

THERE WE SAW THE GIANTS

Numbers 13:26-33

This morning I continue in the same theme that I preached last week.

You'll remember last week I preached on Mountaintop Glory for Valley living and I said that most of us are Valley-dwellers and we need to learn how to get some of the mountain into our valleys.

Today I want to preach you a message entitled: **There We Saw The Giants.**

The movie Toy Story has to be one of favorite animated films.

It's a wonderful story about toys that come to life and have great adventures while no is watching.

The two characters are Woody a stuffed cowboy doll and Buzz Lightyear the latest and greatest action figure.

There is one problem though out the movie Buzz believes that he is a real hero and not a toy.

In the scene we are going to watch this morning, Woody confronts Buzz about the reality of who and what he is.

Here is clip from the movie Toy Story.

(Show Clip)

Thinking that toys come to life is just make believe but there is something about Buzz that I think we all can relate to; he got discouraged.

Even though talking toys are not real, discouragement took over the nation of Israel and the price they paid for it.

This morning I want to take you on a journey that I personally can relate to and I'm sure there are many of you in the Worship Dome this morning who can relate to what I am going to preach about in this series of overcoming Discouragement and having Overcoming Faith.

With toes curled tightly over the edge of the diving board and the clear blue water 12 feet below, which at the age of 10 I thought it looked like it a mile, it was so far down and my first time on the high dive.

I had my friends cheering below telling me I could do it, and for what seemed to be an eternity, I had a multitude of people watching and I was the center of attention.

Some were thinking I'm sure, "Will he do it? Will he jump?"

And I was faced with that great decision, that one step forward diving and there was no turning back.

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If I turned around and walked away it would mean failure and embarrassment and ridicule.

You know what I mean! I had to be able to do it!

The Israelite spies in our passage today saw giants, but Joshua and Caleb saw God!

There are people today in every church who will say, *“We can’t attack ... ; they are stronger than we are” v.31*

Yet, on the other hand, those who believed said, *“We should go and take possession . . . for we can certainly do it.”*

Giants represent great difficulties, and they stalk us everywhere we go.

They are in our families.
They are in our churches.
They are in our social lives
They are in our own hearts

The Word of God tells us that we must overcome them or they will devour us, just as they devoured ancient Israel, fearing those in Canaan, for it says in verse 32, *“The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.” (There we saw the giants NKJV)*

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Now, let me take you over to Numbers chapter 14 and verse 9 and see Joshua and Calebs response, *“Do not be afraid because we will swallow them up.”*

What does this teach us – it teaches us this – **We will be stronger by overcoming them than if there had been no giants to defeat.**

There are some people who always dwell in the Land of Unbelief and Discouragement.

Folks, that is a terrible place to live. I can’t imagine living there all the time.

How many come right up to the edge of salvation, get a glimpse of the joys others express, feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit in their hearts but pull back because of the Giant of the world that beckons to them?

Do you remember Felix in the Book of Acts after Felix had heard the Gospel of Salvation, he said to Paul, *“Almost you persuade me to be a Christian, but you can leave now; I’ll send for you later when I find it convenient to hear about this again.”*

How many come up to the edge of walking in total obedience to God, seeing the blessings of a consecrated life and the rewards of being a genuine disciple, desiring to be committed to that Lifestyle, but decide that the price is too costly and the time too demanding?

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You see – now understand this friends – it wasn't the Giants in the land that made them complain and grumble against God.

Neither was it the obstacles in our own Christian life that keeps us from a fulfilling walk with Jesus Christ, it is the

Giants in the heart –
the Giants of unbelief –
The Giants of Fear –
The Giants of complacency

that really keep us from enjoying God's peace and His indwelling fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Every Promised Land has its Giants
Every Blessing has its challenges

When the rich man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus said, ***“Keep God's commandments and sell all you have and come follow Me. And the rich man walked away sorrowfully.”***

Unless we have overcoming faith as believers, as disciples of Christ, we will be swallowed up – consumed by the Giants who block our paths.

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 4:13 from the Message:

13-15 We're not keeping this quiet, not on your life. Just like the psalmist who wrote, "I believed it, so I said it," we say what we believe. And what we believe is that the One who raised up

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the Master Jesus will just as certainly raise us up with you, alive. Every detail works to your advantage and to God's glory: more and more grace, more and more people, more and more praise!

I. The First Giant we face is the Giant of Unbelief

When we think about it, God simply said to go and explore the land, not determine if it was the right place.

God had selected 12 men to scout out the Promised Land because they were preparing to invade and take over the land that God promised to give to them.

God had already looked at the land and decided to give it to the Israelites.

So the Israelites had no reason to not believe God.

Now get this – understand this

- They had the promises of God that this would be their land.
- They had the promise this land would be bountiful.
- They had experience on their side as well.
- God had already delivered them from slavery in Egypt.
- God had fed them every day

- God had guided them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

What about us? What do we have to show the might of God?

We have the Scriptures that are full of His promises.

We have the testimonies of others and even our testimonies of how God has miraculously moved in our lives.

We have God's personal touch on our lives and how God has intervened in situations and circumstances we had no idea how we were going to get out of them, but God never failed us, He was there!

But the Question is – Where does unbelief enter?

Where does discouragement come from?

Here's what we have a tendency to think:

"It's those Giants again – we wouldn't have a problem trusting God if it weren't for those challenges and obstacles all around us!

Here's what I've learned in my life – especially in the past few weeks:

Friends, the Giants are there to test our trust and belief as well as to bring us to spiritual maturity.

You see – we only encounter Giants when we are serving God and Following God.

It was when Israel was going forward that the Giants appeared, for when they turned back into the wilderness, they found no Giants.

Spiritual Application:

Many believers believe that the power of God in a person's life should keep them from all trials and conflicts.

However, the power of God actually brings conflicts and struggles.

You would think that the Apostle Paul, during his great missionary journeys to Rome would have been kept by God's sovereignty from the power of violent storms and persecutions from his enemies.

Yet, just the opposite is true.

Paul faced one long, difficult struggle with the Jews who were persecuting him.

- He faced fierce winds
- He faced poisonous snakes
- He faced all the powers of the earth
- He faced the imps from hell

- He almost drowned

Does this sound like a God of infinite power? YES!

Paul told us that once he took the Lord Jesus Christ into his life a severe conflict immediately came against him.

In fact, the conflict never ended.

Why should we think it's going to be any different with us?

If were in the Battle and we're good soldiers of Christ, don't you think the enemy knows that and he's going to come against us in every way that he can.

And what should that do for us, but to drive us to our knees in prayer and drive us to trusting God for His deliverance and drive us to claiming His victory over the Giants of our lives.

The opinion of 10 spies was that their enemies were too powerful, too numerous and too overwhelming.

You've felt that way about your circumstances you have had to face.

- It was too powerful
- It came in like a flood

- It was overwhelming

These 10 men took their eyes off of God and put in on their circumstances.

Now Church family – we can do that – we can take our eyes off of God and see only the circumstances.

They revealed a true lack of faith and when faith begins to diminish, discouragement starts to set in.

William Ward said, **“Discouragement is dissatisfaction with the past, distaste for the present, and distrust of the future. It is ingratitude for the blessings of yesterday, indifference to the opportunities of today, and insecurity regarding strength for tomorrow. It is unawareness of the presence of beauty, unconcern for the needs of our fellowman, and unbelief in the promises of old. It is impatience with time, immaturity of thought, and impoliteness to God.**

The 10 spies were already discouraged because they saw a good and wonderful land but they also saw a fight they could not win.

Now folks, when God tells you “You can!” – You can!

The next Lesson God is teaching us here is our faith never grows in comfortable surroundings.

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As a matter of fact, if things are too easy it doesn't even take faith at all.

If it's difficult and gets done anyway, our faith grows and God gets the glory.

Have you ever noticed –

When God is going to do something wonderful, He begins with a difficulty.

When God is going to do something really astonishing, He begins with an impossibility.

We can go ahead and doubt God's promises in our lives

We can go ahead and doubt that God will ever grow our church and be blessed.

After all that's what the Israelites did and the result was 40 years of wandering in circles.

I don't know about you, but I don't want feel like wandering for the next 40 years.

Besides, I'm not so sure any of us have that long here on this earth before Jesus comes to rapture His church.

Friend, listen to me – Unbelief will always blind you to God's greatness and magnify your own weakness.

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II. The Second Giant we face is the Giant of Fear.

For the Israelites, the fear of giants and fortified cities outweighed the blessing of the fruit they saw.

Verse 32 reads "***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."***

You see – this is what I still am learning – so often we are guilty of measuring obstacles and challenges against our own strength and resources instead of focusing on God's power and resources.

How big is your God?

How powerful is your God?

You see – the Israelites saw themselves as grasshoppers in the eyes of the giants, where instead they should have seen the giants as grasshoppers in the eyes of God.

Story:

I remember hearing this story about a little shortlegged bulldog.

This little bulldog would walk down the alley where he lived where was two German shepherd dogs inside a fence.

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These two German shepherd dogs would growl and bark at this little whip stick of a dog.

The little bulldog took the challenge and went inside the fence and those two bigger dogs did a number on that little dog.

That bulldog went home whining and licking its wounds.

The next however, the little bull dog showed up at the fence and those two big dogs barked and growled at him.

Well, it's amazing, but that little bulldog went inside the fence and took another whipping but he got his licks in too, and left whining and licking its wounds.

The next day, that little bull dog came back to the fence and the big dogs barked and growled.

You know what happened, the little bulldog went back inside the fence and he took his whipping, but he got some more licks in on those big dogs.

Finally, one day he showed up to the fence, and those two big dogs took off whining and yelping to get away from that little dog.

Now folks, that is what you call facing the Giants.

He overcame his fear

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Paul wrote to Timothy and said, ***“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of love and of power and of self-discipline>”***

My friends, when fear keeps you and I away from God's leading remember that He is your refuge and strength and you and I ***“can do all thing in Him who gives us strength.”***

The pressure at times can be so persistent, but from the conflict you and I can always emerge victorious through the strength of Jesus Christ.

III. The Third Giant we face is the Giant of comfort and complacency.

A few giants show up and all of a sudden everything is just fine where we are.

- It's not so bad here.
- Just wandering around
- No nation
- No homeland
- No place to settle
- Just gettin' use to it

Have you ever noticed in your Christian walk what fear and unbelief don't do?

- Comfort and Complacency makes up for it!
- I would obey but ...
- I would get more involved with the church but ...
- I would give my tithe consistently but ...

■ I would do what you tell me do God, but

...

What I'm talking about here is being reckless and irresponsible.

But if you and I are following the leading of God's Holy Spirit, we can risk the criticism and judgment of others

We can risk the ridicule of others because God has blessed us for doing the right thing.

Complacency avoids things that cost

Complacency holds us in our comfort zones.

Story:

At ten years old, I didn't jump from that high dive the first time I tried.

That 12 foot Giant that lay in front of me scared me.

It took a little more of attempting it and finally I did.

Application:

10 out of the 12 spies that went out to explore the Promised Land forgot God's promises

They forgot His works in their lives.

They forgot His provisions

They forgot God's faithfulness.

All they could see was the Giants.

They took their eyes off of God and put their eyes on 10 spies who were negative and critical.

They took their eyes off the solution, off of what they knew to be true and dwelt on the problems.

Application:

Church Family in the next several weeks, this church could face situations that will tempt us to take our eyes off of God.

If we're not careful we can see the Giants and fear will strike us.

If we're not careful we will forget God's faithfulness

If we're not faithful we can loose sight of what God has in plans for His church.

We're standing on the edge of God's leading.

Sometimes all we can see is the Giants, the challenges, the criticism, the negatives.

And we can end up just like the Israelites wandering in the wilderness until Jesus comes.

40 years of testing

40 years of exploring

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40 years of aimless wandering

Because the Giants look so appalling

Summary:

Yes, you might be facing some Giants in your life.

I'm facing some Giants right now, but I don't want you to feel sorry for me.

You can pray for me – and I will pray for you.

But I'm developing spiritual muscles.

I'm developing spiritual compassion.

I needed some patience, so God has put me through some trails and testings.

I didn't want to face these issues, but God thought it was necessary to make me more like Him.

Pray for me, not to get out of these, but to go through them.

I'm going to pray the same way for you.

Listen –

God did not deliver Daniel from the lions den.

He delivered Daniel through it.

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God did not deliver the Three Hebrew Children from the fiery furnace – God delivered them through it.

David needed Goliath to become a leader in Israel.

The children of Israel needed the Giants.

The Three Hebrew children needed the fiery furnace.

Yes, we're going to struggle.

This is a sermon most of us are uncomfortable with but this is what God has been teaching me.

There is no victorious testimony without the test

There is no victory without the battle.

A victorious life is not a problem free life, it is a life in which we overcome our enemies by virtue of the struggle and the fight.

Finally let me say: **The Struggle doesn't last forever.**

“Weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning.”

The struggle means you and I are on our way somewhere where God is leading us.

The struggle prepares you and me for a glorious crown that He will give on that day to those who love Him and are faithful to Him.

The Apostle Paul said, “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

God left Giants in the Promised Land on purpose.

Why?

Because the people of Israel needed to learn how to fight.

Because the Giants distinguish the difference between professors and possessors.

You know it's one thing to confess the promises of God, it's another thing to strap on your sword and go toe to toe with your Giants and possess the promises of God.

Giants will expose the grasshoppers in the crowd. Then giants show up, those who are negative and critical will be the first to speak out their fears.

Believer friend, you will get to know yourself in the struggle (the real you comes out under pressure.)

God begins to show you areas where you need to trust Him more.

The struggle qualifies you for a rest. Jesus said, **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”**

The first generation of Israelites forfeited their inheritance because they would not fight.

How many of God's children have forfeited their destiny – their promises, just because they refused to stand up for what God promised them?

When the heat was on they bailed out, they backed down, they laid down their swords and conceded to the enemy.

What do we have to fight for?

What do we have to fight against?

What do you have to overcome?

Will you be one of the two or one of the ten?

Will you reap the blessings of God's promise land experience, or will you waste it by wandering in the wilderness?

The exploration is over and the reports are in – How will you cast your vote?

