

**GIANTS IN THE LAND**  
**Eighth in a sermon series on “Spiritual Leadership”**  
**First Sunday of Lent --March 13, 2011 –Numbers 13: 25- Numbers 14: 10**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

Moses was one of the greatest spiritual leaders in the Bible. He had led the people of God out of bondage from Egypt; they had watched God bring the 7 plagues against the Egyptians; they had been provided for in the desert with manna from heaven; they had been led by a cloud and a pillar of fire; at their darkest moment by the Red Sea God had even parted the Red Sea to allow them to escape. Over and over again the people of God had seen miracle upon miracle wrought by the hand of God. But amazingly we as human beings have the ability to forget all the many blessings God has done in our lives and when faced with issues, problems and things which seem insurmountable to us we doubt and we waver, we rebel and we complain. Such it has ever been. Such it shall ever be.

So Moses has been reminding the people that God is going to provide for them a Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. They may be in the wilderness now, they may be enduring the hardships of the desert and they may have left what was known behind them but if they trust in the Lord, if they follow Him, if they believe and are obedient to His will and His plan, they will make it to the Promised Land. The Promised Land today, by the way, is not so much flowing with milk and honey as it is flowing with the Holy Spirit and the Living presence of the Lord God Almighty. For us today, the Promised Land is all around us, the Kingdom of God is within, but it waits for us to spiritually journey to a place in our own lives where God becomes more and more real and where we lead our life and do our ministry more and more in the power of God and less and less on our own. People of God, men and women of the New Israel, this is the Promised Land which the Lord Jesus Christ has set before us!

So Moses leads the people of God right to the very edge of the Promised Land. They have made a rather direct journey across the wilderness and are standing at its edge in a place called Kadesh-Barnea. They send scouts out ahead to survey what is there and the scouts come back filled with reports of the abundance of the land, just as Moses has said. But they also report that there are *“cities fortified and very large”* (Numbers 13: 28) but *“the people who dwell in the land are strong”* (v. 28). The descendants of Anak are there. The Anak are GIANTS. The scouts are reporting that there are GIANTS IN THE LAND. And as the scouts tell and retell their report the giants seem to get larger and larger with each retelling. The land itself is a land that *“devours its inhabitants”* (Numbers 13: 32) The “Nephilim” the sons of Anak are there. It is a land filled with Goliaths and Giants, large and fearful. We are just “grasshoppers” by comparison. Even as you read the story you hear how the issues become larger and larger and larger; the problems become more and more impossible; the “giants” they face larger and larger and larger.

Ever do that with a problem in your life? Build it up larger and larger and larger? Dwell on it over and over and over again? Recite how large it is? How impossible it would be to address?

Then fear stalks the people of God. Fear invades the camp. They turn on their leaders. And in the process they turn on God. *“Why does the Lord bring us into this land?”*, they whine. (Numbers 14: 3) *“Would that we had died in Egypt?”*, they cry. *“Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?????”* (Numbers 14: 3) They say, *“Let us choose a captain, and go back to Egypt.”* *“All the congregation”*, as it says, *“said to stone (the leaders and Moses) with stones.”* (Numbers 14: 10)

Think about that for a moment. They are saying it is better to go back into slavery in Egypt than it is to face their fears and to move forward. They are saying they would rather be slaves in Egypt and build the

Pyramids without straw than to receive the gift of the Promised Land. They would rather receive the lash than receive liberty. They would rather be a slave than free. They would rather be spiritually dead than alive. They would rather be a slave to Pharaoh than free men and women for the Lord.

Would you ever give up Jesus? Would you ever give up salvation? Would you ever give up eternal life? Would you ever give up faith? Would you ever give up the Spirit? Would you ever give up the church? Would you ever give up the new Promised Land in Jesus, because we were afraid? Because we were unwilling to address our fears? Because there seemed to be large and insurmountable "GIANTS IN THE LAND"????????

The people of God in Moses' time did. Will we?

I have been preaching to us since January about what it means to be a spiritual leader. I am using the insights from Henry Blackaby's book "Spiritual Leadership" to lay out for us over and over again what it means to be a spiritual leader for the Lord Jesus Christ. I am preaching Biblical principles of spiritual leadership to us...and to me. I have an admission to make –I'm an old scaredy-pants where ministry is concerned. I don't want to fail; I don't want people to think less of me. Too much I want people to think highly of me. I certainly don't want people to rebel against the session. I don't want people to prefer to go back to slavery than to inherit new life in Christ. I am always afraid somewhere down in my soul that people will not like something I am doing and, just like in the Bible story we just read, "the congregation" picks up stones and begins throwing them at me! There, I've admitted it. I'm completely human, just like the people were in Moses' time; just like we all are today.

But I have learned something that God has taught me over some 30 years of ministry. And it is this – **SPIRITUAL LEADERS FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION, NOT THE PROBLEM. SPIRITUAL LEADERS DON'T FOCUS ON THE GIANTS, THEY FOCUS ON GOD.**

Human beings, and O I am most definitely one of them, make our problems into GIANTS. WE think they are HUGE and impossible to take on and our self talk in our head makes them grow larger with each re-telling. There are GIANTS in the land we whine. We are just grasshoppers by comparison. And so we get stuck and so we are stopped. But let me ask you this question –HOW BIG IS GOD????? God is infinite. God is all-powerful. The planets spin because of God's power. The universe is arrayed because of God. Whatever the size of our problem, whatever the size of our issue, whatever the size of the GIANT we think we face in life...God is far, far larger and far, far more powerful.

We think our GIANT is this big ((((((((((((((()))))))))))))). But in reality, with God, our problem is this big (). **(A spiritual exercise that is helpful in your daily life)**

There are giants we have built up in our own head that are sons of Anak and Nephilim...in our personal life (I can't deal with that; it is impossible; I am too small and the problem is too large) and in our family life (I can't deal with that; it is impossible; I am too small and the problem is too large); and in our church life (we can't deal with that; it is impossible; it costs too much and we don't have the time; I am too small and the problem is too large); and in our community (the problems in Washington are too large and are insurmountable and unfixable). "There are GIANTS in the LAND!!!!!!!"

No, beloved, the Giants are in our head and they flee before us when God is in our HEART.

