

Learning What Others Have Known

(Building and Leaving a Legacy)

Joshua 14:6-14

⁶ Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea. ⁷ 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 word back to him as *it was* in my heart. ⁸ Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear (*become demoralized*); but I followed the LORD my God fully. ⁹ So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God fully.’ ¹⁰ Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. ¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. ¹² Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim *were* there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.”

¹³ So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴ Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully.

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A family began a vacation to a destination which would take several days of driving to reach. As you can imagine – the repeated question “*Are we there yet?*” became quite annoying within just a few hours into the trip... The dad finally had enough and threatened the 8 year-old daughter to NOT ask that question again... After several more hours – she couldn’t help but ask; “*Daddy, when we get where we’re going, will we be there?*”

You know – if you think about it – that is an important question to ask about our very lives... When you get where you're going, will you be where you should be?... Where do you want to go? What do you believe is the purpose for your life? What is your desired destination? ... No other factor so determines the quality of our lives as the God-given purpose and goals He leads you to establish...

There are a lot of people who get stuck and never learn what their God-given purpose is. Why is that? The short answer is they are not following the One Who has given them life... They do not know the One Who has perfect knowledge of them... They do not seek the One Who has the greatest purpose in store for them – a purpose of which they would gladly choose if they truly knew the One they should follow...

Our text today centers on a man called Caleb. Caleb was a part of Israel when they left Egypt. He was at the crossing of the Red Sea when Israel became free from bondage and free from Pharaoh...

There was a great lesson Israel needed to learn – a lesson that each of us need to learn – and that is – there is much more to life than just being set free... More specifically – there is much more to salvation than just being set free...

God had a land “flowing with milk and honey” prepared for Israel – that He had promised to give to the covenant offspring of Abraham... It would be a land of giants and a land of battles, but it was theirs if they wanted it.

But as you know – Israel chose to wander in the wilderness – an experience that closely resembles the experience of the Christian life... God saves us but rather than claim what is rightfully ours – things like peace, joy, and fellowship – we often choose to live in a spiritual wilderness – defeated and depressed...

There are 2 key men in the book of Joshua:

* Joshua – who has been identified by many as a picture of Christ leading us to victory...

* Caleb – who provides us an example of a child of God who is possessing the promises of God...

Too many Christians are guilty of spiritual window shopping... Now there is nothing wrong with window shopping! A lot of folks like to do it... As Christians we need to do more than window-shop with God's promises... We need to adopt and appropriate them into our lives...

Today we hope to learn some great life-lessons from the example of an 85 year old man who was in no way ready to just coast out the rest of his life... Caleb serves as an example of a man of God who lived life *possessing* that which God had promised him...

1. Caleb's Consistent Commitment

Joshua 14:8 (NASB) “Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear (*become demoralized*); but I followed the LORD my God fully.”

Notice “God’s commentary” on Caleb:

Numbers 14:24 (NASB) “But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.”

Now the first key to Caleb success was that God had all of Caleb that there was! Every inch, every ounce, every nerve, every fiber of Caleb belonged to God. Now you may think because you are not a preacher or deacon or SS teacher or whatever, God doesn't expect to have all of you – Wrong!

God deserves our all if you're holding back even a little bit of our lives – it ought to be us sham!... Half-hearted Christians are faint-hearted Christians, and they never learn to conquer the giants in their lives.

James 1:8 (NASB) “... a double-minded man, (is) unstable in all his ways.”

There is only one path to victory over the enemy of our souls – (the world, the flesh and the devil) – and that is total and consistent surrender to Jesus.

Anonymous – “He who kneels before God can stand before anyone”

So – the man or woman who kneels before God can stand before anybody or anything...

[] **D.L. Moody** was saved at the age of 19. At some point, early in his walk with the Lord, he heard an evangelist by the name of **Henry Varly** say “the world has yet to see what God can do in and through and with and for a man wholly committed to him.”... Moody said – “by God’s grace I will be that man.”... He was an uncultured, uneducated, untrained shoe-salesman but God used him to touch two continents for Christ. Why? – because he was committed!

2. Caleb’s Attractive Attitude

Joshua 14:12 (NASB)

¹² Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim *were* there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.”

Caleb’s attitude was one of bravery or courage... Courage may describe it best... Just what is courage? Dictionary.com – “the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear.”

I think **G.K. Chesterton** (late 19th, early 20th Century British Theologian) captured a deeper understanding when he wrote – “*Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live, taking the form of a readiness to die.*”

What was it that gave Caleb the attitude of courage? What was it that gave him the idea that he could be a giant-killer?

Caleb’s confidence (faith) was in God’s word (:6, 10, 12).

⁶ ... “You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me...

¹⁰ ... from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses...

¹² ... which the LORD spoke on that day... and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.”

I can see Caleb now climbing that mountain with a sword in one hand and a deed in the other!... Caleb knew God had given it to him so he claimed it!

Listen – faith is not positive thinking... Faith is not optimism... Faith is not looking on the bright side... Faith is acting on what God says!

Faith is more than saying you believe – it is acting on what you believe!

Notice also that faith is not being presumptuous. It is not presuming upon God’s favor – it does not take a stand in pride and arrogance... It merely trusts in the Lord and rests in His Word... Look at verse 12 again carefully:

“... perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.”

“The Lord will be with me” – That is the key phrase. The factor which will determine whether or not we reach our goals is not our strength or weakness. The answer lies ultimately in God and His power. Throughout the Bible, we read of those who reached – what seemed to be impossible goals – and they did so in spite of their own weaknesses... How? What explains it?... “The LORD was with them” and with God – “all things are possible”!

Matthew 19:26b (NASB) “... Jesus said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

We see evidence throughout Scripture of God’s faithfulness to accomplish through His people what He had promised:

- Moses, the tongue-tied shepherd, stood up to Pharaoh and won!
- Gideon, supported by an army of 300 armed only with trumpets and empty jars, fought the Midianites and won!
- David, untrained and unprotected, challenged Goliath and won!

- Caleb, 85 years old, confronted the giants in Hebron and won!

What made the difference? Why did all of these apparent losses turn out to be great gains?... It was because of the God of All-Power – Who is ever Faithful – flowed into and through their lives as they moved out in trust and obedience to Him!

“The Lord was with them!”...

3. Caleb’s Obvious Obstacles

Caleb’s commitment pledge led to confident poise – which will be tested by specific problems...

Caleb faced 3 obstacles in claiming his possession.

➤ **He had to overcome “grasshopper identity”**

Numbers 13:33 (NASB) “There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

For Caleb to claim what God had promised he had to go against the majority.

➤ **He had to overcome “giants of superiority”**

The Nephilim were the offspring of the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men” (Gen. 6:1-4) – before Noah’s flood – and they were like giants!...

All of us have giants in our lives. Giants of discouragement, finances, sickness, family, distress, doubt and the truth is – we can’t defeat them ourselves.

Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr. – “My life didn’t get difficult until I became a Christian.”

We have 2 options.

* We can say look how small we are compared to those giants.

* Or look how small those giants are compared to God!

Look back at –

Numbers 14:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey (food). Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.”

Listen – fighting giants are good for you!

➤ **He had to overcome “gray-hair mentality”**

Now – there is no need for any of us who have gray hair to get offended... But let’s face it. The older we get – the more “set in our ways” we tend to become... We have the tendency to become excuse makers for why we are unwilling to embrace a God-sized challenge that He has placed before us... We have to face our pride and repent of our limiting excuses for not “charging the mountains” that are in front of us... We need to follow the example Caleb leaves us:

Joshua 14:10-11 (NASB)

¹⁰ Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. ¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in.

What does this tell us?... When God makes a promise, He will fulfill it! He will provide the grace and strength to endure and overcome any obstacle of challenge he allows – or sends our way!

James 1:2-3 (NASB)

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance

have *its* perfect result (Lit. *work*), so that you may be perfect (*mature*) and complete, lacking in nothing.

Again – overcoming obstacles is good for you!

4. Caleb's Promised Possession

Joshua 14:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴ Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully.

Caleb experienced what God had promised! He climbed the mountains – defeated the giants – and he claimed his possession!

This narrative in of Caleb's life began with a pledge to consistent commitment. It continued with an attitude of a victor – then culminated with God-given power to overcome obstacles!

I don't want to be guilty of merely “spiritualizing” a historical passage – but we do need to apply some timeless truths that we see unfolded in Caleb's story... Do you have any mountains that need climbing today?... Who are the giants that are standing in your way?

Claim the promises of God today - start up the Mountain

Hebrews 10:35-36 (NASB)

³⁵ Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Questions to consider in CG:

- The first point was about Caleb's "consistent commitment". Is that redundant? Why does "commitment" seem to be so avoided in our day – both in its use as a word and in its practice?
- What is the secret to Caleb's "consistency" in his commitment? (Hint – Num. 14:24 "...has followed Me fully")
- What is "courage" and why do you think it deserves attention in this message?
- What were the potential, if not obvious, "obstacles" that Caleb faced? Which of these do you most often face? What is the solution to overcoming these obstacles?
- How does one go about "claiming the promises of God" – or "appropriating" into our lives what God has promised? What are some practical things a believer must do to "possess" what God has promised/provides?
- What Scriptures do you most often turn to for the promises of God that you most often need?