**Pastor Lloyd’s Sermon Notes for 13th February 2022**

**WHAT DO YOU SEE #3 – SPIRIT OF CALEB - OBSTACLES, OPPOSITION OR OPPORTUNITY? - Numbers 13: 1-33**

* We are in a series of 6 messages entitled ‘what do you see’? It’s a question that is asked many times in the Bible. Mostly by leaders, or on some occasions by God.
* Week 1 Zechariah 4 – A New way of the Spirit (Not by might nor power…)
* Week 2 1 Kings 18 – Elijah – A change in the climate – There is a cloud on the horizon! God grows things from small beginnings!
* Today we are in Numbers 13 – And I have entitled the message today “Obstacles, Opposition or Opportunity”?

God had promised, “This is the land - I am ‘giving’ to my people! So send out one leader from each of the 12 tribes”. Their mission was clear - to scout out land…and answer specific questions about what they found there. Were there many people? Were the cities well protected? What is the soil like? What kinds of crops do they grow there? Bring some samples back.  So off they went and they came back after 40 days and reported to Moses. Ten of them bought reports confirming that indeed the land was filled with milk honey and good things, but that giants (Nephilim) – sons of Anak - live there. We cannot take them, they are too strong for us. And they spread this report among their people too, so that the fear and unbelief took hold. In fact, they exaggerated the situation, they said these giants are so big ‘we seem like grasshoppers' to them. The result was the people said two things: Let’s go back to Egypt and get a new leader! We don’t like where Moses is leading us – so let’s find someone else who will lead us somewhere else. The two who bought a positive report – were Caleb and a young man called Joshua. They said – we can do this if God is with us – we will succeed. We are well able to overcome these giants! On the basis of this unbelief, God said ‘Not one of these people will enter the land’. Only Caleb and Joshua will go into the new land… for he has a ‘different attitude’. Numbers 14:24 *‘He has remained loyal to me and his descendants will possess the land.* This all took place when the people were only a few miles from entering the land...they were so close... but God would say to the whole nation...turn your back on your destination and spend the next 40 years wandering.  A small group of them tried to go up and fight and they were soundly defeated. Numbers 14.44

We are asking this question in this series of messages..... What do you see? It’s the question on this occasion that Moses asked the 12 people going in. Here is some things that impressed upon me from this story.

1. **God doesn’t give us victories without our effort and working with him to achieve them.**

Each square meter of the land had to be won and fought for. There would be loss of life and battles. The enemies are real and won’t move out unless they are challenged and defeated.

When God promises something it will happen – but the journey towards it can be filled with some trials, testings, and even some defeats. The outcome is for sure but getting there is filled with a wide variety of life experiences.

We have a rose-tinted expectation often that God will deliver us on a plate what he has promised without it costing us anything…but friends this is not true. You only need to read Hebrews 12 and the record of those who are listed there for their exemplary faith that most if not all of them fought their way to victory. And we don’t prevail without intentional participation, prayer, and faith.

1. **The battles we fight and the adversity we face grows us.**

Most of us know that most growth occurs in our lives when we face difficult times. That is when our character is tested and we truly see what is in us. I came across a great quote this week…here it is. ‘One can acquire everything in solitude except character’!  Character is forged and shaped in relationships! Life experiences and people, in particular, are there in your life to shape your character. Sometimes when we face the most difficult times – we grow the most.

**Kintsugi**is a Japanese process for repairing broken objects. Rather than disguising the breakage, they aggrandize the damage by filling the cracks with gold. They believe that when something suffers damage it has a history and its restoration makes it more valuable. The gold is where God has filled your brokenness and your character has been shaped.  Where God has restored and rebuilt us is where the gold shines through. And it is the adversity that has tested you and shaped you to become the person you are. Nothing is wasted! And even the toughest times you come forth as ‘gold’ and what God proves in you is for you to then – invest in others.

1. **There are some choices you make that determine your next season**

There are times when we reap the results of our unbelief and fear and when God will say to us....OK then if that’s what you want, if you allow unbelief and fear to reign in your life then it will, and you will spend time in a spiritual wilderness. And yes you might after some time come back to face the same thing again later, but for now, I have no choice but to let you live with what your heart has determined. Churches who resist and pull back from trusting God – will find spiritual desert, dryness, barrenness, and leanness.  I see a small cloud on the horizon but we have to capture by faith the essence of its message to us and run with it. It will not happen just because your pastor has a good week. It will only happen when spiritual momentum is built up - by believing, thirsty, and hungry people, after more of God and His presence in our midst, than their own comfort!!!

1. **It’s what you ‘see’ that makes the difference…they both saw the same thing but it meant something different to them.**

It’s not what you see it’s *what you think about what you see that matters*. How large are the obstacles in the way of your faith and progress? The key is whether or not God is with you... in you and for you. So you have this strong conviction that with you stands the Almighty. And in faith you say to God – Lord if you are with me we can do this. God if you stand with me – even the biggest giant will not prevail. This is the spirit of Caleb…because he had a ‘different spirit’.

My message today is to stir up among us the spirit of Caleb.  Where do you think Caleb and Joshua learned to have this kind of faith?  They learned it before they went to spy out the land, they learned it in private tuition with their God, and they learned it so that when the time came for them to face these giants they were ready. Courage does not just come on you...it is grown in you before you are asked to display it.  We look at other people and think we can just have what they possess...but we do not know what they have been through to make them into the people they are. They have been through fire....they have been tested, they have faced adversity... and the gold has come forward.

What are your giants this morning? – Who are the Sons of Anak or Nephilim for you? What stands in the way of you really entering into what God has for you?

**Fear of man** – reputation, fear of being different, wanting people's approval – is a giant in some of your lives…today you can be free from it.

**Sickness** in your body – it’s the reason why you pull back from giving God full leadership in your life because you’re miffed that he hasn’t done what you want. It is your way of expressing your displeasure at him. Physical problems that prevent you from serving God. And it’s an obstacle that God wants to deal with or use you through.

**Hardness** of Heart – that you have learned how to live your Christian life but it’s a coat you put on, it’s not authentic deep down, there are values and motivations that rule and reign in you under surface. You’ve developed a relationship with God that suits you, which you’re comfortable with, and you resist anything else. And God wants you to soften your heart before him.

**Unbelief** – that you simply don’t think your life circumstances can change and you have accepted your lot in life to be the way you are.

**Tradition** – that you place a higher value on your past and the things you value there than you do on following God’s direction now in your life.

**Unforgiveness** – That you hold grudges and unforgiveness against people and for things that have happened that you will not release other people from. It’s a giant. Your spiritual life becomes rational, emotionless and there is little joy in your life.

**Pride** – That you have your life sorted and most people aggravate you because they don’t do things your way, your territorial, there is little grace and tolerance for others in your world. You find easy fault with most things other people do. ‘Let me do it my way’ is one of your life mottos.

You see there are plenty of giants in the land. But the real issue is do you see them as obstacles that block you or opportunities for God to do something in your life.

How do you defeat these giants?

1. **Face them** – recognise their hold over you and your thinking.
2. **Name them** – identify them, declare them! Repent from them.
3. **Shame them** – by doing the opposite - Instead of fear exercise faith, unforgiveness/forgiveness, pride/humility, sickness/health, hardness/softness of heart, unbelief/courage and trust in God, adaptability/tradition.….they are the opposite.

We are WELL ABLE to overcome it – With the Spirit of Caleb

Because he SAW a mighty God who was greater than the obstacle

Because he SAW Gods purpose and promise and held onto that

Because he understood that through even the worst crisis God could do something powerful which would have far-reaching consequences.

So we have done three of three of the six ‘What do you see?’ messages.

1. *Recalibrate your thinking* – Not by might, but by my Spirit – **Zechariah**
2. *Review your horizon*....rain coming…**Elijah** servant…small cloud.
3. *Report your sightings*….See giants or mighty God? **Caleb/Joshua**