant" is:

1. anything that distracts us from our focus on God;
2. anything that detours us from our service for God; and
3. anything that drains us of our driving passion for God.

Do not empower your giants with a negative confession! You were never designed to speak anything that opposes the Word of God! The bible says that the ten spies brought back an evil report. In Ephesians, the book of warfare, it warns, **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth". Ephesians 4:29a KJV**

Their confession led to their demise. They got in trouble. Get a load of **Numbers 14:28**. God says this, **"Say unto them, truly as I live", sayeth the Lord. "As you have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you".**

The community of Israel heard two reports...

1. **Report one:** *the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!"*
2. **Report two:** *"Let's go at once to take the land. We can certainly conquer it!" "Don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"*

Report #1 is evil. Report #2 is good. Which of the two do you think everyone believed? Answer: The evil report. Now watch crazy get crazier. The people agreed to stone the messengers of report #2. God had to step in to save Caleb and Joshua!

So, when those 10 spies told the people what they wanted to hear, all of them died in the wilderness. Every one of them! NOW THAT'S NOT YOUR DESTINY. Your destiny is Canaan. Don't get your mail forwarded to the wilderness. Forward your mail to Canaan.

Giants can keep a church divided. Just like Samson, he hung around with that woman so long that he fell asleep and didn't know the power left him. The next thing you know the Philistines came on him. And she says, **"The Philistines are on you Samson"**. He woke up but had no power.

What is the first thing they did with Samson? They put out his eyes. I'm saying the first thing that happens with the church when they're walking too close to the world is that they lose revelation. And if you lose revelation, you lose faith. But I'm here to say restoration is coming to the church!

Your fulfilled promises must focus on God's power!

Joshua and Caleb said, ***"...if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey."*** Numbers 14:8 NLT

STOP looking at your giant! That's the only report of the ten. Their huge, we're small, their strong, we're weak. They're fortified, we're nomads. J & C were like, STOP it! Stop looking at the giants. Instead, take a good look at our God. That's what you call God-Centered! If God is telling us to go - He will do it if we obey!

J & C did not deny the presence of giants, and neither should we. They believed God was superior to the giants, and so should we. They were focused on the promises of God, not the size of those who opposed it. When you focus on your giant, you surrender easily.

The temptation to quit, to despair, to give in to bitterness, to flee the struggle, to yield to lust, to give in to greed, to indulge ourselves, to walk in pride...these things either destroy us or they make us stronger.

In this life we will encounter trips, tumbles, errors and failures. The "voice" we often hear is that of the adversary. He doesn't say, "Nice try." He shouts, "FAILURE!" He asserts, "You can't live this Christian life." Or, "You were better off before you started on this faith journey." Or, "You deserve better than this."

DON'T LISTEN TO THAT VOICE! Do not let the ten get into your head! Giants are gifted discouragers. Don't be a victim of that attack. Maybe you are so disheartened that you are ready to give up — on your job, on your marriage, on your family, on yourself.

- Ignore the voice that's saying things will always be the way they are today.
- Ignore the voice saying give up and go away.

There is another voice. The voice of God delivers a different message. His Voice says, "Let me help you with that." Or, "I have been there before, and I know you can make it." Or, "My strength is sufficient for you." Or, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

Proverbs 24:16 reminds us that God sticks closer than a brother, to honor our achievements, not punish us for our failures. Consider the Message paraphrase...

"No matter how many times you trip them up, God-loyal people don't stay down long; Soon they're up on their feet, while the wicked end up flat on their faces."

God has a word for you today. It's not a condemning word. It's not a critical word. It's not an indictment against. When you fall God does not shout "Epic Fail." Quite the opposite. He shouts, "Try Again." Can you receive that into your spirit today? Even if you fall seven times...Get up, brush yourself off, and TRY AGAIN!

God knows your potential. He knows you can rise from a fall because He deposited in your spirit resurrection power! You may be struggling to make ends meet / sin that you can't seem to conquer / failure and defeat in virtually every area of your life, and it may seem impossible for you to become the kind of person you want to become.

But God knows your potential. He believes in you. He knows what you can become. So, child of God, GET UP! Stand tall. Stand proud. Stand in faith and try again!

James asks us to consider Job, a righteous man. Job stepped into the octagon against multiple giants ... And it was brutal! Satan was relentless. The outcome was agonizing. His riches were gone, his servants and children were killed, his body was racked with disease and his friends turned on him. Job lost it all ... EXCEPT HIS FAITH! His faith survived!

The Apostle James was impressed. He wrote, ***"You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." James 5:11 NIV***

How did Job survive? He knew who God was. Victory depends on our view of God.

There was harsh punishment for looking at the giants. For refusing God's visitation. 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. This is meaningful for me because I am approaching 40 years of ministry. In recounting my steps, I wonder how many years I've wasted wandering in the desert because I couldn't stop looking at the giants.

Not any more. My eyes are fixed on the promises of God!

THE GIANTS I NEED TO SLAY