Numbers 13–14 – The Big Idea

Faith does not ignore the giants; it remembers that God is greater

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever noticed how two people can look at the exact same situation and see two completely different things

Two people can receive the same diagnosis, face the same financial pressure, walk through the same kind of hardship, or face the same cultural challenges

One person says: “There is no way.” Another says: “I don't know how, but I know God.”

Same circumstances, with a completely different perspective

That is exactly what happens in Numbers 13 and 14

Background: Israel has finally reached the edge of the Promised Land. Think about what God has already done for them: He brought them **out of Egypt**; He **broke Pharaoh's power**; He opened the **Red Sea**; He destroyed the **Egyptian army**; He led them with a **pillar of cloud by day and fire by night**; He gave them **water from a rock**; He fed them with **manna from heaven**

God has repeatedly demonstrated: “You can trust Me”

And now they arrive at the border of the land God promised them, and Moses sends twelve spies into the land

Twelve men walk through the same territory. They see the same cities, same walls, same fruit, same people, and then they see the same giants

But when they return, something remarkable happens. Ten spies say: “**We can't**” Two spies say: “**God can**”

The difference wasn't what they saw; the difference was how they interpreted what they saw

Ten spies interpreted God through the giants. Caleb interpreted the giants through **what he knew about God**

And then God says something extraordinary about Caleb in Numbers 14:24

But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. Numbers 14:24 NKJV

God says: There is something different about that man. Different circumstances? No. Different enemies? No. Different walls? No. Different giants? No.

Different spirit? Yes! "he has a different spirit in him"

And that raises an important question for Grace today

What kind of spirit **are we carrying into the circumstances of our lives**?

Because Caleb did not have different circumstances. **He had a different confidence. Confidence and not a spirit of Fear**

Because a fearful spirit magnifies the obstacles

The spies return after forty days. At first, their report sounds fantastic Numbers 13:27

Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit." Numbers 13:27 NKJV

God was right, the land is good, the promise is real, the fruit is abundant, then comes one dangerous word: Numbers 13:28

Nevertheless. Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. Numbers 13:28 NKJV

In other words: "Yes, God promised it... but..."

Have you ever lived on the other side of that word, but?

God is faithful...but...**Am I Faithful enough?** God provides... but...**Why would He help me?** God is **powerful**... but... God can **restore**... but... God can **save**... but... God can **lead me**... but...

Fear always has the word "but." Fear does not necessarily deny God. It simply makes the obstacle bigger than God in our thinking. Fear makes God just out of reach.

Notice something very important. The spies were not lying. There really were giants, there really were walls, there really were fortified cities

Biblical faith does not deny reality. Faith does not walk into the doctor's office and say: "There is no diagnosis." Faith does not look at a bank account and pretend the numbers aren't there

Faith does not pretend the marriage isn't struggling. Faith does not pretend the culture isn't changing. Faith does not pretend the problem isn't real.

Faith simply refuses to treat the problem as the biggest reality in the room

Caleb saw the same giants; listen to his response in Numbers 13:30

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.” Numbers 13:30 NKJV

I love that, Mike! Ten men are talking about giants. Caleb is talking about victory. Why?

Because Caleb knows something: The enemy's size doesn't determine the outcome when God has made a promise

But the other men respond Numbers 13:31: “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.” Numbers 13:31 NKJV

There's the problem. **They compared themselves to the enemy**, and they were right

The enemy was stronger than they were, **but they forgot something**

The battle was never going to depend on their strength alone

They left God out of the equation. And any equation where God is missing will always produce fear

Then they say Numbers 13:33: There we saw the giants... and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight. Numbers 13:33 NKJV

Listen carefully: “We were like grasshoppers in our own sight.”

Before the enemy defeated them militarily, fear defeated them internally, and that's what fear does. Fear makes giants bigger; fear makes you smaller

And eventually fear makes God seem distant

Possible practical application: Is there anything we’re magnifying right now? Our finances, health, future, marriage, children, loneliness, job, your past,

Grace, some of us spend so much time studying the giant that we forget to study God

As a people, we rehearse everything that could go wrong; we calculate every possible disaster; we imagine every worst-case scenario

And by the time we're finished, our giant is enormous, and our God is tiny. What are we doing today Grace? Are we up at night thinking about our giants or are we praying to our God?

Matthew 6:34

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble

A grumbling spirit infects the community

This story gets worse. The ten spies don't simply become afraid. They spread their fear

Numbers 13:32

And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out... Numbers 13:32 NKJV

By the beginning of chapter 14, the entire congregation is infected Numbers 14:1

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. Numbers 14:1 NKJV

Twelve spies entered the land; ten came back afraid

Never underestimate fear's contagious nature; fear spreads

Listen to what Israel begins saying: Numbers 14:2

And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron... Numbers 14:2 NKJV

And then Numbers 14:3: Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword...? Numbers 14:3 NKJV

Think about how distorted their thinking has become. God rescued them from slavery... and now they accuse Him of bringing them there to kill them

Fear has rewritten the narrative, and that's what prolonged fear will do

Fear is just as contagious today. If you watch any news station you'll hear **gas prices, inflation, unemployment, and wars**

But, a <u>different spirit</u> remembers God's faithfulness

Now Joshua and Caleb step forward, and they speak to the congregation Numbers 14:8

If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us... Numbers 14:8 NKJV

Notice what Caleb and Joshua do. They don't deny the danger; they remember the promise

They say in Numbers 14:9:

Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them. Numbers 14:9 NKJV

There it is: The LORD is with us. That changes everything!

Isaiah 41:10 states it perfectly

Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10 NKJV

Caleb's confidence wasn't: "I believe in myself." This isn't positive thinking. This isn't motivational psychology. This isn't: "You've got this!"

Caleb's confidence is: **"God is with us."**

There is a world of difference between **self-confidence** and **God-confidence**

Self-confidence says: "I am strong enough."

Faith says: "God is faithful enough."

Caleb remembered what the fearful spies forgot. He remembered Egypt, Pharaoh, the Passover, the Red Sea, manna, and water from the rock

He remembered God's promises, and every memory became evidence of God's work

If God was faithful then, He can be trusted now

One of the greatest weapons against fear is remembering what God has done

David did this before facing Goliath. When Saul tells him that he cannot fight the giant, David remembers 1 Samuel 17:34–35

Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock... I went out after it and struck it... 1 Samuel 17:34–35 NKJV

David says, in effect: God's past faithfulness gives him confidence for his present battle

That's what we need to do.

Grace: we do not walk by sight alone 2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV

Is there giant dominating your attention right now?

Maybe nobody else knows about it. You go to bed thinking about it. It follows you through the day

It sits quietly in the back of your mind, and maybe your giant has a name: Cancer, debt, grief, marriage, child, job, loneliness, addiction, regret, uncertainty, or fear

Maybe the giant is something you cannot fix. That's where this story speaks directly to us

The question is not: “Is the giant real?” The question is: “How are you interpreting the giant?”

Are you interpreting God through the problem?

Or are you interpreting the problem through what you know about God?

Fear says: “The giant is huge, therefore God must not be able.”

Faith says: “The giant is huge, but God is still God.”

Fear says: “I don't know how this can work.”

Faith says: “I don't either, but I know Who is with me.”

Fear asks: “What if everything goes wrong?”

Faith asks: “What has God already proven about Himself?”

Caleb didn't have different circumstances. He had a different confidence

And ultimately, our confidence doesn't rest merely in what God did for Israel

Our confidence rests in what God has done through Jesus Christ

At the cross, it looked as though evil had won.

Jesus was crucified, the disciples scattered, hope appeared dead, the tomb was sealed. And if you had looked only at Friday, you might have said: “It's over.”

But Friday wasn't the whole story. Sunday was coming

And because Jesus is alive, there is no giant we face that gets the final word

I think it's perfectly written in 2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV