

## FACING YOUR GIANTS

March 8, 2009

Good Morning,

As I look around the sanctuary this morning, I'm not able to visually pick out any giants that are a threat to any of us. It is also unlikely that if we leave here and go over to Charlie Johns' parking lot, there will be someone standing there who is three or four feet taller than everyone else shouting for the people in Speculator to come over so he can turn them into food for the birds and animals! So for most of us, it is easy to dismiss the tale of David and Goliath as just a nice story that may have happened in the past, but not something we have to worry about in our life time. But, whether we want to admit it or not, we all have faced (or will face) more than one giant in our every day lives. Let's take a look this morning at what some of those giants may be and what kind of weapon we need to be triumphant over them.

What is your definition of giant? In doing some research, I came up with a few. We have already heard scripture describing one of several in the Bible. Here are some definitions from a search on the internet:

- a. A person of extraordinary power, significance, or importance: for example - *a giant in the field of physics*
- b. *From Greek Mythology.* One of a race of humanlike beings of enormous strength and stature.
- c. A being in folklore or myth – Remember the story of Jack and the bean stalk?
- d. A member of a New York NFL football team
- e. A thing of great size. - Marked by exceptionally great size, magnitude, or power: For example - *a giant wave or a giant impact.*

For today's study and thought, let's explore along the line of the last definition – *a thing of great size or magnitude – something making a giant impact.*

Do you remember your first experience with being afraid of anything? One of my early memories goes back to being in bed at night

in the dark – like we talked about in the children’s story. I can remember visioning some kind of creature in the shadows of the room - or thinking something was under the bed – or was looking in the window. My solution was to jump in bed quick and cover up my head. (I guess if I couldn’t see it, it couldn’t get me.) Often I would pray to God that He would keep me and all those I loved safe through the night.

I can remember more experiences with that unknown in the darkness as a teenager. I lived on a dead end road. Often times the school bus would not bring me the last ¼ mile of the way home, and I would have to walk. Many times it was after dark. It is amazing how many things appear to come to life and move around in the shadows. There were even more heart pounding experiences in the woods when hunting - when my Dad and I, or I alone did not allow the proper amount of time to get out of the woods before dark.

*Ps 91: 5 – 7 - -*

*<sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, <sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.*

Well as I stand here today as witness – I survived the darkness and you will too! God is Bigger than the Boogie Man! Psalm 91 assures us that if we believe and trust in God, we will be fine.

As with the darkness issue, I can witness to facing other types of giants because of the experiences I have had in my own life. I need to point out that I’m not here to boast because of what I have been through, but instead to give glory to God for being with me through it all and making me stronger because of it.

Another giant that can be devastating is the strife that comes with the brokenness of divorce or any broken family. I was a successful contractor, married with four children. I was very involved in business, church, community and school activities. I had always been successful in what ever I had done. I knew how it felt to be good at everything I did - to hit the home run to tie the game in the bottom

of the ninth, to score the basket to win the game at the buzzer, to be at the top of my class and to be the leader of my platoon. I had coached one of my son's teams for five years – four of which were undefeated. Then at age 35 there was a sudden turn of events and my life hit rock bottom. The grief was so bad I did not know what to do or where to turn. It was there at the bottom that I prayed for God to come into my life and give it meaning. He did and I have never been the same. He gave me a new, God loving family and a new relationship with Jesus Christ my Savior. Little by little I learned how to trust in the Lord in good times and in bad. I have seen in my life proof of the promise of :

### *Romans 8: 26 - 27*

<sup>26</sup> ----- *the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

<sup>27</sup>*And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*

<sup>28</sup>*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.*

Perhaps the giant you are facing is of a medical nature. Here again I can witness and give praise to God! If you have a problem, pray to our Father with the knowledge that He will be there for you and then sit back and watch to see how He sees you through it all. In 2006, I had a heart attack. I could feel the Lord's reassurance through the whole procedure as I was rushed from one hospital to another and finally into the operating room at Ellis Hospital. Within 9 hours of being diagnosed, I was resting calmly in the recovery room.

Then in 2008, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Again, I prayed to God and knew everything would be ok. The night before surgery, I was at a worship service. Not only did the congregation pray for my healing, but there was also the laying on of hands and anointing with oil by four pastors who were taking part in the service. I knew on the spot I was healed. The next day's surgery was just God's way

of accomplishing the task. Praise God! I stand here today cancer free. We are told in

*Isaiah 43: 1 – 3a -*

<sup>1</sup> - - - - - "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. <sup>2</sup> When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. <sup>3</sup> For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

In 2005, my dad went home to be with Jesus. Several of the members of our congregations have recently lost loved ones. We all grieve with you. That is another giant hurdle to overcome. We all must face the loss of close friends or family members as we go through our lives. It is difficult. But remember - - Jesus understands the earthly loss of loved ones. We read in

*John 11: 32 – 36 -*

<sup>32</sup>When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. <sup>34</sup>"Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

But Jesus also further promises in

*John 14: 1 – 4 -*

*<sup>1</sup>"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God<sup>[a]</sup>; trust also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going."*

Even death is a giant we need not fear, because Jesus has already defeated it. It is not the end for those who believe in Jesus and have accepted Him as their Lord and Savior. (If you have not done so, I encourage you to not delay. See one of our church leaders or our Pastor. Jesus will change your life as he has mine and many others!)

We are all currently faced with another giant. To find out about it, we need only to turn on the TV or read a newspaper. It's hard to ignore the current economic status. But we need not worry about what the world news burdens us with. Opening to

*Luke 12: 22 - 31*

*<sup>22</sup>Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup>Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. <sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! <sup>25</sup>Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life<sup>[b]</sup>? <sup>26</sup>Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"*

*<sup>27</sup>"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup>If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! <sup>29</sup>And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup>For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that*

*you need them. <sup>31</sup>But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*

**The gospels give us countless examples of the many miracles Jesus performed while He was here on earth – conquering all kinds of giants. Let's look at a few:**

### **Mark 2:1-4**

#### **Jesus Heals a Paralytic**

<sup>1</sup>A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup>So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup>Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup>Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

### **Mark 4:39-41**

#### **Jesus Calms the Storm**

<sup>39</sup>He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

<sup>40</sup>He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

<sup>41</sup>They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

### **Mark 10:46-52**

#### **Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight**

<sup>46</sup>Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>47</sup>When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>48</sup>Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>49</sup>Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."

<sup>50</sup>Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

<sup>51</sup>"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

<sup>52</sup>"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

## **Mark 11:20-25**

### **The Withered Fig Tree**

<sup>20</sup>In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. <sup>21</sup>Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"

<sup>22</sup>"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. <sup>23</sup>"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. <sup>25</sup>And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

## **Mark 17:14-20**

### **The Healing of a Boy With a Demon**

<sup>14</sup>When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. <sup>15</sup>"Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. <sup>16</sup>I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

<sup>17</sup>"O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." <sup>18</sup>Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

<sup>19</sup>Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

<sup>20</sup>He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

And what does Paul tell us about faith? - - - - -

## **Hebrews 11:3-12 & 17-19**

### **By Faith**

<sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. <sup>4</sup>By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

<sup>5</sup>By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

<sup>7</sup>By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

<sup>8</sup>By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup>For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

<sup>11</sup>By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered himself faithful who had made the promise. <sup>12</sup>And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

And on to verses 17 – 19:

<sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, <sup>18</sup>even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." <sup>19</sup>Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

## **So what is your understanding from all this?**

### **How do we combat the giants in our lives?**

For me, I go back to the following scriptures:

#### **From Luke 12 Verse 31**

*<sup>31</sup>But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*

#### **From Luke 17 Verse 20 b**

*20. - - - - - "I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

#### **From Luke 11 Verses 24 – 25**

<sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. <sup>25</sup>And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

#### **From Isaiah 43 Verses 1 & 2**

*<sup>1</sup> - - - - - "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. <sup>2</sup> When you pass*

*through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

**And From Mark 12 verses 28 - 31, let's not forget this:**

### **The Greatest Commandment**

<sup>28</sup>One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

<sup>29</sup>"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

<sup>30</sup>Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

<sup>31</sup>The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.

There is no commandment greater than these."

### **My Brothers and Sisters, may we together:**

1. Love our God with all our heart, soul and mind and seek to know and serve Him better.
2. Love our neighbors and treat them as we would want to be treated.
3. Forgive those who mistreat us.
4. Have Faith in God and do not doubt.
5. Have no fear. God will keep His promises!

Amen.

**"The Anchor Holds"**