

Attitude to Deal with Hardship

By Ron Hafer

[I'm Trading My Sorrows by Darrell Evans; Meet With Me by Paul Balocha; and Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing by Robert Robinson are performed]

Andrew Brain:

Please remain standing with me for prayer. Eternal King, Lord of the Universe, and Father of perfect compassion and mercy. We stand here this morning as your beloved. Lord, people who once were running from you and drowning in our own sins. But yet, Lord Jesus, you stepped in with streams of mercy, never ceasing. And so, Father, as we gather together in this moment to glorify your name, I pray that your Holy Spirit would remind us again just how truly incredible your mercy really is and that, holy Jesus, when you hung on that cross and said it is finished, you paid for every last one of our sins. That's why we worship you. Lord Jesus, you are our king. And so, Lord, even as we've just said, teach us some melodious sonnet sung by flaming tongues above. Lord, we unite our hearts here as your people with all of those redeemed who are already in heaven worshiping and singing your praises. We unite our voices with the tongues of the angels, the living creatures and the elders already singing your praises in heaven. And Lord, we look forward to that great and glorious day when we will all bow before your throne and praise you for Your Grace and your mercy, never ceasing. So, Father, we commit this chapel to you in the strong name of our risen and conquering savior Jesus Christ, amen.

Hafer: Attitude to Deal with Hardship

Thank you. You may be seated. My name is Andrew Brain. I am the chaplain assistant for this year.

[Audience Cheers and Applause]

And allow me just to introduce. We had Michelle Anderson on vocals, and that was Ryan Frost leading, and Troy Forebess on drums. Allow me to introduce. Allow me to introduce the other chaplain assistant there this year, Kathy VerHooven.

[Audience Cheers and Applause]

Kathy VerHooven:

Thanks, Andrew. Thank you, Andrew and Andrew, myself and Lauren McCartney, if you'll stand. She's the chaplain intern this year.

[Audience Cheers and Applause]

We comprise the chaplain team, along with our beloved Ron Hafer, who you will hear from in just a moment.

[Audience Cheers and Applause]

One announcement before I introduce our speaker, and that is that there is a chapel two change for this Wednesday, August 30th. Dr. Cook will be giving his convocation address, once again. For many that didn't hear it last Wednesday. He will do it again in chapel two only this Wednesday. And Chapel one in here at 9:30 will be Timothy Sharett. That's this Wednesday.

Now it's my privilege to introduce to you our speaker. He asked that he only be introduced as a man who is a sinner saved by grace. However, those of you who know our beloved chaplain, Ron Hafer, know him as a man who loves life. He loves the Lord with all his heart. And he loves you college students enthusiastically. I also happen to know that after he graduated from Biola, he spent five years in church ministry and then he came back and got his Masters of Divinity at Talbot School of Theology right here on this campus. Biola spotted him and hired him at the ripe old age of 27, and he has been faithful to that call ever since. He would say that he is the man he is today, partly due to the fact that his wonderful wife, Hilda, holds his feet to the fire. So, ladies, a bit of advice for you, for your man when you're married: hold him to a very high standard and after 41 years of marriage, he may be as wonderful as our dearly beloved Ron Hafer.

[Audience Applause]

Ron Hafer:

Thank you, Kat. Oo, I like these little ear job-ies, Little Rock Star (Ron and Audience laugh). My little, emphasis on little, I'm looking to (clears throat) see if my bride made it. No, I didn't think so. My Hilda. My wife's name is Hilda. Our daughters are Heidi and Heather. Hilda, Heidi and Heather. And then our three sons or Hans, Harry and Herman. That's not true, that's not true (Ron and Audience laugh). But I, now that we mentioned my little bride, you might wonder, well, why is she not here supporting you? Well, she's babysitting our granddaughters. But basically, she felt that if she had to write the message and then listen to me butcher it, that that wouldn't be fair. So I put a.

[Audience Laughter]

I just talked with a guy across the country who's retiring in a chaplain and minister. Yes. And (clears throat) and he's he is counting the days and he's young. He's 65, just a young guy. I thought shame on you. And he said, let's retire together. And I said, well you're some bored silly. What are you going to do? I'll tell you what I'm going to do, on Monday I'm going to show up. Well, it absolutely surprised me (laughing). Where do you come from? To a thousand students and preach to Jesus. I said, now that that is exciting. So this old guy, he should have gotten out of it a long time ago.

Turn in your Bibles to (clears throat) Numbers, 13. Actually, I tried to put this on PowerPoint (clears throat) so that I could say, just look at the screen. But I screwed that up, so that's all right. And before we look at Caleb, who is not just this middle age guy who became this

phenomenal old guy with his faith and his vision and his courage and his ability to handle hardships. I want to, I want to give you a story--I told one of my favorites to the freshman, Ralphie. The seniors are saying, are you still telling Ralphie? Yeah, I have no idea where Ralphie is, but he's famous now. I want to tell you, (clears throat) because we're talking (clears throat) we're talking about hardships and actually the attitude to deal with hardships. I'm your friend and I'm very positive, and I'm if I can quote Kathy VerHooven, chaplain assistant, I'm very enthusiastic regarding college people, but I'm your friend. So I'm here to tell you that, along with the package of growing in Christ, will come this great opportunity to face hardships and giants in our lives. Now, I threw in the last word, Giants. That's my transition for the story that I want to tell you before we look at Numbers 13.

I want to tell you about (clears throat) Carter, the giant of flood junior high. I want to make sure, check the balcony. It's really hard because the lights aren't on up there. I want to make sure Carter isn't here. Good. No, they turned on the lights (laughs). Oh, good, because I want to describe Carter. I went to a, this is a long time ago. I went to a three year junior high. And I'd like to say this about junior high. (Ahhhhh) Right?

[Audience Laughter]

The seventh, eighth, they're a gnarly bunch. God, God loves them. Who else will, right?

[Audience Laughter]

And seventh, eighth, ninth grade. I, you will find it not surprising to know that I was among the smallest in the student body. Okay, I was a little this guy. Okay, I was a little human being, all right? The little brothers and sisters who visited weren't as little as I. Well, never mind. Carter, on the other hand, was a ninth grader. But only, only the Lord knew how old he was. Honestly, he had a full growth beard. That's why I always check the crowd. And he was known as being big and dumb and (drawn out) ugly and. And he drove his car, I mean, I'm sure God loved him (laughs). And eventually I got to where... Well, anyway, Carter drove his car to school legally in junior high. We have no idea how old he was huge; mammoth guy and a bully. So, it was no surprise when we gathered out behind flood junior high. (Clears Throat) Yes. That is the school in South Denver that burned down. No. The stories of my being part of it are not true (laughs). But we gathered behind flood junior high in the area called Rumble City, (mimicking wrestling announcer voice) are you ready to rumble? Carter was always there and he would always plow clean some poor guy's clot. You say, well, why would you go? Why would you go to watch something? Because junior highers. So there was Carter, (clears throat) and I had a little buddy named Roy. And Roy's brother had the misfortune of being tall but skinny, and I'm sure he'd never had a fight in his life. He'll never forget this one. It was brief. Carter grabbed him, pulled him over (laughing) they're about eye to eye, but this guy was scared to death. Carter said- -yeah I know, I know it's corny, but he said, okay; knock this chip off my shoulder. And the guy thought (laughing) I can live a long time before I'm going to breathe on that chip, you know? Then Carter goes (pprrp), you know, and the chip falls, and then Carter looked surprised, and then he hits the guy in the nose. That's what bullies do. And I, I felt something in me and, and he fell, and then he was smart enough to roll head down because you can't, you can't get hit in the nose again if you're head down. So Carter, the bully, straddled him, took his hand in this poor

guy's back of his head and mushed his head in the dirt. Aw. And I just, I just, I just thought (high pitched) somebody, (low pitched) somebody ought to do something about this.

[Audience Laughter]

(Clears throat) And this is, this is Roy's moment. Life has its defining moments. The message is life as its giants, its hardships and its defining moments. This was Roy's defining moment. I go to all of my high school reunions. In Denver we will have our (emphatically, sing-song voice) 50 year high school reunion in a week or so. And Roy will be there. We'll look very carefully to see if Carter shows up because Carter was so old, he, you know, he could attend in the year that he wanted to.

[Audience Laughter]

So Roy, Roy decided somebody ought to do something. He ran, Roy, unlike myself, was little but thin and wiry, ran. And everybody there was just aghast, as this little guy ran and he straddled, jumped on the back and straddled the body of this gargantuan Carter. And then he immediately started to do whatever he could to stay on and he was wrapping arms and legs around--Carter was swatting like he's swatting a fly off of his back, you know, and in a desperation move, well he, he wrapped his left arm out around. (Clears throat) Actually, Carter didn't have a neck, but it would be where the neck was on most people.

[Audience Laughter]

Who, you know, and (clears throat) and he and the end, he locked his hand just to stay on. They call this in the LAPD, locking them off, choking them off. And let me tell you, don't try this at home or in chapel (laughs). You know, what happens is if you, if you hold that posture for any period of time, there is a shortage of blood and oxygen that flows to the brain, which we had suspected of Carter for a number of years anyway.

[Audience Laughter]

But now, now he actually started to, he actually started to spaz out. His eyes crossed and he started to do the jerky, (pauses) and of course, Roy's just hanging on. And we're a bunch of pagans, if we were Christians, we would have said (singing) God is so good.

[Audience Laughter]

But we weren't. We were thinking other things and saying that. That as Roy hung on and Carter's eyes crossed, he literally started to topple. And as he went down, you would think, you know, let go and flee for your life. But, but Roy didn't know what would happen. Neither did Carter, really. So Roy rode him all the way to the ground. Then they banged, Carter didn't bang, but Roy banged his left ear on the ground and it actually messed it up pretty badly, and to this

day, we call that on Roy--affectionately-- a cauliflower ear, you know just. And, you know, you say, could you get it corrected? Sure. Do you think he's ever going to do it? No way. Are you kidding? His badge of honor and courage, the day he dropped the giant. So they fall, Roy jumps up, holding his ear. His brother gets up and hauled out of there. I mean, he said, (drawn out) go feet. And then (clears throat) Carter is doing a little shaking like he's coming to. And we were yelling, Roy, flee, run. You get out, go. Haul out of here. And he ran about seven or eight steps. This is our favorite part that we react every five years at our high school reunion. Roy ran back, hulled back, and kicked Carter as hard as he could in the side.

[Audience Laughter]

God, God forgive me. I think I like that part the best (laughs).

[Audience Laughter]

And I've prayed about it, and the Lord's forgiven me, and I'm sure (Ron and Audience laugh) Carter was eventually healed of the wound. He will. But moments later, and he said, well, I'll just I'll paraphrase (laughs), alright. Right (mumbles incoherently). And we said, well, there was this giant guy. We've never seen him. And he came in and you were fighting and, and he came up and he started to choke you. And then he, then he ran away because he didn't want to [inaudible]. Carter knew that he wasn't getting the straight scoop, and we went back to class and Carter went on to, I don't know, six or seven wonderful years of high school. But when we

gather, we put, we throw Roy on our shoulders and we run him around the little sleazy hotel lobby that we rent for our, (laughter) for our reunion cause we're a bunch of cheap-os, you know, 50 years. I mean, you don't need the Hyatt, right? Give us Holiday Inn. And we cheer Roy for the day he dropped the giant.

(Clears throat) Now at Talbot, they said, be sure to leave that word on, giant, that gets you back into the text. So I want to remind you this morning that I want to talk about the Giants, Carters everywhere. He's coming (laughs). Have you had your Carter today?

[Audience Laughter]

And hardships are coming, and they're on their way to mature us in our faith in Jesus Christ and to make us stronger individuals. So as your friend, for the next few moments, I want to tell, retell a familiar Sunday school story from Numbers chapter 13. And then I want to ask some questions about this amazing, amazing man, Caleb. How did he do it? Not only how did he face the land, and the 40 days, and the Giants, and all of the hassles. But how did he continue? What, how could a man who is 45 end up at 85 still excited about the power of God? Well. I will ask that question and allow you to answer it. But let's look first in Numbers 13 at the familiar Sunday school story. You know the story.

The Israelis get to the Promised Land. You know, how they got across the Red Sea, because you've been to, sure, you've seen the waters part. And (clears throat) they're right there at the outbreak of the land. And God says to them, your assignment--expect for Torrey students, I don't have the heart to assign you anymore reading after the nine books you have to read over the

weekend. But your assignment for the rest of the class would be to read verses one through 26. God said to the Israelis, you're going to take them. I love that!

Dr. Cook is embarrassed when I mention that during my youth, I played basketball here--not well, but sincerely. You know, to think, but to think that we would go into a ball game with an absolute guaranteed victory was just, was just almost more than, than we could bear. We did handle the wounded Nuns of Pasadena, fairly faith. But, but never mind. God says to the Israelis, you're going to win. You're going to win. Get a, get a committee (clears throat). I have a question about the committee that was gathered too; twelve tribes, twelve individuals. These are supposed to be varsity people. These are premiere people. These are, these are, they're not picked for their, I would hope, just for their size. These--if I'm picking a spy for my tribe, I want someone with a little faith, a little bit of courage. Okay, a little bit size. I want somebody that can assess the situation and then listen to the promise of God and make a decision. But these guys were it's, it's amazing. Well, they were in the land, they came back 40 days. Bible students any time on any test, there's a question of how many days or years it was of anything throw in 40. It's a pretty good guess, alright. They're there 40 days, 40 back (clears throat).

I'm sitting up here on this platform years ago, hearing this passage, and I'm hearing Jill Briscoe preach. I'll give you a terrific outline. I've used it. We won't use it this morning, but it's a great outline. Giants, grapes and grasshoppers: the giants of opposition, the grapes of blessing, and the grasshoppers of self-doubt. She's preaching that, in those days we had a platform and the ones who led a Torrey conference had to sit on the platform. She turned around. She's this wonderful British, she has this (accented) British accent. Yes, we are getting her, we think, next year. She turned around and she said (accent), What are you doing, Ron? I said, I'm writing, Jill. She said, what are you writing? I said, I'm writing your outline. I'm going to preach it. She said,

that's marvelous. She said, I stole the outline from my husband, Stuart, and only God knows from whom Stuart, stole the outline (laughs). So it's okay, there we go. Giants, grapes, and grasshoppers.

They went in the land. They came back. This is, this is the report. They came to back to Moses and Aaron, they the twelve, and the whole Israelite community at Kaddish in the desert of Boron. There, they reported to them, to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. Okay, there's the grapes of blessing. Then they gave Moses this account, quote (lowers voice), "We went to the land to which you sent us" the, the varsity spy representing the ten, must have just really been eloquent. I want to meet him someday. And it does flow with milk and honey, here's its fruit. Oh, oh. But that's the last joy. But the people who live there are powerful. In 40 days. What are you going to observe? Well, in 40 days, you've got to do a lot of walking or writing or whatever the spies did to get in and out. I don't know that they could view how powerful they were in those days. I think we have cowardice speaking here. I think we have lack of obedience and lack of faith in God. But I have to move on. And the cities are fortified and very large. Okay, we'll give them that. We even saw the descendants of Anoché [sic] there, giant tribe. Anoché the giant tribe where they're a lot taller than we are. The Amalekites, what we have "ites" living everywhere in the next few verses. And now everyone is a little bit stirred. You got. You hear that they're giants. You heard that there, these guys are tough and you, and you hear the varsity report saying we cannot take them. God has brought us here. I know, he said, but go. But I--we can't do it. Aren't you glad that--I mean, I'm so thankful for the worship team that, that emphasized the grace and mercy of God. And aren't you glad we aren't God, cause wouldn't you zap these--young guys, are you the best your tribe can do? You're out of here. You know, I'm sending in twelve more.

Now when Caleb silenced the people and he said, oh I like this guy. Isn't it interesting, by the way, that Caleb and his buddy Joshua go. But at this point Caleb gets to be the spokesman. And then when I get to heaven, if we don't know everything, I'm going to say to Joshua and Caleb. How did you guys decide who is going to get to do that? Because Caleb, who shows phenomenal obedience and faith and vision and courage. Caleb, Caleb doesn't get picked to be the leader later. I'm going to talk about that. How does that happen? How can you handle that when you run for office and don't make it? Or where you're not recognized in the area, that you should be. He silenced the people because they're scared to death. We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it. There's, there's sunlight. We, we could we could load up now; we can haul up those hills. We could wipe out the big guys first and then the rest of move fall in place. I mean, Caleb is so ready to go.

For those of you, not the Torreys, but the others that want to read in the next chapter, they get a chance to spit and argue again. And Joshua gives a chance to speak even more from his heart, and he has, he has a chance to declare, hey, you guys, we were there. There's no question we weren't sent into form a strategy. We're set in to find out the best way to take the victorious. But the men who had gone up with him said, I don't know if there was a chance for rebuttal, but cowardice jumps in. We can't attack those people. They are stronger than we are. Wait a minute. Wait just a minute. Is my speech prof, Dr. Chase, used to say, now, just wait a minute here. They're strong--40 days, you think they had arm wrestling, you think they saw some rumbles outside the city? I don't think so. I think, I think now you got a little bit of cowardice that's flown over the lip and they spread among the Israelites. This translation says a bad report; I think evil or wicked in some of your translations is even better. What they did, folks, these representatives of the nation of Israel, the people of God, not only said we can't, God was wrong, but then they

start heaping a bunch of lies, a pack of lies on the whole story; they're spreading among the Israelites, a bad report. They said the land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there of great size. Give me a break. I mean, Carter's come along once in a while, but all of them? Give me a break. They're not all big. I tell you, once they started to view the land through the eyes of cowardice and disobedience, once God's people hear the declaration of God that we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us, and somehow we don't believe it. Boy it, it leaves all kinds of room for all kinds of tough situations. I want to tell you, I know I was going to say to the freshman, but I'll add it to anybody who sits in. I want to tell you when the hardships come, God tells us, first of all, it's going to happen. Jesus promised it. Peter said the pure gold comes through when you see the hardships and you face it through the eyes of vision and courage and obedience. We saw the Nephilim, the giant tribe; we seem like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them. Okay, that's the story.

Rebecca, I know I screwed up that one, but do we have 2 Corinthians? Here's, here's what I'd like to suppose for the next few moments. Going to be longer, but at Talbot they said throw out next few moments. It builds false hope. I mean the guy's going to land the plane eventually, alright? I'd like to think that Caleb, who had never met the apostle Paul. I'd like to think that somewhere along the line he had the same training, and the same faith-base that did little Saul of Tarsus, that little ugly little scar tissue for God, who was talking. He was declaring to the cruddy Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 10 his, his calling as an apostle. And then to help them understand what he was talking about, he started talking about, about giants and about opposition and about warfare in our lives. And he, Small of Tarsus, said, for though, we walk in the flesh. Sure we do. I mean, it's in the flesh, 68 years of flesh, 100 and (indistinguishable murmurs) pounds of flesh. Alright, fill in the flesh. Alright, we're human beings; some of us taller, some of us shorter, some

of us that lose, some of us prettier, some of us sincere and average, alright. But we walk in the flesh, alright? This is it. This is the package. This is what I have to walk in, alright? We are not waging war according to the flesh.

Oh, 10 spies would say, yes, we are. And I say to them, and you got the end result: Carter kicked you. You wage war, brothers and sisters at Biola at the start of this year. I do that, my faculty, colleagues and staff, administrators and everybody on this campus. We wage war according to the flesh (clears throat). We view the opponents the way these guys view them. I'll tell you what the scripture says. We, the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but have divine power. For what? To destroy strongholds! I mean, the weapons of the Spirit, the power of the Spirit of God, they're awesome. We're invincible. I've been here 40 years now starting year 41. I'm not--Dr. Cook has the grace and the class to step, I'm not stepping. I said they'll have to grab me and throw me out and say you're 90, Ron, you have to leave. No, oh, no, no. I want to scale to ride it out, because I can't get more excited about things that are happening here. Listen, folks, the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh we--(laughs) see, oh, a little trick there. Rebecca, removing it. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God.

Numbers 13, the ten spies and brothers and sisters. We take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Paul said it in Philippians two differently. But it's the exact same idea. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Will there be Carters? You bet your sweet life. Will there be hardships? Some of your, you're going through them right now. Some of you are not and you're going to get your turn. I want to tell you the key to this business of handling hardships in the power of God, is in the power of God and it's the idea of taking every thought captive. Here's Caleb (clears throat) and he and Joshua vote. Maybe Joshua high fived him and

said, you go, Caleb, you're a little bit more passionate or you're a louder voice or whatever you go. But Joshua was no shabby dude either. So they took the vote and the vote was no, we don't believe God! Boo, boo. Let's stay. Let's wander 40 more years and get kicked around. Let's--and that's exactly what happened. That nation, you know that, that nation went back into the boonies for how many years. Yeah, right, 40 years.

And during that time, here's what I thought would happen. God, to Joshua and Caleb: yo', Caleb, yo' Josh, come here. Go on, come here. I'm proud of you guys. I said you're gonna take them. You believed me. I said, the land is yours. You could hardly wait to move in. Good job. I saw your vote--it might have been secret ballot, but I saw your vote. And I'm going to honor you. And I'm gonna give you a little, little package of the Promised Land while the rest of those yokels wander around for 40 years. He did not. He did not. Those who hung in faithfully, Joshua and Caleb and their tribes, they wandered that 40 years as well. You say, is that fair? Is that the way it should have been? I'm glad you asked that question. We're going to ask Mickey Klink to speak to that next semester and answer it. I don't understand the sovereignty of God and his plan and his will. But I understand this: he is sovereign and loving and gracious. And those two spies who watched the other spies die one by one, and their families, and their tribes for 40 years, they did not seethe with anger or rage. You were unfair. They, they didn't shake a puny fist at God. Somehow, somehow--this is how they brought. They took every thought captive. They kept their eyes focused on the Jehovah God and his love and his grace. And after 40 years, do not turn.

But I say this in closing, which is always good for three more minutes. They're back in the land. It's humi--amazing the way they get back into the land. And by the time you get to 14 of the book of Joshua, you have Caleb. I was going to have students stand and do it. But it would have been so corny and I'm a little bizarre anyway, but I was going to have him stand and sing

Happy Birthday to You because it was Caleb's 85th birthday. I love the story because at 68, he's, he looks old to me. And on his 85th birthday, after wandering 40 years with the disobedient people and keeping his vision and his faith alive, and understanding that the way you handle hardships and giants and discouragement is that every day the word is flowing through our lives and obedience as part of our lives. He goes. He called in his marker. Moses is gone. Joshua was there. He says, I want to quote Moses. Moses said to have the whole heart for God. I want a quote Joshua, you. You said, I have a whole heart for God and I have a whole heart for God. I want those giants. And you know the story. That's where I usually preach the whole sermon.

I'm just going to wrap it up with this: here he is at 85 and he didn't bite the bullet either. He at 85, he gets his tribe and they march, because the Giants are still there and they live on the hill. You talk about challenge, a giant on a hill in the strong fortified city and the spies look over the edge of the city. They say okay, it's these are, this is a chapter and verse, but this is, I feel happened this way. And the, and the little, little peewee spies about maybe 7 foot 6 or something (laughs). You can't do anything else. So he looks over the wall. Anything happening down there? Yeah. There's a shaggy old guy and a bunch of Israelis walking up with their staff and their swords. Yeah, really? How old? It looks, oh, the guy looks ancient. I don't know. Look at him, barrel chest; looking at sucker's got calves. He's looking like he's, looks like he wants to fight. That's the last thing they knew. Scripture says Caleb is the only one who did what God said to do. He threw them out of their city, off of their hill and out of their land. And secular writers who don't believe this word said, yeah, well, there's no evidence whatsoever of giants on that hill, duh! Duh (laughs). He kicked them out. He did exactly what God said to do.

Bottom line, there will be giants. There will be hardships. We have the very promises of God that we've already won the war. But I'll tell you how desperately important it is that we

Hafer: Attitude to Deal with Hardship

bring every thought into captivity. I have 10 other thoughts. But as chaplain, we're supposed to close at 10:15. So here's my final thought. I'll share it with the Lord.

Lord, my desire for me and for my brothers and sisters is that we walk with vision and courage and obedience to you this year. In Jesus' strong name I pray, amen.

By the authority vested in me, you are dismissed.