

“Caleb’s Faith”

Joshua 14:6-15

INTRO:

We now come to the second most famous passage in the book of Joshua. Everyone knows about the walls of Jericho coming down. Almost everyone who has heard a sermon from the book of Joshua has heard of Caleb. Caleb has a long history of following God and thus has some important lessons to teach us about our own walk with God.

As we arrive on the scene, Joshua is parceling out the inheritance of the Promise Land to the different tribes of the Children of Israel. In **vs. 6** the tribe of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal to receive its inheritance. Right away we read how Caleb, one of the original infamous twelve spies, claims the promise the LORD made to him 45 years before. As we look at this text together, we will see it in two parts.

I. Caleb’s Claim (v. 6-12)

II. Caleb’s Faith (v. 13-15)

I. Caleb’s Claim (v. 6-12)

A. We read the record in the first verses of our passage. (**Joshua 14:6-7, 9**)

“Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: ‘You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. . . So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children’s forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.’”

Caleb’s claim is based on a promise that the LORD had made to him through Moses, the man of God.

B. The LORD God made His promise to Joshua and Caleb first because they believed the promises of God and viewed the challenges through the eyes of faith. They believed with God on their side fortified cities and nine foot giants did not stand a chance against them. Caleb and Joshua did not discourage the people of God but tried to help them believe and possess what God had for them.

C. God also blessed Caleb’s continual faithfulness; we read three times in this passage this fact about Caleb: ***“he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.”*** God delights in those who fully follow Him.

1. In **2 Chronicles 31:20-21** we read of another who fully followed the LORD.

“Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.”

Hezekiah served God whole heartedly and so, God prospered him. We do not earn God’s blessing, but God does bless those who follow Him wholly.

2. The second example I think of is the promise made in **Jeremiah 29:13-14**;

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.”

D. So, we see how God does use older people (us old fogies). In today’s world we often forget that truth. After serving God faithfully for years, we think we should just sit back and let the younger believers do the job. The truth is, the Bible sees the older crowd carrying on to do the work and God blessing and by this process the younger people learn to do the work. While all this is true and necessary, but I rush to point out that Caleb was old and faithful because he started out young and faithful. We must not wait until we get older to follow God without wholly in our lives, we need to start serving and obeying today.

II. Caleb’s Faith (v. 13-15)

A. We need to recognize the object of Caleb’s faith. Caleb had faith in God Himself and the promises the LORD made. Caleb held on to the Word of God and cited it over and over again.

“Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said.” (Joshua 14:12)

God said it, so it would happen.

This is not *faith in faith*, or believing that if we can muster enough faith it will all happen. This is *faith in all that God is*, which is the foundation for all that He promised us. Real genuine faith always has an object. It is not alone in a vacuum. It is placed in God’s person and His faithfulness to us. Without Him, our faith is worthless.

B. Second, we need to understand how Caleb’s faith motivated him to stay faithful through his life. He did not stand in a corner and pout. He faithfully served God and waited 45 years for God to fulfill His promise. He wholly obeyed God all of his life. He invested his life in the fact that God was faithful. What are we investing our lives in?

C. Caleb's faith gave him strength to attempt the impossible in the eyes of others and to accomplish it. I love vs. 14-15;

“Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.”

Remember those Anak dudes that the Children of Israel was so afraid of? We have an idea of how fearful they were with Goliath showing up in **2 Samuel 7**, who was no doubt one of the Anakim. Goliath was nine feet nine inches tall. In this verse we learn that the place God gave Caleb was home to Arba, the greatest among the Anakim. He was the biggest and best of them all and 85 year old Caleb would have to defeat him.

Did he do it? **Joshua 15:13–15** tells us;

“Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, namely, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher).”

D. Finally, Caleb's faith made him openly acknowledge God's faithfulness. This maybe should have come earlier, but it is important. Not once as Caleb laid out his claim of God's promise did he express any bitterness about having to wait so long to possess it. Instead, this is what he said, (**Joshua 14:7-11**)

“I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.’ And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.”

It is easy to trust God when everyone around us is doing the same thing. It is much harder to stand alone for God when everyone else says we are wrong. It is even more difficult to stay faithful to God for many years waiting for the promise. Caleb did all of these things. How does our faithfulness compare against his?