

Daily Devotional, May 12, 2021 Faith to Overcome

“And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.” Numbers 13:32

The Hebrew people had been delivered from their captivity in Egypt. Through Moses, God had led them out of a place of slavery and miraculously saved them from the powerful Egyptian army. After a long time of living and traveling in the wilderness, the Israelites are now on the boarder of the land that God had promised.

In Numbers 13, Moses is commanded to send twelve spies into the promised land. These spies were leaders from each of the tribes. They were commanded to see if the people who occupied the land were strong or weak and to see if the land was filled with good fruit. The spies went into the promised land and did just as they were commanded. When they returned from their mission, they brought back evidence of good fruit. It was true, the land was flowing with “milk and honey.”

The spies also brought back a report about the strength of the people who occupied the promised land. Eight of the spies reported that the task of taking the land from the tribes that already inhabited the land would be impossible. They reported that the cities were fortified, and the people were strong. They even reported that some of the people living in the promised land were giants. When the Israelites heard this report, they were struck with fear. They began to wonder why they had been taken all the way across the wilderness, only to face giants and powerful armies behind great fortresses. How could they overcome all of this?

Two spies, Joshua and Caleb, did not agree with this same report. They did say that there was good fruit in the land. However, they did not believe that it would be impossible to take the promised land. They told the people, “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak, These people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan. ”The Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”

I wonder why twelve people who saw the same thing would have such differing reports? Why would one group be willing to go, and the other group be overcome with fear and want to retreat? I believe the answer is found in the focus of those who are reporting to Moses and the Israelites. Joshua and Caleb, just like the other eight, witnessed the good and the bad in the promised land. However, Joshua and Caleb kept their focus on the God who had delivered them from their captivity in Egypt. Joshua and Caleb kept their focus on the God who was bigger than any giant living in the promised land.

This story in the book of Numbers is important to us today. There are so many things in our lives that bring us fear. When we focus on the ‘giants’ in our lives, they can seem overwhelming and the task before us can look insurmountable. The good news is, our God is bigger! Our faith teaches us that the fortified cities of the promised land crumbled before God. The biblical story reminds us that the giants of the promised land were so small compared to the greatness of our God. Today, I pray we are reminded that the same God who ultimately led the Israelites to victory is the God who is with us today.

Prayer: Dear God, I am laying my fear and anxiety at your feet. I ask that you help me get through all of the doubts and fears when I feel as if I am being crushed. Remind me that you are a powerful God. Remind me that I can trust in you. I know I can't do this on my own. I need you. In the name of Your matchless son. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.