

Fully Follow the Lord

Text: Joshua 14:6-15

Introduction:

1. Caleb's life shines out in the Scriptures as a life wholly lived for the glory of God. Six times Scripture records of this man that he 'wholly' or 'fully' followed the Lord (Num. 14:24; 32:12; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:8, 9, 14). This is an incredible testimony and one that should inspire and challenge every man.
2. Our lesson will be based on Caleb's own words as found in Joshua 14 which are in the context of the division of the land. Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, is now in the land and the land is being divided by lot. Caleb lays claim to what the Lord had promised him for his faithfulness to the Lord in the incident at Kadesh Barnea.
3. The life of Caleb provides a wonderful model for every man of God to follow. May we like Caleb of old, with all our hearts, fully follow our God.

Observe firstly...

I. THE TESTIMONY OF CALEB'S FAITHFULNESS (VS. 6-9)

In these verses Caleb reflects back on the events of Numbers 13-14 45 years earlier when Israel stood at the border of the promised land and the 12 spies went in for a 40 day reconnoitre of the land. This incident would prove to be a defining point in the nation of Israel at that time and a defining moment in the life of Caleb. Caleb reflects upon...

A. The Perspective of His Faith (Vs. 7)

Hearts were revealed at Kadesh Barnea those 45 years earlier. Caleb makes reference to the fact his report was according to what "was in mine heart." Great crises of faith do not tend to produce the problems of the heart so much as they serve to reveal them. What was in the hearts of the 12 spies when they returned from their 40-day survey of the land?

1. Unbelief was in the hearts of the Majority (Num. 13:26-33)
 - a. It needs to be remembered that each of these spies were taken from the leadership of each tribe. Num. 13:2 "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, **every one a ruler among them.**"
 - b. These men acknowledged that the land was as God had promised (Ex. 3:8) it would be, a land flowing with milk and honey (Num. 13:27).
 - c. However, they were not prepared to engage in the battles that were necessary to enter into an enjoyment of the blessings God had for them. They were afraid of the giants in the land and turned back choosing the wilderness life over the Canaan life. How many

believers follow Christ to a point until they are faced with a giant and decide that is as far as they will go in their walk of faith.

- d. Challenge: Canaan represents the victorious Christian life. God does not want us to stay in a state of spiritual infancy for a protracted period of time. He brought **you out** of Egypt that he might **bring you in** to a greater experience and enjoyment of your inheritance in Christ “And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: **And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in**, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.” (Deut. 6:22-23) Canaan cannot represent heaven as there are giants in the land and battles to be fought and won. It is the land of fruit and fight, picturing so accurately, the experience of the Christian life.
 - a. The wilderness life was marked by dryness, division and dissatisfaction. They were sustained but not satisfied. They were prone to backsliding (e.g., golden calf incident), murmuring and rebellion (e.g., against the authority of Moses). It is possible to be saved, sustained (mana) but not truly satisfied and living in spiritual victory. You can choose not to progress in the walk of faith and if you are saved, God will still show you mercy and sustain you in a measure with mana in the wilderness but what a tragedy to miss the grapes, pomegranates and figs of the Spirit-filled life of faith you could have enjoyed!
 - b. The Canaan life is marked by fruit (satisfaction), faith and fight (victories over enemies).
 - c. The Book of Hebrews unmask the heart condition that prevented the men of that generation from entering the land – “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in **because of unbelief**.” (Heb. 3:18-19)
2. Faith was in the hearts of the Minority (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9)

Caleb and Joshua saw the same things as the other 10 but from the perspective of faith. They believed...

 - a. In the Abundance of the Land (Num. 14:6-8)
 - i. These men knew that what God had provided in the land was far better than what was available in Egypt or the wilderness. The rebels saw the giants, these men saw the grapes.
 - ii. The rebels believed they would have been better off dying in Egypt or in the wilderness or returning to Egypt (14:2-4).
 - b. In the Ability of God (Num. 13:30; 14:9)
 - i. These men saw the same challenges as the other men but they saw them in light of the truth of God’s limitless power.

- ii. The rebels saw the giants, Caleb and Joshua saw God.

B. The Position of His Faith (Vs. 8)

1. Following the Lord wholeheartedly for Caleb meant taking a position that was contrary to the majority opinion.
2. The 10 faithless spies had a devastating effect on the whole nation of Israel. Their fear and faithlessness spread like a contagion throughout the camp and turned the hearts of the people in a rebellious direction.
3. Caleb and Joshua stood virtually alone in their generation. To stand for truth and right always means standing with a minority on one side with the majority against you. But time would prove these two men unspeakably more blessed than those who stood on the wrong side of the battle.

C. The Promise because of His Faith (Vs. 9)

1. The Reward of an Inheritance (Vs. 9a)
 - a. A blessing for Caleb.
 - b. A blessing for Caleb's children.
 - i. Caleb's faith meant blessing not only for him but for his children. There is so much more at stake than our own lives as fathers. Our walk with God affects the family. The best thing a man can do for his family is follow God with all his heart, soul and strength.
 - ii. Deut. 1:36 "Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, **and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.**"
 - iii. Prov. 20:7 "The just man walketh in his integrity: **his children are blessed after him.**"
 - iv. Isaiah 44:3-5 "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: **I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:** And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I *am* the LORD'S; and another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe *with* his hand unto the LORD, and surname *himself* by the name of Israel."
2. The Reason for the Inheritance (Vs. 9b). The blessing of God was upon Caleb because of his consecration to the Lord. Challenge: Are you following the Lord completely? Or are you half-hearted and mediocre about your walk with God. Total consecration, total surrender, total yieldedness is what is needed.

II. THE CONSISTENCY OF CALEB'S FAITHFULNESS (VS. 10-12)

A. Consistent in his Past Walk (Vs. 10)

1. The Preservation of the Lord. Caleb could look back and see that the preserving hand of God had been at work in His life, keeping him alive to fulfill all of God's will for his life. God had kept His promise to Caleb.
2. The Patience of Caleb. Caleb had to wait over 40 years before he finally got to enjoy the fulfillment of the promise God had given to him. In this generation of instant gratification, we need to be reminded that the Christian race is not a sprint but a marathon – "let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (Heb. 12:1)

B. Committed for his Future Walk (Vs. 11-12)

1. Committed to the warfare of God (Vs. 11)
 - a. His power hadn't faded. God had supernaturally preserved not only Caleb's life but his physical strength so that he would be fit for the future battles that were in store. This was a unique thing that God did for men like Caleb and Moses but the principle that applies for all of us is that we trust that God will equip us with his power for whatever battles he has for us to fight in His Divine will.
 - b. His passion hadn't faded. At 85 years of age, Caleb wasn't thinking about retiring from the battle. He was standing ready to go out and do some battle for the Lord.
 - c. There is a wonderful encouragement and challenge for our senior saints here. You may not have the same physical strength you had 40 years ago, but by God's grace you can have the same spirit of passion for the cause of Christ. Perhaps like Caleb, the most significant work of your life will take place in the final phase of your life.
 - d. Harry Ironside: "He did not look for some secluded valley where he would be safe from the prying eyes of enemies, nor did he ask for some town or village from which the Canaanites had been driven out already. Caleb wanted all that God had for him in His will, even if that meant facing battles to get it...We are too apt to take the line of least resistance, to be content with that which seems **the easiest thing** instead of valiantly going on in faith to lay hold of the best that God has for us, no matter what difficulties may seem to make it impossible for us to overcome the foe and to enter into and enjoy our allotted portion."
2. Committed to the will of God (Vs. 12)
 - e. Caleb didn't seek what was easiest but rather what was God's best for him. Although more than 40 years had passed he hadn't stopped growing. Maclaren: "Old age is generally much more

disposed to talk about its past victories than to fight new ones; to rest upon its arms, or upon its laurels, than to undertake fresh conflicts. Now and then we see a man, statesman or other, who, bearing the burden of threescore years and ten lightly, is still as alert of spirit, as eager for work, as bold for enterprise, as he was years before...It is the coward and the selfish man who are always looking for an easy place, where somebody else will do the work.”

- a. S. Grant: “Age is no barrier to possessing what the Lord has given to the believer in salvation. Caleb’s appetite for the inheritance remained as great as it had been, and he was determined to possess it. How encouraging it is to see an older saint living in the good of what he received from the Lord many years before. It is even better to see an older saint, having a desire **to further explore his spiritual inheritance.**”
- b. The word ‘Hebron’ means ‘fellowship’ so we see Caleb still striving for fellowship with God even in his old age.
- c. Caleb had assurance that God would supply the power needed to fulfill His plan.
- d. In Josh. 15:13-14 we read that Caleb did drive out the three giants, the sons of Anak and took possession of the land God had promised him. These men were present when Caleb spied out the land 45 years earlier (Num. 13:22).

III. THE LEGACY OF CALEB’S FAITHFULNESS (VS. 13-14; 15:13-20)

A. The Legacy of a godly Heritage (Vs. 13-14; 15:13-14)

1. Hebron became a city for the Levites, the spiritual leaders of Israel and a city of refuge (Josh. 21:11-13).
2. Hebron’s suburbs became the inheritance of Caleb’s descendants. Never underestimate the flow on affect of just one man’s commitment to follow God fully! The blessings and impact can be ongoing even after he has gone home to glory.
3. Not only had Hebron been a significant place prior to this time (e.g., in the life of Abraham), but it went on to hold a significant place in the national life of Israel. David was anointed king in Hebron and reigned from there for the first 7 ½ years over the tribe of Judah before Jerusalem became his capital city.

B. The Legacy of a godly Seed (Vs. 15-19)

1. A spiritual husband for his daughter (Vs. 15-17)
 - a. There is no reason to believe that Caleb couldn’t have driven out the inhabitants of Debir as he had those of Hebron. He had just driven out the three sons of Anak! It appears that his aim was to

help find the right sort of husband for his daughter Achsah. “The nature of the task ensured that the man who would succeed would be a man who trusted in the Lord, as Caleb did, and prove himself to be a worthy husband.” (S. Grant)

- b. Othniel proved himself as a man of God and went on to become Israel’s first judge (Judges 3:9).
 - c. Note: From Josh. 15:18-19 we get a sense that Achsah had a good relationship with her father. He was open to what her desires and requests were so I think it would be safe to say she wasn’t forced into this marriage.
 - d. **Ladies**, make sure you marry a spiritual man who has won some spiritual victories in his life. A man who has done some battle with the world, the flesh and the devil and come out victorious with God’s help.
 - e. **Men**, if you want to marry an Achsah, you need to be an Othniel! You also need to be prepared to work with Caleb (prospective father-in-law) to win her hand in marriage. It is entirely right and reasonable for him to want to know something of your spiritual walk and maturity before he gives you his daughter in marriage.
2. A spiritual heritage for his daughter (Vs. 18-19)
 - a. The spirituality of Achsah is seen in her request. She wanted a lasting, fruitful inheritance rather than personal wealth and other temporal adornments.
 - b. “In this little cameo is seen the spirituality of Othniel’s wife; they were perfectly matched. It is an excellent picture of a marriage of equals. How important it is for the husband and wife in a marriage to share a spiritual ambition, to have the same desire to enjoy the inheritance they received when they were saved, and to be fruitful in the things of the Lord. Achsah was prepared to act in order to see her ambition realised. She did not wait for her husband to do for her what she could do for herself.” (S. Grant)

Conclusion:

1. Do you know Christ as Saviour? This is the very first step you need to take in order to follow God fully.
2. Will you commit, God helping you, to following God with all your heart?