

# Caleb

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev A.G.Ross

[ 0 : 00 ]     which we find in Numbers chapter 14 and verse 24. So this is from verse 23 again. Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it, but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and applauded me fully.

Him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it. These words in verse 24, Caleb has followed me fully.

Caleb has followed me fully. The need for a scouting operation before sending troops into unfamiliar territory is an accepted military exercise.

The idea of reconnaissance is as old as Moses, for that is what he arranged before the Israelites entered into the land of Canaan.

He organized a reconnaissance party of 12 spies, they're called here in our version, and he sent them into the land of Canaan to scout around and to report.

[ 1 : 21 ]     As we know, 10 reported pessimistically, and advised strongly against entry into the land of Canaan. And only two of the spies were optimistic, Joshua and Caleb.

And here tonight we have a special interest in Caleb, because of what the Lord said of him, that Caleb followed the Lord freely.

Indeed, the Lord said this three times of Caleb. He says it once here in number 14, and then in Joshua 14, he says it twice that the Lord, that Caleb followed him wholly.

And here, Caleb followed me fully. And it wasn't only one good thing that the Lord said about Caleb, but he says in this one verse, four good things about Caleb, in verse 24.

He says, my servant, Caleb. He recognized Caleb as his servant. He said also that Caleb had another spirit with him, another attitude.

[ 2 : 34 ]     He wasn't pessimistic like the other 10 spies. He had an optimistic attitude. He had a trusting attitude. He had another spirit. And then, that he followed him fully, and finally, that he was to, he was worthy of the, of possessing, his possessions, in the land of Canaan.

But we want to look at this third commendation, and to notice two things about it. First, what it means, and second, why it matters, that we follow, the Lord, fully.

First, what it means. Now, the duty of following the Lord, is one of the clearest, that is brought before us, in the Bible, both in the Old Testament, and in the New.

It is, required, by the Father, and by the Son, and is done, in the power, of the Holy Spirit. And, following the Lord, has to be done, in the power, of the Holy Spirit, because, it is such, a radical thing, for any of us to do.

because, it goes, clean, contrary, to what is normal, for natural man. And, what is normal, for natural man, is, not to follow the Lord, but to resist him, and to rebel against him, and to go, in a contrary direction.

[ 4 : 03 ]     It is, therefore, only by divine grace, that we can follow, the Lord at all, and only by great grace, can we follow, the Lord at all, fully.

And, this duty, this requirement, this responsibility, and this blessing, is brought before us, time and time again, in the scripture. It is, only by the grace, of the Lord Jesus Christ, can the command, of the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow, be obeyed.

And, it is, a command. For the Lord Jesus says, that we are to, deny ourselves, to take up the cross, and to, follow him.

Jesus says, follow me, and I will make you, vicious of men. Jesus says, if any man, serve me, let him follow me. You see, there is simply, nothing we can do, for Jesus, until, first of all, we begin to follow.

And, not to follow, means, that we are, living our lives, contrary, to the will of God. And, in order to put that right, we must do, what we were speaking of, this morning, to put that right, we must, kiss the son, must he be angry, and he, and we perish from the way, if his anger is tender, but a little.

[ 5 : 42 ] The only way, of putting right, our lack of, following the Lord, is that we, kiss the son, and in doing so, without, kiss of reconciliation, we are then, on the way, that leads, through the death, into the eternal city.

But, there is, following, and following. Our following, can be, either, half-hearted, or, whole-hearted.

And, there is no, shortage, of examples, of the first kind, of those who are, half-hearted. And, the emphasis, on the text, here before us, is with the other kind, to be whole-hearted, and to follow, the Lord's holy.

We think of, half-hearted followers. We think, for example, of Joseph, of Arimathea. He was a follower, he was a disciple, but, secretly, for fear.

He kept, looking back, over his shoulder, at what others were doing, what others were thinking, what others were saying, about him perhaps. He was half-hearted.

[ 6 : 53 ] And, so was Peter, in those days, when Peter, followed, afar off. Indeed, Peter was behind, the Lord Jesus, that he was well behind. And, then we read of, other disciples, who went back, and walked, no more with him.

They were half-hearted. We think of, Demas, and Hymenaeus, and Alexander. We think of, some of the Galatian, Christians, who were, politically, bewitched, and mesmerized.

So that they were, hindered, from their, following of Christ. Now all, such following, all, such, half-heartedness, feels like, the flame, in an old-fashioned, in an old-fashioned, oil lamp, that splutter, and burn, and thirstingly, and smoke, because of dirt, in the wick, or because of, lack of oil.

And my dear friends, it's the lack, of the oil of grace, that causes a person, to follow, half-heartedly. If there's no grace, at all, they don't follow, at all. It is a lack of grace, we follow, half-heartedly, and through the, lack of the cleansing, of the God of Jesus, there is, that within us, that, him, is our following, the Lord Jesus God.

Well now, there was nothing, like that, with Caleb. We are told, quite distinctly, in the words of the Lord, Caleb, has followed me, fully.

[ 8 : 26 ] Caleb was nothing, if he was not, fully committed, to the Lord. Now we want to ask, this question, and try to answer it. What is involved, in following the Lord, fully?

What is it, that we are called, to do, in order to follow him, closely, and realistically, and meaningfully, and in line, with the scriptures, and so on. What are we called, upon to do?

Well for one, this calls for discipline. You'll never, follow the Lord, fully, if you're not disciplined, in your Christian life. It calls for discipline. Now I'm sure, that Caleb, must have been, a disciplined person, to be sent, on that, by mission, at all.

And especially, so, when, like Joshua, who became, the commander, and chief of the, of the, of the Israelite army. When like Joshua, he gave him, a good, and balanced report, about the land of Canaan.

And I believe, that there's a very, close connection, between discipline, and balance. Discipline, and balance. They're very, closely connected. Our following, of the Lord Jesus Christ, like Caleb's following, of the Lord, must be, without, slothness, able to be, close, followed.

[ 9 : 49 ] And no one, follows fully, who prays, only when he feels like it. Who studies the Bible, and reads the Bible, and worships the Lord, and says, the Lord, only when he gets, the notion, now and again.

to be a person, who is, undisciplined, in these things, undisciplined, in his devotion, undisciplined, in his Christian life, a person like that, cannot be, dependent upon.

He is, inisic, he is, will-on-the-wist-like, and the service, he renders, and the report, he gives, is marked, by his deficiency, and the lack of discipline, and indiscipline, is a deficiency.

We are to be, disciplined, in our lives, for indiscipline, contributes, to, half-hearted, followers. Well that's one thing, that's required of us, discipline.

Another thing, that's required, if we are to follow, the Lord fully, is confidence. Not in ourselves, nothing else there. The confidence, we require, is not the confidence, that we have, all that it takes, to follow the Lord.

[ 11 : 07 ] But we can rely, upon our own initiative, and upon our own good sense, to follow the Lord. Not that confidence, at all. That confidence, in God, and in the righteousness, of his cause.

So it was, with Caleb. Caleb said, let us go up, and possess the land, for we are well able, to possess it. But notice, his confidence, wasn't in his ability, to possess the land.

For it goes on, and he says, if the Lord, be light in us, he will surely, give us the land. Fear not, neither be afraid, for the Lord is with us. This is confidence, was a spiritual confidence.

Fear was confidence, that was justified, on the ground, of what God was. And as that, and as the passage, before us indicates, on the ground, of what God, had done, in bringing the Israelites, out of the land of Egypt, away from the house of bondage.

Fear was a fearlessness, in the case of Caleb, that was not, brass boldness, that was not, biological, but that was rooted, in the faith, that Caleb had in God.

[ 12 : 16 ] And in the assurance, of the righteousness, of the cause, to enter the land of Caleb, because it was, in the will of God. My dear friends, fear is no part, of Christ's legacy to us.

Fear is the legacy, of unbelief, and it is the product, of this trust. How we need to remember, another faithful soul, the writer of Psalm 118, when he says, I will not see you.

What can man do to me? Why could he say that? Because he says, the Lord is on my side, better it is to trust in God, than to trust in God, that was David in Psalm 118.

That was, that was Caleb's attitude, that was the, the different attitude, the right attitude, the right spirit that he had, of which the Lord speaks, there in verse 24. And what an abdenseness, for faithful following, for following fully.

Let us go up, and possess the land. The Lord is with us, and if the Lord be right in us, he'll give us the land. For his confidence, not in one's hope, but in one's God.

[ 13 : 29 ] Oh, to be free, from doubt, and fear, and phobia, and reservations, about our God. There is a number, that in quietness, and in confidence.

shall be a step. There is discipline, and there is confidence, and there is also consistency, called for, if we are to follow the Lord fully, consistency.

Now, Caleb's confidence, in God, was put to the test, when he submitted, his report, about the land of Canaan. And Caleb, was only 40, when he submitted his report, and that was young, in those days.

It's considered to be, possibly, positively advanced, in our days. But 40, in those days, was a young age. And it was therefore, no easy report, for a young man to give.

For the simple reason, that it was, a minority report. And a minority report, is never a meansy report to him, because it is generally, a non-popular report, that invites criticism, and censure.

[ 14 : 46 ] And so it was, with Caleb. His report, was so minority, and his report, was so unpopular, that the people, wanted to stem him. His life, and his faithfulness, to his report, put his life in jeopardy.

Now what was his response? What was his response? To this situation, where his life, was in jeopardy. His response, was consistent. His response, was in line with, his trust and confidence, in God.

He didn't throw in the towel. He didn't climb down, and try to amend his report, and make it more popular. He didn't, wash his hands of the whole thing, and say, well I'm done with it, if that's your attitude.

Not at all. He was consistent, in his stand, in that he urged the people, not to rebel against the Lord. A young man, that's it some day. His concern, wasn't that they were going to stone him.

His concern, wasn't that they were, rebelling against his God. And so he, stood his ground. And with closeness, and fullness of his following, was he in this, that he was consistent.

[ 16 : 00 ] He had confidence in the Lord, and in the time of testing, he stood consistently, on the side of God. Now my dear friends, no one is following fully, who does not stand consistent.

Consistent. No one is following fully, who capiculate, at the first sign of opposition, or danger to one's own person.

And this standard of following, is needed in every age. And ours, is no exception.

Our age, is no time for, shared weather Christians, who follow the Lord, when the sun signs, and the circumstances, are convenient. Such a lack of consistency, and backbone, takes him, fully, out of our following, and substitutes the words, of our, oh may we have this, consistency, as well as, discipline, and confidence, in the Lord our God.

And the fourth thing is this, consistency. We are, if we are to follow the Lord fully, there must be, constancy, in our walk, within, and in our Christian life.

[ 17 : 27 ] Now here we turn, to Joshua, chapter 14. I didn't have time, to read that tonight, but there are some, very useful verses, there in Joshua, chapter 14, which, which, brings before us, the time, when the land of Canaan, was being divided, by Joshua, to the different people.

And, there in Joshua, 14, we are taken, 45 years further on, than in Numbers, chapter 14. And so, at the age of 40, we said that, Caleb, given his report, as a true, follower of the Lord.

And at the age of 85, 45 years further on, we are told that, in Joshua, 14, Caleb, was still following. He says, in chapter, in verse 10, of Joshua 14, the Lord has, kept me alive, these 45 years.

And now, I am this day, 85 years old. And he says, I am as strong, this day, as when Moses, sent me out, to try the land, at 40 years of age.

And I wonder, how many of us, would be able to say that, if we were to testify, that we are a strong, that we are strong, that we are fortunate. Well, Caleb was able to say that.

[ 18 : 50 ] But my dear friend, that's not the sickness, that really matters. It's our spiritual sickness, and health, that we are to be concerned about.

The question is, you say, are we declining, spiritually, with declining years? Or are we advancing, spiritually, with advancing years?

Are we following the Lord, as fully today, tonight, as we did five years, ten, twenty, forty years ago? That's the question.

Is there constantly, in our following? There must be consistency, but there must also be, constantly. And here was a man, at eighty-five, and still following.

And at eighty-five, the Lord said of Caleb, he has followed me, Holly, and he said that twice. I wonder if you can say, what this psalm is, in the words of Richard, close to service.

[ 19 : 52 ] In shadow of thy wings, I'll join, for thou my help hast been. My soul, he followed us, and me, thy right hand, that's the truth.

What a secret, to hard, close, faithful, following, the sustaining, right hand of God. The right hand of his righteousness, that holds us, and upholds us, and keeps us, from going back, to what we can say, and I will, constantly go on, in strength of God the Lord.

From whom, forth, I will not go back, not earn, from thee at all. And any abundance, in the work of the Lord, that we may do, whether at forty, or at eighty five, or any kind of, is due, to grace, abundance, to sin as such as we are.

Now, there is, the first thing we notice, what it means, to follow the Lord's faith, with discipline, with, as here and that we are in the right way, that we have a great God, confidence in the Lord, with consistency, and with constancy, and a shame, to follow him at all.

That's what it means. Now, maybe secondly, why it matters. Why it matters. Well, it must matter, because God says three times, about Caleb, that he followed him fully.

[ 21 : 22 ] There must be a lot of it, it must matter. So, we must say, is it not enough, to follow even secretly? Of course not. It's better to follow secretly, than to follow at all, and even the secret believer, will not be lost, although he may lose, much of his reward.

But you see, is that the standard, we want to adopt? That is enough, for us to follow, even secretly, or even half-heartedly, and it's better to follow, even half-heartedly, than not at all.

Is that the standard? Are we prepared, to be saved, so as by fire, just by the skin of our teeth, and to live our Christian life, at that kind of level?

Surely not. Are we happy, with the minimum, when the maximum, is required of us? Indeed, I'm not sure, if I'm rightly saying, that to follow, the Lord fully, is the maximum.

I believe that's the norm. That's the norm, to follow, the Lord fully. And I want to give, four good reasons, why we, should not only follow, but why we should, follow him, fully.

[ 22 : 33 ] And the first is this, that we owe it, to ourselves. We owe it, to ourselves. Now, I'm sure that we know, from experience, that nothing is so, unsatisfactory, and so, unsatisfying, to ourselves, as doing something, by heart, in a flip-flop way, with a divided loyalty, and a divided interest.

With half your heart. It's an unsatisfactory, we are doing things, and it's unsatisfying, to ourselves. And you see, when you take this over, into the Christian faith, the same thing works out.

It's, a person's, half-heartedness, in the Christian faith, that, that makes it, dull for them. The false is not, with the religion, but with, many who practice it, in a half-hearted way, in a lackadaisical way, with a divided heart, and with only half an interest, and half an eye.

That way of doing anything, is most unsatisfying to us, you will get a free to us, for us. In fact, you follow the Lord's, willingly, whole-heartedly, contributes, to our personal satisfaction, it gives meaning, and purpose, to the Christian faith, and satisfaction, to our hearts.

So that we, surely shall be satisfied, with God's, abundant grace, when we enter, into the whole enterprise, with heart and soul, and strength in mind. We owe it to ourselves, to follow the Lord's foolishness.

[ 24 : 11 ] Then again, we owe it to the church, to follow the Lord's foolishness. For the church, is judged, by the world, not only, on the wisdom, of its pronouncement, but on the quality, of its membership.

And the church, is as inceptive, as the commitment, of its members. And if the church, is guilty, of being more dead, than alive, then the fault lies, with those, who make up the church, that, they are not, tolering the Lord, but in a half-hearted, lackadaisical way.

And my dear friends, if the church, is to be taken seriously, then, those who make up the church, the members of the church, must follow the Lord, seriously, and fully, and totally, and consistently, and confidently, and constantly, and with discipline lies.

We owe it to the good name, of the church, and we owe it to the good name, of our own church, that we live lives, that are consistent, and that we are known, as those who follow the Lord, fully, who are wholly committed, and let's not be ashamed, of being, of being known, as those, who are total, in a commitment, and allegiance, to the things of God.

Why is Islam, growing, is such a growing force, in Britain, and all over the world today? Why? Well, one reason is, because of the devotiveness, the utter devotiveness, of so many of us, that we have been following.

[ 25 : 52 ] And here we have, the greatest faith of all, and so many, are following, so far off. We owe it, to ourselves, to follow fully, we owe it, to the church, to follow fully, and we owe it, to the world, around us, to follow fully, because the world, lies, in the wicked one, says God.

It lies, in the wicked one. The world lies, in sorrow, and confusion, and darkness. And the world, is blinded, by its own God.

That's all, the God of this world, can do. It blinds, its own followers. And the world, is blinded, by its own God. And therefore, the light, that the world, leaves, in this darkness, will not be found, in Islam, or anything else, but in the Christian faith, in that faith, founded by Christ, interpreted by the apostles, and exemplified, by all, in the apostolic tradition.

And if we are, in the apostolic tradition, then, we are light bearers. And we can only, be light bearers, effectively, if we keep, close, to the source, of our life, which is the Lord.

And if we, follow closely, the faith, of the master. We owe it to the world, as light bearers, to follow the Lord, fully.

[ 27 : 22 ] And finally, we owe it, to God, to the God, of all grace, who has called us, unto his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, to follow him, fully.

we owe it, to the Lord himself. If we are believing people, then, God has put his honor, into our hands. God has entrusted, his glory, and his good name, to us.

And to do so, what did God do? When he called, men, into his hands, he could put his honor, and glory, and trust. What did God do? He did not call, many noble, he did not call, many mighty, but he called, the ordinary, he called, the weak, he called, heirs, and their faith, to be his servants, and witnesses, through which his glory, could be seen.

And my dear friends, when we think, of what God, has done, for those, whom he called, he sexually called, and brought into, his kingdom, and brought into, salvation, when we think, of all that God, has done, for his call, how the God, of all grace, has called us, unto every kind of glory, by Christ Jesus, then surely, nothing is too great, for us to do, for him.

When his great God, has done so much, for us, not even following, fully, that's the least, we can do. That's our reasonable service, that's our spiritual worship, to follow, the Lord's will.

[ 29 : 07 ] Therefore, how unworthy, how cowardly, it is, for any of his, deeming soul, to say, even to himself, I will follow thee, thus.

I will follow thee, if, I will follow thee, so long as. My friends, such, such a hedging, of our following, delete, its sincerity, and dilute, its value.

Let's not be guilty, of that dilute, let us follow the Lord, with all our soul, and strength, and mind, and then, we will be following him, holy, and this will be pleasing, in his sight.

We can be certain of this, that no half-hearted, following, is pleasing to God. No divided loyalty, brings delight, to the most high. And when we think of the, infinitude of his life, and the depth of his message, and the greatness, of his saving power, towards us, are we content, of half-heartedness, following that a far off, following, secretly, for fear, and so on.

There are followers, we. Now when Caleb died, he left, a vast legacy, to his family. Not, property in Hebron.

[ 30 : 42 ] Hebron was a part of, Canaan, which was allotted, to Caleb, by Joshua 14, and also. There wasn't property, in Hebron that he left, but he left his family.

The example, of unwellery, loyalty, and commitment, to his and his family's God. And what, what better, and what more durable legacy, can we leave, to those who follow us, than that we, in our lifetime, followed God fully.

And in the eyes of those, who followed us, they recognize, the fullness, of our followers. And if we are, remembered by them, for that very thing, that we follow the Lord fully, then, then, we will have no regrets.

And especially so, if those, who follow us, also, follow on. To know the Lord, encouraged, by the example, that we have set before.

And we have this responsibility, and we have this, and we have this privilege, of setting before others, and of setting before those, in our own home, this quality of Christian discipleship, that is the antithesis, of our heartiness, that is marked by devotiveness, that is marked by loyalty, that is marked by, the whole, heartless following of Jesus, through sick and sick, for the sake of him, and the glory of him, who has called us, unto his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus.

[ 32 : 37 ] Think of Caleb, and God's commendation, Caleb, has followed me. Here. Let us pray. O great God, may this quality, of life, and of devotion to thee, be given to us.

It is not something, we can work up for ourselves. We cannot follow thee at all, but in the power of the Holy Ghost, and through his gracious work, in us, and Christ's work for us.

And we cannot follow thee at all, fully, unless, the Spirit of God, is working, and ministering, to us, daily, and constantly.

And we pray, therefore, that we may be, under the ministry, of the Spirit of God, as he applies his word, as he encourages us, to pray, as he shows us, the importance, of following these, fully, and the privilege, of setting an example, for those, who are coming after us.

O Lord, may we be, under, the guidance, and power, and direction, of the Spirit of God, so that we are not left, to ourselves. To follow thee at all, is so radical, a step.

[ 34 : 11 ] It is so contrary, to what, we are by nature, and what we do by nature, that, that nothing, but divine grace, can enable us, to follow. And nothing, but great grace, can persevere, with us, to follow feelings.

Lord, may we know, something of this, for ourselves. O, for a closer walk, is God. And we ask, O Lord, that, in the grace, that lie before us, whatever, fail, we have been out in the past, and there have been many, whatever lies before us, may we not fail, in this most important exercise, in this most important part, of our life, that we might be close to thee, that we might be devoted to thee, that we might have a true, love for thee, a high respect, and regard for thee, and that in everything, we would have, at the forefront of our trust, the glory of God.

For man's deep end, is to glorify thee, help us, to accomplish it, and secondly, we cannot, if we do not follow thee, closely.

Remember us, each one, we pray, remember us, in all the engagements, and tasks, of this new week, in which we enter. And when we are tempted, to take the easy way out, the way of least resistance, when we are tempted, to slackness, and indiscipline, to carelessness, to a lack of constancy, Lord, correct us, and show us our foolishness, and empower us, to run this creation, the race that is set before us, looking away to Jesus, the source of our life, and the source of our faith, and our very hope, is there.

Come amongst us, we pray to them, and bless us. For Jesus' name, Amen.