

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU MET THREE GIANTS

Joshua 15:14

If I posed this question to you, there would come to your mind -- first, I would retreat. Or either I would have to advance. Now if you met three giants, and they confronted you - what would you do. There are three giants that confront every Christian. The world, the flesh, and the Devil.

What do you do when you are confronted by these three giants. Do you retreat?
Or do you advance?

Caleb met three giants called by the names of Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Takmai. These were the children of Anak. He met them on more than one occasion. They lived in the fortified city called Hebron. The adventures of Caleb and the giants, are rich in teaching for all Christians. For Caleb was a mature believer and I say, man of God.

He was the son of Jephunneh, that distinguished him in Numbers 13:16 - V. 30.

He was the man who was desirous of a mountain. He was an Israelite indeed. He was one of the 12 spies sent out by Moses. He was courageous. And preserved where the other spies became discouraged, but he persevered. He was invincible in driving out giants. Completely devoted to God and vigorous in his old age.

Six times the Bible records of Caleb - he hath followed (fully followed) the Lord.¹¹ His consecration was thorough. What magnificent adverbs were used to

describe Caleb. He followed faithfully, wholly, fully. He never lowered his standards but his perpetual whole-heartedness. His courage was unfaltering. And giants did not disturb Caleb or those that were ready to stone him.

His request was answered. In fact, the crowning reward of his life, was his faith and faithfulness. Through the autumn winds of snow, he brought forth fruit even to his old age. It is recorded that Caleb's personal inheritance in the land of Canaan as we follow him, at 80 years of age, he was asking of Joshua - now therefore give me this mountain. Caleb was a man of altitudes - he was not content with the average or common place. He never thought in terms of fenced or walled cities. It was the high mountain that he wanted. And the mountain was filled with hostile giants, the sons of Anak. He refused to be defeated. He claimed this inheritance. And of course, this became his prize.

The first time we meet Caleb is at the close of the march from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea. And belonged to the tribe of Judah - David's tribe - Christ's tribe. And as a representative of that tribe, he went in to investigate Canaan and to see what they had and how they might conquer it. He worked on this committee of 12 for (40 days) investigating and bringing back samples. And checking on the walled cities and the natives, and they found giants there.

Now the commission or the committee was divided however as to the ability to conquer Canaan. The report of the 10 drew a very dark picture. They said, they are militarily prepared, for any invading army.

Now of course Caleb and Joshua brought a minority report. And they urged that they adopt it. God wanted to give Canaan to Israel. And he would help them to possess it. And they said, in these glorious words, "we are able." And of course, Caleb was about 38 years ahead of his people at that time in his thinking. And he dared to stand up because he knew what was absolutely right.

Well, Joshua and Caleb were the only adults in the company to enter Canaan. Sometimes people are very foolish. And do not pay attention to the stand of righteousness. We need more men and women in our churches who specialize in doing what God wants done. Instead of what people want done. And Caleb was a great joy to Joshua and to God because the Bible says, he wholly followed the Lord.

Courage is certainly an outstanding thing in his career. He was loyal and put the best interest of God's people in the forefront. And I think at his some 80 years that had passed, many people think that the curtain is about to fall on his life. But he has a wonderful experience. In a novel they say - youth is a blunder. Manhood is a struggle. And old age is a regret. Now such an observation by a brilliant man is far from correct. But rather - it ought to read - youth is an opportunity. Manhood is an achievement. And old age is a holy memory. Why not? We covet tonight for people who reach old age that they may be a product of Caleb's life. We are customary to think that youth will adventure, be reckless, and brave. And old age will be easy - off from responsibilities, to enjoy leisure. But this was not so with Caleb.

At 85 he uttered one of the most heart-stirring speeches in the whole Bible. And there is no man that matched his faith and his valour. It is impossible to rise to a great opportunity in old age unless the necessary qualities have been cherished through the preceding years.

Now just because a man gets to be old is no sign that he is going to have the results that Caleb had in his life.

(As a man of 40), he had shown a great character of true godliness when chosen as a representative of his tribe, from Judah. To spy out the land which God had promised the Israelites. Like his 11 companions, he confirmed that it was indeed a goodly land. But 10 of them were afraid of the giants that dwelt there. And they

said we can never hope to subdue them. Only Caleb and Joshua had faith to declare that God would give them the victory. He was an even more noticeable testimony than that of Joshua - for it was not surprising that the companion and trusted one of Moses who had been privileged to share so many outstanding experiences with the great leader of the nation, should be confident that God would fulfill his word and give them the Promise Land.

It was Caleb that spoke the word to the whole assembled people - ("Let us go up at once and possess it. For we are well able to overcome it.") Numbers 13:30.

But the people heeded the other ten spies. And Caleb was kept back from the inheritance. Not through a lack of his faith, but their faith. He was ready to go, but he had to wait another 45 years before he got in.

I might insert one little lesson here - people have a tendency to over look that the spiritual state of the church many times has its effect on each member thereof. The church being a body of believers. And when one individual can exercise great influence over many, we are bound together in the bundle of life. Spiritually as God's people. Now while the faith of Caleb should have inspired the whole church - the whole group - and we know that from experiences. That one or two can pull the church back to low-ebb-tide in the spiritual realm. And influence the whole work of the entire church. Now if every individual enjoyed the experience, and personal renewal and revival, then how different would be the work of the church.

Now Caleb saw all of these fellow spies and people perish in the wilderness. At length the younger generation entered Jordan and crossed over into the land. Yet Caleb still had to wait for his inheritance about 7 more years. Until they had conquered the Canaanites.

And of course the hour struck and Caleb declared that God had promised him a

possession. Joshua 14:13. He came forth to claim it. Not actually until he came forward, and petitioned to receive it. And that is according to the Scripture. There are given unto people of God, great and precious promises. But these are not fulfilled automatically. Faith is a condition upon which all the promises depend. That is, we must reach out and claim these for our possessions. Phil. 3:12.

The moment of opportunity which he had waited for found Caleb with his faith undented and his courage unquenched. He did not say I've waited so long that the inheritance is scarcely worth having. He didn't say I am an old man and all I need is a quiet spot to spend a peaceful retirement. He instead rebuked those who look toward the end of life's journey in an attitude of doing nothing. Now behold, he said, the Lord hath kept me alive these 40 and 5 years. I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me. Now, therefore, give me this mountain. Wherefore the Lord spake and in that day. Joshua 14:10-12. What thrilling words - what a challenge to faith. He was willing to scale the heights, to fight with the giants, despite his 85 years. Nothing less than God's best for him would do.

Few of us are able to say that physical strength remains ineffective by the passing of the years. But spiritually, we should be able to say with Caleb keep the faith and God will sustain you with strength. Give me the mountain. Let me ascend and drive out the sons of Anak in this fortified city. Joshua 15:13-14.

For we are well able. So he went forth as a man of faith. For we are well able. Not relying on his own abilities. If so, be the Lord will be with me he declared. Then I shall be able to drive them out. Joshua 14:12.

Numbers 14:24 - The Scripture says that he was a man who followed me fully.

God said that Caleb followed him - and that meant that Caleb lived in faith. God had planned to bring his redeemed people out of Egypt and to Canaan. And 12 outstanding leaders had been chosen and they were sent out to spy. And Caleb assisted in exploring behind the lines, and he found out that the land was glorious indeed.

Keep in mind

Deut. 8:7 - They found the land of freshness as God had promised. ("For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land. And land of brooks of water. Of fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills.")

V. 8 - It proved to be a land of fruitfulness. A land of wheat, and of barley, vines, and fig trees. And a land of olive oil and honey.

V. 8 - And a land of fullness, and land wherein thou shall eat bread without scarceness. Thou shalt not lack anything in it. A land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.)

This is a delightful picture - characterized with the freshness and the fruitfulness, and the fullness. How marvelous like the brooks, the wells, and the fountains, and the springs. The abundance of fruit is in evidence that the spies were satisfied.

They found giant sized bunches of grapes in the valley of Eschol. But unfortunately they found a giant size bunch of giants. Now the giants spoiled their enjoyment of the grapes. You see, it was impossible to settle down and to

live in a land where they were going to be disturbed by a bad tempered old giant every few minutes. You cannot eat the grapes until you have slain the giants. Now this is the principle that is important - for no Christian can enjoy the fullness of Christ, while the giants are running wild in his life. There is no mature Christianity in your life, as long as the world - the flesh, and the Devil are free.

Ahiman, Seshai and Tamai were all sons of the father, Anak. Now they all had come from a common source and they appeared to be unlimited and united in a common activity.

Now this is a clear illustration of the three giants of evil trinity that confront everyone tonight. The world, the flesh, the Devil.

The flesh which is opposed to the operation of the indwelling Christ = and it is the flesh that works in an effort to retard and hinder the production of Christ's own fullness in the believers life.

Every Christian has an ample opportunity to explore the land of freshness, fruitfulness, and fullness which God offers in the Christian experience. It is impossible for a Christian to read the word of God, the Bible - and fail to see that here is the way to live a radiant life.

But the great fact that many who explore the land - never enter it. Why is this?

I believe, it is like those having spied out the land - make a report - like 10 of Caleb's friends. And they told him, why we found the land flowing with milk and honey. And with fruit in abundance. Nevertheless there are the walled cities,

and there are the giants. Numbers 13:27-28. The half-hearted spies made no attempt to deny the qualities of the land. But they looked at the giants and immediately they decided to abandon the whole project of living in the land. There they saw the giants. Numbers 13:33. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight.

Think of these three giants that convince these 10 spies of two things. One, they thought their giants think we are grasshoppers. And two, they thought when we looked at these giants, we are inclined to agree.

Now the result is that these men of God felt like grasshoppers. And they said to themselves, let's get out of here. Let's get out of Canaan. And let's leave these three giants to control the God chosen life.

Now this is the experience of many people tonight. You have tasted of a possibility. You have seen the potential. And you know about the promises of God concerning the fullness of Christ. But here are the giants - the flesh. And like grasshoppers ye have said, come on, let's get out of here. Now this kind of Christianity is unrealistic, unattainable. You might even say unnecessary. We will settle for another kind not quite so ambitious. We will let the grasshoppers have the land. And we will manage without the freshness, the fruitfulness, and the fullness.

Numbers 14:24 - Thank God for Caleb - "He had another spirit with him." Now the 10 were dissolutioned - defeated. And he said let us go up at once and possess it. For we are able to overcome it. Numbers 13:30. Now they probably tried to stone Caleb and Joshua for believing God. And Caleb had a feeling that they could. V. 30 - Chapter 14 Numbers. That the land could be conquered.

Caleb recognized the giants. He saw the giants and he carefully studied them. And he knew that he must learn all he could about his enemies. He carefully noted the giants armour and stature.

Anak, means long necked. In all probably Anak's three giant sons had long necks like their father. Long giants have long necks. I can imagine Caleb carefully noting this - being a most vulnerable part of the giant's body. The longer the neck - the better the opportunity to cut the head off. Anak's long necked sons were recognized by Caleb as powerful.

Caleb describes them as (bread for us) Numbers 14:9. Perhaps we would say, today, he regarded these mighty giants as a piece of cake. Now that is refreshing to note the difference in attitude of the ten spies and the two spies. The 10 pessimistic and the 2 optimistic. Someone says a pessimist sees a difficulty in every opportunity. And an optimist sees an opportunity in every difficulty.

Now each person tonight must recognize the giants that are stalking in our midst. A chaplain was visiting a hospital ward in Vietnam and spoke to a soldier about to be discharged and he said - what are your plans now? The boy had no plans. Surely you had some plans before you entered the service. Aren't you going to pick them up. Yes, I had some plans before I went in. But not now. Well, what happened. You could pick up those and go on. And the boy replied, I had planned to be a (concert pianist) but the door is closed to me now and he drew from the covers a stubby, handless arm.

Now this is a tragic story of shattered dreams. He had planned to be a pianist. But because of this injury, life had become almost impossible it seems. And all about us, we are confronted with giants that seem to disturb us. How are we going to conquer these. How are we going to get the best of the flesh - which every human

being that has been born into this world in the physical life has the principle of sin in his body, his flesh. All have sinned because all are sinners.

And of course, Gal. 5:17 - For the desire of the flesh are opposed to the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit is opposed to the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. You are not free but prevented from doing what you desire to do. So these giants are deep rooted in the human heart. And we cannot settle this and conquer these giants with just having religion as a favorite hobby. No, that will not do. You remember Job had his problems. There were those who talked to him about self-importance, self-opinions, self-praise, and self-righteousness. And those giants of the flesh - the world, and the Devil, must be met. Now I think that in the life of Caleb, when he met those three giants there were two or three things that he used to conquer with.

1 — First, he had a great character. Now if you are going to conquer giants, the kind of character you have - the principles by which you live, morally and spiritually, - now you can be anything you want to be. Now this is not true. Physically you may be six or seven feet. You may be a giant and you may be able to play basketball. Now if you are five feet - you will be five feet all of your life. You can't grow to be a giant in size, just because you want too. But I want to say to you tonight, that you can be as large a giant morally and spiritually as you want to be. This was the thing about Caleb.

Now I ask you, Isn't that the greatest need of this hour today. To have men and women of giant characters in the level of life. We have been disillusioned with our nation - the immorality. The lack of integrity, at all levels of life. Whether in business or otherwise. If we don't somehow get back to the foundation stone of our heritage, we need not to worry about the economic collapse. I don't think we

should worry at all about the economic collapse that is going on today and is about to destroy us. We need to worry about the foreign invaders - about Russia. Or some idea taking over.

We will decay and rot for within unless there is a revival of morality and spiritual principle and character as was found in Caleb.

Did you know that today there are nations - some nations around this world discussing whether or not they ought to send Christian missionaries to America.

Now I remember the story of the great wall of China built in 214 BC, 1200 miles long to keep out the Mogul invaders. The wall, was such a magnificent fence it incorporated every known technique of national defense. They had watch towers. They had armies stationed along it. It kept the invaders out for awhile. But did it succeed. Of course not, in due time, the enemies slipped in. Not by over coming the wall - of military defense - but by bribing a gate keeper. And slipping under the cover of darkness.

Now this simply says that we may make our defenses strong with military might. We may build even a strong economic system. We can do everything else to defend ourselves and this nation. But unless there is character and moral principle to go along as part of the citizenship, we will decay and rot within. And we will die in the wilderness like those 10 spies. And of course, where is this moral character coming from.

Caleb let you know, he reckoned with God. In the view of the giants, he looked at it from God's angle. Here is some big giants. Here is a wonderful man. But here is God who promises us - Numbers 13:30. We are well able to over-come it. Later, he adds, if the Lord delights in us - he will bring us into this land and give it to us. The land floweth with milk and honey. Only rebell ye against the Lord, neither

fear ye the Lord or the people of the land for they are bread for us. Their defense has departed from them. And the Lord is with us. Fear them not. Numbers 14:8-9.

Caleb was 100% right - he planted his feet on the ground of God's promises. Fear not. Live for God he said. And if we have to come from the people of God - it will have to come from the church. It will have to come from the men and women who know the transforming power that has changed this human nature of ours from selfishness, greed, and dishonesty.

So I ask you - that we think about God's blessings upon us. You can be what you want to be and determine to be the principle and the character that you want to be. And Caleb was a big man because he had a great character.

Now people everywhere in this nation are saying, I want to know how to increase my faith. How to meet these temptations. How to face eternity. Everybody knows you ought to pray. But folks want to be told how to pray. Everybody knows they ought to quit drinking and cursing, and losing their temper - but how are they going to do it. All of us want to live radiant, victorious lives. We admire people that live that way and we want to be like them. We respect people that are successful and who encourage us and who are strong people. Now the Apostle Paul, in the 12th chapter of Romans says, be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good. Be not conquered by evil but conquer evil by good.

A great many people never learn the lesson. We may spend all of our time denouncing evil like those ten spies, denouncing the giants. Many a young person has found his appetite for evil wetted by maybe the vigorous denunciations of some

preacher, or teacher, or parent. No one is ever justified in condoning evil. But we remember that we are not to be overcome of evil. Now these words contain a warning and also an encouragement to resist. Now modern man is not convinced that evil is dangerous. Or even bad. The inscription on a greeting card that was sent out said - the road to Hell is paved with fun. Now that is symbolic of our age. Why do men underestimate the power of evil and this giant of the flesh. It is the very nature of sin itself to deceive. As far as I know, sin is the only thing in the universe that the more you associate with, the less you understand. The alcoholic is much less able to control his liquor than he was when he took that first drink. Sin is progressive. It enslaves an individual. She gives her best first and her worst last.

Paul made no such mistake as he talked about it - he said, finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord. And in the power of his might, put on the whole armour of God. That you might be able to stand against the wilds of the devil for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world - against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand and withstand in the evil day and having done all, stand. Eph. 6:10-13.

In Luke 11:24-28, there is a terrible story of a man who had an unclean spirit expelled. The unclean spirit found no resting place and finally determined to return to that man. The man had swept his soul but it was empty. The evil spirit collected seven other evil spirits and came back. Now a man tonight who has an empty soul - it is going to be filled with something. It will not stay empty long. You will be mastered by something. By your appetites, by your popularity, by your power. You will be slaves of the sin - or either a slave of Jesus Christ.

II. CALEB HAD A GREAT CAUSE

He not only had a great character but he had a great cause.

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Joshua 14:9 - Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be thine inheritance and thy children's forever. Because thou hast wholly followed the Lord God.

God is a giving God. And thank God that he gives us the victory. And here is a great cause that Caleb's feet were going to trod on Hebron. That great place where he had never been before but where Abraham had dwelt and God had met with him there. Jacob and his sons lived in that area and Hebron was the treasure of the last resting place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, and Leigh.

Hebron means fellowship - and it was this beautiful place of fellowship that the giants had made their garrison of evil. And Caleb wanted it to reclaim it and to possess it. And God gave it to him.

Caleb knew all of this and he had to wait 45 years before he had the opportunity to take what God had promised him. But now the Lord that kept him all of these years, Joshua 14:10-12 - he tells about this.

And of course in the 14th verse it tells that it became his inheritance. Because he wholly followed the Lord. He had a claim on this victory. He came in for this great cause to take over this place of fellowship.

Now we all need to plunge our lives into some great cause. And I think we ought to put it into the greatest cause that this world has ever known.

Men are caught up today by heroes such as the astronauts who walk on the moon.

And the breathtaking discoveries in science today.

But God has made us co-laborers with him. As Paul says, we are laborers with God. This means we are linked together. Our little hands with God's mighty hands. To carry on and conquer the giants that are around us.

A large diamond was discovered deep in the interior of Africa many years ago, and the question arose how to get it out of Africa and on to the company officials of London without something happening. So elaborate plans were made - it was put in a locked box that was put in a safe that was in turn locked. The safe was put on a large cargo box and carried by porters out of the interior to the rail head. And there it was put on a box car heavily guarded by soldiers - moved to the port to board the ship. Employing the greatest caution while the world watched. The diamond was moved from the heart of Africa to the offices in London. Finally an official opened the doors to the safe. Took out the locked box and with a special key, the head of the company unlocked the box. Lifted out the diamond - but it was just a rock. There was no diamond - but a common rock. Someone had already stolen the diamond.

Then the official explained, this was a blind used to capture the person of the world. The diamond is already here. It was wrapped and put in a plain cardboard box - wrapped in brown paper and sent insured mail, parcel post and it came right on through.

You see, this is how we miss it. The great causes of life are sometimes wrapped up in the brown paper and the twine of every day living. Here is a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. This church carries on a routine week in and week out. There are some Sunday School Classes that are taught here - you say they are so routine - well, I am going to give some money for the budget and the program of the church. When you do this in the name of Christ, you are linking your life with the greatest

cause in all the world. And this is great in the eyes of God.

In a Washington orphanage many years ago, a janitor who was untrained taught a Sunday School Class of orphaned boys. The man gave himself - bringing them to know Christ. Leading them to commit their lives to Christian service. One little boy in the class was crippled. The man got hold of this boy and led him to know Christ. And led him to commit his life for service for Christ. And challenged that boy by the power of Jesus to rise above his handicap. He could rise above that crippled body. He could become somebody. He could do something worthwhile. He could conquer that giant. Now the nameless janitor has been long forgotten. He died and no one knows very much about him. But the crippled boy that the janitor invested his life in, his name is on several ^{many} cards that have been signed as a boy. Men have come through as a tenderfoot scout and stepped on through the ranks of scouting. With every step and achievement in scouting, they have received a little card marking that step, signed by James E. West, chief scout executive, boy scouts of America. That was the little crippled orphan boy, that the janitor invested his life in. And he came into a top place of usefulness and service. And has blessed literally millions of boys around the world.

Now that is the way God wants you to use your life. Conquer these giants. Serve in your church. Open the door of your heart. Even though something may seem not very significant. But if you will build a great character and give your life a great cause, you will conquer the giants.

III. A GREAT PROMISE.

Caleb had a great promise and a great God. That enabled him to conquer those giants.

I thought about that German, George Mueller in England in 1822 - as he had

inherited much of his father's ability as a collector of excise tax in Prussia. And finally had come to the place in his life to seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. And he wanted to do something for orphaned children. And he and his wife agreed together that theirs would be a test case for the world. They found an orphanage home on simple faith. And pure example of trust in God. So in 1936 the first orphan home was dedicated in a rented building. And within a matter of days, he had 43 children. It continued to grow. He had several things that he followed. First, no funds should ever be solicited, or revealed by the workers or anyone except to God in prayer. No debts were ever to be incurred. The burden of experiment therefore would not be on the local shop keepers or suppliers. Third, no money contributed for a special purpose could be used for any other purpose. Fourth, all accounts would be audited annually by professional auditors. Fifth, no ego pandering by publication of donors names with the amount of their gift. Each doner would be thanked privately. Sixth, no names of prominent or title people would be sought for the board or to be advertised in the institution. Seventh, the success of the institution would be measured not by the number served, but - or by the amount of money taken in, but by God's blessing on the work, which Mueller expected to be in proportion to the time spent in prayer. And he spent much time in prayer that would ordinarily gone to money raising and an unbelieving public was amazed when a second building was opened six months after the first. He concentrated on prayer and the money kept coming in. And there were five new buildings with 110 helpers taking care of 2,050 orphans.

Before opening the first orphanage, Mueller had said, that he would consider the experiment a failure if ever the orphans had to go a single day without food. They never did. Nor were these children taken care of in a nominal or minimal fashion. Part of his conviction was that God not only provides but he provides bountifully. For their time, his orphanage buildings were constructed, built-in cupboards with large pigeon-holes for each child's clothes. Sunny play rooms

with shelves and cupboards for the toys. Each child must also have not one but three pairs of shoes. Each boy, three suits. Each girl, five dresses. They must also be white tableclothes for the evening meal and flowers whenever possible. Behind the scenes were the latest labor saving devices available. One of the first American washing machines in England. After each year's audit and the detailed report made public, showed how God had provided for that year. Soon it became apparent around the world, and business men were interested and executives traveled distances to interview Mr. Mueller. And of course, he wrote out his prescription in five parts. This was his advice.

✓ First, each year - you and your wife are to spread your business difficulties before the Lord.

✓ Second, you are then to watch for answers to prayer and expect them.

✓ Third, absolute honesty necessary - avoid all business trickery.

✓ Fourth, beginning immediately, a certain proportion of your income must be given to God.

✓ Fifth, keep a record - month by month - how the Lord is dealing with you and what is happening.

The man did keep a record. And the business man who asked for that prescription was about to go in bankruptcy - but after that, his business profits mounted. For more than 60 years, the orphanage carried on under his leadership. And Mueller was 70 years old, he felt it was time to tell his story. And he wrote about his faith. And of course, this is something that we need - because he says, you cannot really trust God until you know something about him. And faith is strengthened only as we exercise it. And faith has to be in the present tense. And absolute honesty is