

UNSTUCK

Grasshopper Eyes

Numbers 13:25 to 14:9

BIG IDEA

The giants never kept Israel out of the land. Their own reflection did.

Key Text: Numbers 13:25 to 14:9

Supporting Texts: Deuteronomy 2:3 • Hebrews 3:19 • Joshua 14:6 to 13

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: HOLDING PATTERN

A holding pattern is what happens when a plane is close to its destination but cannot land yet. It circles above the very runway it is meant to land on, still burning fuel, still flying, still moving, but never arriving. From the ground it does not look stuck. It looks like it is still flying. That is what makes it dangerous. Some of us are not far from God, not backslidden, not lost. We are close. We can see the runway. We are just circling it.

The Israelites stood at the edge of the land God promised, close enough to carry back its fruit, and then circled that land for forty years. Not because God moved the promise, but because they never got clearance to land in their own hearts.

THE TEXT: ONE LAND, TWO REPORTS

Numbers 13:26 to 33

They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole community and showed them the fruit of the land. But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified. Caleb said, we should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it. But the men who had gone up with him said, we cannot attack those people, they are stronger than we are. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.

Twelve men saw the same land, ate the same fruit, stood under the same sky. Ten of them talked God's people out of their own promise. This is not a story about a bad land. It is a story about a bad report, and a report defines what a person is willing to attempt.

We seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers is not a report on the giants. It is a report on their own self image, dressed up as information. Notice what is absent: God. Ten men who watched the Red Sea split walked into the promised land and gave a report with no God in it.

Two reports. Two futures. Same facts.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A GRASSHOPPER REPORT

1. They measure themselves against the obstacle instead of measuring the obstacle against God.

The giants become the fixed variable and God becomes invisible.

2. They mistake a feeling for a fact.

We seemed to ourselves is an internal sensation reported as external data.

3. They project their self image onto other people.

So we seemed to them. They never asked the giants what they thought. They assumed their insecurity was visible to everyone.

4. They need company to feel validated.

Ten spies talked each other into the same conclusion, and by chapter fourteen the whole camp agrees. Doubt spreads through consensus, not conviction.

5. They rewrite history to justify retreat.

Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt. Slavery gets recast as safety.

6. They present caution as the responsible position.

They frame themselves as the realists and Caleb as reckless.

7. They treat God's past track record as irrelevant to the present decision.

Red Sea, manna, water from the rock, none of it makes the report.

8. They confuse the size of the giant with the size of the assignment.

Caleb and Joshua saw the same Nephilim and called them bread for us. The giant does not get to define the mission.

I. FEAR SAYS DON'T START. DISCOURAGEMENT SAYS DON'T FINISH.

Fear shows up first in chapter fourteen and says don't even attempt this. Discouragement shows up later and says you have come far enough, quit here. Fear says don't start. Discouragement says don't finish. Most of us give in to one or the other at some point in every promise God has given us.

Hebrews 3:19 says they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Not because of Canaanites. Because of unbelief. You can be one report away from the very thing you have been praying for and still miss it, not because God changed His mind, but because you believed the wrong witnesses.

II. DOUBT DISGUISES ITSELF AS MATURITY

The ten spies did not think they were faithless. They thought they were responsible. Let's be realistic. Let's manage expectations. That is how doubt survives in church culture. It rarely announces itself. It shows up wearing the clothes of wisdom and caution.

Caleb and Joshua were not ignoring the giants. Both reports had the same facts. The difference was which fact they let define the size of God. Faith is not the absence of giants in the report. It is the presence of God in the report.

Is there an area of your life where you have called something wisdom that is actually just doubt you have never had the courage to name.

III. DOUBT DISGUISES ITSELF AS WISDOM

Christians expect a negative outcome. Some of us do not doubt God out loud. We just quietly stop expecting Him to come through, and we call it being even keeled. We started treating a negative outcome as the mature, spiritual default and treating hope as naive. That is grasshopper theology. It sounds humble. It is actually a low view of God dressed as a high view of realism.

IV. SOMETIMES STUCK DOES NOT LOOK LIKE STUCK

The wilderness generation had manna every morning, water from the rock, clothes that did not wear out. Sustained is not the same as sent. The enemy does not need you to feel dead. He just needs you comfortable enough to stop asking whether you have actually entered anything.

Stuck disguised as busy.

Activity gets mistaken for advancement. You have been traveling around this mountain long enough. Deuteronomy 2:3.

Stuck disguised as contentment.

There is godly contentment and there is a counterfeit, the kind where you stopped hoping and called it peace.

Stuck disguised as caution.

A very reasonable sounding explanation for why you have not moved.

Stuck disguised as survival.

Israel survived Egypt. Surviving Egypt was never the promise. The land was.

Stuck disguised as routine faithfulness.

You can be faithful in the wilderness and still be in the wilderness. Faithfulness proves your heart. It does not prove you are in the land.

Stuck disguised as waiting on God, when you are really waiting on yourself.

I'm waiting for God's timing is sometimes true and sometimes a spiritual sounding cover for I'm waiting until I feel less afraid.

THE REAL BATTLEFIELD

The land did not change between the majority report and the minority report. The self image did. That is identity language, not intelligence language. The life God has for you may be hidden inside a fear you have never been willing to address. Not a fear you have conquered. A fear you have never even looked at directly.

KEY LINE

We seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers. The question was never how big are the giants. The question was always how are you seeing yourself in front of them.

CLOSE

Every one of us is walking through some version of Canaan right now, a marriage, an assignment, a calling, a next step. Every one of us is one report away from staying stuck in the wilderness or going up and possessing what has already been promised. What report have you been giving about your own life. Is it time to trade it in for Caleb's one sentence. We are well able.

SCREEN TEXT

Numbers 13:30 to 31. Then Caleb quieted the people and said, let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it. Then the men who had gone up with him said, we are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.

Numbers 13:33. And there we saw the Nephilim. We seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.

Numbers 14:9. Only do not rebel against the Lord. They are bread for us. The Lord is with us. Do not fear them.