

Caleb

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[0 : 00] We'll return with the now to the chapters. We read Joshua chapter 14 and today for a short time we will look at a few things about the life of this man Caleb about whom it is said he wholly followed the Lord.

You remember that Caleb was one of the 12 spies sent into Canaan by Moses to spy out the land as the children of Israel were on the border as they were waiting to go in to possess it.

And you remember how Caleb and Joshua were the only two spies who brought back an honest report of the land. They gave the report that was honest, they acknowledged the difficulties but they put it into perspective because God had said that he would give them this land.

So although they saw all the difficulties in the land and all the things that were against them, they gave back a good report saying let us go in and possess it.

And the other 10 spies had given pessimistic and defeatist reports where they said that the land was impossible to conquer.

[1 : 11] And Moses had promised Caleb the ground on Canaan over which he had walked because of his honest report. And now as they are in the promised land with Joshua as the new leader of the children of Israel, Caleb goes up to him and claims the land as it was promised to him by Moses.

Give me this mountain, he says. And Joshua blessed him and gave him Hebron as an inheritance. And now because this man Caleb lived a victorious life, because he's a winner, let us look at his life and we pray that we will learn how to live a victorious life in this world.

This man Caleb followed the Lord closely. Three times in our reading we read that. Verse 8 by Caleb himself, I wholly followed the Lord my God.

Verse 9 by Moses, thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And then in verse 14 by God himself and his word, he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. So we see right away that that's what made Caleb victorious.

That's what made him a winner. He wholly followed the Lord. He followed the Lord wholeheartedly. And because he followed the Lord, he, first of all, defeated discouragement.

[2 : 35] There were ten of the spies who brought back a bad report of the land of Canaan. Caleb himself says, the people who lived there were huge and strong and warlike, with many giants among them.

The cities were well guarded, surrounded by high walls. The very land, though productive, was at enmity with the people. It's impossible to go in to take this land. That's what the ten spies said. It's impossible to go in to take this land. And all the children of Israel listened to them. And we read that they cried and they wept. And they wanted to go back to the slavery of Egypt.

And Caleb was able to say that, my brethren who went up with me, that is the other spies, they made the hearts of the people melt. But I wholly followed the Lord my God.

In other words, he saw the difficulty. He was able to assess the situation. And he saw the impossibility of it. But against that, he put God's promise.

[3 : 35] And because he wholly followed the Lord, he says, let us go in. Let us possess it. Now there may be somebody in here today who's being overcome by discouragement.

Because it is almost a disease at the time. Life may be giving you hard knocks. And things look black ahead of you. The future doesn't look too good at all.

And you don't know what to do. And your usual circle of friends calling you to turn back to the world's answer. To everything. Drink.

Drug. Another man. Another woman. Now to you, my friend, Caleb speaks. And his advice comes down through the corridors of time. And he says to you this morning.

The secret of marching through to victory in the face of discouragement is to follow the Lord. To follow the Lord wholeheartedly. And not only was Caleb able to defeat discouragement.

[4 : 33] But he was able to defeat unbelief. The children of Israel on the very edge of the promised land of Canaan. A land promised to them by God himself. Listen to the ten spies.

And they listen to all the difficulties. And they saw that it was impossible to take it. And they wouldn't listen to Caleb and Joshua. Who gave a good report of the land.

And argued, since the Lord delights in us. Then he will bring us into the land. And give it to us. The people wouldn't listen. And we read even. But the people wanted to stone them. And we read that God was angry with the people.

Because he had told them. This is the land that I am going to give you. Go in and possess it. He didn't even want them to go in and set it out. He didn't want the spies to go in.

But he gave in to their weakness. And their unbelief. And he allowed the spies to go in. And then when the spies gave the bad report. And the children of Israel listened.

[5 : 35] To the bad report. And didn't put God's own promise against that. Then God was angry. And he made them turn away from the promised land. And he made them wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

That is a year for every day. That they spent reconnoitering the land. And God punished them further. We read in Numbers chapter 14.

That all who were aged 20 and over. Weren't allowed into the promised land. They were to die in the wilderness. And the only exceptions were.

Caleb and Joshua. Who gave the proper report. And we read in the New Testament. Hebrews chapter 3. That the children of Israel couldn't enter into the promised land.

Because of unbelief. They just didn't believe. They just wouldn't believe. In God's promise. They didn't believe that God could.

[6 : 32] And would. Take them in. As he had promised. They saw the giants. They heard the reports of these big men. They heard the reports of the walled.

Barricaded cities. They heard about the war like tribes. And they looked at their own weakness. And they were only just slaves that had been released from captivity.

They had no experience of fighting. They weren't an army at all. There were no soldiers. And they had very few weapons. And they were overcome with unbelief. They looked with the eyes.

And they saw the impossibility. And they left God out of it. And they wanted to turn back to Egypt. But Caleb followed the Lord wholeheartedly.

And he was triumphant in his victory over unbelief. Caleb was brave among cowards. He stood out amongst all of those people who were wanting to go back.

[7 : 32] And he was confident in the Lord. Amongst the scoffing, skeptical unbelievers who were so vicious in their antagonism to him. That they wanted to stone him.

Now there are many people today. Even Christians. And they go through this world as spiritual paupers. As if they were poor people. And they should be going about like spiritual millionaires. Because of unbelief. They just know very little. Of the joys of the promised land. They just can't. And they won't.

Believe absolutely. In the word of God. Because he said it. They don't know of the joys of the promised land.

God has said. Lo, I am with you always. Even to the end of the world. God has said we are more than conquerors.

[8 : 33] Through him who loved us. People standing, teetering on the edge of the promised land. They see the difficulties. They see the impossibilities of being saved.

They see how ridiculous it would be for them. To claim Christianity amongst their friends. They see the difficulties of breaking off their old lifestyle.

Their old friends. And all of that they see all the difficulties. And they prefer to wander in the desert of this world. Than to step boldly into the kingdom of Christ.

Going on his promise. That whosoever comes to me. I will in no wise cast out. They can't believe. They won't believe.

They have never learned the secret of conquering unbelief. Well, Caleb comes to them this morning and tells them. It is to follow the Lord wholeheartedly.

[9 : 31] And again, not only is Caleb able to overcome discouragement and unbelief. But there is the strange one that he was spared from death.

All the adult Israelites. All over 20. 20 and over. Except Caleb and Joshua. Died in the desert. Without entering into the promised land.

Yes, even Moses. The friend of God. Because of his mistake at the waters of Meribah. You read about in Numbers chapter 19. He died without entering in.

Caleb conquered death though. Caleb conquered death because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly. Now, I can't understand fully the principle of life and death and how it works. There is a mystery about it that belongs to the Lord himself. But we do know that death is one of the Lord's means of punishment. We read about that in the New Testament.

[10 : 32] Acts chapter 5. And are we not able to say that the drug addicts, the poor drug addicts who are found dead, through overdose or through adulterated drugs, the glucophers who die, the AIDS victims who catch AIDS through their own lifestyle, the drunk drunkards who die through drink, are we not able to say that they would quite possibly have lived much longer if their lifestyle had not been as it was?

Are we not able to say that if these people had followed the Lord wholeheartedly, that they would have extended their lives?

And the same thing is that Christians are not immune to this, to what we call, what we can call, a premature death. Because there is a death of spiritual baroness.

Christ himself says so in John chapter 15 verse 2. He says, Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. In other words, the useless Christian, they cannot expect a long life.

But it would be absolutely wrong to say that every death, particularly of young people, is a punishment. We cannot say that at all. It is not a punishment because of their wickedness, because somebody dies young.

[12 : 02] We have to leave that as a mystery with the Lord himself. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. But we do see here that Moses and the others died.

But Caleb and Joshua entered into the promised land and conquered death because they followed the Lord wholeheartedly. Caleb says in verse 10, The Lord has kept me alive.

And then the other thing we see about Caleb that he is able to face up to and defeat the enemy who would try to keep the promised land from him. We read that even as he was asking Joshua for his promised share of the land of Canaan, he was aware that that land was in the hands of the enemy, that the enemy still held it.

We read that the giants, the anachins, were there and we read that the cities were barricaded. But at the age of 85, this man Caleb was still following the Lord wholeheartedly.

For he says, Since the Lord will be with me, I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord says. At the age of 85, he is still following the Lord wholeheartedly.

[13 : 26] He is able to go out and fight against those giants and take his inheritance. Why? Because the Lord had said it. He was marching on the Lord's face.

And in verse 14 of chapter 15, we read that that's what happened. That he went and he does drive his enemies out. And special mention is made of the three sons of Anach.

No doubt they were well known. No doubt they were giants of men. But as this is told us, that we may learn.

This is told us in the Old Testament, so that we may learn from it, we can safely understand in New Testament language, that those giants mean those things that we have to fight against in order to get to our promised land the salvation that Jesus Christ has offered.

There are giants that try to keep us out of heaven. There are giants that try to come between us and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ who tries to save us.

[14 : 39] There are giants who come in the way. And the Apostle John named three such giants. So we can take them as the three sons of Anach.

These three giants in John 2 verse 16, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. First of all, the lust of the flesh, the giant who is threatening our very civilization.

Not just one or two of us, but our very civilization, being attacked and threatened by this giant of the lust of the flesh. Moral decay, delinquency, defeated sex lives, impurity, worldly perversions of all kinds.

The natural order of men and women broken down into obscene chaos. And the worst thing about this giant, the worst thing about this condition of things is that it is making incursions into the very church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians are being bitten by this giant of the lust of the flesh. But Caleb beat him, Caleb beat him, he conquered him.

[16:00] How? By a faithful life of surrender to God. He followed the Lord wholeheartedly. And then the second giant, the lust of the eyes.

That is worldly pleasure. Things that people like because they see them, things that titillate the senses, things that people chase against. Do you realize and do you see that the world has gone mad after pleasure?

After things that it enjoys? People are living for pleasure. From day to day they live for pleasure, vain, transient, temporal things, and they have no time for the spiritual.

And again, the sad thing is that Christians are being caught up in this. Our young men, our young women, and not so young men, and not so young women, are being drawn into the world.

Being drawn into worldliness and materialism. We are to be found in worldly places when the house of the Lord is open. When the Lord's people are meeting with the Lord, which Christ has promised to be, we prefer to go to worldly places to satisfy a temporal weakness within themselves.

[17:23] How can they be delivered from this giant of worldly pleasure? Well, Caleb overcame the son of Anak because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly.

and then the third giant, the pride of life. The pride of life. Where the person is full of himself.

I'm alright. I'm quite happy. I'm doing fine. I don't need religion. I don't need the savior. I'm as honest as the next man.

I'm much, much better than a lot of people who go to church. And probably this giant is the most difficult one of all to defeat. Because it's part of the makeup of a passion.

But do you want this morning to know how to defeat this giant of self? Caleb defeated him.

Defeated the three giants.

[18:29] Because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly. And finally as we read about this man Caleb in his old age being blessed by Joshua.

Being given his inheritance in Hebron. And being at peace. Because we read the land had rest from war. And as we know that this is the fruit of following the Lord wholeheartedly.

We have to ask ourselves what does it mean? What does it mean to follow the Lord wholeheartedly? What does it mean to wholly follow the Lord? Well in the original language in the Hebrew to wholly follow is a nautical term.

It's a seaman's jargon. A seaman's language. And it means to steer a straight course through the sea. A straight course through stormy weather.

Through calm weather. through mountainous waves. Through sunshine. Through fog. Through darkness. The course is set. And the ship steers by that.

[19:38] And the ship sticks to that course. So it was with Caleb. To wholly follow the Lord means a complete act of surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of all you are and of all you have. It's a complete act of surrender. So many people are willing to give a little bit of their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have seen them coming to the session and professing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as their saviour. But they go out into the world and they allocate a certain part of their lives to Christ.

And the rest they keep themselves. That is not wholly following the Lord. To wholly follow the Lord means a complete act of surrender.

It means pushing ourselves off the throne of our lives and enthroning the man from Galilee.

Enthroning the Lord Jesus Christ over everything in our lives.

[20:43] Our attitude is given to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our attitude must be his attitude. We must look upon others to the things of the world as Christ would look at them.

Not just now and again but continuously. To wholly follow the Lord is continuous obedience in every situation to the Lord Jesus Christ as King.

It means our bodies given over to Christ. Remember the body belongs to God. The body doesn't belong to you at all. Paul says ye are bought with a price therefore glorify God in your body.

God made that body in which you move around in this world. It's his. He gives you every bit of your heart and every breath in your lungs.

He lent you this body for a specific time in this world for a lifetime. time. But it is his. And it's his all the time.

[21 : 50] And when you become a Christian he makes it a temple of the Holy Spirit. He makes it the temple of the Holy Spirit. In other words he puts the Holy Spirit inside your body.

And it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And I ask you is your body really given to Christ? I ask you young people in particular is your whole body given to Christ?

Or are there some parts of the body that are disused? Misused maybe? Or even abused?

When it belongs to the Lord? Are you allowing sin to erode your physical frame? To come in and attack your very body?

Are you allowing sin to take up a lot of your strength? You see Christ wants your physical powers. He wants to grasp somebody's hand with your hand.

[23 : 02] He wants to look out at the world with your eyes. He wants to speak to the world with your tongue. He wants to sing praises to God with your lips.

He wants to live in this world through your body and that is why he wants it. That's why he wants it holy. That is altogether.

What if our hands are busy with other work than his? What if our feet are walking for sin's allurements? Or our tongues are speaking things that he would spur?

How can we hope to help him and hasten his return? The biggest assault made upon you by Satan is through temptation to the passions of the body.

And if you don't win there my friends you won't win anywhere else. the biggest fight young men and young women have is the fight for purity in their lives, purity in thought, in desire, in their imaginations, in the picture house of their minds, in their very habits of a lifestyle.

[24 : 23] Their fight for purity. And then again our intellect must be given over to the Lord. What we read, what we watch, what we talk about, what do you feed your mind on?

Your mind belongs to the Lord, your mind must be given over to Christ. What is the daily ration that you give your mind? Remember when Paul preached at Ephesus and many people were converted and a strange thing happened.

A lot of people went home and they got all their books and all the things that they had at home and they brought them and they burnt them in the market. Many of them also would use Curious Art brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver.

They sprinkled their houses of the things that were not of good to their minds and to their intellect. I ask again, what do you feed your mind on? Is it going to strengthen you in your walk through life? Is it going to make you a victor over life?

[25 : 52] And then again, out of motion, Christ must be Lord in our hearts. Or the number of young people who have refused to give Christ full control in their lives, who won't allow Christ to come into their lives in such a way that they give the control of their friendship to Christ and of their choice of a life partner to Christ.

and the tragedies of those emotionally weak men and women at a vulnerable middle age who cast aside the marriage vows and disappear in the world.

We must have Christ in control of our emotions if we are to live victoriously, if we are to holly follow the Lord. You see, there's no need for me to go on preaching because I'm sure that you've got a message by now.

God doesn't want to destroy your will. What he wants to do is to guide you into channels of obedience to himself, channels that would fulfill his purpose in this world, his purpose in your life, to your good and to his glory.

Dear Christ, I hear thy pleading call, to spurn I cannot move. My heart is conquered, take my all, for let insult thy love.

[27 : 25] O Lord, I fall at thy dear feet, compelled by love divine, my consecration may complete. Let me be holy thine. It is our prayer for everyone here, that they wouldn't just double at Christianity, that they wouldn't just tither on the edge of the promised land, but that they would stand up triumphantly and victorious to go forward, holly following the Lord with all their hearts and everything that they have, to their own good, and to the glory of their Saviour, to him be all the praise.

Amen. Let us pray. O Lord, we ask thy blessing upon us, and we ask and plead with thee that thou would make us holy thine. Make us, we ask of thee, wholehearted followers of thyself, and if there

is any portion of our lives, or of our time, and of our good, that we keep back to ourselves.
O Lord, we ask that thou would give us the will to release it to thee, that Jesus Christ, the man from Galilee, would be in complete control over our lives.
Bless the young people, bless the middle aged, bless the old people, bless us all as a congregation, hear our cries to thee, and make us holy rind, for we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.