



Look at God, Not the Giants

The Church that meets on Livingston Ave

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P M Assembly

Introduction:

Have you ever heard of these men? Can you tell me who they are? Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, Geuel. No? That's because usually we only remember the two good spies sent by Moses into the promised land: Joshua and Caleb. These men were the 10 bad spies who talked the people out of conquering Canaan. Their problem was that they looked at the giants of the land and not the God of Israel. Many times when I read this passage, I immediately start judging these men. How could they have done this? Hadn't they seen the plagues? Didn't they cross the Red Sea? Hadn't they seen God's power? Yet, in a moment of honesty I realize that too many times I'm just like the 10. I see the giants around me instead of God within me. I want to spread the gospel to the community, to my friends, to my family, to my neighbors but I see, as it were, the Nephilim and the Anakim. I quell in fear and then live in shame and guilt. But this story is helping me. I want to share it with you so it can help you as well.

Discussion:

I. Israel at the brink (**Numbers 13-14**).

- A. *Moses' commission*: The Israelites had come to the edge of the Promised Land. All that was left was for them to take the land. In **Numbers 13:17-20**, Moses sent out a reconnaissance team, 12 men to see what the strength and weaknesses of the land were. Further, they were to bring back fruit from the land as testimony to its greatness. Notice what Moses did not do. He did not commission them to determine if Israel could beat the residents of the land. He simply asked them to spy out what was there.
- B. *The goodness of the land*: The spies did not doubt the goodness of the land, the worthiness of the goal. In **Numbers 13:23-24**, they cut down a cluster of grapes. And what a cluster it was. It was no mere bag of grapes that we get at the grocery. It was so large, they had to carry it on a pole between two men. When they returned, they reported the greatness of the land in **Numbers 13:27**. It did flow with milk and honey. It would be a great place to live.
- C. *The spies looked at the giants*: However, despite the greatness of the land and the promise of God, ten of the spies turned the entire congregation against the Lord because the giants filled their eyes. In **Numbers 13:28-29, 31-33** they talked about the Amalekites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites. They saw the Nephilim and the Anakim. They saw giants and felt like grasshoppers. "We can never take this land," they said.
- D. *Caleb and Joshua encourage the people*: In **Numbers 13:30** and in **Numbers 14:6-9**, Joshua and Caleb encouraged the folks to look to God. "Who cares if we are grasshoppers in their sight, they are grasshoppers in God's sight. God is on our side. If God delights in us, we'll get the land." That was the encouragement; look to God, not the giants. God can conquer. God will conquer. We just need to surrender to His will and let Him take care of the fighting. He will win the victory.
- E. *Israel rebels against the Lord*: In **Numbers 14:10**, the nation went with the 10 instead of the 2. They rebelled against the Lord. You know how this story ends. This generation died in the wilderness without seeing the Promised Land. Not until the next generation did they rely on God and win the Promised Land.

II. Will we look at God or the giants?

- A. God has given us a commission as well. In **Matthew 28:19**, God has asked us to go and make disciples of all nations. In **Mark 16:15**, He has commissioned us to go into the entire world and proclaim the gospel. We know that if we don't get out there and talk to people, they won't be saved (**Romans 10:13-15**). I have no doubt that most hearing this sermon are just like me. We see the benefits and glory of getting God's message out. We want people to be saved. We want Christ's church to grow. We want this congregation to grow. We know the gospel message is the only way this can happen (**Romans 1:16-17**). We love the gospel message. We love salvation in Jesus, freedom in Jesus, redemption in Jesus. We want others to experience these as well.
- B. However, sometimes the giants around us block our view of God within us. We see the giants and begin to think it is impossible for us to accomplish this task. What giants do we see?
 1. *Other churches*: How many churches are there today? I have a book in my library that describes all the different kinds of churches. The table of contents alone is 11 pages long. Some of these churches are huge. Folks are flocking to some of them. Yet, many of them simply aren't teaching the gospel message that really makes saints and disciples, that really saves them and brings them into the Lord. When we see the success of churches that teach error, we can see a giant. We begin to think no one wants the simple message of Jesus Christ when they can have the mega-church or some other gospel.

2. *Social gospel*: Many churches today are teaching a social gospel. They are teaching a gospel of feeding the poor, educating the young, changing our government. They offer mother's day out programs. They have youth group trips to Six Flags. They have concerts and parties. They invite people in with ice cream. They entertain. And they are successfully attracting lots of people. We begin to believe we can't possibly get folks to hear the simple gospel of freedom from sin. They won't want to be part of a church that just focuses on God's work. We are sure we can't possibly win the world for Jesus because no one would want what we offer. Just giving folks the freedom from sin is boring.
 3. *Pleasures of the world*: But then there are the folks who aren't in any church and don't seem to be interested in a church at all. They are the ones who drink, drug, gamble, lie, cheat, and steal. Some are in unlawful marriages. Some are trapped in homosexual behavior. We are sure that none of them will want to leave their sinful lives because they seem to be having too much fun there. They don't want freedom in Christ because it seems like bondage to them. Surely we won't be able to connect with them and get them to Jesus.
 4. *Lost friendships*: Perhaps the biggest giant of all is REJECTION. It looms over us. We so desire acceptance from those around us that we fear bringing up Jesus and His church. We are afraid our friends will abandon us. They will dislike us and reject us. We are certain we can't overcome this giant because we are grasshoppers in the face of it.
- C. We must not look at the giants. We must follow the advice of Caleb and Joshua, focusing on the God. **Ephesians 3:20-21** says God can do far more abundantly than we ask or think. The giants we see are nothing compared to Him. Further, we can do all things through Him (**Philippians 4:13**). We can win others to Jesus.
 - D. Will everyone we ever talk to accept Jesus? No. Will every one we ever talk to like this congregation? No. Will some of them reject us? Yes. But the fact is that there are some folks in churches that teach error who really love the Lord and want the truth because they know that is what will free them. We need to get this message to them. There are some folks who want more than social gospel, they want the real saving gospel. We need to get this message to them. There are some folks who are trapped in sin, trying to look good on the outside but desperately trying to find something to help them get out of the sin trap. We need to get this message to them. There are some folks who will reject us if we tell them about Jesus, but there are others who will be happy to learn the message of freedom in Jesus. We need to get this message to them. If you have trouble remembering this, simply think of **I Corinthians 6:9-11**. Things were not different in the New Testament times. People were trapped in error and sin, but they wanted freedom. Many of them accepted the message, but only when they got to hear it. Further, let's just think about who is here in this congregation right now. Has anyone here come out of a life of sin? Has anyone here come out of a church that taught error? Of course. There are others just like us waiting to hear the message of Jesus' truth that will set them free. We need to get the message to them.
 - E. Here is the great part. We don't actually have to save these people. God does. As **I Corinthians 3:5-7** demonstrates that it is God who gives growth. These are just opportunities for us to serve God. He does the heavy lifting.
 - F. Remember what happened when the second generation got to the Promised Land. They relied on God and God won the victory. The fact is we are grasshoppers in the face of these giants. But we are not alone. God is working within us and He is the victory. We will be victorious.

Conclusion:

This leaves us with a question. We've got great evangelistic opportunities all around us. We have opportunities to invite people to our CLS. We have opportunities to pray with people. We have opportunities to talk about spiritual things. We have opportunities to live faithfully against the grain of the world. Giants surround us, threatening us. But our God is a giant killer. I have no doubt, God is working in us and we will be victorious.