

HAMMOND FIRST BAPTIST PULPIT

Sunday Morning Sermon January 11, 1970

“Giants or Grasshoppers”

By Dr. Jack Hyles

Chapter 3

“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19

All of you who have attended here for any number of months are aware of the fact that I served in World War II as a paratrooper. One thing they told us when we would jump was never to look down, but always to look up. We would stand in the door of the airplane and they would say, “Ready, jump.”

We would stand in the door of the airplane. The first man would put his hands just outside the door. He would put his feet and knees together, bend his knees slightly, and look toward the horizon, always looking up, never looking down. If you look down, you become fearful and discouraged, and oftentimes you would not jump.

There is something else they told us. We had what we called “risers” on our chutes. Risers were four sets of lines — one going this way toward this side of the chute, one going this way toward this side of the chute, one out this way, and one out this way — with which you guided the chute.

If you wanted to go forward you pulled down the two front risers, which caused the wind to blow you forward. If you wanted to go backward, you pulled down the back set of risers, causing the parachute to tilt, and the wind would blow the chute backward. If you wanted to go right, you pulled down these two and the wind would blow into the chute and tilt it that way. If you wanted to go left, you pulled these two risers. The chute would tilt this way and the wind would blow you to the left. That is how a good parachutist can pick out his landing spot.

So many times people say, “Well, how do you know you will not land in a tree?” If you are watching carefully, you can miss the tree. Once you start to land, have your spot picked out within 50 to 100 feet of the ground. The instructions were

But Moses made a mistake. Moses should have said, "Let's go. Follow me." But, no, Moses appointed a committee of twelve people. These twelve men were to go to the Promised Land, find out about the possibility of its conquest, and come back and report to Moses and the people.

Well, they chose these twelve people. They went out to the Promised Land, looked at it, came back and said, "Boy, it is a wonderful place. It's a land that flows with milk and honey. It's a wonderful land. But," ten of them said, "those people we saw, the sons of Anak there, were giants! We were like grasshoppers in their sight. Put us beside them and we are like a grasshopper beside giants. No, we can't go in. We're like grasshoppers in their sight."

Now follow me. It became a slogan. It became a byword. It became a colloquialism. The Jews would talk about the grasshopper and the giant. Oh, like we would say, "That dirty buzzard." Or, "He's a flirt," "He's a wolf." Or here's a fellow who's pretty mean — "He's a tiger." Or here's a fellow who's pretty big — and I dare not look around now — they'd say, "Boy, he's as big as an elephant."

Now, in those days, if a fellow had a battle with someone who was overrated, (when there was a mismatch) instead of saying "heavy favorite," they would say: "He's a grasshopper in his sight. He's a giant in his sight." It became a constant byword. When there would be a fellow as a grasshopper up beside a giant, instead of calling one, "You little pip squeak. You runt. You weasel." That's the way you would put it. They would say, "You grasshopper." Or instead of saying, "You big bully," they would say, "You big giant!" Giants and grasshoppers became symbolic of weaklings and strong men. Samson would have been a giant, you see.

Here is something interesting. Now follow this. Years pass, and a little ruddy-faced boy is watching his flock in the field. His brothers are on the battlefield. His father, whose name is Jesse, sends the little ruddy-faced runt — David is his name — to the battlefield to take some okra and squash and turnip greens to his brothers on the battlefield. (That's in the Greek. If you want Hebrew, you won't get that in the "original language" now — the okra, squash, and turnip greens, etc.) He says, "I want you to take some victuals to the front lines for your brothers."

Here goes little old David up to the front lines and he hears a noise. The earth is shaking and he says, "What do I hear?" Over on the other side there is a great Philistine. His name is Goliath. The Philistine stands up and breaths out threats against all the Jewish army, and he challenges the Jews: "Send a man to fight against me, the one who wins, his army shall be victorious!" Oh, the Jews are trembling.

Saul is the king, and Saul refuses to fight. He is the one who should have fought, but he refuses. Then little David says, "Let me go up and lick the big fellow."

Saul says, "Why, David, you couldn't do that." His brothers laughed at him and say, "You go on home." Though in the English you don't usually find this, it is generally agreed by scholars that David looked across and said, "Are you going to be afraid of that grasshopper?"

What? Goliath was six cubits and a span tall — nine feet, nine inches. Now a cubit is the distance between the bend of the arm and the tip of the finger. For a small lady, that would be about 15 inches. For a big man, it would be about 23 or 24 inches. For an average man, it would be about 21 inches. Mine is 21 inches. But generally it was understood that a cubit was 18 inches. Now if a fellow is six cubits high — that is a foot-and- one-half per cubit — that's nine feet. A span is about nine inches. That means he was at least nine feet, nine inches tall.

He had a helmet of brass on his head. He had a shield across his shoulders. He had a coat of mail. He had greaves or coverings on his legs. He had a spear, the Bible says, like a weaver's beam. He had everything covered; probably the only things visible were his eyes.

Now, if you can, picture the obstacle David faced: a giant, nine feet, nine inches tall, completely covered by protection, with armor, and with a spear in his hands like a weaver's beam. Little David walks up with a slingshot and five stones and says, "Let me take care of that grasshopper!" (That is like walking up to Cassius Clay and saying, "You little weasel!" And I'd like to take a chance at that, by the way.) He said he was a grasshopper.

Now follow me. Here was the giant of the giants. These ten men at Kadesh Barnea said, "We are like grasshoppers in their sight!" But David said, "He is a grasshopper in my sight." Well, I guess it depends on how you look at it, doesn't it?

Look at the same fellow. One person says he's a giant. The other person says he's a grasshopper. It all depends on how you look at it.

Here are two young people. They are seniors in high school. They want to go to a Christian college. One of them says, "I can't afford it. Maybe I can go for awhile, but I can't go for long." The other looks at that same college with the same obstacles, the same problems, the same financial needs, and says, "I am going to go! No trouble at all!" One looks at the obstacle and says, "It's a giant." The other says, "It's a grasshopper." It depends on how you look at it. What is the difference? God is the difference.

Here are two people who face heartache or a burden. In 1970 there is some heartache to be faced. One looks at it and says, "It's a giant." The other looks at it and says, "It's a grasshopper." Same problem, same heartache, same type person, but one looks at it and says, "A giant." The other looks at it with God and says, "A grasshopper."

Here are two people who face a task - the building of a Sunday school class, the building of a bus route, the building of a department in the Sunday school. Two people look at the same task and one says, "It can't be done. Compared to me, a grasshopper, it is a giant." The other says, "It can be done. To me the problem looks like a grasshopper." It depends on how you look at it. One looks with God, the other does not.

Here are two preachers - both face the same field, the same city, have the same streets on which to serve, the same houses on whose doors they knock, the same type people and the same area. One fellow says, "I cannot build a church in that city. It's like a giant task." The other looks at it and says, "I can build a church there. It's like a grasshopper." Why? Because one has God.

Here are two people who look at tithing. They make the same salary and have the same size family. One says, "I cannot afford to tithe. It's too big a task, too big a hurdle. It's a giant to me. How could I afford it? How could I pay my bills?" The other says, "I cannot afford not to tithe. I must tithe. It is no hurdle for me. God can take care of me. It's only a grasshopper as far as I'm concerned." What is the difference? The difference is God.

Here are two people who look at a death, their own death. In 1970 some of you will die. Some of us will die in 1970. Someone here this morning will not be here a year from today. Someone this morning, who has no thought in this world that you'll be in eternity in a year, will be gone in 1970. Next year on this Sunday when we meet here, you will not be here. Your body will lie beneath the sod, and your soul will be thrown out into eternity to meet your God and to meet your Maker. You will have to face God. One of us, some of us, will face God in 1970.

Last year, and every year, I make a statement about like this: There are people who are in Heaven, who are in eternity today, whose bodies lie in a cemetery in this city, who sat here one year ago today just like you sit here now with no thought of death, no thought of its being them; but they are gone!

Here are two people who face death. One says, "Oh, no! Death is like a great giant before me." Here's another who says, "I don't want to die. I don't necessarily want to die now; but if I do, I'll be with the Lord Jesus Christ." One says, "It's a giant." The other says, "It's a grasshopper."

They will be buried in the same cemetery. They'll use the same funeral home. The same preacher will preach their funeral messages, the same singer, perhaps, will sing in the same auditorium or chapel. Yet, one person sees death as a giant, and one sees death as a grasshopper. What is the difference? God!

May I say to you: Whatever your obstacle is this year, whatever burden you face this year, whatever problem you will solve this year, whatever question you must answer this year, whatever burden you must bear this year, it can be to you a

giant or a grasshopper. The great difference depends on whether you include God. Now follow me.

Here ten men with three-and-one-half million folks behind them say, "We cannot go up. We are like grasshoppers in their sight, and they are like giants."

There is one little, ruddy-faced boy who has the blessing and power of God on him and he says, "I'll lick that big giant. Let him be nine feet, nine inches tall. Let him have a spear like a weaver's beam. Let him have his legs covered with his greaves. Let him have a coat of mail covering his body. Let him have his shield covering his chest. I don't care."

Little David walks up and Goliath says, "You are going to fight me? You? Why, I'll serve you to the fowls of the air. They'll be eating your flesh in just a little while." Little David looks across at Goliath and looks up at that nine-foot nine-inch frame of his and says, "I've got news for you. All you have is a spear like a weaver's beam. All you have is a coat of armor covering every part of your body. I've come to you in the Name of the Lord."

Goliath said, "I'll feed you to the fowls before the sun goes down." David said, "Big boy, the fowls are going to have a bigger lunch than they planned. They're not going to eat a little Jew; they are going to eat a big Philistine." Goliath, I am sure, would have said something like this: "Where are you going to hit me? All I've got is a little spot here so I can see." David said, "Look quick, boy. Look quick. You're a grasshopper! I come to you in the Name of the Lord!"

He takes that one little stone in a slingshot controlled by God, and it has more power than a spear like a weaver's beam controlled by Goliath. Let me tell you, my precious friend, the burden you face in 1970 — that problem, that financial problem, that heartache you face, that physical problem — will be to you a giant or a grasshopper depending on one thing and one thing only: Do you face it in the name of God?

Little David came and said, "I face it in the Name of God. My God is able! I face it in the name of the Lord!" God said to David, "Take that slingshot, and put a stone in that sling." Little David took that slingshot, and hurled it toward Goliath, and God guided that stone. It did not hit the greaves on Goliath's legs, the coat of mail on his body, the shield on his chest, or the helmet of brass on his head. God took that little stone and guided it through the air to the one spot on Goliath that was vulnerable. The one spot where Goliath could have been hit.

That stone, in the hands of a young man given to Almighty God, found its way toward the proper place, and Goliath was felled. If you will take your Bible and read it carefully, you will find that David cut off the head of that big fellow. As near as I can tell from what the "original language" says, he took it to his family room, mounted it on the wall. Every time David had hot chocolate and popcorn,

he looked up and said, "Yeah, you grasshopper. Yeah, you grasshopper." For giants become grasshoppers when God gets in it!

Now, I don't know what your problem is. I don't know what your burden is. I don't know what your need is, but there is one thing I do know: I know that with God a giant becomes a grasshopper. I also know this: Without God, grasshoppers can become giants.

A strange thing happened to me the other day. I have folks to do work for me. I do the big tasks. It's nothing for me to pick up the telephone to call somewhere and order books with a retail price of \$15,000. It is nothing for me in a day's time to transact business that takes care of thousands of dollars, but do you know what is hard for me to do? The little things.

I had not been to a grocery store, since I don't know when, until recently. The other day I needed some white shoe polish, and do you know it seemed impossible to get it. Now, don't misunderstand me, I can pick up the telephone and order something that costs \$15,000. It is a grasshopper to me. But I thought, "Now, where do you buy shoe polish?" Normally I just say, "Mrs. Plopper or somebody, go down and get me some shoe polish," but on that day, everybody was busy. I thought, "Now, where do you get shoe polish? Now who would have it? Not a barber shop. A drugstore? No, I believe a grocery store would have it." So I go down here to the A & P grocery store next to Steinberg-Baum (that store looks like a huge shopping center to me). I walked in and felt as unqualified to face the task as anybody ever felt. It's just some shoe polish!

I walked in and I thought, "Now what counter would it be on?" It took me 30 minutes to buy that shoe polish. I got there and didn't know what the names were. I didn't know whether it was Green Giant or what the brand was, and I didn't know which was the best. I had the hardest time.

Now, I got back and was talking to some folks on the staff, and I said, "You know that was a big thing for me." I can do a big job just like that. Listen, I can go down and buy a car. I can go down and buy a suit of clothes. I can order \$15,000 in books. I can take care of a loan. (God knows I've had enough experience borrowing money.) I borrowed a few thousand dollars, just picked up the telephone and did it, but shoe polish? When I got back and I got to thinking, "Now, why was that so big for me?"

Here's why. Because I have to go to buy shoe polish where people know me and it's a big deal. I relived it. I got out of the car and a fellow said, "Hey, don't I know you?" And I said, "Well, I don't know." He said, "I know who you are. You're Reverend Hyles, aren't you?" And I said, "I'm Brother Hyles." And he said, "Sure, I've seen your picture in the paper." I walked in and a fellow walked over and said, "Hey, Brother Hyles! Merry Christmas!" There was a church member there, and I said, "Merry Christmas." And I walked in and the first person I saw inside said, "Hello, Reverend."

I walked up to a fellow and said, "Say, where's the shoe polish?" He said, "Don't I know you?" And I said, "You probably don't." I asked again, "Where's the shoe polish?" Now it took me 20 minutes to get to the shoe polish. I am saying a grasshopper was a giant.

Now I know people today in this building who have little problems that are driving them nuts. (Pardon me, they have driven you nuts.) They have little, bitty problems; I mean little grasshoppers! Little things! On the other hand, I know people this morning in this building who have big problems that God could make look like grasshoppers. Why is it that little problems bother you? Listen and I'll tell you why. It is because you don't think you need help on the little problems and they throw you.

Now if I had said, "Dear Lord, help me get some white shoe polish," He would have said, "Okay, send one of the secretaries down to get it." But I thought, "Now I won't need that." The honest truth is, I borrowed \$4,000 the other day from the bank faster than I could get the white shoe polish. No joke!

Now, what am I saying? I am saying that 1970 holds some problems for you. I don't care how little they are, God wants to help you with them. God is concerned about them.

Many of you have heard me tell this. I have told it time and time again. Mrs. Hyles and the children and I were taking a train trip to Texas one time. We were almost to Garland, Texas, and my mother and sister were to meet us at the train station. We slept in a chair car all night and I wanted to brush my teeth before I met them. So I got up, and you know how you are on a train; you are sleeping all night—I won't go into all that—but you are tired. I opened my briefcase, and you know what? I had left my toothpaste somewhere. I had left it!

I didn't want to meet Mother and Earlyne with bad breath. I said, "Dear Lord, give me some toothpaste somewhere." Well I went back to the concessions, to the little sandwich man who sells toothpaste and so forth. And I said I wanted some toothpaste. He said, "Mister, I'm out of it. I just sold my last tube."

I said, "Look, just let me borrow some." He said, "Mister, I don't have any." And I said, "Now look, in less than 15 minutes I will come to the Garland, Texas, train station, and I've got that brown taste in my mouth; I want to kiss my mother and sister, and I want to smell good." He said, "I'm sorry."

So I went back to the rest room. I got on my knees and said, "Dear Lord, I've got to have some toothpaste." A little kid walked in. I say little, he was 11 or 12, but he was fat—one of those little fellows who should get out and run around the block some. He walked in and said, "Hi, Mister!" (Little cocky fellow!) I said, "How do you do?" He said, "What's your name?" He put his hand out. Well, what 11 year old kid does that? I put my hand out. I said, "My name is

Jack Hyles." He called his name and he said, "Hi, Jack!" (The little runt! "Hi, Jack?") Timidly I said, "Hi." I was intimidated.

He said, "Jack, let me show you what I bought in Chicago." He pulled out a little thing that looked like an overgrown vienna sausage or a potted meat can key that opens the can. (You pull the little deal up and you wrap the key around it and then twist it down.) He said, "Look what I got." I said, "What is it?" He said, "It is a toothpaste squeezer. What you do is you put that thing on the end of a toothpaste tube and it rolls the toothpaste up and the toothpaste doesn't slide back down to the bottom." I said, "Is that right? How does it work?" He said, "Just a minute and I'll show you." I said, "Hold it, before you show me."

I reached in my briefcase, got my toothbrush out, and said, "Do it on the toothbrush so you won't waste the paste." He said, "This is the way it works, Jack!" Boy, at that time I was glad he showed up. I stuck my toothbrush under that paste and said, "Thank You, Lord," and brushed my teeth.

Now, do you know that God is concerned about your teeth and is concerned about your having toothpaste? I don't care what your need is - there is a God in Heaven who's concerned about it. He knows whether you have toothpaste or not. He knows the smallest, most minute problem you face, and in 1970, He would like to help you with that problem! And yet, what you will do—you will fret and stew, and that grasshopper will become a giant, and before you know it, you have got to spend hundreds of dollars in psychiatry bills because a grasshopper has become a giant. God wants to help you.

Just a few days ago, our church needed \$5,000. We found ourselves \$5,000 short. I mean we didn't have any money. We had to have \$5,000. I was flying to Winston-Salem, North Carolina and I had to have \$5,000. I prayed for two solid hours. For two solid hours, I prayed for God to give me the \$5,000. We had to have it!

When I got to Winston-Salem, I had not told them when I was arriving. I had too much to do. I got my briefcase and made a little desk out of it and worked for two hours there in the airport. Then I called back to the office and spent an hour dictating letters and taking care of business. Just before I said good-bye to Mrs. Sandi Plopper, she said, "Brother Hyles, Meredith wants to talk to you." I said, "All right." Meredith said, "Brother Hyles, I want to tell you something you will be glad to hear. A Mr. Smith that used to live down here on Michigan Street, remember him?" (How many of you remember Mr. Smith? A few of you do. He was a member of this church for many years.) "He passed away. In his will, he included First Baptist Church." I said, "Meredith, how much was it?" She said, "\$5,000." I cried all over the airport. Folks, it matters not whether you need a squeeze of toothpaste or \$5,000. God can make a giant look like a grasshopper.

Ten men said, "We be like grasshoppers, and they be like giants!" David said, "You big, blow-hard grasshopper! I will feed you to the sparrows and the fowls of the air before sundown. You're a runt!" What's the difference? Does that mean Goliath was smaller than the other giants? No, sir. He was bigger! It depends on whether you look at it through the eyes of God or not.

Now look. What's the secret? You don't look down. Whether you are jumping or landing, you don't look down; you look up. If you are at the door of the plane and the problem looks insurmountable, don't look down. Look up! If you're landing, reach up and grab the risers. Don't look down. Look up!

If you look down, you will see a world that is racked with disease and pain. If you look down, you will see a country that's headed for destruction and defeat. If you look down, you will see pessimism and gloom. If you look down, you will look from victory to defeat. If you look down, you will see socialism. If you look down, you will see corruption. If you look down, you will see heart attacks. If you look down, you will see cancer. If you look down, you will see Satan.

But if you look up, every promise of God is yours! Don't look down! You face some burdens this year. Look up! You face an illness this year. Look up! You face serious problems this year. Look up! If you look up, giants will look like grasshoppers, but if you look down, grasshoppers will look like giants.

So, this year, may God give you strength to fight the grasshoppers. May God give you the strength to see them in their perspective. May God give you the kind of vision that looks through the eyes of God Himself and makes a giant look like a grasshopper.

If you look up, you will see the God of David, who felled Goliath. If you look up, you will see the God of Elijah, who sent fire from Heaven. If you look up, you will see the God of Daniel, who closed the mouths of the hungry lions. If you look up, you will see the God of Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, who made the fiery furnace air conditioned. If you look up, you will see the God who caused the walls of Jericho to fall. If you look up, you will see the God who parted the Red Sea. If you look up, you will see the God of Joshua, who made the sun stand still. If you look up, you will see the God of Jacob, who gave the vision of the ladder from Heaven. If you look up, you will see the God who parted the Jordan River. If you look up, you will see the God who made the axe head swim. If you look up, you will see the unlimited, limitless power of God available to every single person in this house today. If you look down, grasshoppers will look like giants.

Listen carefully as I close. You face a new year. You will cry some and laugh some. You will be happy some and sad some. You will fight some and love some, but there's one thing that every person in this house must face in 1970. You may face a single problem or several problems.

