

5-13-2016, COTR Texarkana

Title: I Believe God

Purpose: Provoke people to embrace the lessons of faith from Joshua and Caleb.

Spiritual Truth: Our faith causes us to believe God in spite of what we see.

Text: Numbers 13,14

Topic: Heroes, Faith, Caleb, Joshua, Dreams

Series: Heroes

Series Purpose: Provoke people to follow the example of Biblical heroes.

I Believe God

I. Introduction

A. Review Series, “Heroes”

A.1. Listen to messages @ChurchOnTheRock.org or on the COTR iPhone/ Android app

A.2. Def. Hero: someone we admire for their achievements or character; someone we want to be like.

B. Today we’ll talk about Caleb and Joshua. They’re heroes because they show us how to face our problems with faith in God and His Word. Their story begins in Egypt when the Israelites are slaves in Egypt.

B.1. Context: Moses at the burning bush: Exodus 3:8 (ESV) I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land **to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey**, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

B.1.a 1-2 million Israelites are on a journey from Egypt to the Promised Land but they will face obstacles along the way, i.e. “ites” and will need faith to reach their dream. This account will show us how important it is for us to believe God’s Word when we face problems that have the power to stop our dream.

C. Title: I Believe God

D. Purpose: Provoke people to embrace the lessons of faith from Joshua and Caleb.

E. Spiritual Truth: Our faith causes us to believe God in spite of what we see.

II. Whose report will you believe? (In each passage we’ll learn a lesson about faith.)

A. **Faith anchors itself in a word from God.** Numbers 13:1–8 (ESV) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, **which I am giving to the people of Israel**...6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb...8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua

- A.1. Their dream is in sight; they're almost in the Promised Land. They've faced many problems but God has been faithful to help them with every problem.
- A.2. God made a promise, i.e. "I am giving you the land." They would have to believe what God said to reach their dream.
- A.3. Def. faith: to trust, believe and act on God's Word without any other evidence.
- B. Faith expects opposition but believes God will do what He promised.** Verse 25–33 (ESV) At the end of 40 days they returned from spying out the land... 27 ...We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey...28 **However**, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified...And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 Amalekites...The Hittites, the Jebusites, and Amorites ...
- B.1. Anak, i.e. long/ strong necked ancestor of a race of giants in old Canaan. Deut 9:2–3 (NLT) The people are strong and tall—descendants of the famous Anakite giants. You've heard the saying, 'Who can stand up to the Anakites?' 3 But recognize today that **the LORD your God...will subdue them** so that you will quickly conquer them and drive them out, **just as the LORD has promised.**
- B.2. There will always be obstacles between us and our dream. The question we must ask ourselves is this, what's bigger, God or the problem standing in my way?
- C. Faith sees what others don't see.** Verse 30 But Caleb quieted the people...and said, "**Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.**"
- C.1. What's the difference between Caleb and the other spies? He had faith in God's promise and they didn't. Heb 11:1 (ESV) Now **faith is** the assurance of things hoped for, (NLT **the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen**) the conviction of things not seen. (NCV Faith means knowing something is real even if we can't see it.)
- D. Faith demands we choose: believe God or believe the circumstances.** Verse 31 Then the men who had gone up with him said, "**We are not able** to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are." 32 So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report...saying, "**The land...devours its inhabitants**, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. 33 And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak) and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and **so we seemed to them.**"
- D.1. Nephilim were giants, a legendary people of the past. Their imagination had taken over and imagined the worst. The more they let these thoughts grow the bigger they became. 2 Cor 10:5 (ESV) We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive** to obey Christ,
- E. Doubt, fear and unbelief are contagious.** Nu 14:1–3 (ESV) Then all...the people **wept** that night. 2 And **all the people of Israel grumbled** against Moses and Aaron...3 Why

is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword... Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

E.1. The doubt of 10 men infected 1+ million people. The facts were overwhelming and they ignored God's promise. They forgot the miracles of yesterday and were willing to forget their dream.

F. **Faith makes us face what we fear and trust God to do what we can't do.** Verse 6 And Joshua...and Caleb...7 said to all...the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through...is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD delights in us, **he will bring us into this land**...9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

F.1. Joshua and Caleb saw exactly what the other spies saw but interpreted it differently. Faith and fear had divided the people producing obedience in some and rebellion in others.

F.2. Faith is willing to follow God into uncertainty.

G. **Faith in God's Word will open the door to my dreams.** Numbers 14:22–25 (ESV) none of the men who...have not obeyed my voice, 23 shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers...24 But my servant **Caleb**, because **he has a different spirit and has followed me fully**, I will bring into the land...and his descendants shall possess it.

G.1. Unbelief cost a whole generation everything simply because they refused to believe God's Word and do what He said.

G.2. Caleb, Joshua and their families realized their dream because they believed God. They are my heroes. We can be just like them! 2 Corinthians 4:13 (ESV) Since **we have the same spirit of faith** according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," **we also believe, and so we also speak**,

III. **Conclusion: Faith is willing to wait**

A. **Numbers 32:11–13 (ESV)** 'Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt...shall see the land that I swore to give...because they have not wholly followed me, 12 none except Caleb... and Joshua...for they have wholly followed the LORD.' 13 And the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and **he made them wander in the wilderness forty years**, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone

B. **Summary: Our heroes taught us a lot about faith:** 1- Faith anchors itself in a word from God; 2- Faith expects opposition but believes God will do what He promised; 3- Faith sees what others don't see; 4- Faith demands we choose: believe God or believe the circumstances; 5- Doubt, fear and unbelief are contagious; 6- Faith makes us face

what we fear and trust God to do what we can't do; 7- Faith in God's Word will open the door to my dreams; 8- Faith is willing to wait.

- C. **Joshua and Caleb had to wait 40 years before they entered the Promised Land** because of the sin of their friends. People of faith often have to wait until God's timing is right. Abraham had to wait for a child; Joseph had to wait for his dreams to come to pass, the disciples had to wait for the Day of Pentecost for the HS to come, the disciples had to wait 3 days for the resurrection and we're waiting for the 2nd coming of Christ... Waiting can be the hardest test of all but faith is willing to wait.

IV. **Response**

- A. **Prayer:** Are you having a hard time waiting for God to act? Are you seeking God for His promise in an area of your life?
- B. **Souls:** There's something you don't have to wait for; God wants to save you today.
- C. *** *Logos Bible Software and library, Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language, Baker encyclopedia of the Bible were used to prepare this message.*