

**Into the Word:**

Have you ever waited a long time for a promise to come true? Why did you wait so long? What gave you the patience and belief that it would happen?

Read Numbers 13: 1-2 and 13:21- Numbers 14:9

Israel had gathered at the border of the Promised Land. God had freed them from Egypt by bringing plague after plague on the Egyptians. Each one designed to demonstrate just Who the Egyptians were dealing with and that the Israelites were the chosen people of the Almighty God.

As the Israelites had journeyed toward Canaan, God proved Himself again and again by performing the impossible—bringing water out of rocks, bread out of heaven and quail out of the sky. God protected and provided for His people every step of the way, and now here they were, at the very border of the land He had promised to give them.

Enter Caleb. He and 11 other men were selected to enter the Promised Land as spies, checking out the land and bringing back news of its inhabitants. All 12 men agreed that the land “truly flows with milk and honey” (Numbers 13:27), but they couldn’t agree on what to do about it.

They had found more than milk and honey in Canaan—they had found a land filled with strong people, fortified cities and, worst of all, “the descendants of Anak” (Numbers 13:28). Giants. Israel fell to pieces. Clearly—*clearly*—the God who had shattered the might of Egypt and miraculously sustained them through a barren wilderness had done so only to kill them all with giants.

Only two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, made a case for entering the land. After quieting the people, Caleb insisted, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it” (Numbers 13:30).

The other 10 spies only added to the doubt. “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we,” they said. “We were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight” (Numbers 13:31, 33).

When the people of Israel started talking about turning around and returning as slaves to Egypt, Caleb and Joshua pleaded with their fellow countrymen. “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).

Israel responded by crying out for Joshua and Caleb to be executed on the spot.

How did you become the person you are?

- From whom did you receive tools for living?
- Who were your teachers, mentors, and examples?

- Who shaped your values and how did that happen?
- Who encouraged you, and why?

What challenges are you facing right now that might seem impossible?

- How do they involve others?
- Who are the people that count on you in these matters, and what do they expect of you?
- Can you meet the demands placed upon you? Do you want to? Why or why not?

Impossible. The Israelites convinced themselves that taking possession of the land that God had promised them was impossible. As punishment for their faithlessness, Israel was sentenced to 40 years of wandering. The current generation would live and die in the wilderness, with Joshua and Caleb as the only exceptions.

Joshua would go on to lead the next generation into the Promised Land, while Caleb received a special promise from God: “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).

And so the Israelites wandered. Days turned into weeks; weeks, into months; months, into years; and years, into decades. One by one, the generation that refused the Promised Land died off, while the next generation came into its own. Under the leadership of Joshua, no one was able to stand before the armies of Israel. Bit by bit, God drove out the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, and the time soon came to divide up the land.

For Caleb, now 85, it was finally time to claim the promise God had made 45 years earlier. He told Joshua: “I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said” (Joshua 14:11-12).

After almost half a century of waiting, Caleb’s faith was still strong. When it came time to seize what God had promised him, Caleb didn’t hesitate for a second. There were still giants roaming on Caleb’s mountain, but that didn’t matter. He was a few years from being 90 years old now, but that didn’t matter, either. In Caleb’s mind, if God had promised it, that was enough.

Apply the Word

Not all giants are made of flesh and blood. They come in many other forms. Anything bigger than us, stronger than us, faster than us—anything more powerful than us, anything we don't have the skill to face on our own, anything with the potential to knock us down and beat us senseless—these are giants, too.

- What are some modern day “giants”?

Giants remind us of how small and helpless we are. On our own, we can't beat them. They outclass us in every conceivable way. The safer bet is to run, to hide, to surrender before the battle even starts. Why bother trying? It's easier to give up and give in before we get hurt, because winning is impossible. That's the approach the Israelites took thousands of years ago, and it's still the easiest route to take today.

The problem is, when we surrender to a giant—especially one of the modern-day variety—we give up more than just a fight. We give up control over our own lives, handing the reins over to Satan himself. When we decide beforehand that we can't win these battles, we forfeit any hope of growth, of overcoming and of breaking free. Choosing not to fight means embracing hopelessness and accepting defeat as a lifestyle. Israel's 12 spies all walked the same land, all saw the same giants, but only two of them saw a battle they could win. Why?

The key difference isn't what these men saw; it's *how they saw it*. The spies looked at the giants and saw wicked men standing in the way of God's plan. Most of the spies saw the giants and knew there was no way they could win. Caleb and Joshua looked at the giants and knew there was no way God *couldn't* win.

The giants in your life are standing in the way of God's plan for you, and how you look at them is going to change how you deal with them. They're bigger than you, yes. They're stronger than you, absolutely. They could grind you under their feet like dust and not think twice.

Where do you sense God leading you?

- How do you know that this is more than wishful thinking?
- Who helps you discern God's leading?

Caleb and Joshua knew the answer. They could both look back at the miracles God had performed in their lives—in the lives of all of Israel—and know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that God was able to give them every victory, no matter how improbable, unlikely or, yes, even impossible.

That's why Caleb could tell his brethren to go up and seize the land, “for we are well able to overcome it.” That's why he could wander for 40 years, trusting God to make good on His promise. That's why, at 85 years old, he was ready and willing to work with God and toss some giants out of his mountain.

You're going to face giants. You're going to have to take a stand against enemies far too powerful for you to handle on your own, but *you're not alone*. That's what Caleb understood and Israel failed to grasp.

In your toughest battles, in the middle of fights where you find yourself out of your depth and over your head, you can be “confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you *will complete it*” (Philippians 1:6).

How do you feel about stepping out on this journey of completion?

- What fears do you face?
- How confident do you feel about your purposes or the outcomes you hope for?
- What is God's great plan and how are you fitting into it?
- How does your community of faith confirm this for you?

Prayer Time

Heavenly Father, thank You for the battles that you have helped me win. Thank You for the giants that have been in my way that You have driven before me. Please forgive me for the times that I have doubted who You are. Give me faith to see my giants in comparison to Your Greatness. Help me to remember that "nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)