Title: Facing Giants…

**Intro:**

Good morning church My name is Grant Wright the Outreach Minster at FC and I am excited to get to spend some time with you all today. So I in my role I oversee the local outreach efforts like: MUTM, Holley elementary, FriendSpeak, Hearts & Hammers, Prison Ministry. Then I also get to oversee our 5 mission points in: Honduras, Haiti, Colombia, Uganda and Nepal. With next week being Mission Sunday, today I would like to tell you a story from one of our international mission points.

For security and safely reason I will need to change the names of the people in this story to protect their identity’s as this message is live streaming on the internet and will get posted later.

This story starts with a girl named Diana. Diana is a normal 10-year-old girl living in a village in the Himalayan **(Show slide #2 & 3)** mountains tucked away in a small country between India and China called **Nepal. (Show slide #4 & 5)** **Her family is poor** but survives and lives off the land like her ancestors have done for 100’s for years. **Diana, father** is an alcoholic, and finds out a way that he can make a lot of money for himself to feed his habit, it’s about **2 years of income** for him. He invites these two guys to come to his home one evening and Diana watches their interaction for a distance. At the end of the evening the men handed her father $4,000 and Diana was told to go with these two strange men. That was the last time Diana would see her family.

Diana was taken from Nepal down to India where she **was forced to work** in a brothel. She felt **abandoned by her father** and that her life was worthless. Diana was **abused daily,** all because her father couldn’t break his addition with alcohol. The days were long and life was empty and meaningless **until one day she** found out she was pregnant. Diana was excited for the first time in years, she was going to have a little girl. Diana named her **baby Lilly. Lilly** was the joy of her life and gave her hope of a better day.

I am going to tell you a second story of a boy named Steven.

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Steven

* Steven was born **(Show slide #6)** in large city in Nepal into a Hindu, Upper Caste/class family.
* **(Show slide #7 & 8)** His family was in charge of leading others in worship of all the Hindu gods
* So each day they woke up they would also wake up their gods/ideals. They would bath them, feed them and put them to sleep each day.
* When **Stevens was 5 his parents divorced**, and his mom left. This wounded his heart deeply and he greatly missed his mother.
* When **Steven was a teenager** he was able to visit his mom for the first time since the divorce. He quickly found out she had become a Christian, and she shared the gospel with him. His mom showed him loved like he had never experienced before. It was a love he longed for. Steven would later say about this experience, **(Show slide #9)** **“The Love of God demonstrated through the likes of a person, that makes a difference.”** His mother demonstrated Christ to Steven and he was forever changed from that day forward.
* About **10 years** had passed, Steven was now a **Christian married** man. He was walking through the streets of town one day when he saw a group of people gathering and a fight breaking out in the street. As he got closer he realized it was not a fight it was a girl getting beaten. Steven asked a man what was going on and he said, “Oh that girl was causing problems. She was refusing to do her job in the brothel, so her boss is punishing her.”
* At this point the girl had been beaten badly and boss left her on the street to die. Steven’s heart broke for this girl and he scoop her up off the street and took her to his home where he and his wife cared for her. The girl was desperately fighting for her life and she kept saying repeatedly **“Save Lilly!”** Sadly, despite all their efforts to save her, **Diana** ended up dying in Steven’s house that night.

I am going to tell you a story of a church named First Colony-

First Colony

* In 2015, First Colony’s leaders spend time praying and fasting as asking God where he wanted FC to go next on Mission.
* Many of the leaders felt **God leading to Asia**, and others it was specifically India and China.
* We appointed a team of **4 to investigate** mission opportunities in Asia where we felt Gods leading.
* They found some exciting work of but were met with a lot of obstacles in these countries that are closed to Christianity like India and China.
* Ultimately God led us not to China or India, but to the small country, 500 miles wide and 100 miles tall, wedged right in between both India and China: Nepal **(Show slide #10, after I Say the word Nepal. Leave up for 10-20 seconds.)**
* After it was clear we were headed to Nepal, we started networking with others to find potential partners.
* **We heard Randy Harris and Highland** CofC in Abilene, had been working with a group called Eternal Treads sending sowing machines to Nepal to help start businesses for girls that had been trafficked.
* It was at this point that the CEO of Eternal Treads told us about a **Great man of the Lord** in Nepal who had given his life to stop human trafficking. I was excited to visit with him so got is contact information and gave him a call.
* I said, “Hi my name is Grant Wright and I am from the FC CofC in Sugar Land TX. We have been praying about where the Lord is calling our church into mission and he is leading us to Nepal. So I would love to talk to you today about what the Lord is doing in your life and in your work.” There was a pause and I hear the voice of a **Nepali man speaking in English** on the other side and he said, Grant, its so nice to meet you and hear about your churches heart for Nepal. I think God has brought us together to visit today. **My name is… Steve.**
* One year later I find myself on the other side of the world, riding in the back of a jeep with Drew Dasher (FCCC member) on one side and Steven on the other side…
* As we drove to the Nepal India boarder in Biratnagar, Steven told us his testimony. We heard all about how he grew up, the impact his mother had on him and Diana’s story. **He told us that ever since that horrible night when Diana died in his home, God put a call on his life to save Lilly …**
* Over the next few days we would discover one of the most amazing works of God we had ever seen, and we would dream with Steve about what it would look like for FC to partner with him in his mission.
* At the end of 2017 FC finalized our partnership with Steven and **Starting January 1 of 2018 FC** started funding the boarder station operations in Biratnagar Nepal so Stevens group could watch the Nepal India boarder day and night. In just this one year we have been able to:
	+ **Rescue 44 girls for the clutches of Traffickers (Let’s Celebrate that!) (Show slide #11 after I say the number 44)**
	+ Handed over 43 cases to police to prosecute traffickers **(Show slide #12)**
	+ Started 4 Women’s Mentoring Groups, serving 79 rescued girls during recovery. **(Show slide #13)**
	+ 1,286 girls received counseling, possible trafficking situations **(Show slide #14)**

* In 2019 we look to do the same and next week on Mission Sunday you will have the opportunity to give and help make this happen. But not only do we want to do this again we also want to support their **Safe House work, where they introduce Christ, provide Christian counseling and vocational training skills.** **(Show slide #15)**
* And we look to **help 6 girls** in Biratnagar start their own business that **(Show slide #16 & 17)** will provides sustainable income for them and keep them out of the brothels. **(Show slide #18)**
* And if all that was not enough, I haven’t even got to the best part yet…
* Stevens mission and FC mission is not just about saving girls its also about saving souls.
* When the girls are rescued they are show the love of Christ and the gospel is shared with them just like Stevens mother did for him. They are **introduced to a Father who loves** **them so much**, he was willing to sacrifice his one and only son so that they can spend eternity together. This is a **father that values them** and will never sell then off. They like Steve fall in love with God and are forever changed. **(Show slide #19, 20, 21)** They are taught how to share the gospel and how to study the bible. When these girls are sent back to their villages they go in groups of 3 and every day they meet as a group of Christian believers reading the bible and sharing the gospel with their villages.
* We visited one village where there were **now 70 believers** **(Show slide #22)** worshiping Jesus because of 3 rescued girls that returned home and shared the gospel with their people. **(Show slide #23)**
* This is happening all over the country and in **the last 10 years** Steven has seen **12,000 people** come to Christ! **(Show slide #24,25)** He has seen about **800 churches** and small fellowships start. **Our prayer is we will see this same life change happening all around the city of Biratnagar!** **(Show slide #26, 27)** Next year I hope to be telling you not only of the 44 girls rescued but of the villages that now follow Jesus because of the girls that were rescued. **(Show slide #28, 29)**
* The road for Steven to get where his is today has not been easy. He has had to fight against the **GIANT** of human trafficking. That is the reason I have had to change names in this story today. He as received death treats for years, he family has had to flee this city and even his country multiple times. He as even had is own family members, kidnapped. **Each Day for Steven requires** a new level of trust and courageous faith.
* Stevens original ask from Diana was to, “Save Lilly”. Steven carries that request with him still to this day and every time they rescue girls he is searching for Lilly. **It’s the call of God that gives him courage** **and strength to preserver** each and every day, even in the face of kidnappings and death. Steven has not yet found Lilly, but he has rescued about 10,000 girls in the process.
* One of the most impactful statements Steven said to me while we drove around Biratnagar seeing the all the work God had been doing was, **(Show slide #30)** **“The Christian life begins at the end of our comfort.”** It blew me away to hear all the hardships and persecution he had gone under for the work he is going and then for him to look me in the eye and say, “this is truly living. This is so worth it!”

**Can you imagine stirring down a giant like human trafficking?** Can you imagine stirring down a real Giant three times your size? It makes me think about the story of Joshua and Caleb and how they had to look into the face of giants. **God called Joshua to take over leading Gods people for Moses and he also called Joshua to lead Gods people to the Promise land which meant** he was going to have to face these Giants.

These are the words God spoke to Joshua as he gave him this call…

**Joshua 1: 7-9: (Show slide #31,32,33)**

7“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Imagine for a minute you are Joshua staring into the faces of these giants.

Or Stephen, staring in the face of the Giants that is human trafficking.

* What does it feel like? Are you scared? Timid? Are you angry at God

An important question we all need to ask ourselves today is…

**(Show slide #34) What Giant is God calling you to face?**

An important question we all need to ask ourselves today is…

**What Giant is God calling you to face? (Show slide #34)**

* Reality is every one of us a has call and Giant we are facing in our lives. **When we face the Giant God has called us to, God will do extraordinary things through your life.**

What has God been calling you to do that is your next step of faith in your journey?

* Reconciling with family member/friend/co-worker (Courage of Humility)
* How you lead your family (Courage to take a bigger role or maybe smaller role)
* Courage to ask for help, Courage to Rescue someone in need of help
* Extra boldness in your faith in Jesus at work or school (start new relationship)

**Steven - “The Christian life begins at the end of our comfort.”**

* Volunteer for the first time or in a new area
* Going on a STM trip (Courage of getting out of your comfort zone)
* Extra give next week at Mission Sunday (courage with Tithe)

What is your CALL? What is your **Giant?** What is God call you conquer today? I want you to write down on your OOW one name. This is the name of the **person you need to take a next step** with: reconciliation, Rescue someone in need of help, or a person you need to pray with or share the gospel with.

 Or you can write down a persons name **that can help you take your next** step. Like if you… Courage to ask for Help, Get out of your comfort and Volunteer or STM.

**Make your call to conquer your Giant personal**. Don’t leave it for someone else. Don’t reply on the experts. This is your call! It’s your mission!

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Let’s **be like Stephen and Joshua who were ordinary people** **who had the courage to follow their Call, Conquer their Giants and let God do extraordinary things through their lives, to serve his Kingdom.**

As you write down your next step and the one person you are going to talk to next I urge you to not keep this to yourself. Today, come pray with **elders** during prayer time or tonight ask your **Connection Group** to prayer for you. If you are **feeling timid** ask God to give you the courage... Ask someone to pray this Joshua 1 scripture over you.

**As you go out this week remember you** go with God on his mission and with his blessing. As you stare into the face of your **Giant** remember Gods promise, **(Show slide #33)** **“Have I not commanded you?** Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

*Lets pray.*