**The Grasshopper Illusion**

*Numbers 13*

Welcome back everyone to another service, I don’t know about you, but I have really been enjoying this year’s series, despite the online difficulties. I’m also grateful in this time that I’m able to sit down and go through the storyline of the bible, especially with my church. And For those of you who have been following the bible reading plan. I’m sure you were grateful that we skipped Leviticus. As much as I wanted to teach, at least one passage from there, I had to remind myself of how disappointed it would be if we didn’t finish Revelation in December.

 So with that in mind, we will be in the book of numbers today. So far, the Israelites have left Egypt, received the 10 commandments and are on their way to Canaan, which is the land God has promise to Abraham. This is the promised land flowing with whole milk and organic honey. Now in Numbers 13 God told Moses to send in 12 leaders, 1 from each tribe, to scope out the promised land. So Moses gave them some criteria to look for in verse 18-20.

*18 See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. 19 What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? 20 How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.”*

So in verse 21-25 they explored the land and found huge clusters of grapes, so big that 2 of them have to carried it on a pole. And after 40 day they returned to the Israelite to give their report. But we will find in this story that out of 12 leaders who witness the same thing, came back with 2 different report and 2 different responses. I have titled this lesson “**The Grasshopper Illusion**” because their sight made them blind to who they are, and who God is.

 Through this story today we will get a glimpse at why we don’t see the world the way it is.. but we see the world the way we are.

* That’s why some sees the cup half empty, while people like me, just see that I need more coffee.
* Some may only see this pandemic as a tragedy, while others may see it as an opportunity
* Some may look at their addicted with hopelessness, while others may fight for hope because they have seen the truth.
* Some may have a dark outlook on life, while others may be living life to the fullest.

What you believe about yourself matters, because it will change how you view the world and the people around you. One of the most dangerous things you can do, is let your observation determines your own interpretation of a situation.

**The Grasshopper Illusion** happens when you stare at the enemy long enough, you will magnify your giants and minimize the God who lives in you. but when you gaze at the power of Jesus, you are able to overcome your enemy, because you have accepted his promises, and believe who you are in him. This is the **Grasshopper Illusion.**

So let me ask you, what are you looking at? Because that will determine what you will find. Today I will show you;

*5 reasons our perception can be misleading.*

You can’t always trust what you see, because what you saw could be filtered through the wrong lens.

 Let’s read what happen when the men returned with the report in Numbers 13:27-29;

27 They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit.(look) 28 But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even **saw** descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites …; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites ..; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”

The termites, we **saw** the obstacles, we **saw** how scary the enemies where, we looked at the powerful people and we **saw** defeat.

1. **Your vision can change your version of the story** (Num. 13:27-29)

How come all 12 men, 12 leaders of the assembly, saw the same thing, but some focused on the grapes and others focused on the giants. These men reported back exactly what Moses requested, but it was not the right response. Could it be possible that when God has given us a mission, we choose to stare at the problem. And turn that into the reason why we can’t succeed, or the reason why we can’t overcome. We like to create excuse, not because the task is too difficult or risky, but because we let our version of our story cloud the vision of God’s promise.

See, when you are fully convinced of your negative version of the story, you are already living in defeat.

* Oh, I can’t change, my addictions are too strong
* Oh, I can’t share my faith, people will judge me
* Oh, I can’t take on this responsibility, I’m not good enough
* Oh, we can’t do this, it’s too much.
* Oh, we can’t start over, we already messed up

Your vision can change your version of the story.

I want to speak to those who are living in discouragement right now, you know who you are. How you see the situation, is determined by what you seek. Because if you keep looking at the enemy’s walls, you will always be discouraged by the obstacle.

**You need to focus on the fruits**. I know in this time a lot of you are burdened by your friends, and burdened by what’s going on in this group, but I need you to look at the fruits. look at what God has done. He is still the author of this story so stop looking at the situation but focus on the fruits. I see so many good fruits out there, so don’t give up now.

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored…

1. **Your vision can create a bad report out of a good news.** (v30-32)

You notice how Caleb had to silence them? Why is it that people with bad news always has a lot to say, have you notice that? It’s like people always find a reason to complain about everything. I feel bad for Caleb because he was outnumbered 2 to 10. And a lot of times I feel that voice in my head that says, “you can certainly do it; I have already given it to you.” Yet I have a louder voice in my head that screams, “You can’t do it, no one is going to listen to you, you don’t have enough strength, you’re not smart enough, you’re not able to accomplish that.” A lot of times it outnumbered by 2 to 10.

A lot of time you have to decide, whose voice are you listening to? God’s or the devil’s?

And these people who were anticipating a good news of hope, was met with a bad report of fear. This fear spread throughout the Israelites and now everyone has a mindset of expecting to fail. And that’s the issue. A lot of time the problem is that we look at the good things God has given us and call it bad.

 A lot of you have already given up the fight before the battle even begin, because you expected to fail. You received a bad report and have already predicted the outcome. My advice is Don’t let what you explore, determine what you expect. Learn to respond to the report and leave the results up to the Lord.

1. **your vision can cloud the promises of God. v32**

They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.

Don’t you see that the 10 men where not wrong? The Canaanites where bigger than they were. The Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites where stronger than they were, and the Amalekites where more numerous. Comparing to the Israelites of course they looked weak and small and unable. That’s correct, if that’s what you chose to look at. But that wasn’t the premise God wanted them to start from.

Listen, if we start to measure our ministry and calling from the premise of what we can do, by our abilities and by our strength, and our experiences, then we will only get what our power can do. I think a lot of people are working out of the wrong **premise** instead of the **promise of God**. Because when you start to step out in faith and operate out of his promises, then we will see his power and what he can do. If he has put a desire on your heart, and a mission in your mind, know that he will finish what he started. So **Don’t let your vision cloud the promises of God**.

We saw the Nephilim there (giants). We **seemed** like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

1. **your vision can cause you to look different than you appear v33**

I call this The Grasshopper Illusion, how you view the enemy change how you view yourself. The men who saw the giants perceived themselves as grasshoppers. What they saw made them believe something about themselves that wasn’t right. One of the most dangerous things we can do, is let our observation determines our own interpretation of a situation.

* The struggle in your family may look hopeless. But What you see, may not be what it seems.
* That breakup may have been depressing, but what you see, may not be what it seems.
* Those night when you cried out to God may seem pointless, but what you see, may not be what it seems.
* Your body shape may cause you insecurity, but what you see, may not be what it seems.
* Let me tell you, like object in the mirror are closer than they appear. So is your God and his promises.

**Your vision can cause you to look different than you appear.** A lot of times our vision may cause us to magnify our insecurities and minimized our faith. We like to enlarge our enemies and minimize our God. But he remines us that is not who we are. We may seem like grasshoppers in our own eyes, but that is just and illusion, because God is raising up an army of men and women who are ready to fight. We just have to look and believe what God is telling us.

1. **Your vision can cost you your victory. 14**

I hope by showing you how this story ends, will give you the courage to take the next step in obedience. And to shift your focus away from the grasshopper illusion.

1That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. **2**All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness!

6 Joshua… and Caleb…, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. 8 If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us.

**10**But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites.

23 not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors…24 But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.

**32**But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness.**33**Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. **34**For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’

Friends have you realized your vision might cost you your victory. The only reason people are not allowed to enter the promise land is because of the sin of unbelief and unfaithfulness to God.

All those people got what they were looking for, their eyes were on the enemy, so it was their enemy that took them out. Caleb’s eyes were on the Lord, so the Lord delivered him.

God said in verse 24 because

Caleb was a servant,

Caleb had a different spirit,

Caleb followed wholeheartedly

I will bring him into the land

That is why we walk by faith not by sight. Because our perception may be misleading us.

You know, God promise eternal life for you in heaven. And this time, God has sent his own son to bring a Good News to all people about this Promised Land. We have all heard the bad report, that because of our sins we deserve the fate of the Israelites. But the good news is that Jesus has died for us on the cross and came back to life. So whoever repents of their sins and trust in what he has done, will be with him in paradise.

Therefore, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:18

 I pray that this week God may open your eyes that you may finally see him face to face.