

THE GRASSHOPPER COMPLEX

What Do You See?

Numbers 13 & 14

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Last month, on October 2nd, 2023, I discussed on the sermon “Abundant Living”, living life to the fullest. We talked about the man by the Pool of Bethesda and the challenges the man had and how it relates us today. Today’s sermon will be like a follow-up on that sermon. The idea is to spur us to look beyond our circumstances and approach each challenge with faith on the Almighty and not focusing on how big our problems are and how small our backgrounds are.

Many complexes concern us today as humans: inferiority complexes, superiority complexes, etc. But none can be so devastating to the Christian as *the grasshopper complex*. It can devastate the Christian life. It can keep a church from growing. In this day, some are happy just to “be faithful,” to protect and hold on to what we have. But I believe God wants us to *grow*—not just grow for growth’s sake, but to reach out to all the people about us with the gospel (**Acts 1:6-8**). God wants us to “possess the land.” And what will keep us from achieving this growth? *The grasshopper complexes!*

THE GRASSHOPPER COMPLEX: WHAT IS IT?

The Grasshopper Complex is the syndrome that occurs when we see ourselves as being unable to move forward in our purpose and destiny because of our wrong identity, past experiences, and present circumstances. Low self-esteem, trauma, fear, unbelief, and failure to trust God are all contributing factors.

The Bible story is found in **Numbers 13, 14** and **Deuteronomy 1**.

The Sad Reality: The People Hesitate

The Israelites had come out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. They had camped on the peninsula of Sinai where they had received the Law—and had prepared for entering the Promised Land. At last, all were ready, and they had made the long hard trip north to Kadesh Barnea. They were now on the southern border of the land of Canaan, at the edge of the Promised Land, on the threshold of victory. Everything that has happened has been leading up to this moment. Now God’s leader says: *You have come to the hill country of the Amorites which the Lord our God is about to give us. See, the Lord your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed (Deuteronomy 1:20, 21).* But on the verge of

victory the people hesitated. They suggest that a committee be appointed to investigate the matter (**Deuteronomy 1:22**). Someone said, (*If you want to kill something, appoint a committee.*) Twelve men are selected—one from each tribe. They are told to go throughout the land, checking on whether the land is worth fighting for and how hard it will be to take the land. Now God has already told them these things: He has said that the land is good (**Exodus 3:8; 33:3**), and that with His help they will be able to drive out the inhabitants and possess the land (**Exodus 32:34; 33:2, 14; 23:20ff.**). But the people say in effect, “*We want to check it out for ourselves.*” So, God agrees (**Numbers 13:1ff.**). If we do not want to do God’s will, God does not force us to.

The Sad Report: We Cannot Take the Land

The committee heads out. They start at Hebron where many of their illustrious ancestors were buried: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. They did a thorough job. Over forty days, they travelled 250 miles north and then 250 miles back. On the way back they picked up an object lesson at Eshcol: A cluster of grapes that they had to carry on a pole—probably weighing ten or twenty pounds or more. Finally, they returned. They gathered the people together. They are ready to give their report.

There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses this account, “*We went into the land to which you sent us, & it does flow with milk & honey! Here is its fruit.*” Doesn’t that sound great? The first part of their report was unanimous and very positive. “*We looked at the land & it is exactly as God said it would be. It is a land flowing with milk & honey.*” And they brought back a huge cluster of grapes & pomegranates & figs as evidence of its fertility. They present their object lesson and say, in effect, “*Yes, the land is fruitful*” (**Numbers 13:26b, 27**). **Now, the committee shifted to ten and two aside.** Then comes the fateful word **nevertheless**: *Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan* (**Numbers 13:28, 29**). And it is all true—as far as it goes. Is it not amazing what a difference it makes in *how* you present the truth—and what you select to tell and not to tell? Then Caleb comes in with a minority report “signed” by two members of the committee—Joshua and himself (**Numbers 13:30**). In effect he says, “*OK, so what? We can still do it.*”

Now the ten got excited—and all of a sudden, the difficulties grew to overwhelming proportions! They had said the land was full of good things to eat (**Numbers 13:27**); now they say that it is a land that will eat *us* up (**Numbers 13:32**). They had said that among the inhabitants were “*the children of Anak*” (**Number 13:28**); now *all* the people are either “*men of a great stature*” or else they are actually *giants* (**Numbers 13:32b,33**). So: “*We became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight*” (**Numbers 13:33b**).

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Vs. 31 tells us that these fearful spies spread out among the people & began telling them, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And each time they told it, the story got worse and worse. . 32 they say, "All the people we saw there are of great size." And in vs. 33 they say, "We saw the Nephilim there!" Now that name may not mean much to you, but the King James Version translates that word as "**giants**." These 10 spies are saying, "We don't stand a chance because there are giants in the land! Everywhere you go there are giants!"

I think or believe these 10 spies told us more about themselves than they ever meant to when they said, "We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them." Talk about the *grasshopper complex*! What did they see? **They saw themselves as grasshoppers. They saw the enemy as giants. And they did not see God at all.**

Look at there at the society we live in. we are all looking for easy fixed lives. We do not want to work hard anymore. Young ones today want to make it but without hard work. So, believe there are giants everywhere. We believe, "*if you nor know somebody you nor go fit make am for this country*". So what becomes the result, the easy road without giants, yahoo yahoo, ritualism, stealing, runs girls, sugar mummy and the like. To us, there is no God anywhere, all around us are giants and we are just like grasshoppers before our very own eyes.

We are a people living as if there is no God. Those are some of the giants we face. But as we look into the future, I think that sometimes we become so overwhelmed by these giants that we are like these 10 men, and we think that there is no way we can take the land. People, if there has ever been a time when our world needs Christians who care about hurting people, Christians who will reach out to a lost and confused world, Christians who will preach the simple Bible message without compromise, today is that day. We must not retreat. We must not be intimidated. And do not ever forget, our God specializes in slaying giants. *David slew Goliath. And Gideon, with 300 God-picked men, took care of all the armies of the Midianites.*

And Jesus carried a cross up a hill and allowed cruel men to nail Him to that cross. And in what seemed like defeat, He won the victory over all the forces of evil and hell. So, what do you see when you look into the future? Do you see giants, or do you see God?

THE GRASSHOPPER COMPLEX: HOW CAN WE BEAT IT?

After forty years, a new generation at last entered the land under the leadership of Joshua: How did they beat *the grasshopper complex*? I believe the secret is in the attitude expressed by Caleb and Joshua in Numbers 13 and 14. After the first majority report, Caleb said, "*We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it*" (**Numbers 13:30**). In effect he says, "**Don't**

minimize what we are capable of. “Let us. . .”

He stresses togetherness. “Go up *at once*. . .” He urged urgency. “And possess it. . .” He did say conquer it. God had already given it to them. “***For we are well able to overcome it.***” He said, “***We can do it!***” But the real secret is found in Joshua’s and Caleb’s impassioned appeal in ***Numbers 14:6-9***: *And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”* They cry, “*Don’t minimize what God can do!*” They say, “The land is everything God said it was and more. There’s no need to fear the people of the land. Instead of the land eating us up, the people will be bread for us.” The *Lord* makes the difference. They were saying, “We may be nothing, but even a string of zeros takes on a great significance when a One is put at the front of them! Maybe some of the inhabitants are giants, but in God’s sight, *they* are mere grasshoppers!” (***Isaiah 40:22***).

Why did Joshua and Caleb have such confidence in the Lord? They had assurance because of *God’s promises* to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to them. They had confidence because of *God’s performance*. Cases in point would be crossing the Red Sea, the miraculous pillar, the manna from heaven, and water from the rock. They had confidence because of *God’s presence*. God was still with them and He was still God! Are not these three realizations also the key to our success? What a great challenge is before us! Yet we hesitate because of *the grasshopper complex*. How can we beat it?

First, let us not minimize what we are capable of. Flavil Yeakley’s closing words in his book, *Why Churches Grow*, are;

*“We have the manpower. We have the communication power. What is most important: We have the gospel power. **All we lack is will power.**”*

But above all, don’t minimize what God can do with us. Faith in God is what the story in Numbers 13 and 14 is all about: Faith in God’s plan for His people—which rested on faith in God Himself! ***Note Numbers 14:11***: “*And the Lord said to Moses, how long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?*”

Throughout the Bible, this incident is used as the prime example of unbelief (***Numbers 32; Deuteronomy 1:20-40; Psalms 95:10; 106:24ff.; Amos 2:10; 5:25; 1 Corinthians 10; Hebrews 3:7- 4:13***).

We are warned: “*Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil,*

unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end” (Hebrews 3:12, 14). How we limit ourselves by our lack of faith! You cannot grow a redwood in a soup can. . . you cannot float an ocean liner in a mudpuddle . . . you cannot light up a football stadium with a match . . . and we cannot do what God wants us to do without faith in Him!

- ❖ Our God has said: If you go and teach, I’ll be with you! (**Matthew 28:18-20**).
- ❖ My word will not return to Me void! (**Jeremiah 55:11**).
- ❖ If you plant and water, I will give the increase (**1 Corinthians 3:6**).
- ❖ Through Me, you can do all things (Philippians 4:13).
- ❖ You will have the *victory* through My Son! (**1 Corinthians 15:57**).
- ❖ Your labor will not be in vain (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

We have every reason to believe God: We have His *promises* to us, His *performance* in our lives, and His continued *presence*.

CONCLUSION

What a great and wonderful challenge God has given us! We can be like the ten spies—or we can be Calebs and Joshuas. We can overcome *the grasshopper complex*!