

Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Wholly Follow Wholly Victorious.”

And I’m not talking about the “Batman” type of holy, like “Holy follow, Batman!” I’m talking about WHOLLY, spelled “wholly.” The text is Joshua 14 from verse 6 to verse 14, but we are not starting there, we will end up there.

Today, we are talking about one of the greatest “un-sung heroes” of the Bible. And the lesson we learn from our “un-sung hero” today is the most important lesson a Christian can learn in order to take *full possession of the Promised Life*.

Today, we are going to talk about Caleb – the other guy who was there with Joshua all the way. But Caleb was the un-sung hero of this dynamic duo. And Caleb did something that very few in Israel did and that very few today do.

Caleb chose *one thing* and he put that one thing above everything else in his life, above all desire and above all accomplishment, *Caleb chose to wholly follow the Lord*. He chose to completely and absolutely, no matter what, wholly follow the Lord. And Caleb’s determination to wholly follow the Lord made him wholly victorious. If we will determine to *wholly follow the Lord* today, then just as he did for Caleb, the Lord will make us *wholly victorious*.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, would you reveal that to us, please? Would you make that come alive to us, Lord? That as we follow you wholly and completely and without reservation, that you Lord will respond to strengthen us and to make us wholly victorious. Lord, we pray that as Caleb’s life comes alive to us today, that we would see ourselves there or that we would desire, and commit to be in that same place – to wholly follow you and to allow you to make us wholly victorious. Lord bring it to life for your glory and in your name, Jesus, amen.*

God has not changed from the days of Joshua to today, and God today is looking for those who will wholly follow him so that he can make them wholly victorious.

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NLT)

9 The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him . . .

That is what we see in the life of Caleb. But to see it we have to go back forty-five years from Joshua Chapter 14 to the Book of Numbers Chapter 13. Turn there.

Our story begins on the edge of the Promised Land at the gateway into the Promised Life – *Kadesh-Barnea*. Numbers 13 and 14 is where Moses sends in twelve leaders to spy out the Promised Land and bring back a report. It would have only taken a year or so for the Israelites to move from Egypt (the Exodus) to the Promised Land, including the time spent at Mt. Sinai receiving the Law.

And when they got to the “gateway” of the Promised Land, we read in Numbers 13:1-2,

Numbers 13:1–2 (NLT)

1 The Lord now said to Moses, 2 “Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve ancestral tribes.”

Two of these twelve were Joshua and Caleb and these twelve leaders were sent to do reconnaissance on the land and on the enemy in the land. And when they came back, ten of the leaders instilled a complete lack of faith into the people.

We read in Numbers 13:27-28,

Numbers 13:27–28 (NLT)

27 This was their (the 10 faithless leaders) report to Moses: “We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey . . .

. . . and then they showed Moses a single cluster of grapes that took two men to carry.

28 But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! (these were the GIANTS in the land)

And in verse 33 they say, ***“We felt like grasshoppers next to those Giants.”***

Their problem was these ten leaders measured the giants against their own strength – just like the army of Israel would later do as they stared down Goliath.

But Caleb measured those giants against God’s power and God’s strength and Caleb tries to correct the faithless report in Numbers 13:30.

Numbers 13:30 (NLT)

30 But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at once to take the land,” he said. “We can certainly conquer it!”

Not “we” because of “*our strength.*” “We” because of “*God’s strength.*”

But the ten faithless leaders spread their faithlessness through the entire congregation. And in Numbers 14:1 it says the whole community whined and cried all night, ***“If only we had died in Egypt...”***

Then in 14:4 the people said, ***“Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt.”***

Then Joshua and Caleb again speak up as the only two faithful.

Numbers 14:6–8 (NLT)

6 Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing.

7 They said to all the people of Israel, “The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land!

8 And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey.

If the Lord is pleased with us then HE will bring us into the Promised Life.

If we will WHOLLY FOLLOW the Lord then we will be WHOLLY VICTORIOUS.

Then, continuing in Numbers 14:6-8.

Numbers 14:6–8 (NLT)

9 Do not rebel against the Lord, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the Lord is with us! Don’t be afraid of them!”

And then in verse 10 the people start talking about stoning Joshua and Caleb.

Then the Lord says to Moses in verses 11-12

“How long will these people treat me with contempt and unbelief – How about if I destroy them with a plague and we start over?”

Then Moses intercedes for the people and God makes the commitment that Israel will wander in the wilderness forty years until that entire generation dies.

But look what God says about Caleb in Numbers 14:24.

Numbers 14:24 (NLT)

24 But my servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have. He has remained loyal to me (he has Wholly Followed me), so I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will possess their full share of that land.

And just write this down there and Numbers 14. Write Numbers 32:11-12.

Numbers 32:11–12 (NLT)

11 ‘Of all those I rescued from Egypt, no one who is twenty years old or older will ever see the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for they have not obeyed me wholeheartedly

(they have NOT Wholly Followed the Lord).

12 The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they have [wholly] followed the Lord.

The consequence for the people’s unbelief was death – just like it is in the New Testament.

But not for Caleb!

As Numbers 14:24 said Caleb has an entirely different attitude than the masses of God’s people. He was wholly following the Lord and the Lord promises that he will make Caleb wholly victorious and Caleb will take possession of his full share of the Promised Life.

Man, that is good, isn’t it? God responds to Caleb’s unwavering faith by promising that Caleb will take possession of the Promised Life.

And then what happens?

Then Caleb wanders around in the wilderness for forty years with all the unbelievers. And not only does Caleb wander *with* the unbelievers, he *experiences* every trial and every difficulty that the unbelieving masses had to experience.

Wait a minute, God...

Caleb has this massive faith and you didn’t air-lift him out of the same trials that the unbelievers had to experience? Caleb and Joshua were wholly following the Lord for those forty years! But they still had to experience the same earthly trials that unbelieving Israel experienced.

Guys, listen to me please. We have the most incredible, awesome, eternal inheritance reserved for us – we can’t even grasp the glory of it. Yet God allows us (in this life) to experience the same trials and struggles that the unbelievers experience.

And maybe someone lied to you and told you that Jesus died to *fix things* for you in this temporal, vapor of a life. If that happened to you – I’m sorry, because Jesus Christ himself said in John 16:33,

John 16:33 (NLT)

33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

We wholly follow Jesus now and he makes us wholly victorious later – and Caleb is a perfect example of that.

And did God make a way for *Caleb* to inherit ALL God promised?

Yes he did! (We'll see in a minute.)

And has God made a way for *us* to inherit ALL he promised?

Yes he has!

And that WAY has a name, and that name is Jesus Christ! And all that God has promised us “in Christ” is reserved for us – it is being kept for us and God is “keeping us” by his power until we receive that full inheritance (1 Peter 1 says.)

Do you think Caleb gave up his faith during those forty years of living in the wilderness with the unbelievers? Do you think he stopped *wholly following* the Lord while he ate manna burgers in the wilderness for forty years?

Listen, please, God wants to meet you *in* your difficulties so that he can reveal himself to you while you are on your way to his ultimate victory for you. So please don't ask God for a short cut and don't make God into your genie. Meet him every day – right in the midst of WHATEVER you are in the midst of. And, as you wholly follow him through the trials of this life, he will make you wholly victorious.

That is what happened to Caleb and we see it come to pass, forty-five years later. After forty years in the wilderness and five years of battle, we meet Caleb again in Joshua 14:6 and I want you to look to see if anything has changed in Caleb's commitment to wholly follow the Lord.

Joshua 14:6–12 (NLT)

6 A delegation from the tribe of Judah, led by Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb said to Joshua, “Remember what the Lord said to Moses, the man of God, about you and me when we were at Kadesh-barnea. (the Gateway)

7 I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan. I returned and gave an honest report, 8 but my brothers who went with me frightened the people from entering the Promised Land. For my part, I wholeheartedly followed the Lord my God.

9 So that day Moses solemnly promised me, ‘The land of Canaan on which you were just walking will be your grant of land and that of your descendants forever, because

you wholeheartedly followed the Lord my God.'

10 "Now, as you can see, the Lord has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old.

11 I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then.

And remember the physical battles in Joshua are pictures of our spiritual battles. And Caleb is saying, as strong as I was for the battle *then*; I am just as strong *now*.

12 So give me the hill country that the Lord promised me. You will remember that as scouts we found the descendants of Anak living there in great, walled towns. (the biggest Enemy, in the most difficult towns) **But if the Lord is with me (same thing he said 45 yrs ago), ***I will drive them out of the land, just as the Lord said.***"**

What's so incredible here is that Caleb is saying *the passing of forty-five years has not changed a thing*. My faith and my obedience are just as strong today as they were when this all started forty-five years ago. And I know God is the same. And I know God will give me the strength and the power to drive the enemy out *now* just as he did forty-five year ago.

And then in verse 12, Caleb says, "***So give me the hard country. Give me the craggy mountains where the giants of Anak live in great walled towns***" because *I want to experience God's victory today, just as much as I did forty-five years ago!*

Caleb is saying, Man, this is it! I've been wholly following the Lord for forty five years in the wilderness and now God is going to make me wholly victorious *in* the Promised Land.

And so in Joshua 14:13 we read,

Joshua 14:13 (NLT)

13 So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave Hebron to him as his portion of land.

The ultimate goal and the ultimate inheritance for Caleb was to inherit Hebron. When Caleb went in to spy out the land forty-five years ago he saw one very special place and it had been in his heart all these forty-five years. That place was Hebron.

Hebron was located on the top of a rugged mountain range, where it still is today. And Hebron was a powerful stronghold of the descendants of Anak (the giants) who lived in great walled cities. All Caleb could think about was inheriting Hebron.

Why? Why Caleb? Why seek such a difficult place for your inheritance? Why not ask for the easy, lush, pasture lands of the valley? Why do you have your eyes set – all these years – on Hebron?

Well, it was in Hebron that Abraham made his most permanent home in the Promised Land. It was Hebron that God again promised to give the land to Abraham and make a great nation from him. It was at Hebron that God came down and spoke to Abraham and communed with Abraham face-to-face.

The word “Hebron” means: *“to keep company, to be associated with.”* It carries the idea of *fellowship, communion and friendship. THAT* is what the name Hebron means. In Arabic Hebron is called KAHIL, which means: *friend* – as in *“friend of God.”*

And Caleb says, All I want is Hebron.

After forty-five years of wholly following the Lord, Caleb’s ultimate victory was to reach the place of

True Fellowship

Genuine Communion and

Friendship with God

No matter the cost, no matter the difficulty! Caleb, do you want the lush, easy land in this life? No. Do you want a land with no enemies, no battles? No.

When you are wholly following the Lord, you begin to realize (at some point) the ultimate victory is reaching this place of

True Fellowship

Genuine Communion and

Friendship with the Lord.

THAT is the meaning of Hebron, and *THAT* was Caleb’s ultimate victory. Because Caleb knew that at Hebron was the source of his faith and the source of his strength.

Caleb knows his faith and his strength came from that place of

True Fellowship,

Genuine Communion and

Friendship with the Lord.

Hebron is where God met man – face-to-face and made a relationship possible. And Hebron is an Old Testament picture of the most significant place in the New Testament –

The place where God ultimately enabled man to have
True Fellowship
Genuine Communion and
Friendship with God.

The New Testament place is Calvary and what Hebron was to Caleb, Calvary is to us.

Caleb knew that he had to inherit that place of genuine communion with God, and Caleb was willing to wholly follow the Lord through whatever he faced in this world in order to reach that place of genuine communion with the Lord.

And, as Caleb did, you and I must inherit Calvary. Above all else – we must inherit Calvary. Not just our culture’s simplified form of repeat the prayer and be “good to go.” We must wholly follow in order to inherit all that Calvary brings...

True Fellowship with the Lord
Genuine Communion with the Lord
and Friendship with the Lord.

Because it is through that genuine relationship that we actually become wholly victorious and we reach that place of genuine relationship by wholly following the Lord.

We’ll finish today with Joshua 14:4.

Joshua 14:14 (NLT)

14 Hebron still belongs to the descendants of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite because he wholeheartedly followed the Lord, the God of Israel.

Tell me – when you leave this place, will they be able to say about you “all that Calvary represents still belonged to him (or her)?” Will they be able to say that your ultimate inheritance was Calvary? That your legacy passed to your descendants was Calvary? Will they be able to say that you wholly followed the Lord, and because of that you were wholly victorious?

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, give us revelation and the insight Lord. We can’t see there’s too much stuff in our way, the stuff of the world, the flesh and our own understanding and our pride and our lust of the flesh, Lord. God wipe it all away and help us to see that our ultimate victory is in you, Jesus. It is in true fellowship with you. It’s in genuine communion with you, and it’s in friendship with you, Lord. That is our victory because that is our eternal inheritance. And so God whatever we’re in today, may we meet you in it. May we wholly follow you in it. And may we know that our victory is set in you, Jesus.*

And Lord, our role is to wholly follow you and allow you to make us wholly victorious. Lord as we prepare our hearts for communion, we pray that you would pierce us, that we would know where we stand and that we would wrestle with you during this time. And that we would truly decide right now whether we want your life to replace ours, whether we want to consume you, to have you replace our lives with yours. God draw us to that place, now. For your glory, amen.