

# Caleb - Persevering Faith

by Joel Beeke

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of persevering faith, as exemplified by Caleb's unwavering trust in God's promises and His Word, even in the face of unbelief and difficult circumstances.*

**Duration:** 1:09:25

**Scripture:** Numbers 13:25

**Topics:** "Faithfulness", "Spiritual Obedience"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the example of Caleb from the Bible and how he was able to resist negative peer pressure and follow God fully. Caleb is described as having a different spirit, a spirit of faith and obedience, which came from having the Holy Spirit within him. The preacher emphasizes that as Christians, we are servants of God and everything we are and own belongs to Him. The sermon also addresses the challenges of peer pressure and provides eight guidelines for fighting it and following God. The preacher encourages consistency in our Christian walk and emphasizes the importance of being a faithful example to others.

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## Transcript

We're going to read from God's word now in numbers, and chapter 13, we're going to begin reading at verse 25, and we'll read down to chapter 14 and verse 10. And we pick up the account where the spies have returned from their reconnaissance of the land of Canaan. You remember how they brought impressive examples of the fruit from that land.

Numbers 13, verse 25. Let's hear God's word. And they returned from searching of the land after 40 days.

And they went and came to Moses and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and to the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh, and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great.

And moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south, and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

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. And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron.

And the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness? And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said to one another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, 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 pass 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 land, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bred for us.

Their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Fear them not, but all the congregation, they stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

Well, every once in a while, every faithful minister of the gospel experiences occasions, be it one on one with a parishioner or be it in a small gathering, be it at a conference or in public worship, times where he feels more ministered unto than he ministers. And I want to take this opportunity to tell you with all the love of my heart that that's the way I feel about this week. You have ministered to me greatly, and I thank you all for your friendship, your hospitality, your communion in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the communion of saints. It has been so good to be here, dear friends, and so good to have the opportunity to meet you and to come to know you a bit. And I pray, God, that ties have been forged that will turn into petitions after our departure from one another.

When you attend a conference of this nature and you feel close to the Lord and close to his people and you return home to your small charges as ministers, to your small congregations as lay people, to that city block where you don't know anyone who serves the Lord besides your own family, back to your job where you seem to be the only Christian, there can be a genuine anticlimactic letdown. And what we need in such occasions more than anything else is that dimension of faith that we want to speak to you about in this closing address. I'm calling it simply persevering wholehearted faith.

Persevering wholehearted faith. So we need not only the faith, the simple childlike faith of an Adam and Eve, the submissive faith of the Shunammite woman, the growing and mature faith of the Canaanite woman, but we need the persevering, following faith of Caleb, this great man of God who persevered for 85 years in the midst of murmuring Israelites. You know, the persevering dimension of the Christian life is sometimes the greatest miracle of all.

When we preach on Pentecost from Acts 2, verse 4, about how the Holy Spirit filled the house where the apostles were sitting, and the Spirit gave them utterance that they could speak in their own languages and preach to the people, we are awed by the miraculous character of the outpouring of the Spirit. But sometimes I think that a later verse in Acts 2, Acts 2, verse 42, is every bit as miraculous as Acts 2, verse 4. And there we read these words, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. You see, it's a wonder to become a Christian, but it's also a wonder to remain a Christian.

And when you consider what you are and what I am in ourselves, sometimes the greater wonder becomes that the Lord keeps me converted, that the Lord allows me to persevere, that the Lord doesn't abandon me. Because now when I sin, I sin against the cross, against the blood, and against His love. What a wonderful thing perseverance is.

And may I say to my fellow brethren in the ministry, one thing to remember to assist you in persevering in the Gospel, in the day of small things, is to reckon with this reality that all around us, our people are submerged in worldly things 165 hours a week. They have three hours with us, perhaps, in the house of God. And when you don't see much progress, consider the miracle that God would use basically those three hours and a little bit of daily devotions to even retain them at the level of spirituality where they are, in the face of a powerful, terrorizing, godless world that bombards its philosophy every other hour of that week.

Sometimes that helps me. When I say, where's the progress of that young saint? Then I think, well, at least there's no backsliding. At least they're holding their own.

That's a wonder that the Word even does that. But we want more than that, don't we? We want to grow. We want our people to grow.

And we want to persevere in the most holy faith. And we need as ministers, first of all, to show our people examples of that kind of perseverance. Could it be that God has put you in a small charge in a day of small things and shown you but small fruits in order that you may stand as a beacon of example for your people and for the world around you of a faithful minister of the gospel who is emulating and modeling the grace of our God in the Lord Jesus Christ? Could it be that God has withheld showing you great fruits in your ministry so that you might be a living example of those who keep their hand on the plow and don't look back? For he that looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

Brethren, labor on. Cast the bread of God upon the waters and you shall find it after many days, if not in this life, on the great day. Samuel Rutherford said, And heaven will be two heavens to me when I meet one other soul from Anwerth there.

And when you meet your own people on the day of judgment on the right hand of the great shepherd of his sheep, oh, be encouraged. Even if you were used for one soul, all the labor expended will be well worth it. To spend eternity also with that person praising and glorifying the Lamb.

But every one of us needs mentors in this regard. And this morning I want to set before you this great man of God who in times every bit is bad or worse than ours. And against every human odd, persevered in consistent and persistent and fulsome faith.

So I want to preach to you from Numbers 14, verse 24. Numbers 14, verse 24. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went and his seed shall possess it.

So our theme this morning is persevering by following God fully. And I want to see that theme in three thoughts with God's help. First, we want to look at the meaning of that expression, following God fully.

Its meaning. Secondly, we want to see its root. Why Caleb could follow God fully.

And third, we will look at its reward. The promises God granted to Caleb in response to his following God fully. The day I was ordained into the ministry, when my father shook my hand.

He said to me, son, today you have finally begun. But remember, it will be harder to persevere than to begin. But the grace of God will be sufficient for both if you stay close by God.

That is what is so remarkable about Caleb. You never read one instance in scripture. Of course, he was a sinner.

Of course, he was a man of like passions as we are. But you don't read of it in scripture that this man ever strayed from God. He's an amazing example.

The Bible, God says of him. I'm sure Caleb wouldn't say that of himself because he would know his own heart, wouldn't he? He followed me fully. What a wonderful thing when other saints can say that of us.

But an amazing thing when God can say that of us. You remember what God said of Job that he was perfect in heart. God meant he was the same thing.

God didn't mean that he never sinned, but God meant that he was following him fully. Job didn't say that of himself, did he? But God said it of Job. And God says it of Caleb.

He followed me fully. Persevering faith, fulsome faith. That's what we need, friends, by the grace of God.

Now, who was this Caleb? Well, you know, of course, that Caleb was one of the 12 spies sent out by Moses with God's permission to search out the promised land. One was sent from every tribe. Israel was encamped at Kadesh Barnea on the edge of the desert on the border of the promised land.

Ready to do battle against the inhabitants of the land, to conquer them as God had promised. And after 40 days, these 12 spies returned. And what is remarkable is that all 12 of them agree on the basic, objective, external facts.

All 12 agree that the land of Canaan is a good land. A land that flows with milk and honey. They even brought back a huge cluster of grapes from Eshcol to prove how good this land was.

They all agree that the inhabitants of this land are, for the most part, a war-like people. And they agree that there are giants, particularly in Hebron, the children of Aenar, the sons of Aenar, that would be a fearsome foe. And they agree that the cities are strongholds containing walled bulwarks.

They all agree that it would be a complicated and difficult thing to fight the Canaanites. But the spies have a division among them when it comes to interpreting these facts. There is a majority report that is turned in by 10 of the 12.

And that report is very negative. That report says, verse 31 of chapter 13, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. That's the conclusion.

No use going forward. It's plain as day. They outnumber us.

Human reasoning. There'll be more against us than there before us. The majority conclude by reasoning and by unbelief.

Fear and unbelief are the parents of their conclusion. They had the facts straight, but they had the conclusion wrong. And they had the conclusion wrong because they omitted the greatest fact of all.

The fact of God. And the fact of God's promise. The God of the Red Sea.

The God of the wonders of ages past. That God had said, go in at once and you shall take the land. You see, unbelief, the antonym of faith, is such a deadly foe because unbelief reasons with flesh and blood.

Unbelief tallies up the walls and the Amalekites and the Giants and the Canaanites. And unbelief concludes it is impossible to go forward. And the tragedy of the story, it is a tragic story, is that the people side with the majority report.

And these ten men are responsible for leading two and a half million Israelites into the slew of desponding unbelief. What a tragedy. What a calling ministers have, because in some ways, I like to think of our calling, brethren, as the calling of a spy.

Every week we go out and we spy through the Scriptures, don't we? And we search the Scriptures and we bring back to our people the coming Sabbath, a report of the land, a report of God and of his promises, a report of the heavenly land of Canaan, a report of how to traverse the earthly land by faith. And woe be to us if we bring to our people a message of unbelief, a message of no hope, a message in which God is left out of the equation. That's what these ten false spies were doing.

It was really a cruel report, don't you think? Here they come back, carrying on poles, mind you, with men, these huge clusters of the grapes of the vineyards of Eshkol, and they lay them before the people. They say, look at these wonderful grapes. Look at this wonderful land.

But you can't have it, because we're not going in. Here you can see it, but you can't have it. It's no use.

It's torture. Have you ever tried that with a child? Bring in a beautiful new bike to my son and say, look at this wonderful bike, son. Isn't it a great bike? You know, walk around it.

Great! Oh, but you can't have it. That's the way you can preach the Gospel. You can make it great.

You can show the wonderful things of the Gospel. But if you don't show sinners the way, and you don't encourage them in that way, and you don't tell them to go in by faith, you are like the ten false spies. Well, happily, there are two other spies.

And they come with a minority report. They come believing what even unbelieving Balaam had to say. From a donkey, God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.

Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? And so, Caleb stands up and he quiets all the people. And he says exactly what the people don't want to hear. Because

the people, you see, really wanted to hear that they couldn't go into the land.

They were afraid. They were unbelieving. And so, Caleb tells them what they don't want to hear.

Let us go up at once and possess it. For we are well able by the strength of our God to overcome it. And Caleb says, our defense is sure.

And the people will be bread for us. You see, with God all things are possible. And with God, a minority gains the victory.

I had a ministerial friend who was in Nigeria, very discouraged in his ministry. And in the lonely, remote part of Nigeria, the numbers were very few. Everything was down.

He was wondering, why am I here? What's the future? And one day, in God's providence, a little, old, run-down, rickety truck went bouncing along in front of his home through all the bumps of the street and all the potholes. And he looked at that truck with amazement. And crude, red letters painted on the side of the truck were the words, God plus one equals majority.

Friend, when you go back tomorrow, when you ascend that pulpit on Sunday, when you go back to your labor on Monday, would you please remember those few words? For your own good, God plus one equals majority. You see, it's by that faith that Caleb could have the courage. He really believed that.

And therefore, he had the courage to stand up and face all these hundreds of thousands of people. Let us go up at once. Caleb didn't say, oh, well, you know we disagree among ourselves, so we're going to have a conference.

We'll come back to you in about four days after the twelve spies have had a conference together. We'll see if we can come up with a compromised position. No, God had said, God had promised.

Lord, do as thou hast said. You see, there are many things in our lives that we don't need to pray about. I don't know if you've ever thought about it that way.

You don't have to pray about discerning God's will in areas where God has already made His will known. God had made His will known. It was plain.

It was clear. We must go in at once. You see, when we don't want to do God's will, what we so often do is we say in our pious Christian way, well, I'll pray about it.

Those prayers are an abomination to God because His will is known. You see, those who persist in low levels of obedience will persist in false petitions. And they will persist in low levels of assurance as well.

God has connected together obedience with His own Word. And when He speaks, it is to be done, friends. And it is not to be done tomorrow.

Tomorrow's faith is simply today's unbelief. Let us go up at once. For the people are given unto us because God has promised.

So, all the spies saw the same facts, but Joshua and Caleb had a heart for God, a heart for His promise, and a heart for the people. They saw the same thing with their eyes, but they had different conclusions from the heart. And what a difference this makes, you see.

Unbelief is always dreadfully contagious. It persuades the people that the giants of Anak are larger than the promises of God. It makes God look small and giants look big.

And it eats away at the vitals of faith. And it stunts spiritual growth. Isn't that true? Every time you are unbelieving in the presence of God, your spiritual growth is bruised and stunted.

But true faith, persevering faith, makes the giants become dwarfs. And it makes God to be big as He really is. Persevering faith is realistic faith.

Now, that doesn't mean that persevering faith goes in an easy way. I didn't say that. I didn't say that persevering faith is easy faith.

But I do say that persevering faith is sure faith. There is a sure way. Sinners, saved sinners, persevere with God.

Believe in His promises. Trust in His Word. They may go through difficult times and difficult furnaces of affliction and tunnels of challenges, but God will bring them through.

Proverbs 23, verse 18 says, "...there will surely come an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off." God is always true to His Word. God always meets or even exceeds His promises. He does exceeding, abundantly, above all that we ask or think.

And so, this minority believes in God. And believing in God, they come with a positive report. Let us go in and let us take the land.

Now, may I ask you, my friend, does your life display a positive report of God and His promises? Or a negative report of your own complaints and your own unbelief? You see, not only unbelief is contagious, true faith is contagious too. And your life, more than you realize, is contagious. For well or for woe.

People are watching you, especially when you claim to be a Christian. They are watching you so carefully. They are watching every move you make, far more than you realize.

When I was in the army, then the drill sergeant said to us, as part of the harassment of the army, you can only have two pairs of boots. And you have to have white dots on the back of one pair of boots. And every other day you wear the white dot boots.

And the next day you wear the non-white dot boots. And you can't disobey. And the goal, of course, was that every night you have to polish your boots because you have to wear the other boots the next day.

So you have to keep up with all this polishing. Well, I didn't like polishing my boots very much. So, yes, I bought a third pair of boots.

And I had that third pair of boots in my locker. One day I opened my locker and my room partner, who was not a Christian, he saw my locker and he came to me. He said, I have something to ask you.

He said, why do you have three pairs of boots in your locker? I said, well, I just thought I'd get an extra pair and I wouldn't have to polish my boots. But the drill sergeant said, you should only have two pairs. I said, yes, but you know.

He said, and he looked me straight in the face. I'll never forget it. This is 30 years later.

I remember it vividly. I see his face. He said, I thought you were a Christian.

The smallest thing. If you're inconsistent, the world will notice. But the good news is, if you are consistent, the world will notice too.

And the world will begin to feel that there's something in your life that the world misses. And the world will ask you questions. They will test you.

Is this minority report for real? Or is it a sham? Is Christianity really vital? Is it really true? What do they say when they look at your life? Are you a Caleb walking consistently with your God? Are you following God fully? You know the story of an old Puritan who was challenged by someone once who said, I'm not sure I'm really so attracted to your religion because your life is so precise. Well, said the Puritan. His name was Rogers.

My friend, I serve a precise God. He meant that in a good way. In a loving way.

And you see, when you walk in a precise way, not a precise legalistic way, but a precise way according to God's law out of love, and people see that love, there will be a certain level of contagiousness in your life. The Heidelberg Catechism says that by our walk of life, we may win others. What does it mean then to follow God fully? I'd like to suggest to you this morning, it means at least four things.

And certainly more. But let me just give you four things. First of all, to follow God fully.

It means to follow God persistently. You see, this is not the only time that the Bible says of Caleb, he followed me fully. If you turn with me just a moment to Joshua 14.

Joshua 14. You will notice there that in verses 13 and 14, Joshua speaks to Caleb and blesses him and gives him Hebron for an inheritance. And then says, 14, Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenazite, unto this day because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

He's 85. He fully followed God when he was 40. He fully followed God when he was 85.

Through 40 years in the wilderness. 40 years surrounded by murmuring Israelites. 40 years of unbelieving, complaining people on every side.

He followed God fully. That's amazing. Some of you I've been talking with in the last days, I feel for you in a situation where there's so few Christians around you.

But here's your encouragement, my friend. It is possible to be a Daniel in the courts of Babylon. It is possible to be a Caleb in the midst of a murmuring wilderness people and be faithful to the Lord.

Caleb followed God. And I take that to mean that he followed God evenly. He didn't live his religion, as John Warburton once said, in fits and starts.

He lived his religion consistently. Day in, day out. All those years in the midst of the camp of the murmurers.

He was faithful unto death. He persevered. You see, there are a lot of people that are religious by fits and starts, aren't there? There are the Jews in John 6 who were walking with Jesus, but then turned away.

There are the Galatians who began to run well and then backtracked. There is Lot's wife who left the city, but turned back. There's a young man in my congregation who said to me when he was very ill in intensive care, Pastor, if the Lord ever brings me out of this hospital, I consecrate my whole life to Him.

He's now back with his old friends and as worldly as ever. What a tragedy to not follow the Lord fully. What about you, my friend? Can you join God's people on Sunday and look like a saint and be a chameleon on Monday and look like the world at your job? Are you following God seven days a week? Or does the way you talk, does it sound like the world? Can the world hear from you and see from you that you are coming from another world, a heaven-born world? I'll never forget when I was first saved, I so desperately needed communion with God that I went around to all my friends and told them that I could not be their friends temporarily because I had to spend time in the Word and I just had no time.

And one friend was so puzzled, he said to me, he said, you're talking like someone who's coming from another world. And it didn't dawn on me until years later that he was right. It is another world to be a Christian.

It's a whole other world to be a Christian. And we don't need to hide that, you see. We don't need to flaunt it, but we don't need to hide it.

We need to genuinely show it in a natural way by our conversation, by our walk of life that we belong to another world. And that we follow the Lord seven days a week. And that we don't belong to this poor, miserable world that's happy only two days a week.

Happy outwardly. Thank God it's Friday. That's what the world says.

Clare Davis in one seminary class I had, had written on the board one day, TGIM, when we walked in. And we were debating what that could mean. And he walked in and he said, thank God it's Monday.

Because a Christian, you see, a true godly Christian wants to serve God seven days a week. He enjoys his work because his work is an opportunity to serve the living God. A Christian follows God seven days a week.

Is that your goal? Is that your pursuit? Do you persistently strive to live to the glory of God as Caleb did? Secondly, to follow God fully means to follow God sincerely. To follow Him with all my heart. To follow Him just the same, even if there would be no heaven and no hell.

Because God is lovable and worthy to be served and feared and adored. To follow God means to follow Him with all my heart in every situation. No matter what people do to me.

And no matter what they say about me. The big things in life and the little things in life. We must follow God fully.

Caleb followed God fully. He stood up. The people picked up stones.

Isn't that what they did? Verse 9. They picked up stones to stone Him. And Caleb didn't flinch. He didn't back down.

He would rather die than stop following his God. He's a real Daniel. In the wilderness.

He's willing to endure insults and jeers. He's willing to endure the disfavor of men so that he may enjoy the favor of God. Caleb had the fear of God in his heart.

And how we need the fear of God today. Do you know why so often that we Christians are so little salt on the earth? Why we've lost our saltiness so much? It is because we don't portray from the inside out the fear of God. And what is the fear of God? The best definition of the fear of God I've ever read is by John Brown.

He said, The fear of God is to esteem the smiles and frowns of God to be of greater weight and value than the smiles and frowns of men. Did Caleb care that they stone Him? Well, of course he cared. But he cared more about the smile of his God.

He followed God fully. But this applies also to the small things in life. One example that comes to mind is, again, a little army story here.

The first day I was in the army, I sat down for lunch with my tray. And I prayed, of course, silently. And when I opened my eyes, my tray was gone.

There was a whole table full of guys. I just kind of looked around and couldn't find my food. I waited maybe 30 seconds.

Didn't say a thing. Just waited. And then a guy, two down across the table, said to me, So where'd your food go, praying boy? I said, Well, I don't know where it went, but God knows.

He said, You really believe that God hears you? I said, I know God hears me. I was silent for a moment. Ah, one guy said, Give it back to him, buddy.

So they gave it back to me. Just a small example. It's so tiny.

But are you willing? You see, even the smallest examples of life, are you willing to speak a word for God? Wherever it may be. Why are we so shy? The world's not afraid to speak about its agenda. Why are we so shy to stand up for the name of our God? And take a little ridicule, a little persecution.

When our master took so much for us. Follow God sincerely. Every person you meet that is unconverted is your mission field.

And view Him that way. And pray for opportunities to speak. And to walk before Him in the ways of God.

Two weeks ago, well, three weeks ago now, I was in Ontario, Canada, in my brother's bookshop. And the man walked in and he wanted some Bibles for Turkey. Well, my brother showed him 37 Bibles in a box and said he could have them for \$2 each.

The man said, Well, I'd like to tell you a story about what's going on in Turkey. This is what he said. He said, I have a minister friend in Turkey.

He was distributing Bibles. And he got imprisoned. And his tormentor said, tell us who gave you those Bibles.

He said, I'll never tell you who gave me those Bibles. They're brethren and sisters in the Lord. Well, they said, we'll persecute you.

He said, never mind. So they took him into the torture chamber. And they ripped off one of his toenails.

And they said, when he was in pain, You tell us, you tell us. Who gave you those Bibles? I said, I will never tell you. They ripped off another toenail.

Each toenail, they went along. They asked him the same question. He did all 10 toenails.

He would not tell. And they said, why won't you tell? He said, my master suffered much more than you put me through. And he never told against me.

And so we'll get you to tell. It's just a matter of time. Oh, he said, I'll never tell.

They ripped off a fingernail. They went through all 10 fingernails. And they began on his teeth.

One tooth at a time with a pair of pliers. They emptied his entire mouth. And every single toenail, every single fingernail, every single tooth, they asked him, tell us.

He said, no, I'll never tell you. Finally, they hung him upside down in that torture room. And they beat him around the ankles and the feet for some unknown reason.

Ninety-nine times, the maximum Islamic law allows. After every beating, they asked him to tell. He refused to tell.

They then gave up. They took him as a sack of potatoes. They threw him out in the street.

And there he lay as a beggar. And in God's providence, one of the very few Christian missionary women in Turkey happened to walk by and see this beggar in the street. And like the good Samaritan, she had compassion.

And somehow, she managed to get the strength to throw that beggar on her shoulders and take him to her home. She nursed him for three months and was astonished to find out that he too was a Christian missionary. And to hear his story.

She then sent him to Louisiana in America where he spent six months in the hospital. And when he came out of the hospital after six months, he could walk with two canes about 50 feet. The church was so impressed with his testimony, they had him preach for them.

And then they asked him to become their pastor. He said, no. He said, why not? You need to recuperate.

You need to stay here. No, he said, I've got to go back to Turkey. He said, why would you go back to Turkey? He said, I have to distribute more Bibles.

He went back to Turkey. He distributed more Bibles. He got imprisoned again.

In God's amazing providence, when the case was taken to court the second time, because he really didn't know where the Bibles came from, he was let free. He was let free six weeks ago now as we speak. And three weeks ago, this man came into my brother's bookstore and said, he wants more Bibles.

You can imagine what my brother said. He said, you take those Bibles for nothing. You see, this man has a firm resolve.

There is no negotiation. My life is here for only one purpose. I'm going to follow God, period.

There's no other agenda. That's what makes for a strong Christian. You see, that's what Paul had.

Isn't that so? I am resolved. I am determined to preach no other name than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul had a thousand things he could engage in.

He had a wonderful mind. He said, no, I'm going to control my mind. I'm going to control my time.

I've got one agenda. I've got one goal in life. I'm like a horse with blinders on.

I'm living and I'm dying for the Lord Jesus Christ. He followed God sincerely with all his heart. Oh, may God help us to do that.

That doesn't mean that people are going to rip out our toenails or our fingernails. But you know what I mean. In the smallest ways, we're going to suffer persecution.

You can't live as a Christian in this world without suffering persecution. Martin Luther said persecution is the fourth mark of the church, the true church. All they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

You can't follow a reproached master and not ever be reproached yourself. My friend, you have to be willing to pay the price to be a Christian. You have to follow God by persevering faith and God will help you.

He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me. Thirdly, to follow God fully means to follow the Lord indivisibly. That's the old divine word.

Or Thomas Boston put it this way, universally. It means to follow God in the whole panorama of my life. To follow all His commandments, all His will, all His means of grace.

It means to say with David, then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Or in another place, I will run in the way of all thy commandments. You see, Caleb didn't pick and choose.

Some people say today, oh, I'll follow nine commandments. God gave ten. Other people pick and choose certain areas where they say it's not so bad if I do this wrong.

You ever hear Christians begin their statement like this? I know this maybe isn't right, but... Whoa. I know this isn't right, but... Anything that isn't right that you knowingly do is going to bring you away from God and anything you do that brings you away from God is never worth the price, you see. Destroys and injures and dampens your spiritual life and it stuns your faith.

We have no business as Christians obeying God with a halting, partial obedience. We must obey Him fully with all our heart. Not picking and choosing, but asking in all things, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Now, part of that obedience means being in the Word daily, using the means of grace faithfully.

You can't maintain strong, vibrant Christian witness without maintaining daily communion with God. My friend, you've got to make a resolve that from this day on, you will not delegate to third, fourth, fifth, sixth place. Your daily communion with God, but it will be number one.

I must seek the face of God before I seek the face of man every morning, said Robert Murray McShane. It's the only way to live. Serve the Lord, seek the Lord indivisibly with your whole way of life.

Fourthly, follow... Fourthly and finally, to follow God fully is to follow God exclusively. That is to say, to follow no man further than that man. Don't follow every man only insofar as that man follows the Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul advised.

As soon as a man turns away from Christ, we must turn away from that man. That means that we call no man master. It means we enjoy our forefathers.

It means we emulate and we strive to imitate even the great saints of the Bible like Caleb, but only insofar as they follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We call... We are the servant of no man. We are the servant only of the Lord Jesus.

Behold, our text begins, my servant, Caleb. You see, a servant has no time of his own, does he? A servant has no possessions of his own. His silences, his speaking, his everything belongs to his master.

And Caleb is a servant of God. And if you're a Christian, you're a servant of God. And everything you are and everything you own belongs to Him.

Follow Him exclusively. Well, I'm sure there's many young people sitting here this morning and say... You're probably saying right now in your heart that this is all well and good, but do you realize how hard it is? How hard it is to resist all the peer pressure when all my friends want to go to a place of sin. How hard it is for me to say no.

Well, I do know how hard that is. And I do know what it's like to fall. And I do know what it's like, thank God, to go to God for repentance.

And you must do that. And then vow afresh, leaning on God, never to do it again. May I give young people just a moment eight real quick guidelines for fighting peer pressure, for following God fully.

Here they are, young people. Real quickly. Number one, understand the strength of peer pressure.

Understand its strength. Ralph Erskine said, when it comes to sin, you must do one of two things. Fight or flight.

Fight or flight. And if you're weak in that area, you must flee. You must flee friends and groups and places which you know will bring you temptation that is hard for you to fight back.

If you're strong in the area, you can go ahead and fight hand to hand. Number two, lean hard on the Lord Jesus Christ. He fought against more peer pressure than you will ever have to fight against.

And He's able to give you the strength to fight in His strength. Three, be true to God. Be true to His commandments.

Pray for His Holy Spirit. Think more of what God thinks of you than what a man thinks of you. Be true to God.

Remember how small man is compared to God. Remember how small your friends are compared to God. You're going to school.

You're surrounded by all these friends. You think it's so important to be accepted by them. I'll tell you something.

Two weeks after you graduate, you probably won't see any more than two or three of those friends for the rest of your life. They're here today and they're gone tomorrow. But God never goes away.

He's the inescapable God. You need to serve Him, my friend. Don't serve man.

And fourth, be true to yourself. Give of yourself in friendships. That's self-sacrificial love.

But do not give up yourself for friendship. That's sacrificing your convictions. But rather use means to strengthen your convictions and strengthen your position.

Five, remember that a true friend seeks your best. A true friend who leads you into pathways of sin isn't worthwhile being your friend. In fact, he's not your friend.

He's your enemy. And you don't need these kinds of friends. Quote, friends.

Six, remember that long-term happiness means more than short-term pleasure. How many older people in my congregation... I can't tell you the number, but how many older people say things to me like this? If only I hadn't fallen to that sin when I was a teenager. You know, I've never had... And I've worked with literally more than a thousand seniors in my three ministries.

I've never had a single senior say to me, I'm sorry I spent so much time when I was young serving the Lord and reading His Word and talking to His people and obeying Him. Never one. But I've had a good number say to me, If only I had sought the Lord when I was young.

If only I hadn't caved into peer pressure. If only I had seen what life was all about. If only I had lived to the glory of God.

All these years, the scars of my teenage sins are with me. Pardon my sins of my youth, O Lord. Oh, young people, save yourself from that agony.

And dare to say no to sin. Think long-term rather than short-term pleasure. Seven, lead rather than be led.

You don't think your friends will respect you if you lead them in a different direction. They will respect you the more, or else they will reject you altogether. And if they reject you altogether, that's for your best welfare at that point.

Lead them in the ways of God. Be positive peer pressure for them rather than let them be negative peer pressure for you. And do remember that their inner thoughts often differ from their outward words.

How many times, if you're a God-fearing young person, I'm sure you know that, if you're a God-fearing young person, and you stood up for the Lord, the very people that have mocked you have later come to you and said, you know, I'm in trouble. I wonder if you can help me. Because they respect you.

And number eight, remember that life is short. Life flies by. Talk to your grandpa.

Talk to your grandma. Ask them how quickly their life flies by. And what a tragedy to spend this one life being influenced by miserable, rotten, negative peer pressure.

Well, how then did Caleb walk this way? This sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? To walk all these years in such a setting in such a way. Well, our text tells us how it was possible. We read in Numbers 14.24, But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, hath followed Me fully.

Did you hear that? Another spirit. Some commentators say something like this. Well, the ten false spies had a spirit of distrust, of unbelief, of fear.

Caleb's spirit was a spirit of faith and hope. Theirs was worldly. His was heavenly.

Theirs was a spirit of angry disobedience. His was a spirit of childlike obedience. Theirs was satanic.

His was of God. All these things are true. But where did all these things come from? And the answer can be only, of course, Caleb had the Holy Spirit within him.

And that manifested the whole different demeanor, the whole different spirit with which he walked before God. 1 Corinthians 2.12, Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Now why was the Holy Spirit given to Caleb? And why not to the ten false spies? Sovereign grace.

And what motivates sovereign grace? Sovereign love. And what motivates sovereign love? Sovereign grace. You see, you can't get beyond the sovereignty of Caleb's walk with God.

God gave Caleb the strength he needed, and God is willing to give that to sinners who ask it of Him. God is a gracious God, as we heard last night. His free gift of salvation entails within it the free gift of persevering grace as well.

And that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. How could Caleb walk this way? Because Jesus Christ persevered to the end. Because Jesus Christ followed His Father fully.

In sunshine and in darkness. And because Jesus Christ was exclusive in His devotion, and indivisible in His walk, and persistent in His daily life, Caleb received strength to be that as well. Friends, we don't have the strength to be Caleb's in ourselves, but God has it.

And God can give it to us. The Father is willing, the Son is willing, and the Spirit is willing. Will you ask it of Him? But then finally, our text this morning closes with some rich promises.

Him will I bring into the land where into He went, and His seed shall possess it. Let me close by laying before you three wonderful promises that are connected with this persevering faith. The first is, Caleb's life is going to be preserved.

That's an amazing thing. 600,000 men and probably two and a half million people around Caleb died in 40 years. Now, I didn't do my math again, but one time a long time ago when I preached on Psalm 90, I figured out that in the 40 years in the wilderness, it's something like 40 funerals a day.

Can you imagine seeing 40 funerals a day and people still going on and murmuring for 40 more years and living in that atmosphere? And you alone, with Joshua of course, survived to be able to tell what the Lord has done. What a promise. And what a reward of grace.

Caleb survived and entered the land. And friend, I know as a Christian there are days that you think you won't survive. There are days that you say with David, I shall one day be slain by the hand of Saul.

David was hunted for 16 years. And maybe you feel like you've been hunted all your life by Satan and evil powers that be. But you won't be slain.

God will keep you. He keeps the feet of His saints. You will survive.

Him will I bring. God emphasizes it. Him, the one who follow me fully, I will graciously bring into the land.

And the others shall die. God honors them that honor Him. Secondly, God promises to give Caleb the land.

Him will I bring into the land where into He went and His seed shall possess it. Isn't that an amazing promise? Turn with me just a quick moment to Joshua 14 again. Look at verses 10 and 11.

Caleb is speaking here. Joshua 14, 10 and 11, And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as He said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness. And now, lo, I am this day fourscore, five years old, and yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me, as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in.

And then verse 14, Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb. God gave Caleb extra strength. He rewarded his faith.

And then turn over one more page. Joshua 15, verse 14. Here's the most amazing thing of all.

And Caleb, 15, 14, drove thence the three sons of Anak, Shishai, and Heman, and Talmi, the children of Anak. Who were the children of Anak? The giants. The giants.

Who drove them out? Two and a half million Israelites. Oh no, we can't go in. Two and a half million of us aren't enough.

One 85-year-old man is enough. If God is on his side. God plus one is maturity.

If God be for us, who can be against us? And thirdly, the Lord promises to give Caleb's seed the land to possess. The implication is obvious, isn't it? Caleb's children are going to fear the Lord. And they're going to inherit the earthly Canaan as a type of the heavenly Canaan.

His children are going to be influenced by his faith. And God's going to use this man for his own children. Oh, what a blessing.

That's one of the most gracious rewards of living a consistent life of faith, when God uses our testimony as parents in the lives of our own children. He's a faithful covenant keeper. Dear friends, I commend you to God.

I commend you to His grace. And I want to ask you in closing this morning, do you belong to the unbelieving minority? Or do you belong to the believing minority? Or do you belong to the unbelieving majority? Do you believe that the God of Caleb still is? Amen. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we thank Thee for such notable examples like Caleb in the Scripture, Mr. Great Hearts, who follow Thee fully, who serve as mentors for us. And we pray that such men may not discourage us because they're beyond our reach, but, Lord, that they may convict us and draw us to Thee and to Thy

goodness. Lord, help us to follow Thy grace and encourage us that it can be done in the kind of world in which we live.

It is possible to follow the Lord and to rely on His promises and to live as a Christian in an unchristian world. Lord, help every young person here to resist all negative peer pressure and become a source of positive pressure. Help every adult, every senior, to persevere in faith.

Help us to walk in Thy ways, Lord. Show us the foolishness of every daily choice we make that follows the evil spirit rather than the other spirit, the Holy Spirit. Oh, God, forgive us our sin.

Forgive us for grieving Thee, for following our own devices, for fearing the faces of men more than the face of the living God. Grant us Thy Spirit to overcome the world, preserve us from falling, and to present us blameless before Thee in the great day of the appearing of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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