

Summer Sermon Series

A Lesson on Defeating Giants: Og

August 10 & 11, 2014

Deuteronomy 3:10-11

¹⁰ We took all the towns on the plateau, and all Gilead, and all Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, towns of Og's kingdom in Bashan. ¹¹ (Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaites. His bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.)

A Lesson on Defeating Giants

Can you imagine what it would be like wearing a size 40 shoe? The Bible also speaks about people who were bigger than Robert Wadlow. They were known as the Rephaites and the Nephilim. These men were giants. This is the group of people that frightened the 12 spies who were sent out by Moses to search out the Promised Land. When they came back to Moses, they reported: **"We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."** (Num. 13:31-33) Because of their fear and not trusting in God, the Israelites would wander 40 more years in the wilderness. An entire generation of people would not be allowed to enter the land that God had promised to his people.

After the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they still fought with some of these giants. Of course, the most famous of those giants would be Goliath – the 9-foot giant that David would slay him with a stone. In another battle, David and his men would slay a man who was described as: **"a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot – twenty-four in all."** (1 Chron. 20:6) Imagine that!

Just prior to entering the Promised land after their 40 years of wandering in the desert, the children of Israel would face these giants of the land again. This time things would be different. A whole generation of people had died off because they had not trusted that the Lord would help them face these giants. Even Moses had not been the ideal leader. He wavered in trusting God. The Israelites had been out of water. They began to grumble once again. Moses went to the Lord to ask for help. God told Moses to *speak* to a rock and water would flow from it. Instead Moses gathered the people around the rock. Instead of speaking to the rock, he struck the rock twice with his staff and said: **"Must we bring you water out of this rock?"** (Num. 20:10) Moses had wavered in his faith. God would speak about this event and say: **"you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah."** (Deut. 32:51) As a consequence, Moses would not be allowed to lead the children of Israel into the promised land.

But God once again would let Moses be a part of his remarkable plan. Moses would only be allowed to see the Promised Land from the East side of the Jordan River. But he was also allowed to be a part of the process of the Lord giving this Promised Land to his people. While not going into the Promised Land on the other side of the Jordan River, Moses was allowed to conquer one of the largest giants left on the earth. This giant's name was Og. He was a ruler over 60 cities. Our text speaks about his bed, which was more than 13 feet long and 6 feet wide. Most likely Og was the same size. If he was 13 feet in length, that would place his head at about the top of the screens in front of church. A man this size could have weighed over 1000 pounds. No wonder his bed needed to be made of iron. Og may have terrified men, but he was no match for the almighty God. A few verses before our text, Moses writes: **"So the Lord our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army. We struck them down, leaving no survivors."** (Deut. 3:3) In a few short words, Moses says that one of the last giants of the earth was dead.

As Moses is speaking his final words to the children of Israel, and as he is about to hand off the leadership reins to Joshua, he reminds them of how easy it is for the Lord to defeat giants. The children of Israel had not focused on God. Instead they had focused on their eyes on the giants. All they could see was the giants in front of them. As this aged leader of God's people would soon go home to God, he wanted to encourage Israel's new leader and the people he had led. He wanted them to see that there was not ANY giant who was bigger than God. Instead of focusing your eyes on the giant, focus them on God. When that happens, you can't lose.

This morning, God says the same thing to you. Are there “giants” that block your view of God? Yes. We look at these children of Israel and think: *Why did they not trust God? They saw with their own eyes how God remarkably rescued his people out of Egypt. They saw the Red Sea close over their enemies. They heard and saw God’s presence on Mount Sinai. They had food miraculously brought to them every day. Why didn’t they get?*

Perhaps, the question can also be asked: *Why don’t we get it?* We know God’s promises. We have heard the message again and again. We know the words. We know them well. Yet, why do we let those giants take our eyes off of God. Look at some of those giants in our lives. Maybe they are the grades that you just can’t make. They are the people that you can’t please. They are the bills that you can’t pay. They are a future that you can’t seem to face. They are the temptations that Satan places before you every day. How are you going to face them? Are you going to be afraid of them and think of ourselves as only “grasshoppers?” Or are we going to see the God who can take out a 13 foot giant and ruler of 60 cities?

Giants. We all must face them. Yet we don’t face them alone. Focus first of all on God. Which is easier for us to do? Count the blessings God has given us? Or list the complaints or struggles we face? Are we more filled with confidence or fear? Those giants are there in our personal lives. They are there in the life of a congregation and it’s leaders. Those giants are there as we may face the last breaths we breathe on this earth.

When we face those giants, let us learn a lesson from Og. Let us remember that we have a God who defeats giants. We have a God who gave us a giant promise in Jesus. We have a God who sees us through every step we take in this life. May we listen to the words of Moses to Joshua: **“Do not be afraid of them; the Lord your God himself will fight for you.”** (Deut. 3:22) Amen.