

~ Wholly Follow God ~

Text: Joshua 14

Theme: Despite the challenges, and although our service may go unseen, we are called to follow God throughout all our lives, believing in Him till the very end.

Intro:

1. In chapter 13, we considered the fact that there comes a time when the older generation must pass the baton to the younger generation so that they can continue the work. There were two main things we noted that the next generation must pick up on.
 - a. Each generation must seek to attain to greater spiritual heights for themselves. We cannot coast along on the spirituality of our parents or older saints.
 - b. Each generation has its own battle that must be faced and fought in the power of God.
2. In chapter 14, we see the faith of Caleb to continue trusting God for victories over the enemy as he follows God with his whole heart.

We will break down the chapter into the following divisions:

- I. Caleb Believed God (Vs 6-12)
- II. Caleb Followed God (Vs 13-15)

Main:

- I. **Caleb Believed God (Vs 6-12)**
 - A. Caleb believed God despite the giants
 1. When God sent the spies into the land of Canaan, Caleb and Joshua were among the 12 spies.
 - a. Caleb and Joshua saw the same land and the same people as the rest of the spies did.
 - i. In the book of Numbers chapters 13-14 we have the account of the spies entering Canaan and then bringing a report back to Moses.
 - Numbers 13:22 *“And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)”*
 - When the spies were in Canaan, they saw the sons of Anak, who were giants, and they were afraid.

- ii. Caleb reminded Joshua, in verse 8 of our reading, that his brethren made the hearts of the people melt with their tales of giants who made them feel like they were as small as grasshoppers.
 - This was quite an exaggeration, but they clearly were afraid to fight the giants.
 - **Num 13:33** *“And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. Num 14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.”*
 - The report of giants in the land made the children of Israel afraid, and they refused to enter the Promised Land.
- b. Despite the giants, Caleb and Joshua brought back a good report to Moses and the people.
 - i. In verse 12 of this chapter, Caleb states that he and Joshua were well aware of the giants in the land.
 - Their faith in God was not a faith based in ignorance of the facts, but a faith that believed God was greater than any obstacle they might face.
 - ii. Caleb and Joshua had gone into the land with the other 10 spies and had seen both the bounty and the battles that would be theirs, but they came back with different thoughts on their minds.
 - The other 10 spies returned to Moses and the people saying, “It is a beautiful and bountiful land, but there is no way we can overcome the giants there.”
 - Joshua and Caleb returned and said, “It is a bountiful and beautiful land and God will deliver these giants into our hands.”
 - iii. They all viewed the same land, the same beauty and bounty, and the same giants, but only Caleb and Joshua chose to believe that God would keep his promise to give them the land.
- c. For the Christian, the “giants” we face could be characterised as “Any person, circumstance, or thing that threatens to keep me from doing the will of God.”
 - i. Giants come in many shapes and sizes, but they all serve the same purpose which is to prevent you for doing what God expects you to do.
 - ii. To give you some examples:

- The fear of man is one of the greatest giants we face. It is the fear of man that keeps us from sharing the gospel when we know we ought to. Often, it is the fear of man that keeps us from totally surrendering our lives to God because we fear what others will think of us.
- The appeal of material gains is another giant we face. The appeal of material gains could actually be broken down into two other giants:
 1. The desire to be wealthy and influential. The Christian life typically doesn't lend itself to wealth and influence, but we sense the appeal of those things drawing us away from serving God wholeheartedly.
 2. The appeal of material gains is also found in financial security. In this way, the giant of material gain offers us security rather than total dependence upon God.
- The giant of faithlessness is a big one.
 1. This giant keeps us from trusting that God's way is always best.
 2. This giant keeps us from praying because we fear that God won't come through for us.

Caleb and Joshua believed God despite the giants they were facing.

B. Caleb believed God despite the grumblers

1. When everyone turned against him, Caleb still believed God.
 - a. When the 12 spies returned from spying out the land, only Caleb and Joshua brought back a good report.
 - i. It must have been difficult for these two men to stand before the whole congregation of Israel and bring a report that contradicted the report they had already heard from the other 10 spies.
 - Num 14:6-10a *"And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is*

departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.”

- The whole congregation of Israel was ready to stone Caleb and Joshua rather than trust God and enter the promised land and face the giants.
- ii. Caleb was ready to go forward by faith even if it meant standing in the extreme minority and facing the anger of the people.
 - It's easy to follow God when that's the direction the crowd is heading in, but it becomes a much greater challenge when serving God means going against the crowd.

Caleb believed in God despite the giants and the grumblers.

II. Caleb Depended Upon God (Vs 9-12)

A. Caleb depended upon God (Vs 9-13)

1. Caleb's confidence in entering the Promised Land came from his faith in and dependence upon God.
 - a. In verse 9, Caleb reminded Joshua of the promise God gave him, through Moses, that the land he had trodden on while spying out Canaan would belong to him and his children forever.
 - i. This reveals to us that, as he fought the giants of the land, Caleb was trusting the promises of God who had said He would give Israel the land.
 - b. For the Christian, we ought to do the same. When we face the giants of today, we can claim the promises of God.
 - i. The giant of the fear of man would keep us from soul-winning but the Lord Jesus said in Mathew 28:18-20 "All power is given unto me... go ye... and, lo, I am with you always..."
 - ii. The giant of material gain would keep us from surrendering all to Christ, but the Lord Jesus said in **Mathew 16:25-26**, "*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"
2. Caleb depended on God for future victories
 - a. Caleb's statement in verse 12 reveals that he wasn't trusting in his own strength to overcome the giants.

- i. Caleb promised Joshua that if he were granted the mountain of Hebron, he would drive out the Anakims. The ability to do so would be if “the LORD will be with me.” The he knew he would be able to drive them out. Evidenced is not only Caleb’s dedication and obedience, but also his faith. Indeed, he “wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.”¹
 - ii. Caleb’s faith in God allowed him to see the potential victories rather than then probable defeats.
 - b. Caleb was determined to look for more victories of faith rather than be content with the victories he had already won in the conquest.
 - i. “He (Caleb) did not look about 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, but he requested Joshua to give him the mountain on which Kirjath-arba was located. Arba was a great man among the Anakims. Kirjath-arba meant the City of Arba. The Anakims still dwelt there, but strong in faith Caleb declared: “If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.”²
 - i. Again, the giants of the land could not keep Caleb from following God because his faith and confidence was solidly grounded in the God who had called him to a life of faith.
- B. Caleb wholly followed God (Vs 14-15)
 - 1. Caleb claimed the promises of God and took the mountain where the giants dwelt by faith.
 - a. The fact that the name of the city on this mountain was changed from Kirjath-Arba to Hebron tells you that Caleb was successful in defeating the giants there.
 - i. “The name Caleb means *wholehearted* and aptly describes this doughty (*d-ow-tee*) warrior and faithful servant of God. He did not immediately get possession of Hebron, but he fought stubbornly and determinedly until

¹ David H. Sorenson, Northstar Ministries, Duluth MN 55811, 2008; Understanding the Bible, Joshua Through Samuel, Pg 67.

² H. A. Ironside, [*Addresses on the Book of Joshua*](#). (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1950), 115.

- he had driven out the ancient inhabitants and so took possession of it.”³
- ii. “Caleb took possession of it, drove the Anakims out of the city and changed its name to Hebron, a word that means *fellowship or communion*.”⁴
- b. Caleb is one of those men in the Bible who stands out as a steadfast servant of God.
- i. There isn’t any wavering in his loyalty or devotion to God, but the passage tells us three times that he “wholly followed the Lord God.” There are very few men in the Bible to whom God gave such a glowing review of their service.
 - Caleb wasn’t the leader of Israel like Moses or Joshua were.
 - Caleb wasn’t used to write books of the Bible like them either.
 - Caleb doesn’t have a book of the Bible named after him and he doesn’t even feature that greatly in the Bible.
 - ii. What we do know about Caleb is that he was there all along the journey of faith from the wilderness to the Jordan River and on into Canaan, even to the mountains where the giants dwelt, and through it all God reveals to us that Caleb was wholeheartedly following God.
2. The great man of Arba was nothing compared to the man of faith.
- a. The city of Kirjath-arba was named after a giant of a man, Arba.
 - i. The city stood as a testimony to the greatness of this giant of a man. He was obviously quite a somebody in his day and, no doubt, someone who regular people were afraid of.
 - ii. Then, along comes Caleb, the man of faith who is following God with his whole heart and he takes the city and re-establishes for us that old truth that sing about today, “Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.”
 - iii. “Such a faith was Caleb’s and in this he is an example for us all. We are too apt to take the line of least resistance, to be content with that which seems the easiest thing

³ H. A. Ironside, [*Addresses on the Book of Joshua*](#). (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1950), 115.

⁴ H. A. Ironside, [*Addresses on the Book of Joshua*](#). (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1950), 115.

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.”⁵

Conclusion:

1. For the Christian, the “giants” we face could be characterised as “Any person, circumstance, or thing that threatens to keep me from doing the will of God.” Have you identified a giant in your life which God want’s you to overcome through faith today?
2. Caleb believed in God despite the giants and the grumblers. Don’t let the world, your circumstances, or any one else discourage you or keep you from believing that “with God, all things are possible.”

⁵ H. A. Ironside, [*Addresses on the Book of Joshua*](#). (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1950), 116.