

FACING THE **GIANT**

The “Giant” Pandemic & Facing Off Against Giants

(Based on Numbers, Ch. 13-14)

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Do you think you would like to fail a test in a class? Probably not. No one wants to fail a test in a class. But that’s not the only place you get a test. You also get tests in life. Would you want to fail a test in life? You wouldn’t? That’s a good smart decision. So listen, today I am going to help you, from God’s Word, so that you will not fail a test in life.

To learn how to pass our tests in life, we must look back to other followers of God who came before us and who, like us, were tested by life. I’m talking about the people of Israel. Remember them? Again and again, they tested God, testing God’s patience with their grumbling and complaining. But again and again, God tested them, testing their faith and their trust. One of their biggest tests is recorded for us in the Old Testament, in Numbers chapters 13-14.

12 men were sent by God to spy on the land of Canaan. They were to bring back to the whole people a report on this new land God was giving them. They were to explore what the land was like, what the soil was like, what the fruits of the soil were like, what the people in that land were like. They were instructed to conduct their reconnaissance, then bring back a detailed report.

To choose those 12 men, Moses selected a leader from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. These were men who represented the people, and who were to be examples to the people. These leaders were supposed to be examples of faith and trust in the Almighty God, who promised always to be with them.

Those 12 men entered that land. Those 12 men carried out their mission with 40 days of spying. They found that the land God was giving them was amazing. They found grapes so large, one single cluster took two men to carry it, on a large

pole balanced between them. They found fantastic figs and prolific pomegranates. They found a land filled with fabulously flowing milk and honey.

But listen, just like those 12 spies found giant grapes, they also found giant men. In fact, they suggested that their own people were like little grasshoppers in comparison to the mammoth men in that land. They found men that were monstrous in size, colossal behemoths, with strong cities that were fabulously fortified besides. And most of the 12 leaders who were the selected spies became terrified.

Rather than trust God to go with them, they turned from God and said, “We cannot do this!” God wanted leaders who trusted in Him, who did not shake in terror at the giants in that land. 10 of those 12 spies showed a total lack of trust. They said, “There is no way we can do this!” They failed to trust in the Almighty God’s promise. He had said that He would give them that land! But those 10 men not only did not trust God, they turned the whole entire nation from trusting God to living in panic instead.

When those spies were sent into that land, it was a test of faith! 10 men failed that test. When those spies came back from that land, for the whole people of Israel, it was a test of faith. That entire nation failed that test! Only 2 men trusted in their Lord, Joshua and Caleb.



God wants people who trust in Him and in His power, people who do not cower in terror over the giants in the land. Today there is a giant towering over us, the pandemic. For many of us, this coronavirus crisis is the most gigantic challenge we have faced in our lifetimes. It seems mammoth and monstrous, overwhelming and overpowering. It covers the whole world, which is in fact the meaning of the word pandemic. If it’s not worldwide, it’s not a pandemic. What a giant we are facing!

So what does God call on us to do in the face of giants? Trust in His Almighty power! Will our nation fail this test? Will we fail to trust in God simply because circumstances look bad, simply because the coronavirus is spreading and the cases are growing? Will you fail this test? Will you falter in your faith? Or will you display gigantic trust in Jesus when things are bad and you greatly need your Lord?

Are you trusting in God, or are you panicking over the pandemic? If you only trust God when things are good, do you have gigantic faith in your Lord? You've heard the saying "Can't see the forest for the trees," right? Sometimes you can't see the big picture because you're too focused on details like the trees. Well, how about this saying about the 10 men: they "couldn't see the land for the giants." They were so focused on the giants, those men in that land looming large, that they couldn't see that glorious land the Lord Himself was giving to them. They were so focused on those giants and their strength, they forgot the far greater strength of the Lord who was with them, who promised to protect them, and who proclaimed HE would lead them into that land He was giving them.

Are we failing to see the Lord because of the giant in our land? Well you might say, "This pandemic is big." You're right. You might say, "The cases are growing and the virus is spreading." You're right. This pandemic is big. It covers the whole world. But listen, who made the whole entire world? Who holds the whole world in His hands? My friends, when there are giants in the land, that's when we are called upon to have gigantic faith. We have the Holy Spirit in us to give that faith to us. Faith is believing in God even when the facts tell you something different. Let's think about this.



Faith is believing in God even when the facts may be at odds with His Word. The facts tell you the world could never have been made in just six days. God tells you He did it in one real week. The facts tell you that wine can never be made simply out of water. Jesus did it, and the wine He made and served was the very best. The facts tell you that no man can walk on water. Jesus Christ did it and He gave Peter the power to do it too.

The facts tell you that five little loaves and two tiny fish cannot feed a crowd of thousands. Yet Jesus did it. He multiplied the one little boy's lunch and fed thousands until they were stuffed, with lots of leftovers to boot. The facts will tell you that no one can control the weather, it's run by the forces of nature. Yet Jesus looked at a storm and told it to be still and that sinister storm had to stop in its tracks, because Christ is in charge of all creation. Again and again, Jesus showed that "the facts" mean nothing when He, the Almighty God, is acting.

And, dear friends, Jesus saved His very best for last! The facts tell you once you're dead, you're gone, you're done. Jesus tells you otherwise. Jesus Christ defeated death. Jesus rose from death, rising from His tomb for you. Jesus beat death so you could have life. Christ Is Risen! My friends, with power that great protecting and blessing you, why would you ever panic if you say you believe in Jesus? Why would you live in fear if you have faith that Christ's Almighty power is here? Isn't God bigger than all of us? Isn't God bigger than the coronavirus?

Think for a moment about just a few of the many magnificent promises God makes to you of His power and His presence.

If God is for us who can be against us? (Romans 8:31b).

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (Romans 8:35)

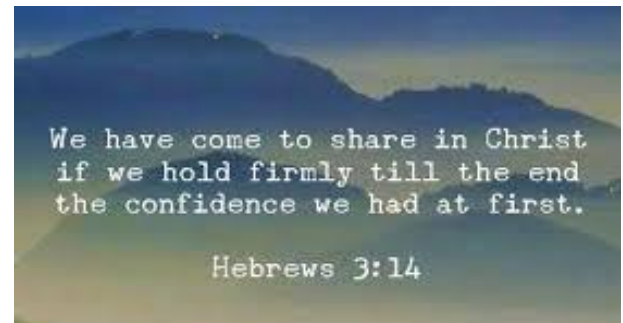
For I am convinced that neither death nor life...nor any powers...will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Does God love you? Always and forever. Does God always have a plan and a purpose? Yes, He does, and you can bank on it. Is God's plan and purpose always for your benefit? Yes, it is, beyond any shadow of a doubt. So what could be God's plan and purpose for you during this pandemic you're going through? Could it be God wants to use you to show the world around you, which is so full of panic, what it's like to have faith and trust that the Almighty God is with us? Will you be God's witness by staying calm and trusting? Will you be a light to the world by standing firm in the Lord, professing to the world that Jesus is with us in this dark and difficult time that we are going through?

The book of Hebrews tells us: **"We are His house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast"** (Hebrews 3:6b). Because you are part of God's house, through Jesus, hold on to your courage and the hope of which you boast! Because the Holy Spirit has given you faith to believe in God, when challenges come along, live a faith which is strong!

When you face something like this worldwide pandemic, do you falter in your trust in the living God? Do you think that God is dead simply because the virus is alive? My friend, because the virus is alive, you need a faith which is alive, which trusts that God is alive! The author of Hebrews proclaims, **“We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence that we had at first!”** (Hebrews 3:14). Hold firmly till the end your confidence that God is with you! Jesus who died and rose for you is watching over you. Jesus whose hands stretched out on the cross in love, is stretching out His hands in love to watch over you and shelter you, to bless you and protect you.



Jesus loves us. He knows that we are often like little grasshoppers rather than giants when it comes to our faith. When hardships hit, our faith is often little; we hop all around on edge and in worry. But Jesus died for all our sins, including our failure to live large in faith. Did you hear that? God loves you so much that Jesus Christ gave His life to pay the price for your sins, even your failure to fully trust in Him. Now that's love.

Some today may say they can't completely believe God loves us when He has let this storm of the coronavirus cover the whole land. Well do you remember when God the Father sent darkness over the whole land, and gave up His own Son to the wrath and punishment we deserve? Do you remember how through His death on that dark day, God's own Son took the ultimate sickness of sin away? That's how God showed His love, by sending us the cure, Christ Jesus who frees us from the sickness of sin. God showed His ultimate love by healing us of the ultimate sickness, sin.

So how is God showing His love to you even through this pandemic, in the midst of today's time of sickness? Well, let's think for just a moment about a promise of God's power. It's recorded in Ephesians, where we are told that God **“is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power...”** (Ephesians 3:20-21). God can do more than we can ask or envision! Do you remember how early in this pandemic, we started praying and have not stopped praying for a vaccine? I'm sure many millions around our world have been praying this very same prayer. Vaccines typically take 10-15 years to develop and

approve. Nobody wanted to wait that long for a COVID-19 vaccine, but nobody knew how long it would take.

Yet here we are after less than 1 year, after going through all the stages of testing, almost at approval by the FDA, we have multiple vaccines ready. With around 95% effectiveness rates! And by the way, China and Russia have reported similar vaccines with similar effective rates developed by their scientists, too. The people at the World Health Organization say this will change the direction of this pandemic.

So how did all this lightspeed vaccine development around our planet happen? Well, who do you think was doing the guiding and blessing, so that something was developed in 1/10th of the normal amount of time it takes? You know who ultimately pushed this thing through, multiple vaccines in multiple nations, in less than 1 year, rather than the full decade or more it usually takes? How about the One who is always watching over you?

How about the One who wants you to trust that no matter how gigantic your problem, He loves you and is with you? How about the One who gave His Son to die and rise for you, to defeat life's greatest threats of sin and Satan and death for you? How about giving glory and credit to God, for whom any gigantic problem is like a little infant, or a teeny tiny grasshopper in His sight? Romans 8:31 reassures us, **"If God is for us, who can be against us?!"** No giant on earth is a problem for God and His Almighty power. Through God's power that lives in us, through the Holy Spirit of Jesus, may there likewise be no giant on earth that is a problem for our faith.

**IF GOD IS
FOR US,
WHO CAN
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US?**

Romans 8:31

Friends, based on the reading in Numbers chapters 13 and 14, I like the number 2 so much better than the number 10. I pray that God will make every one of us like those 2 faithful men who trusted Him. May God make each of us like the Trusting 2 rather than the Tiny 10, that we may trust in God's power, as we face the giant in our land. In Jesus' name, Amen.