

ENTER AT YOUR OWN REST

Studies in the Book of Joshua

"Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it"

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Text

Joshua 14:6-15

Topic

One of the two oldest guys, Caleb suddenly steps forward to demand the land he had been promised as his inheritance 45 years earlier

Title

"Old Guys Rule"

Joshua 14:6 Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea.

Joshua 14:7 I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.

Joshua 14:8 Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

Joshua 14:9 So Moses swore on that day, saying, '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 14:10 And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old.

Joshua 14:11 As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

Joshua 14:12 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. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."

Joshua 14:13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance.

Joshua 14:14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

Joshua 14:15 And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.

Introduction

Everywhere I go people are constantly walking ahead of me in line to join with their family or friends up ahead. They see nothing wrong with it.

I'm old school when it comes to taking cuts in a line. It's just wrong. I'm in favor of hiring line police.

There are exceptions. In our text Caleb cuts in line. Joshua is about to begin casting lots to determine the inheritances of the tribes when Caleb steps forward and asks for the portion already promised to him forty-five years earlier by Moses.

It's one of those times I have no problem with someone taking cuts. Caleb had already waited long enough.

One of the things that strikes you about his zeal is that even though he's waited forty-five years he acts like Hebron was promised to him only yesterday. Through many discouragements, dangers, and difficulties Caleb never lost site of God's promise.

It's an example, a powerful one, of biblical hope. We use the word hope to describe things that may or may not come to pass. The Bible presents hope as a certainty.

Caleb was certain he would inherit Hebron no matter how long he had to wait. Encouraged by his daily hope, when the time finally arrived he could not contain himself. He put his whole heart into claiming and then conquering his portion.

We're going to focus on his hope and on his heart. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Put Your Hope In The Word The Lord Has Spoken To You, and #2 Put Your Heart Into The Word The Lord Has Spoken To You.

#1 Put Your Hope
In The Word The Lord Has Spoken To You
(v6-9)

Forty-five years earlier the Israelites had stood on the verge of entering the Promised Land at a place called Kadesh Barnea. Moses sent twelve men in to spy-out the land. It seems that each man was assigned a particular portion of the land to spy-out and report upon.

Ten of the spies exaggerated the dangers and difficulties. They claimed, for example, that the land was filled with giants when only a small percentage of the population were descended from the Anakim.

Joshua and Caleb gave a good report and urged the people to press forward and by faith conquer the land. They were outnumbered and overruled.

Because of their unbelief the Lord told the Israelites that the entire generation over the age of twenty would never enter the Promised Land. The Israelites were made to wander in the wilderness for nearly forty years while that generation died.

Joshua and Caleb were exceptions. After the forty years they would enter the land and receive their inheritance. It was time.

Joshua 14:6 Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea.

Kenizzites were not Israelites. They were Edomites descended from Jacobs brother, Esau, and distant cousins to the Jews.

God is reminding you that Caleb was not a naturally born Jew. Somewhere in his family line he was adopted into a family of Jews as a proselyte to Judaism.

The very first person to receive an inheritance in the land promised to the Jews was not a naturally born Jew. It is another gem we discover along the path that reveals God's grace and mercy. Our God is a whosoever will believe Savior.

Joshua 14:7 I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.

Make no mistake: It was an honor and a privilege to be one of those twelve men. Caleb the Kenizzite was at the very top of his profession. He was full of faith, living righteously, anticipating life in the Promised Land. Suddenly everything around him crashed.

Joshua 14:8 Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

He (and Joshua) stood against the fears of the other spies. He leaves out the part about them wanting to kill him and Joshua. It was a very bad day.

But on that very bad day God gave Caleb His word:

Joshua 14:9 So Moses swore on that day, saying, '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.'

Caleb had gone from forty-year old warrior to forty-year wanderer in a moment's time. It wasn't something that he brought on himself but it was something that resulted from the disbelief of others. He had been despised, hated, and threatened by his peers for doing and saying what was right. For the next four decades he would live in a culture of death watching as everyone over twenty died in the wilderness. He knew that once the next generation entered the land he'd still need to fight - even though he'd be in his eighties by then.

Was he discouraged? Did he get depressed? *Not at all!* He had the word that the Lord had spoken to him and it was his hope.

Discouragement is a powerful enemy to your Christian walk. Depression is a prevalent reality even among Christians. Both are reasons why it is important to remember that you, too, have the word which the Lord has spoken to you.

The Lord has spoken to you on at least three levels. First, He has spoken to every believer in the precepts and principles of the Word of God, the Bible. When your life is crashing around you and people are against you

and time is passing you by and things seem incredibly unfair you have God's Word.

As we've said nearly every week in our studies in Joshua, your 'land' is wherever you find yourself. It's your home, your office, your school. It's your marriage and family, your job or career, your classes, classmates, and teachers. God has spoken His word to you in each of those areas to tell you how to act and react. His word should give you hope and it will when you follow it with your whole heart.

Second, God speaks to us on what I might call a 'personal' level. It is when you are reading His word and get that wonderful sense that the verse or verses are speaking directly to you. Or someone shares a verse or verses with you that go directly to your situation and put it into its spiritual perspective. It is possible for this to occur because God's Word is alive and powerful.

Often when a person is seeking biblical counsel I will ask them what they've been reading in God's Word or hearing taught from God's Word. More times than not the hope they need for what they are going through has already been spoken to them.

Third, God still speaks to us on a 'prophetic' level. The Word of God is prophetic, and certainly when a verse or verses come alive in my heart it is prophetic. In addition there are times God 'speaks' to you more directly. It may be through a waking vision or a spiritual dream. It may be through the exercise of the gift of prophecy in a meeting of saints as someone shares a word or a Scripture. Whatever is shared must be judged against Scripture and must align with what God has already said in the Bible. But a word of prophecy has its place in the overall scheme of the word the Lord has spoken to you.

Caleb bursts onto the scene at age eighty-five, taking cuts in line, to demand his inheritance. You can tell that everyday for forty-five long years he lived with the hope of the word he had been given by God. Four decades of discouragement filled with danger and the potential for depression had not dampened his spiritual zeal.

If and when you find yourself discouraged or even depressed you probably need to return to the word the Lord has spoken to you. Nothing else will give you hope.

Discover or re-discover that word from God. It's usually a verse or verses you will read today or tomorrow. It might be a verse or verses you've noted in the margin of your Bible that were God's encouragement to give you hope. It might be a word of prophecy once given or still to come.

It won't change your situation. Things may not get better outwardly. They may even get worse. But the word the Lord has spoken to you will radically alter your perspective. Inwardly you will rejoice in the Lord as you enjoy His presence in the midst of either your problems or your prosperity. You will have the certain hope of a pilgrim wanderer on this earth headed home to your heavenly inheritance. One day you will step forward and claim it from your Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When hope fills your heart it affects your living.

#2 Put Your Heart Into The Word The Lord Has Spoken To You (v10-15)

At age eighty-five Caleb was looking back over the past forty-five years. Were they a waste? Were they a bummer for him? Were they unfair to him? I mean, really, think about it. Through no fault of his own he was relegated to living the prime years of his life as a desert wanderer among a people who had failed their God. Instead of the grapes of Canaan it was sour grapes in the wilderness.

He looked at those decades from God's perspective:

Joshua 14:10 And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old.

Caleb was just happy to be alive! What a simple yet profound perspective. Every day was a gift from God to be opened with Him in a walk of humble dependance upon His grace and mercy.

Joshua 14:11 As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

Caleb was just as strong physically now as ever. He was just one of those guys that aged well. We can't all relate to Caleb on a physical level.

We are to have a New Testament sense of this. Though our outward man perishes, our inward man is renewed and strengthened every day. After all, the land and the giants we are called upon to conquer are mostly spiritual. We don't need to be prime physical specimens to conquer the land we've been given.

Joshua 14:12 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. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."

Caleb wants the land he had spied out and was promised to him. In one sense it was the worst land because it was the most difficult to conquer. It was mountainous terrain which always put an attacker at a disadvantage. The cities were heavily fortified - again a tremendous disadvantage to their conquest.

And it was there that a concentration of giants lived - the very giants that had so filled the ten spies and the Israelites with fear forty-five years earlier.

The Anakim, or the sons of Anak as they're sometimes called pop-up occasionally in Old Testament history. They are giants who arrived in Canaan hundreds of years before the Israelites got there. In the Old Testament they have many different names because the different peoples around Canaan each had their own descriptions for them.

- In one place they're called the Rephaim, meaning *the shadowy, ghostly, or mysterious ones*.
- The people of Moab called them the Emims, meaning *terrors or horrible ones*.
- There is one place where they're called Zamzummims, meaning *people who speak gibberish*, because no one around them could understand a word they said.

The ten spies had compared these giants to the weird offspring of demons in Genesis that were the cause of the Flood. Thus some people think they somehow descended from them. But these are most likely run-of-the-mill giants like those we still sometimes get today in the gene pool.

There is some archaeological evidence that they were mercenaries originally hired by Canaanite princes as bodyguards. You'd hire the biggest, strongest guys you could find. You'd hire giants from all over the known world. These still in the land were their offspring.

Caleb demanded what God had promised him. He might have asked for an easier portion; no one would have faulted him.

I think sometimes we miss the mark because we want an easier portion than the Lord has given to us. Whether it's marriage or employment or ministry we can convince ourselves we've earned or we deserve something other than we have. We need to be careful and claim what we've been given, *not* what we might want.

When Caleb said, "it may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out," he was expressing a proper humility. Though filled with zeal and just as strong as ever, he still needed to depend upon the Lord. He still needed to discover God's plan. He still needed to be led.

Experience is a great thing, as are resources, as long as they don't substitute for faith and waiting upon the Lord.

Joshua 14:13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance.

Joshua 14:14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

Joshua 14:15 And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.

Hebron was an amazing place spiritually, especially to the Jews. God had spoken to Abraham at Hebron. It was there He had promised Abraham and Sarah a son. It was thus symbolic of fellowship with God that resulted in promises.

Giants had settled there and fortified it. It must be retaken.

Have giant problems or concerns taken away your fellowship with God and nullified His promises to you? Fellowship must be retaken! Get back into your Hebron. Get up early, or stay up late, and storm the strongholds through prayer and reading the Word. Reestablish your devotions.

Caleb put his whole heart into his inheritance. There was nothing half-hearted or tentative about him. He wasn't looking for a way out or planning any retreat.

Only you can answer whether or not your whole heart is invested in God's promises to you. Often it seems in a marriage, for instance, that there is a half-heartedness. If the spouse will change then the other will invest fully in the relationship. But in the mean time there is always a way out; or another person in whom you are investing yourself.

The same can be true in a job or in a ministry. Put your whole heart into everything you do as unto the Lord - which ought to be everything you do!

Do you have any doubt Caleb would be successful? There should be no doubt you will be, too, in all the 'lands' God has given you to possess.