

"Home Sweet Hope"

Joshua 14:6-9

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.

Maybe *you* see nothing wrong with it.

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

I think I might suffer from line rage.

I thought I made up the term, line rage, *but it's a real thing*, being studied at MIT.

The professor overseeing the study describes a line as "a momentary involuntary imprisonment."

He jokes, "if Moses had an eleventh commandment, it would have been, 'Thou shalt not cut in line.'"

In some cities, you can hire people to wait in line for you. In New York City, the going rate is \$60.00 an hour - and people 'line-up,' as it were, to pay it.

There are exceptions to taking cuts. In our text, Caleb takes cuts in line.

Joshua is about to begin casting lots to determine the inheritances of the tribes when Caleb breaks ranks and 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 sight 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.

Let's make a connection between Caleb's forty-year hope and a hope of our own as believers.

The rapture is called our blessed hope:

[Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,](#)

The verse is talking about the rapture, which is imminent; it could happen any moment.

I got saved in February of 1979. That was nearly forty-years ago. No rapture... But I still have it as my blessed hope; and so do you; because God's Word is true.

Caleb was certain he would inherit Hebron. We want to focus on the source of his hope.

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.

Forty-five years earlier the Israelites had stood on the verge of entering the Promised Land at Kadesh Barnea. Moses sent twelve men in to spy-out the land.

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

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.

He (and Joshua) stood against the fears of the other spies. It was Caleb's very bad, no good, terrible day.

He described the result of the bad report by saying it "made the heart of the people melt."

Don't be a heart-melter. In your encounters with others, concentrate on being an encouragement to their walk. Or, if they are not saved, an example of Jesus.

Think about others. In fact, think more about them than yourself. Your needs, or perceived needs, are best met by serving others.

Several times in Scripture Caleb is described, either by himself or others, as "wholly," or as "fully" following the Lord. Let's talk about that for a while.

If Caleb followed, it means he never got ahead of the Lord. Charles Spurgeon, commenting on this, said, "They who travel before the cloud will soon find other clouds lowering upon them. Those who leave the fiery pillar, and will be their own guides, shall soon be in the fire, without a guide to bring them out again."

The emphasis on the words "fully," and "wholly" implies you can follow haltingly; or distantly.

- Israel's first king, Saul, followed haltingly. He was on-again, off-again, in his walking with the Lord.
- The apostle Peter followed distantly - at least, he did the night he denied Jesus three times.

Are there areas in which you are hesitating?

Or where you are still afar off?

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 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.

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 we 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 continues to speak to us on a 'prophetic' level. The Bible is prophetic, and certainly when a verse or verses come alive in my heart it is prophetic.

You've probably had experiences like that at church. Moments when you know God has brought something home to you.

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 or a word of wisdom has its place in the overall scheme of the word the Lord has spoken to you. It can be very precious and powerful.

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 wandering 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.

Maybe you have a life-verse to encourage you. I don't... Some do.

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.