

I. Introduction

- A. Listen to this report. The words are straight from the Bible.
- B. Twelve men have just returned from spying out the land God promised them, and they hold the proof in their hands.
 - 1. *"Then they [12 spies] told him, and said: 'We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.'" (Numbers 13:27)*
- C. Four verses earlier, it says that they found one cluster of grapes on a vine so big, that it took two soldiers to carry it. "This is its fruit!"
- D. This is the report of the spies... and it's so exciting. For one fleeting moment, they believe that future abundance is real! The potential is massive! The promise is not a fantasy!
 - 1. God's vision for their Future Selves was not just a place, but a new identity.
 - a) God gave them a line that he repeated over and over: "A land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8, Leviticus 20:24, Numbers 13:27, Deuteronomy 6:3). This wasn't just poetry.
 - (1) Milk represented abundance, prosperity, and life. It spoke of lush pastures and healthy livestock. It was the picture of stable prosperity.
 - (2) Honey represented sweetness, delight, and natural blessing. It was the picture of a land so fertile and good that joy dripped from the trees.
 - 2. Then God filled in the picture with rich detail. It was...
 - a) A "good and spacious land" (Exodus 3:8) — a direct contrast to their cramped slavery back in Egypt.
 - b) A land of ownership and rest, where they would have their own homes, vineyards, and wells (Deuteronomy 6:10-11) — a contrast to their homelessness of their slavery and their wanderings.
 - c) A land of incredible variety and fruitfulness: "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey" (Deuteronomy 8:8).
 - 3. God was painting a picture of them as Heirs of a kingdom. Not dependents. Not victims. Not slaves. But possessors of riches above all they could ask or think.
- E. But then comes the pivot. The voice of four hundred years of slavery comes roaring back, and it always starts with one word: "BUT."
 - 1. *"BUT the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak [giants] there."* (Numbers 13:28)
- F. That sound you hear is the sound of a future self drowning and fighting to stay afloat.
 - 1. It is the voice that acknowledges heaven's promise, but bows before earth's problem.
 - 2. It's the voice that says, "Yes, God's future is beautiful, BUT earth's giants are just too big."
- G. And it culminates in the most tragic, soul-crushing self-portrait ever painted. Listen to their confession:
 - 1. *"There we saw the giants... and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."* (Numbers 13:33)
- H. STOP. Do you hear that? That is the lie that locks a person in a wilderness. That is the curse you put on yourself to forfeit a future. They looked at the giants, and instead of saying, Oh, a giant? That just makes them bigger targets for God!
- I. Instead of that, they said, we are just too small.
 - 1. Grasshoppers. That was their identity. And therefore, that was their destiny. Because don't you know that your identity shapes your destiny. To embrace the label of grasshopper is to embrace the destiny of a desert.

II. Three Voices

- A. There are three voices speaking into every human soul. They're speaking to your soul right now, today. These are the voices of...
 - 1. **Your Past Self, your Present Self, and your Future Self.**
- B. Your Past Self is whispering the grasshopper story in your ear, pointing to the giants of your addiction, your fear, your inadequacy, your traumas, heartbreaks, losses, and failures.
- C. But your Future Self is describing a very different possibility. Your future self can see on the horizon your very own Promised Land.
 - a) Abundance, prosperity, and life. Sweetness, delight, and natural blessing. A life so good that joy drips from the trees.
 - b) Your Future self is designed for this land.
- 2. Your Father in heaven adds his own voice, and he declares over YOU today: This is how I see you, he says. A God-blessed life. An abundant life.
 - a) This is your victory, your glory, your destiny, your story, your hope. This is your massive potential as a child of God, a child of heaven, a child of mine. And your future self is saying, yes, please, that's for me.
- 3. Your Past Self is whispering the grasshopper story in your ear, pointing to the giants of your addiction, your fear, your inadequacy. Those Jews in those days had four hundred years of slavery baked into the mindset of their collective Past Self. That's hard to rise above.
- D. So all there is now is your Present Self. And the choice for you to make today is whether your Present Self chooses to listen to your Past Self or your Future Self. Your past self dragging you back, slowing you down, over-cautious, over-vigilant, overly afraid. Or your future self, full of hope and faith and the cry, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.
- E. So there they are, 2 million people at the edge of the promised land. They get recon from their spies: this place is awesome. This place is also infested with giants.
 - 1. Two voices. Two orientations. Two destinies.
 - a) *"Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.' But the [spies] who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.'" (Numbers 13:30-31)*
 - 2. Two voices. Two orientations. Two destinies hanging in the balance.
- F. Your Future Self (freedom and abundance) or your Past Self (slavery and scarcity).

- G. The umpire is your Present Self. Here today, you choose. You decide. You determine whether you go in circles in the wilderness of your past or conquer the glories of the territory of your future.
- H. What did that generation choose?
 - 1. *"So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night."* (Numbers 14:1)
 - a) And they blamed God for trying to kill them. And they blamed their leaders for lying to them. And they said:
 - 2. *"So they said to one another, 'Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.'"* (Numbers 14:4)
- I. And you read that and you say... why on earth would anybody ever choose to go back into slavery.
- J. And my message today is that some of you are doing that exact same thing today... BUT
 - 1. ...but you don't have to. There is another way.

III. Series Intro

- A. That other way is the way of the Apostle Paul.
- B. Paul was a man who knew a thing or two about giants.
 - 1. He was a man with a past so powerful it could have crushed him. But he refused to live like a grasshopper.
- C. From a Roman prison cell, he wrote a letter soaked in defiant joy, a letter that serves as the foundation for our whole series. That is this letter in the Bible called Philippians. We are listening to God's voice through this letter week by week, and going verse by verse.
- D. The series is called: **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't.**
- E. And his message to you today is part 15 in this series. I hope it becomes the daily marching orders for your Present Self:
 - 1. **Quit Short-Changing Your Future Self.**
- F. Our key verse for today:
 - 1. *"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 3:14)

IV. The Prize

- A. Let's define the prize.
- B. I want this to become a furnace, forging a new, white-hot vision of the future in your heart.
- C. So what is this "prize" Paul is running for?
- D. The word in the original Greek is *brabeion*, and you need to understand, this is no plastic trophy on a dusty shelf. This word is packed with fire and glory.
 - 1. To a citizen of the Roman Empire, a *brabeion* could be an honor bestowed by the Emperor himself! It was a mark of imperial favor, a declaration from the most powerful man in the world that you were valued, chosen, and set apart.
 - 2. In a court of law, the *brabeion* was the verdict of vindication! It was the moment the judge slammed the gavel and declared you innocent, righteous, and free. Your prize is the final, public declaration from the Judge of all creation that because of Jesus, the giants of your past have no legal claim on you. You are NOT GUILTY! You are VINDICATED!
 - 3. The philosophers of Paul's day saw the prize as a state of inner peace. In this sense, the prize is the vibrant, pulsating, joyful life of God Himself filling your soul!
- E. So what is this prize? Here's my definition:
 - 1. **The PRIZE is the maximum actualization of your massive potential as a child of God!**
 - 2. It is you becoming all that you can be.
 - 3. It is you exploiting your God-given rights, using your God-given privileges, spending your God-given treasures, employing your God-given powers, rising up to your God-given identity, and living your God-given dreams. That's the prize.
 - 4. The prize is you becoming the person Christ saw when He laid hold of you.
 - 5. For short: **The PRIZE is a Future Self, fully and gloriously alive.**
- F. THAT is the prize. Not half-hearted. Not settling. Not full of regrets. And not ever seeing yourself as a grasshopper.

V. Meet Your Future Self

- A. Let's pull back the curtain on the massive, latent potential that is your birthright as a child of the King.
- B. I want to give you a biblical and a prophetic declaration of the person you were created to become.
 - 1. The prize is a **MIND AT PEACE**. It is you, waking up in the morning and the first thing you feel is not the familiar, crushing weight of anxiety, but a deep, quiet stillness in your soul. It is the end of the war in your head. It is the silencing of the inner critic that has tormented you for years. It is the eviction of depression's dark shadow and the dawning of a deep, resilient joy that does not need perfect circumstances to shine. It is the silencing of the voices, the quelling of the fears, and ousting of the lies that dark forces are pressing on you your whole life long. *Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*
 - 2. The prize is a **PSYCHOLOGY MADE WHOLE**. It is the final, definitive end of the constant thought of ending it all. It is the severing of those obsessions with people who hurt you or owe you... no more checking their social media, just a heart that is moving on and ready to love from a place of strength, not desperation. It is the end of you being dominated by guilt and shame. It is you, walking with your head held high, forgiven, provisioned, enriched, accepted, empowered, and triumphant, living with the profound freedom of a clear conscience. *Romans 8:1 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
 - 3. The prize is a **HEART THAT RADIATES LIFE & LOVE**. It is you, becoming a source of supernatural love for your family and your friends. You no longer just reacting to the drama, but setting a new atmosphere of grace, forgiveness, and peace. You are the safe harbor. You are the one whose presence brings calm to the chaos. You show up, and the demons flee, and the love of God prevails. *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* (John 7:38)
 - 4. The prize is a **SPIRIT OF ABUNDANCE**. It is the death of the grasshopper's scarcity and the birth of the heir's confidence, knowing your Father owns the riches of the cosmos, and he delights to provide for His children. It is a life of divine supply, where your needs are met, your generosity overflows, and you are a conduit for His blessing to the world. *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10)

5. The prize is a **A GOOD NEWS LIFE-PURPOSE**, so that you will not rest until everyone you know comes to find the same incredible treasure that you found when you found Christ. *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)
6. THIS is the prize. A sound mind. A whole heart. A life-giving spirit. A destiny of abundance. Love, joy, peace. THIS is the Future Self calling your name. THIS is the person you were born to be.
- C. And if you think that's too big, too out of reach, and too ambitious, then (a) you're still listening your Past Self which is your Overbearing Inner Nanny determined to keep you sucking a binky forever... and (b) you don't believe even 50 percent of Ephesians 3:20:
 1. *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,"* (Ephesians 3:20)
 - a) And even less of Phil 4:13:
 2. *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13)
- D. Christian you need to dream bigger, because when it comes to your future self, you have a Father who has ordained that when your future self reaches for the stars, the stars themselves will reach down to you. And that is not just poetry.
- E. That is the second part of Paul's secret. Because this prize is not something you achieve by gritting your teeth and trying harder. This prize is the result of a supernatural force pulling you forward. Paul calls it "the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
- F. Let's break this down.
- VI. The Upward Call
 - A. First, it is an **UPWARD** call. Your Past Self, the grasshopper voice, is always trying to drag you down. It wants to pull you back into the mud of your old mistakes, your old habits, your old shame. It is a voice with a downward gravitational pull.
 1. But God's call is UPWARD! It is a divine summons to rise above your history. It is an elevator out of the basement of your past. It is a call to a higher altitude, a supernatural, transcendent perspective, compared to the timeline of eternity.
 - B. Second, it is a **CALL**, and that is the polar opposite of being DRIVEN. There is a world of difference between the two.
 1. Being driven is the energy of your Past Self.
 2. It's being pushed by the ghosts of your past—the fear of failure, the shame of your mistakes, the desperate need to prove you're not who you used to be.
 3. Being driven is the exhausting energy of a slave running from a whip.
 - C. But being CALLED is the energy of your Future Self.
 1. It is the magnetic pull of a glorious possibility.
 2. It is being drawn forward by the beauty of the prize.
 3. It is the hopeful energy of an heir running toward his inheritance.
 - a) You are driven by the deficits of your past.
 - b) You are called by the possibilities of your future.
 - D. This is the upward call **OF GOD!** This comes from God.
 1. This does not mean God erases what YOU want.
 2. When God saved you, He didn't break your will; He restored your will!
 - a) He didn't amputate your desires; He sanctified them!
 - b) The "call of God" is not God handing you a script you don't want to follow.
 - c) The "call of God" is you, looking at the prize—that vision of you, fully alive, free, and at peace—and saying with your whole heart, "YES! That is what I want!"
 3. And in that moment, God the Father puts His hand on your shoulder and breathes His divine power into your desire. It is His divine "AMEN!" to the cry of your heart for more. It is His power coming alongside your will, turning your "I want" into "I can."
 - E. It is the upward call of God **IN CHRIST JESUS**. You plus Jesus. You in Jesus and Jesus in you.
 1. Christianity is you being joined to Christ.
 - a) *"But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."* (1 Corinthians 6:17)
 - b) THEREFORE...
 2. *"As He is, so are we in this world."* (1 John 4:17)
 - a) His identity is your identity.
 - b) His riches are your riches.
 - c) His privileges are your privileges.
 - d) His righteousness is your righteousness.
 - e) His nature is your nature.
 - f) His name is your name.
 - g) His inheritance is your inheritance.
 - h) His authority is your authority.
 - i) His eternity is your eternity.
 - j) His powers are your powers.
 - k) His blessing is your blessing.
 - l) His birthright is your birthright.
 - m) His joy is your joy.
 - n) His peace is your peace.
 - o) His mission is your mission.
 - p) His glory is your glory.
 - q) His history is your history.

- r) His destiny is your destiny.
- s) His potential is your potential...
 - (1)and he actualized all of it.
- t) All of which blows the lid off of your massive potential as a child of God.
 - (1) What can't you accomplish? What can't you enjoy? What is impossible?
 - (a) Quit telling yourself I Can't. Quit Short changing Your Future Self.
- u) **"But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him.'" (1 Corinthians 2:9)**
- v) **"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us," (Ephesians 3:20)**
- w) **"Oh, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You." (Jeremiah 32:17)**
- x) **"I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You." (Job 42:2)**
- y) **"But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" (Matthew 19:26)**
- z) **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)**
 - (1) O Child of God...
 - (a) Dream bigger. Believe better. Reach higher. Pray bolder. Strive stronger.

VII. A Question

- A. So let me ask you a question.
 - 1. What dream have you abandoned because it just felt too big, too out of reach?
 - 2. What hope have you quietly tucked away on a shelf in your soul to gather dust?
 - 3. What prayer have you stopped praying because the silence on the other end became too deafening?
 - 4. What desire has been forgotten for so long you can barely remember what it felt like?
- B. I am calling you to a resurrection today.
- C. I am calling you to go back to the graveyard of your abandoned dreams and call forth the things you left for dead.
 - 1. I am calling you to the impossible, to the audacious, to the "they'll think I'm crazy" vision for your life...
 - a) **...Because the only person who can rescue your Future Self from a mediocre existence is your Present Self, stepping up to the plate today and swinging for the bleachers.**
 - b) **And you can do it, because nothing is impossible for God.**
- D. So I look out at this room, and I have to ask: What incredible future stories are sitting here right now, just waiting to be actualized?
 - 1. I see a family reunion that everyone said was impossible, with forgiveness flowing like a river and decades of bitterness washed away.
 - 2. I see a son or daughter, the one you've been weeping over for years, standing with clean hands, in worship, their heart finally, miraculously, home.
 - 3. I see a marriage, not just surviving, but thriving, so full of laughter, passion, and grace that it becomes a beacon of hope for everyone who knows you.
 - 4. I see a business, not just built on profit, but on purpose, that becomes a force for good, a beacon of integrity and generosity in your city.
 - 5. I see a chain of addiction, a generational curse that has plagued your family for a hundred years, broken. Shattered. Once and for all.
 - 6. I see a book being written, a song being sung, a piece of art being created, a career pursued, a date you went on... something, anything, that will reveal the beauty of God to a world that is starved for it.
 - a) These are not fantasies. This is the prize. This is the Promised Land waiting for you. This is the Future Self that Christ died to give you.
 - (1) So quit telling yourself you can't. Quit short-changing your future.
- E. The prize is waiting. See it. Believe it. Press on. By grace, press on.

VIII. Prayer

- A. Father, God of their Future, I lift up to you every person in this room, every soul listening to my voice.
- B. I pray for those who have been living in the shadow of their Past Self, who have believed the grasshopper story for so long it feels like the only truth. Right now, in the authority of Jesus' name, I ask you to silence that condemning voice. Let the call of their glorious future, the prize you have set before them, be so loud and so clear that it drowns out all the lies of the past.
- C. Holy Spirit, I ask you to go into the graveyards of their hearts and begin a resurrection.
 - 1. Where a marriage is on life support, I pray for a miraculous reconciliation. Breathe new love, new forgiveness, new life into that home.
 - 2. Where a career has become a dead end, I pray for you to open a door that no man can shut. I pray for better jobs, with better pay, for a spirit of abundance to replace the spirit of scarcity.
 - 3. Where a son or daughter is wandering in a far country, I pray for them to come to their senses and for the porch light of a parent's love to guide them home.
 - 4. Where a body is broken by sickness, I pray for your healing power to flow.
 - 5. Where a dream has been abandoned, I pray you would breathe on the embers of that forgotten calling and ignite it into a holy fire.
- D. Father, send them out from this place not as grasshoppers, but as the giant-slayers and heirs of the promise you have declared them to be. Give them the courage, starting this afternoon, to press on.
- E. In the mighty and resurrecting name of Jesus, I pray.
- F. Amen.