

THE LORD HELPING ME

Text: [Number 13-14](#)

Key verse: [Joshua 14:12](#)

Opening: Skit Guys – This Time I Mean It

Here we are again staring at the end of an old year ... 2017 is in its final hours

Wondering what this New Year holds in store at the same time hopeful of a fresh new start.

That's a good way to look at this New Year – a chance to press the reset button and begin the year with new hope and possibilities.

With that as a back drop – We turn our attention to a man named ... Caleb

Etymology- (*kelev*) meaning "dog" Hebrew [כָּל](#) (*kal*) "whole, all of" and [לֵב](#) (*lev*) "heart"

In [Joshua 14:12](#) - Caleb is speaking:

And here I am today, eighty-five years old! I'm as strong as I was the day Moses sent me out. I'm as strong as ever in battle, whether coming or going. So give me this hill country that God promised me. You yourself heard the report that the Anakim were there with their great fortress cities. **If God goes with me**, I will drive them out, just as God said."

Caleb is 85 years old and ready rumble – his name fits him

But this New Year's message begins with 45 years ... when Caleb was age 40

The Israelis had walked out of Egypt as free men and women after generations of slavery

But even though they were free in body .. their minds or spirits weren't –they're hearts were still slaves.

As followers of Jesus—we seem to suffer from a similar state of mind –

- The Bible tells us that when we receive Jesus as savior, God forgives and forgets our past
- Yet somehow – we continue to struggle with it –
- God gives us freedom in Jesus, yet we continue to deal with bondage of the past

God had miraculously delivered the Israelis

He gave them a chance for a fresh, new start

But they ended up wandering in circles in the desert of the Sinai Peninsula for 40 years

Following God’s instructions, Moses sent 12 scouts/spies, to check out the land with specific instructions:

1. Assess the people - are they weak or strong? Few or many?
2. Observe the land, is it pleasant or harsh?
3. What are the towns like they live in? Open camps or fortified cities?
4. What the soil like? Fertile or barren

40 days later they return with a Good news and bad news report

When someone tells you they have Good news and bad news ... you’d better get ready disappointment

At the end of the War of 1812, General Andrew Jackson’s army, though heavily outnumbered route British forces, winning the Battle of New Orleans

Only 8 Americans lost their lives, compared to 20,000 British.

That’s good news, so what’s the Bad News?

The Battle should never have been fought ... the war had ended two weeks earlier (but no communications)

A Doctor gives his patient an urgent message ...

“I’ve been trying to reach you all day (says the Doc) I have bad news and worse news, which do you want first?”

“Bad news and worse news – give me the bad news first.”

“You have 24 hrs to live.”

“That’s the bad news? What can be worse news than that?”

“I’ve been trying to reach you since last night!”

All 12 Israeli spies agree on one thing: The land is great ... its flowing with milk and honey

They returned with a cluster of grapes that were so huge, two men had to carry it strapped to a pole

That’s the good news

What’s the Bad News?

Report: [Numbers 13: 27-33 \(MSG\)](#)

²⁷⁻²⁹ “We went to the land to which you sent us and, oh! It *does* flow with milk and honey! Just look at this fruit! The only thing is that the people who live there are fierce, their cities are huge and well fortified. Worse yet, we saw descendants of the giant Anak. Amalekites are spread out in the Negev; Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites hold the hill country; and the Canaanites are established on the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan.”

³⁰ Caleb interrupted, called for silence before Moses and said, “Let’s go up and take the land—now. We can do it.”

³¹⁻³³ But the others said, “We can’t attack those people; they’re way stronger than we are.” They spread scary rumors among the People of Israel. They said, “We scouted out the land from one end to the other—it’s a land that swallows people whole. Everybody we saw was huge. Why, we even saw the Nephilim giants (the Anak giants come from the Nephilim). Alongside them we felt like grasshoppers. And they looked down on us as if we were grasshoppers.”

Talk about throwing a wet blanket on things

[Numbers 14:6-12 \(MSG\)](#)

⁶⁻⁹ Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, members of the scouting party, ripped their clothes and addressed the assembled People of Israel: “The land we walked through and scouted out is a very good land—very good indeed. **If God is pleased with us**, he will lead us into that land, a land that flows, as they say, with milk and honey. And he’ll give it to us. Just don’t rebel against God! And don’t be afraid of those people. Why, we’ll have them for lunch! They have no protection and God is on our side. Don’t be afraid of them!”

¹⁰But, up in arms now, the entire community was talking of hurling stones at them.

Twelve guys all saw the same thing but their reports are tragically different!

And somehow people seem to gravitate to bad news more than good

All you have to do is watch nightly news – what does their reporting reflect good news or bad?

Movie : *Master and Commander* - Jen and I walked out of the movie theater talking about what a great production it was:

- Sound, story - special effects – acting
- Walking just ahead of us were two guys saying the exact opposite: What a waste of time that's got to be the worst movie I've ever seen!

We just shook our heads – asking ourselves ... were we sitting in the same theater ?

People see things differently: However, the 10 spies who terrified the people with the bad news their names are never mentioned again in the Bible

Unlike Caleb and Joshua, their legacy was to die in the desert over the next 40 years.

The difference between the two reports is ... *Perspective*

Listen to the perspective of the Ten:

A land that swallows people whole. Everybody we saw was huge. Why, we even saw the Nephilim giants. Alongside them we felt like grasshoppers. And they looked down on us as if we were grasshoppers."

Listen to the perspective of the two:

Caleb: "Let's go up and take the land—now. We can do it."

Caleb and Joshua: **If GOD is pleased with us**, he will lead us into that land ... he'll give it to us. ... don't be afraid of those people. ... we'll have them for lunch! They have no protection and God is on our side. Don't be afraid of them!"

Guide Posts article - *50 States – 50 Lawns*

Story about Rodney Smith Jr.,

- His goal was to cut 40 lawns by November – he cut 100.
- His mission was picked up by social media soon 150 inspired kids jumped in to help
- Rodney formed a nonprofit organization, Raising Men Lawn Care Servicing all 50 states
- And it all started because he decided to take a different way home one day or did he make a choice to not only listen but obey the inner voice of the Holy Spirit?

Caleb and Joshua listed only one condition for entering the promised land ... **If God is pleased with us**

Translation, don't exclude God from the equation –

We can't do this without God but if we let Him lead us I – we can do anything

Eugene Peterson writes:

Faith has to do with marrying the invisible and the visible. When we engage in an act of faith as Caleb did, we give up insisting that head knowledge is our primary means of understanding. Faith isn't a conclusion we come to simply on the basis of what we see. It's a conclusion we come to on the basis of *who God is*. And that fusing of the visible with the invisible gives us a different way of looking at the world around us.

Today is New Year's Eve ...we all want a fresh start but we're concerned about the giants lurking out there ready to stop us

1. Illness
2. Emotional, physical, weakness
3. Family trouble
4. Finances
5. Fear of the unknown

Like some of you I've been wrestling with a giant this past year, and for awhile it seemed to be getting the best of me –

But in the wee hours of the morning this past week, Holy Spirit reminded me of a past adventure

I call it the M J escapade ...

You didn't do that John – I did!

If I took care of that – won't I be faithful to take care of this?

Fast forward 45 years and listen to the words of Caleb again:

And here I am today, eighty-five years old! I'm as strong as I was the day Moses sent me out. I'm as strong as ever in battle, So give me this hill country that GOD promised me. You yourself heard the report that the Anakim were there with their great fortress cities. **If GOD goes with me**, I will drive them out, just as GOD said."

Jesus told his disciples He would send them the Holy Spirit

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. -

[Acts 1:8](#) NLT

Caleb's strength came from the Holy Spirit working through him, alongside of him – turning Giants into dwarfs

On January 10th a Bible study will begin here at church about the Holy Spirit – The God I Never Knew

Two types of voices command your attention today. Negative ones fill your mind with doubt, bitterness, and fear. Positive ones purvey hope and strength. Which one will you choose to heed? **Max Lucado**

We don't need another New Year resolution ... We need new perspective

A healthy dose of life faith connected to the promise of the Holy Spirit's involvement in our life