

Series: Facing the Giants

A CALL FROM OUTSIDE THE COMFORT ZONE

NUMBERS 13:1-14:10

Text: Numbers 13:31-33

Numbers 13:31-33

³¹ *But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.* ³² *And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.* ³³ *And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*

Introduction:

Larry Walters always wanted to be a pilot but eyesight only allowed him to be a mechanic in the Air Force. After retirement, he got an idea one day. At the Army Surplus store he bought a tank of helium and forty-five weather balloons. He strapped the balloons to his lawn chair which he had staked to the ground. Larry expected to drift slowly up for a few minutes. When he

cut the rope holding him to the ground his chair shot up rapidly, finally leveling off at eleven thousand feet. Eventually a Coast Guard helicopter got a line to him and towed him to the ground and safety. When asked why he did it he said, “A man can’t just sit around all his life.”

Numbers 13 – 14 tells the story of a people called Israel. They had come to a comfortable place at Kadesh Barnea. God had given them everything they needed but now He was getting ready to call them out of their comfort zone.

1. THE CHALLENGE

A. God Initiated this Challenge (Numbers 13:1-16)

Numbers 13:1-16

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ² Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them. ³ And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel. ⁴ And these were their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. ⁵ Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. ⁶ Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. ⁷ Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of

Joseph. ⁸ Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun. ⁹ Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. ¹⁰ Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. ¹¹ Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi. ¹² Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. ¹³ Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. ¹⁴ Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. ¹⁵ Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. ¹⁶ These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.

The first verses of this chapter make it plain that it was God who was sending His people into this place. Not only that but it was God Who prepared what they would find when they got there. He had already created the blessings (a land that flowed with milk and honey) and the problems (giants in the land).

God was in total control of this situation.

B. God's People Investigated the Challenge (Numbers 13:17-25)

Numbers 13:17-25

¹⁷ And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: ¹⁸ And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; ¹⁹ And what the land

is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds; ²⁰ And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes. ²¹ So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. ²² And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) ²³ And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. ²⁴ The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. ²⁵ And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

They chose representatives to go in and spy out the land God was calling them to.

At Moses' direction they were to investigate three things:

- What kind of people were they facing? (v.18)
- What kind of land were they entering? (v.19a)

- What kind of strongholds did they face? (v.19b).

It is important to note that God's people were obedient at the beginning of this challenge.

There are several implications to see in this passage.

First: God is in control of the challenges He puts before us.

Numbers 13:2

² Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, **which I give unto the children of Israel**: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

This is stated in the present tense even though Israel had not yet even entered the Promised Land.

The principle here is simple and yet missed by so many Christians.

We are called to do much for God but He has already prepared the way for us to do all of those things.

All we are called to do is to walk in obedience so God can accomplish those things in us through His power.

Note:

Ephesians 2:4-10

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: ⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Not only is God in control but He also never glosses over the implications of following Him.

The Lord sent spies into the land first so they could see what they were getting into.

Christ never glossed over the challenges that face us if we chose to follow Him.

In Luke Nine, the Lord let His disciples know and we see now see what giants face us if we decide to follow Him:

- Some will reject our faith (Luke 9:1-6).

Luke 9:1-6

¹ Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. ² And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. ³ And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. ⁴ And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. ⁵ And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. ⁶ And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

- There will be work to do in sharing the gospel (vv.10-17).

Luke 9:10-17

¹⁰ And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. ¹¹ And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. ¹² And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. ¹³ But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no

more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. ¹⁴ For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. ¹⁵ And they did so, and made them all sit down. ¹⁶ Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. ¹⁷ And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

We will have to learn what God's agenda is to follow Him (vv.27-36).

Luke 9:27-36

²⁷ But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. ²⁸ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. ²⁹ And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. ³⁰ And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: ³¹ Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. ³³ And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three

tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. ³⁵ And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. ³⁶ And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

- We will have to die to self to follow Him (v.23, 46-48).

Luke 9:46-48

⁴⁶ Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. ⁴⁷ And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, ⁴⁸ And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

- We will have to leave our comfort zones to follow Him (vv.57-62).

Luke 9:57-62

⁵⁷ And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. ⁵⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but

the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.⁵⁹ And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.⁶⁰ Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.⁶¹ And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.⁶² And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

There are plenty of blessings in the Christian life when it comes to following Christ but there are also many challenges.

The marvelous truth is this; even the problems are blessings when we bring them to Christ.

As we trust Him with those who reject us, the weariness of the work, the struggle of putting aside our plans for His, the battle of dying to self, and the unknown factor of leaving our comfort zones, we find grace from God to face those things. That grace is a blessing.

Notice not only “The Challenge” but also:

2. THE COMPLICATION

A. The Report Came Back (Numbers 13:26-29)

Numbers 13:26-29

²⁶ And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. ²⁸ Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

Israel faced a great challenge as do we.

They faced the first part of that challenge but then the spies report came back (Numbers 13:26-29).

The people had to be anxious because the spies were gone for forty days (v.25).

They gave a glowing report and showed off the huge fruit they had brought back with them.

But then comes those dreadful words, nevertheless (v.28).

Numbers 13:28

²⁸ **Nevertheless** *the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.*

The spies explained the complications they saw in following God into the Promised Land.

- First, there were giants in the land.
- Secondly, those giants lived in fortified cities.
- Finally, those giants were everywhere (v.29).

Numbers 13:29

²⁹ *The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.*

We face all the same things whenever we follow God, especially outside of our comfort zone.

There are giants out there!

All believers face giants of unbelief, ignorance and apathy.

There are people in our lives who will not turn to God.

There are problems that are way bigger than we are.

Not only are there giants but those giants are deeply entrenched and fortified.

We face problems that just won't go away and everywhere we turn we run into more giants.

We must understand and, accept that we can't run away from the problems of life.

Note not only the report that came back but note also:

B. The Repsonse to the Report(Numbers 13:30-14:10)

Numbers 13:30-14:10

³⁰ And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. ³¹ But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. ³² And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the

inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. ³³ And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. ¹ And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. ² And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! ³ And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? ⁴ And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. ⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. ⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: ⁷ And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. ⁸ If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. ⁹ Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. ¹⁰ But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the

glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

This reminds us that the response to our giants is the real issue here (Numbers 13:30-14:10).

Most of the people responded in fear.

They protested that those giants were just too big for them to face (13:31-33).

Their attitude was, “We had rather be comfortable in failure than uncomfortable in victory” (14:1-3).

When all other excuses fell short, they just blamed their leaders (14:4).

Joshua and Caleb responded a far different way. They didn’t deny that there were indeed some pretty fierce giants to face if they obeyed God and crossed the Jordan River.

But they had their eyes on God rather than on their problems. They had to go in because it was God Who was sending them there. Surely God could be trusted to be faithful to His Word.

That is the vision we all need to face the challenges of life. It is our vision of God that determines our response to the challenge.

Remember:

Philippians 4:13

¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

"You will not need to fight in this battle.

2 Chronicles 20:17

¹⁷ *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.*

What is God calling you to that would take you out of your comfort zone?

- The comfort zone of life as it is – why rock the boat, life is pretty good.
- The comfort zone of relationships – if I follow Christ someone may reject me or not want me.
- The comfort zone of old attitudes – if I follow Christ I will have to let go of my bitterness, jealousy, etc...

Joshua and Caleb knew that the only safe place in life is where God is and God is not inside your comfort zone!