

“A Grasshopper Complex!”

Numbers 13:30-33

Intro. – 12 Spies were sent to Canaan. 10 were bad and two were good...Were Joshua and Caleb blind optimist? Were they being unrealistic to bring back such a glowing report? Didn't the other ten spies have a more accurate picture of the total situation? They also saw the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. But the hindrances that stood in the way of conquering the land were seemingly insurmountable. It was no joke when they said some of their obstacles were giant problems.

So, how could two conclusions based on the same facts be so diametrically opposed? What caused these 2 spies to have such differing conclusions from the other ten?... The ten spies failed to take God into account. On the other hand, the two faithful spies believed in and trusted God. That meant opportunity!

Illus. – like the shoe salesman sent to a remote part of the world. Dismayed because everyone there went around barefooted, he wired the company, “No prospect of sales. People don't wear shoes here.” Another salesman sent to the same area. He too immediately wired a message back to the home office. His message read as follows, “Great potential here! No one is wearing shoes!”

Another way of looking at this account is the ten spies had a grasshopper complex. In 14:1-4 we find this complex has been passed onto the people. Joshua and Caleb make a last-ditch effort to talk them out of this complex (14:7-9). What was the peoples' response? --“...stone them with stones.”

Without question, this is the darkest moment in the history of Israel. God had delivered and guided them for the express purpose of taking this land. How tragic it was for them to not have faith in God to see them over their giant obstacles. But something far more tragic is when God's people today REPEAT the same complex!

Purpose: to learn how not to have a grasshopper complex

“The only thing men learn from history is that men don't learn from history.” How we need to utilize what God has made available to us to not repeat the same dreadful sin Israel made by having a grasshopper complex:

I CAUSES OF THIS COMPLEX

A. Causes of Israel's Complex

1. Strong enemy – 13:31 *“But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.’”*
2. Difficult fight – 13:32 *“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 great size.’”*
3. Fear of the unknown – many facts of the land remained unknown and weren't sure that there weren't even bigger obstacles further into the land...
4. Personal weaknesses – so overcome with their weaknesses... they wanted to appoint a leader to take them back to Egypt - 14:4 *“And they said to each other, ‘We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.’”*

B. Causes of Our Complex

1. Strong enemy – we too are up against a mighty foe
 - a. attractions/allurements of the world... temptations abound...
 - b. denial of truth resulting in utter confusion especially that often done in name of religion...
 - c. Ephesians 6:12 *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.”* I.e. our battle is a spiritual battle not physical... Ron DiCianni picture...
2. Difficult fight – accomplishing the Lord's work takes patience, persistence, lot of faith...
3. Fear of the unknown – “we are too fearful of what may happen...”
4. Our personal weaknesses – just as Israel viewed themselves as not being up to the task, we often view ourselves as impotent, unable to accomplish the Lord's will – Spirit of boldness/power...
5. 2 Timothy 1:7 *“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”*

II SYMPTOM OF THIS COMPLEX

- Elephants are known for their memories... Man is not...

A. Matters Israel Forgot

1. They forgot they had a great leader – Moses sent by God...
2. They forgot they had a great purpose
 - a. God had chosen them to be His people for a specific task – bless/protect and prosper them
 - b. God had chosen them to be the people through whom the Messiah, His Son would come.
3. They forgot that God had promised victory:
 - a. Exodus 3:8 *“So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey...”*
 - b. Numbers 13:1-2 *“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.’”*

B. Matters We Forget

- we are prone to forget; especially in the following key areas:

1. That we have the greatest of leaders – Christ is Head and He is Lord!
2. That we have the greatest purpose – winning the lost... building one another up in Christ... know of no greater or significant purpose on the face of the earth than the purpose of Christ’s Church!
3. That God has promised and already provided victory:
 - a. Romans 8:31-32 *“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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?”*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 *“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”*

How can we afford to forget our Lord’s promises, especially the promise of victory?!

III RESULT OF THIS COMPLEX

- read Numbers 14:26-35 to get the results in detail:

A. Israel’s Situation

1. Illus. – technical term “meander” = wandered aimlessly for 40 years doing nothing for themselves/most importantly nothing for X!
2. They died and a new generation arose to do God’s will
 - a. so senseless – promised land was theirs... all they had to do was go in and take it
 - b. prior to this, Israel with the Lord’s backing had never suffered a loss
3. God wasn’t going to give the promised land without some display of trust and confidence – that generation of Israelites died with no experience of the promised land.

B. Our Situation

1. Many today are meandering/wandering aimlessly
 - a. those who are lost are have no purpose but that of living unto themselves... they have a grasshopper complex...
 - b. churches engrossed with this complex – fearful of growth (because growth means change and change means challenges with which to deal...) – easier to be content and maintain status quo than to work through the challenges of growth.
2. Many accomplish nothing for the Lord
 - a. fear of unknown, failure, lack of faith, will paralyze their worship and service to God!
 - b. accomplishments (gains) for the Lord are never accomplished with grasshopper complex...

- c. grasshopper complex = lack of faith/trust = what kept Israel out of promised land... what will keep many out of heaven's glory!

Conclusion: Gretchen Alexander refused to allow her blindness to limit her life experiences. She mastered archery, golf, softball, sailing and water skiing, as well as, a number of other activities you and I wouldn't attempt. She was speaking before a group of high school students concerning her achievements when one student asked if there is anything she wouldn't try. She responded, "I've decided to never sky dive. It would scare my dog too much."

In conclusion and summary, God has promised victory, but He won't and can't give it without some display of faithfulness and trust. How we face these battles/challenges will be the test of our faithfulness or the lack thereof..

An Example: The matter of impacting this community and surrounding area with the Gospel. We can have a grasshopper complex or we can trust the Lord to see us through this challenge -- to lead us in doing what we can and ought to do to see this matter through...