

“What Do You See?”  
Sunday, June 28, 2009  
By Pastor Peter F. Paine

One of the biggest challenges we face as Christians can be found in the way we view things. We have to trust in God and know that what we see on the surface, or even our feelings may be completely wrong. Victory is found in a Godly perspective. Pastor Paine started this sermon by asking “Do you see what God wants you to see, and do you see things how He wants you to see them?”

In this sermon, Pastor Paine focused on three things:

1. How the same group of people saw the same thing very differently
2. Our need for God’s perspective
3. How we choose to deal with challenges

Overhaulin’ is a popular show on the Speed Network. The concept is that someone who has a car that is on its last leg is set up to believe that it has been stolen. While they file police reports and lament the loss of their car, a team of experts takes it and overhaul everything from the frame up. Then, owner is taken to see their completely redone car. They are so overwhelmed with joy that they completely forget that they were so upset at the beginning of the process. If the car owner knew at the beginning of the show that their car was not stolen, but off being restored, they would have a very different view of what was happening. They would be excited and looking forward to what was going to happen next, but without that knowledge their reaction is very different.

Overhaulin’ can give us a glimpse into how God might view us sometimes. If we only knew what He’s doing, we would have such a different reaction to our circumstances.

Numbers 13:1-3

1. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2. Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.
3. And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men [were] heads of the children of Israel.

In verse two, we see that God had already given the land to the Children of Israel. This wasn’t something he promised to do in the future. It was already done. The only stipulation was that the Children of Israel had to move forward and take the gift.

Numbers 13:17-21

17. And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this [way] southward, and go up into the mountain:
18. And see the land, what it [is]; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they [be] strong or weak, few or many;
19. And what the land [is] that they dwell in, whether it [be] good or bad; and what cities [they be] that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;
20. And what the land [is], whether it [be] fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time [was] the time of the firstripe grapes.
21. So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

The leaders that were being sent to spy out the land may not have known that God had already given them this land. God told Moses, but in this chapter we have to indication if Moses told the leaders or not. Sometimes, God wants to give us something, and we just don't know it yet.

Think of Mary and Joseph in the months before their marriage. This is an ultimate example of knowing that God has a plan, and enduring difficult circumstances until the outcome plays out. Imagine being an engaged man who has never been with his wife, and she's pregnant! Or, imagine being a virgin who is about to get married and having to tell you fiancé that you're going to be having a baby and it's not his! Neither of those situations are easy, but God put both Mary and Joseph in those positions because he was about to give them something, they just didn't know what or how.

### The same group of people saw the same thing very differently:

#### Numbers 13: 26-33

26. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

27. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this [is] the fruit of it.

28. Nevertheless the people [be] strong that dwell in the land, and the cities [are] walled, [and] very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

29. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

30. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they [are] stronger than we.

32. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature.

33. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, [which come] of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

The only difference between Caleb and the rest of the spies that went to check out the land was simply in what they focused on. They all went into the same land, at the same time, saw the same cities, and saw the same people. The difference was in their focus. Caleb focused on the prize. The rest focused on the problem. If you aren't sure where your focus is, try asking God this question: "What is it that you want me to see, and how do you want me to react to the things I'm facing?"

The spies that returned with an evil report were full of fear about what they saw, and the people who were already in the land. If they were football players, the spies might have said, "I want the ball, but I don't want anyone to chase me. For that matter, I certainly don't want anyone to try to tackle me" That's not the way it works. If the spies were living in today's times, and chatting with us in the church fellowship hall, it might have sounded like this, "I want a victory, but I really can't stand the battles I have to fight to get to them".

The reason the report of how they could not take the land was described as evil because they didn't seek God's perspective. They just gave in to their fears and gave up.

### We need God's perspective to have passion, and we need passion to have victory.

In order to follow Christ, we need passion. Living a true Christian life is one of the most passionate endeavors anyone can ever take on. Without the passion for God and his will in our lives, we will quickly run out of gas along our way. It's not enough to just do the right thing and go through the motions. We have to have passion to live for God and make a difference.

The difference between Caleb and the others was that he had the passion to go into battle. He was not about to be deterred by some big strong guys living in the land already. Caleb was ready to fight for what God wanted to give him.

#### Numbers 13:30

30. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

Pastor Paine asked each of us to ask ourselves the difficult question: "Am I passionate enough to go into battle, or am I busy looking for excuses not to go?" This is a strong indicator of how our passion is doing.

### How we choose to deal with challenges

Challenge is a fact. We do not have any say in whether or not we will face challenges in our life. We will. But we do have the choice of how we will deal with those challenges.

Have you ever found yourself in a poison where you started to get bitter about what was going on around you? Many of us have been there. If you have, you may have noticed that once you got a bit of that attitude it was fueled by the people around you. Everyone got a little more bitter than you thought they were before. Most people would listen and then realize they felt the same way. That is an easy way to spin out of control and become consumed by bitterness.

Our attitude is a magnet. If we find ourselves surrounded by negative people, maybe we're the hub of that wheel. But if we change our attitude, it will be amazing to see what new attitudes we can attract! The best way to change our attitude is to ask God for more passion for him in our lives. Once we start to focus on God and living a life that is pleasing to Him, things start to fall into place.

#### Proverbs 3:5-6

5. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Once we acknowledge God in every aspect of our lives, we can have that right focus and start to gain God's perspective.

#### Hebrews 12:1-3

1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin

which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

#### Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Challenge will always be there, but if we focus like Jesus did while he was on earth, we can make it through. He knew his life was to serve a purpose. He was here to die for our sins and then go prepare a place for those of us who serve him with our whole heart. Because he knew that, he got through the ultimate challenge of giving his life for us.

Challenges are not here to make us weaker or punish us. God has an expected end for each of us. We just have to be strong and keep our focus on him.

#### Matthew 28:19-20

19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.

This section in Matthew shows us what we need to be doing with our lives as we get through challenges. This is our purpose. This is what our passion must be tied to: teaching the gospel.