

Give Me This Mountain

Joshua 14:6-14

Whatever dream God has given in your life—that dream for your life, for your home, for your business, for your personal success—whatever God has given you, no matter how many years it's been, or how long you've had to wait, you have that promise in your heart; and if you have faith in God, one day you'll possess the promise in your hand.

We do not know much about Caleb. He is only mentioned about 8 times in the Bible, 3 of which are in the book of Joshua. Caleb fought side by side with Joshua during the 7 years of the Canaanite conquest, and had been a companion of Joshua in earlier years as well. Caleb's first years are found in Numbers 13. The story is told of Moses' selection of the 12 spies who were to cross Jordan and search out the land of Canaan. This took place 2 years after their deliverance from Egypt, and Caleb was a representative of the people to spy out the land.

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years after 400 years of slavery in Egypt. At one point, Moses sent 12 spies to spy out the Promised Land for 40 days. One of them was named Caleb. Caleb came back with a positive report, silenced the people, and said, *“Let's go and take possession of the promise that God has given to us.”* But 10 out of the 12 spies had a bad report. They said, *“We seem like grasshoppers in the eyes of the giants we saw in the land.”* They failed to claim the promise, and an entire generation died.

But Caleb was not one of the 10. He had a very different response. He was not intimidated by their enemies. Instead, he proclaimed that they could conquer the Promise Land because *“God was with them.”* (Numbers 13:30, 14:7-9)

Because of his good report, God promised to give Caleb the land on which he walked, *“Except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land he set his feet on, because he followed the LORD wholeheartedly.”* Deuteronomy 1:36.

Forty years later, God gives them a second chance. Aren't you glad that God gives second chances? 45 years after that first failure Caleb is the oldest man in Israel by a longshot. His entire generation has died off and, according to tradition, Joshua was probably less than half his age. Joshua may have been 17 years old when they explored the Promised Land. Caleb was 40 at that time, and he is now 85 years young. Joshua represents someone who goes all in. He is fully committed. He does not hold back. Our world encourages us to live half-hearted, passionless lives.

“Now the men of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb said to him, ‘You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions.’” Joshua 14:6-7

To have real passion and make a difference, you have to have convictions. We better live according to the convictions that God has given us. Those convictions guide the way that we do ministry. You do not compromise your convictions relationally, occupationally, or financially. You just don't compromise because you are living according to your convictions.

“But my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear.” Joshua 14:8

The difference between going all in and just going through the motions comes down to choosing to not let fear dictate our decisions. Are you going to let faith or fear dictate your decisions? Those two things will take you in very different directions. It's the difference between entering the Promised Land and claiming the promises of God, between experiencing miracles or just spending your entire life on the other side of the Jordan River wondering, “Where is God?” That's the difference.

1. Caleb Did Not Settle For Less Than God's Best.

Caleb did not settle for the plains. He did not settle for an inheritance that was easy to conquer. He set his sights on the mountain. Mountains can speak of the high calling or destiny that God has meant for our lives.

Caleb doesn't choose the path of least resistance. He chooses the hill country. The Anakites lived there, a race of giants. When Caleb says, "Give me the mountain," it would be the most difficult battle of his life, but it would bring the greatest glory to God.

When the Israelites were poised to enter Canaan before they crossed the Jordan River and moved west, God spoke to Joshua some words of encouragement. Included was a promise of even more land later (Joshua 1:4). Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had already staked out their claim—they chose to settle east of the Jordan and not settle in the Promised Land.

Are we settling for the easy way instead of the highest call that God has for us?

Are we fighting the battles of the Lord, or are we exhausting ourselves fighting the wrong battles?

Mediocrity, partial obedience, and partial dependence will rob us of what God has already promised to give us.

"You know, however, I followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.' Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then." Joshua 14:9-11

Ashley Montague says, "I want to die young at a ripe old age!" This is a young man in an 85-year-old body, but what makes this profoundly amazing is the connective preposition here. The word "as" means "identical" in the Hebrew language. He was as strong at 85 as he was at 40.

"Now give me this mountain that the LORD promised me that day." Joshua 14:12

What does it mean to go all in? It looks like Noah building an ark in the middle of the desert. It looks like Abraham putting Isaac on an altar. It looks like Daniel in the lion's den. It looks like Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego in the fiery furnace. It looks like an 85-year-old Caleb saying, "*Give me this mountain!*"

Why did Caleb pick Hebron? Hebron was the most fertile, the most beautiful, and the most desirable mountain in all of Canaan. It was the very best of the promised land. The word "Hebron" means "fellowship," it also means "fullness and fruitfulness."

Hebron represents fellowship with God. "I want to walk with God."

Hebron represents fullness. "I want everything that God has to offer me."

Hebron represents fruitfulness. "I want that mountain that is flowing with milk and honey."

God has promised these three things to every believer in Jesus Christ.

Hebron is the highest town in Palestine, almost 3,500 feet above the Mediterranean Sea. It was the high ground, which means it would have been the most difficult place to attack and the most difficult place to conquer.

According to one Jewish rabbi, when Caleb was in the Promised Land scouting out the territory, at one point he left the other 11 and went off to Hebron, because Hebron was where his ancestors of 500 years before were buried. Their gravesites were there. Abraham lived much of his life in Hebron and, according to this tradition, he went to Hebron and fell prostrate on the ground and prayed on those gravesites where his ancestors were buried. That was a powerful moment for Caleb. He prayed that God would give them that Promised Land.

Imagine the heartache when he silenced the people and said, "We can surely do it, the Lord is with us, we can claim this promise," and how devastatingly disappointing it was for 40 years, he had to pay the punishment for those who didn't have faith. But he never gave up on that promise. That promise was in his heart and grew in his heart, and finally, 45 years later, with 45 years of passion pent up in his soul, he said, "Give me that hill country! I am going back to the place where I fell prostrate and prayed that God would keep His promise!"

Hebron is where Caleb's descendent, a shepherd by the name of David, would be anointed king of Judah. For seven and a half years, David would make Hebron the capital until it moved to Jerusalem because it was such an elevated, fortified place. David doesn't have his capitol unless Caleb says, "I'm all in!"

- We Need Caleb's Commitment.

"He wholly followed the Lord his God." Joshua 14:7

"...Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God." Joshua 14:9

"Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he wholly followed the Lord." Joshua 14:9

The word "wholly" or "fully" literally means "to be filled." It's used to describe a bottle filled with water. It's used to describe an ocean filled with fish. It's used to describe the fulfillment of a commitment. It was used to describe the Jordan River when the Israelites were about to cross it. It was overflowing. This accurately describes Caleb. Because he fully obeyed God, he was filled to overflowing. It means every area of his life was completely and wholly given over to God.

What are the things that keep us from completely following God?

It didn't say he partially followed the Lord his God. It didn't say he almost fully followed the Lord his God. It didn't say that he followed the Lord his God more than some folks followed the Lord their God. It said that he wholly followed the Lord his God. If you're going to fully follow the Lord your God, you're going to have to do everything that God asks you to do. You're going to have to commit everything that you are to God - your life with its fears, its frustrations, its failures, as well as its abilities and its great potential.

D. L. Moody was a shoe clerk, then he was a Sunday School teacher, then he was a great evangelist. Even when he was an evangelist, he didn't have any power with God. He went to England and heard a man by the name of Henry Varley preach. Henry Varley made this statement: "The world has yet to see what God can do in and through and for and with a man who is totally committed unto Him." Dwight L. Moody said, "I'll be that man." God used Moody to lift two continents for God and bring a million men to Christ.

What could God do through a whole church of people who are totally committed and fully follow the Lord their God? What could God do with a whole church full of people like that - not just one Caleb, but a whole church of Calebs?

I love the story of Eric Liddell, the Scottish missionary who served in China, and who became familiar to many thanks to the movie Chariots of Fire. With the declaration of war between Japan and Britain during WWII,

many of the missionaries left the country for their safety. However, certain missionaries stayed in China, and Eric Liddell was one of them. Eventually all foreign missionaries in China were gathered and interned in a Japanese camp where Eric Liddell would die from a brain tumor February 21, 1945. Eric Liddell became famous when he refused to compete in the 100-meters race of the 1924 Olympics that were held in Paris because the event was held on Sunday. Though it was thought that his best chance for gold was in the 100-meters. Instead, he ran in the 400-meters race, which many thought he had very little chance of winning. However, he won the race, winning a gold medal, and breaking the world record in the process. Just before he ran the 400-meter race, one of the men who assisted Eric's trainer slipped him a note that read, "In the old book it says, *'He that honors me, I will honor.'*" (1 Samuel 2:30; John 12:26) Wishing you the best of success always."

- We Need Caleb's Confidence.

"You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea." Joshua 14:6

Do you have a deep confidence in God's promises? Or do you easily forget and move on without seeing the promises come to pass?

"And the Lord said..." Numbers 14:9

In the Bible, there are over 8,000 promises of God to the believer. Do you know them? Are you claiming them? Is your confidence in God? The Bible says that *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* Romans 10:17

We need to be in a Bible study. You need to be here on Wednesday night. We need to be faithful to the Word of God because faith comes by hearing. Caleb had confidence in the promises of God.

God has promised you peace in the midst of the storm. God has promised you joy. He's promised you victory. He's promised you answered prayer. He's promised you power. He's promised you success. He's promised you prosperity. He's promised you healing. Your confidence is going to have to be in what God has said if you're going to say, *"Give me this mountain."*

- We Need Caleb's Courage.

"But, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out." Joshua 14:12

Caleb is one of the most courageous men of the Bible. There is no easy way to claim the mountain that God has for you. There is a price to be paid. Alexander the Great, the great conqueror, was asked the question, "What is the secret of your great victory? How did you conquer the world?" Alexander the Great said, "I never turned back." The mountains of victory and fruitfulness and fellowship and fullness are for Christian people who will never turn back.

Caleb had opposition. The door to opportunity swings on the hinges of opposition. Paul said in Corinth, *"There is a great and effectual door open unto me, but there are many adversaries."* 1 Corinthians 16:9

2. Caleb Received God's Strength For His Battle.

"I'm as strong this day as I was in the day when I first went into the land. Now, give me this mountain." Joshua 14:11

We need that supernatural strength. How do you keep going? How do you keep walking by faith? How do you keep facing those giants on Monday when you go to work?

Isaiah 40:31 says, "*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*"

God will give us strength. Wait upon the Lord, with faith, with expectancy, with commitment, and with obedience.

“Renew their strength” means “exchange their strength.” We can exchange our weakness for His strength. We can exchange our inability for His ability. We can exchange our weariness for the refreshing power.

Caleb had adversaries.

- He Had To Overcome A Grasshopper Mindset.

“Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt.” Joshua 14:7-8

How did they make the heart of the people melt? Numbers 13 tells us that when ten of these spies came back and brought the report to the people, they said, “Yes, it's a land flowing with milk and honey. There are bubbling springs; there are beautiful waters; there's luscious grapes; there are beautiful flowers, yes. But the sons of Anak are there, giants, and we are but grasshoppers in their sight, and *we are like grasshoppers in our own sight.*” Numbers 13:33

When you get to thinking like a grasshopper, and you visualize yourself as a grasshopper, you begin to act like a grasshopper. We need to stop looking at how little we are, and we need to start looking at how big God is. The difference between a pessimist and an optimist is simply this: A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity, but an optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty. Look at how big God is, not how small you are. If you're a grasshopper, any problem looks like a giant. Everything looks too big. Everything looks impossible. But, if you are seeing from God's perspective, it changes everything.

Can you think of anything in your life that's too big for God? Is there any problem God can't solve? Is there any mountain that God can't conquer? Is there any difficulty that God can't overcome?

- He Overcame Giants In His Path.

“Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified.” Joshua 14:12

“You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said. Then Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb ever since, because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly.” Joshua 14:13-14

Some are facing a giant of failure. You tried once and you failed. You're facing a giant of discouragement, a giant of fear, a giant of depression, a giant of indecision you just can't make up your mind. All kinds of giants.

“And Caleb drove out three Anakim: Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the sons of Anak.” Joshua 15:14

Their names in the Old Testament are significant:

Shayl means "Who I am"—the giant of ego.

Aheman means "What I am"—the giant of pride.
Talmayi meant "What I can do"—the giant of self-reliance.

Those are the three biggest giants you are going to have to drive out of your life.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20

3. Caleb's Spiritual Legacy Spills Over Onto His Family.

"Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.)" Joshua 14:13-15

A young man named Othniel went on to become Caleb's son-in-law, as well as a judge in the land. (Judges 3:7-11) Caleb's faith also touched his daughter, Achsah. She had the faith to ask her father for a field and then for springs of water to irrigate the land. In Joshua 15:19, Caleb's daughter was getting ready to be married. She said to her daddy, *"She replied, 'Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water.' So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs."*

Caleb's faith was much more valuable to his family than the property he had claimed for them. His life had a tremendous impact on his future generations.

How will you be remembered by your children, grandchildren, and family? What will be the legacy of your life? Will you be remembered for your love, your labor, and your loot? Or, will you be remembered by your loyalty to the Lord? We can leave our future generation money, but they will eventually spend it. We can leave our future generation property, but they will eventually sell it. But, if we leave our future generations faith, they can never silence it.

I want that mountain for myself and my family, but I want that mountain so that those who follow me will be able to climb it and claim it as well. I will remind you that Canaan is not a picture of heaven. In the book of Joshua, we see clear evidence that Canaan is a picture of victorious and triumphant living.

For the people of God, Canaan was more than a place.

It meant release. They'd been slaves in Egypt. Don't you want to be free from the bondage of sin?

It meant rest. They'd been wandering and warring. Aren't you tired from the battles of this life?

It meant refreshment. They'd been on a desert diet. Now they are in the land of milk and honey.

It meant reality. Up until now they'd only heard descriptions about Canaan from Joshua and Caleb, but now they are living there.

Alan Redpath writes, "The majority measured the giants against their own strength; Caleb and Joshua measured the giants against God. The majority trembled; the two triumphed. The majority had great giants, but a little god. Caleb had a great God and little giants."

The land will be *"an inheritance to you and your children..."* Joshua 14:9

Caleb was able to be a blessing to others. When a man walks with God, his life blesses other lives. When people grow with God, the blessing of their life spills over and blesses others.