

Joshua: Walking by Faith, Growing in Grace

Caleb

Joshua 14:1-15

October 26, 2025

HDBC

Continuing our study of Joshua. Last week we considered chapter 10. Been doing a chapter each week. Today we are going to zoom way out, and then back in. Zoom out to see chapters 11-21. Battles and allotments of the land to the tribes. Zoom back in to focus on chapter 14. **It is about an 85-year-old man named Caleb** who refused to slow down, sit down or wind down. He was a man on a mission.

He was a contemporary of Joshua. And more than that, they were **kindred spirits and long-time friends**. Together they stood firm in trusting the Lord, when the crowd refused to do so. These men were courageous visionaries in the past. Both were faithful through the wanderings in the wilderness under Moses. But now Moses is gone and one of them has been promoted. Don't miss that last statement; ***one of them has been promoted***.

Even as he watched his friend take the reins of leadership, Caleb remained true and faithful. As Joshua was leading the army of Israel from one victory to another, Caleb was right beside him, serving faithfully **in the shadows**. I admire Caleb for his attitude and response to the situation. Think about this.

He and Joshua came out of Egypt as young warriors, loyal to Moses.

They both stood true to God when all others refused to do so

They both were faithful through 40 years of wandering and death.

They alone remained of the original adults who started the journey.

Both were qualified to take over for Moses. But only one was chosen.

And it was not Caleb. **Did it sting? What did he think? We are not told.** But we do know that he remained true as a faithful servant to his friend and companion, Joshua. Caleb deserves a lot of praise. And he provides for us a great example of **how to finish well**. Now to the text.

1. The tribes received their land (1-5)

This opening paragraph describes the system for assigning the territories in Canaan. Notice the shared leadership as Joshua was joined by this high priest Eleazar and by one representative from each of the twelve tribes, to oversee this assigning of territory.

There is a balanced representation because there is concern on a human level that there be no charge of favoritism from any tribe. In obedience to what Moses said, these men throw themselves on the sovereignty of God and cast lots before the Lord. They want God to decide how big an area each tribe needs and what area in the land each tribe is to have.

2. Caleb made a request (6-12) *Wait to read with subpoints*

Judah received a large portion of land, described in chapter 15. But notice the last verse of that chapter. It points out that they did not drive out all of the inhabitants. **What was true in general of the tribe of Judah was not true of Caleb. who was a member of that tribe.** He was not willing to come short of carrying out God's perfect plan and will. He was determined to see it through. So, he approached Joshua. He shared a memory from the **past**, a statement about the **present**, and a word about the **future**.

1) The past (6-9)

Caleb reminded Joshua of a promise made to him by Moses 45 years earlier. He has waited patiently, but now it was time to claim that promise.

Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite: tells us that Caleb's father was a Kenizzite-his family of origin was not Jewish but Edomite. The Kenizzites were distant cousins to the nation of Israel. They were descended from Esau. **At some point Caleb's family became incorporated into the life of the Israelites.** And Caleb became a faithful servant and key leader under Moses & Joshua.

Caleb makes reference to something that happened at Kadesh-Barnea. Soon after the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, they crossed the wilderness in the Sinai peninsula. They arrived at the border of the promised land, Kadesh-Barnea.

God had promised the people that although there were enemies occupying the land, they could occupy it. God said that it was beautiful & bountiful with great natural resources. Moses sent 12 men, one from each tribe, to view the land. His intent was that their report would encourage the people. Caleb was among them.

Apparently each one of these twelve spies was assigned a separate area to check out. The area that Caleb explored is referred to in Joshua 14:12 as the hill country. It is also referred to as Hebron and was about 19 miles south of Jerusalem.

Hebron was historically important to the people of Israel. It was **associated with the patriarchs**. It was in Hebron where Abraham lived when he came into the land from Haran generations earlier. He built an altar there to sacrifice to God.

It was where God communicated His covenant relationship with Abraham: including the promise of the land, the promise of a nation, the promise of the Messiah who was to come.

Hebron is where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah are buried. **So that place evokes important memories in the minds of the Jewish people.**

2) The present (10-11)

More than a million people died in the wilderness. And through all those difficult years, Caleb to the promise of Moses concerning the land. I believe it was hope that gave him joy and courage as he endured all those years of wandering and waiting. He tells Joshua in

verse 10, *I didn't just survive, I thrived*. He was a man of tremendous vitality, energy, and enthusiasm.

How can Caleb show up at age eighty-five full of physical and spiritual vitality when all the others had grown old and died? The answer is that *even though his physical body was in the wilderness, his heart & mind were already in Canaan*. That's why in verse 12 Caleb is able to make this bold, courageous claim about the future.

3) The future (12)

So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day. Even at his age, he knew his time had finally come. He was claiming his promised inheritance.

Caleb was well aware that the **Anakim** were there and that the cities were well-fortified. In other words, he was not being naïve about the enemy. He knew it would be difficult. Yet, He trusted the Lord.

The Anakim were a formidable race of giant, warlike people who occupied the lands of southern Israel near Hebron before the arrival of the Israelites.

When the twelve Israelite spies returned from exploring the land, they gave a frightening report of *people great and tall whom they identified as the sons of Anak*. Though Moses, Joshua and Caleb all exhorted the people to trust God, they refused to do so, primarily because of their fear of this group. Now, 40 years late Caleb will do what should have been done before.

Many Bible scholars speculate that they descendants were the Philistine giants David encountered, including Goliath of Gath.

The translation of the last part of verse 12 is awkward. It seems to imply doubt or only possibility. The emphasis is really on Caleb's belief in the promise of God.

There is no thought in Caleb's mind that he might not receive the land. He is convinced that he will have what God promised him. **He was a man of spiritual hope, confidence, expectancy, and optimism.** There is no pessimism, discouragement, or negativity, even though he has spent forty years surrounded by such attitudes.

3. Joshua agreed to the request (13-15)

Joshua responds favorably to Caleb's request. And why not. Caleb had made a great case. Moses had given his word. Caleb was in great condition physically. And most importantly, Caleb trusted God to give him success. If you jump down to 15:13-14 you read that Caleb did just as he said. He did drive them out.

Takeaways: There are 4

1. Don't let age limit your vision, passion or service.

Don't let an arbitrary number cause you to assume you cannot serve. As long as there is breath in your lungs, you have a ministry. If God has you here in this life, He has a work for you. Don't quit! Stay aggressive. Stay open. Stay faithful. Make your final years your best years!

For those HDBC members who are in the fourth quarter with me. I have a word for you. You have not been put on a shelf by God nor by this church simply because of your age. In fact, you are to the church what the spine is the body. You hold us together and provide the strength that makes us stand tall. **Let's finish strong!**

Steve Moore tells of an experience at a retirement home dedication: The ceremony included remarks from one of the new residents, Dr. Paul Brand, an outstanding medical doctor. I know him through his best-selling book co-written with Philip Yancey, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. When it was Dr. Brand's turn to speak, he offered this.

I remember well when I was at my physical peak. I was 27 years old and had just finished medical school. A group of friends and I were mountain

climbing, and we could climb for hours. For some people, when they cross that peak, for them life is over.

I remember well my mental peak, too. I was 57 years of age and was performing groundbreaking hand surgery. All of my medical training was coming together in one place. For some people, when they cross this peak, for them life is over.

I'm now over 80 years of age. I recently realized I'm approaching another peak—my spiritual peak. All I have sought to become as a person has the opportunity to come together in wisdom, maturity, kindness, love, joy, and peace. And I realize when I cross that peak, for me, life will not be over; it will have just begun.

2. Resist the temptation to be jealous of others.

I love that there is no hint that Caleb was every jealous of Joshua. He refused to play the comparison game. He ran his race and did not worry about the race his friend was called to run.

3. Be ready for your next assignment.

Two older men were walking along the shoreline of a lake when a frog came hopping up to them.

Creaking with age, one of the old-timers slowly bent down and scooped up the frog in his hands. As he stood there gazing at the frog, fascinated by its ugliness, the frog croaked, *Hey, mister! I'm not really a frog. If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess.*

Startled, the old man slipped the frog into his pocket and headed on down the shoreline. For the longest time he and his friend trudged along in silence.

Well? his buddy finally blurted out. *You gonna kiss it?*
Naw, I guess not, the first codger replied. *At my age, I think I'll have more fun with a talking frog.*

Even at 85 Caleb was ready for a new challenge. He would not be satisfied with the boredom of reading paper, taking nap, eating lunch, taking another nap, playing some checkers, then going to bed. For him there had to be more. He was a man on a quest. A quest is a search, a pursuit, an adventurous challenge. It is what drives a man or woman. Without a quest you simply drift. Regardless of your age, don't settle. Be ready for the next assignment. And the best way to be ready for the next season of your life is to finish well the one you are in. Ignite. Jr. High. High School. College. Young family with kids. Middle years. Finish well!

4. Keep your eyes on the prize, especially in the wilderness.

For all of those years, Caleb kept his eyes on the promised land. He never gave up the conviction that he would indeed make it back into the land and that he would close out his days there. So much of this life can feel like a wilderness wandering. Don't focus on the wilderness, keep looking forward to the prize that is before us.

Heaven waits! Heaven is promised! Heaven will cause all the struggles in this life to be swallowed up in the glory of the presence of God.

But to get to Heaven you must believe in Jesus.

Have you taken that step of faith to join the ranks of those who follow Jesus? If not, you can do so today.