

Caleb

by Welcome Detweiler

To be an extraordinary Christian, one must have a wholehearted commitment to following the Lord, trusting in His power and provision.

Duration: 10:17

Scripture: Exodus 23:30, Numbers 14:24, Deuteronomy 11:22, Joshua 14:8, Psalm 55:22, Matthew 6:33, 1 John 5:13

Topics: "Faithfulness To God", "Wholehearted Devotion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the example of Caleb from the Bible who is commended for his wholehearted devotion to God. The speaker challenges the audience to examine their own commitment to following the Lord and emphasizes the importance of quality over quantity in the Christian life. Caleb's strength and confidence in God's promises are highlighted, particularly on his 85th birthday. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the reward Caleb received for his faithfulness and a call for Christians to live wholeheartedly for Jesus.

Transcript

Some years ago, a Christian prayed, Lord, make me an extraordinary Christian, because there are already too many ordinary ones. Such a request might come under criticism, at least if we take the privilege of judging his motives. We might say he wanted to be an extraordinary Christian to attract attention to himself.

But on the other hand, to refuse to ask God to be an extraordinary Christian might be a way of excusing our indifference. For the most part, God has been carrying on his work through men who trusted God wholly. His mighty acts have been done through devout men upon whom God could trust responsibility.

In the Old Testament, we have such extraordinary men as Caleb and Joshua, of whom we read, they wholly followed the Lord. In this, they became conspicuous because the majority did not wholly follow the Lord. All professing Christians make some pretense of following the Lord, but on the average, the percentage is very low.

Half-hearted and cold-hearted professing Christians are by far outnumbering those who seek to live entirely for the glory of God. In the case of Caleb, God's word tells us why he was extraordinary. In the book of Numbers, chapter 14 and verse 24, we read, but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit within him and hath followed me wholly, him will I bring into the land where into he went.

Did you notice the two words? Another spirit. That's the secret of Caleb's life of victory. Another spirit simply means a spirit different from the general run.

The nation of Israel at this point was characterized by a spirit of rebellion. Caleb did not have a share in that attitude. He had a spirit of absolute obedience.

Israel was driven by a spirit of grumbling and complaint. Caleb had another spirit of quiet submission to God's plans and purposes. Again, the nation had a spirit of independence.

She followed God only so far as it seemed wise to her to do. Caleb could not share that spirit of indifference or independence for he wanted God's blessing, God's best. The tragedy of our age is not outright idolatry, but of those who claim to be Christians, the general spirit is we follow our savior after a certain fashion or to some degree, but only as far as it suits our convenience.

God gets the leftovers. He is squeezed into our program at the very end. If there is any room left, it is very unwise to point the finger of activation at the nation of Israel for having so few who followed the Lord when we today have even fewer.

God's promise to the nation of Israel was conditional upon obedience. He said, every place whereupon you tread with the soles of your feet, I have given it to you for an inheritance. Ordinarily, we do not like to be accused of having big feet, but there's a sense in which we can congratulate Caleb for he had big feet.

That is, he claimed all of God's promises and followed wholeheartedly. How many individual Christians can stand today with Caleb and have it said of them, they have wholly followed the Lord in all things. Do you have another spirit? Or are you drifting along with other perfecting Christians who make no spiritual progress from one year to the next? The average Christian in our day does not wholly follow the Lord.

It may be that our endeavor to have more Christians, that we have unduly become interested in the quantity rather than the quality. Our present generation stands in need of outstanding Christians who are not drifting with a general trend, but men and women who can be used of God to do more than attend religious services regularly. When ten of Caleb's colleagues who inspected the land of Canaan brought back a pessimistic report, Caleb dared to oppose them because he had another spirit.

He believed God and the people who appeared like giants to his low-living friends looked like mere grasshoppers to Caleb. When we trust God entirely, our seeming obstacles dwindle into insignificance. Giants scare us when we measure them alongside of ourselves, but giants become pygmies when we measure them alongside of God, and that's exactly what Caleb did.

Just the daily ordinary things that oppress us or the greater obstacles, when we look at them in the light of an all-powerful God, they have a habit of melting away. Oh what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Caleb had complete confidence in God, and that sounds very simple, and we say there's no good reason why we should not trust God completely.

But sad to say while we believe we should, we don't. We seem to prefer to be cumbered with a load of care, and as a result the things that should be like grasshoppers become great big burly giants. We stand before them and we worry, fret, and tremble.

Caleb's God is our God, and I trust we shall learn increasingly to trust Him completely as did Caleb. If we raise the question, does it pay? The answer is found in Joshua chapter 14. And Joshua blessed Caleb and gave unto him Hebron for an inheritance, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel, and the land had rest from war.

A choice portion of this land of Canaan is the reward that Caleb received for being an extraordinary believer. This 14th chapter of Joshua is most interesting, for it tells us something about Caleb's 85th birthday. On that day he looked back to the time when he was 40 years old, when Moses sent him to spy out the land, and this is what he said.

Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old, as 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. Now therefore give me this mountain, referring to Hebron. I may have some listeners who are 85 or more years old, but I doubt seriously if any one of them can say I am just as strong as I was at 40.

From the retained vigor of Caleb we learn this lesson, that in the spiritual realm, there is no need of growing weaker as the years pass by. Age may weaken the body, but it need not weaken our spiritual strength. Someone has introduced the expression of growing old gracefully, and no doubt it is something to be admired.

However, to grow old maintaining full spiritual strength, complete confidence in God is even greater than growing old gracefully. The devil has no happy old folks, for he has nothing to offer in declining years. He wants flaming youth, he wants your time and your talents while you are young, and he offers nothing but despair and disappointment to his followers in later years.

Those who have come to Christ for salvation, who are resting completely in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as a basis of salvation, have something very, very valuable, for it takes care of the dark past, it makes for happiness in the present, and it offers the very best possible prospect for the future. An eternal home in heaven, free from earth's sorrows and cares, that's a wonderful prospect. And we need not say, I hope that will be my portion, but we can know, in fact, we should know.

If, my friend, you are compelled to say, I hope I'll be in heaven someday, you are not as happy as you might be. For God doesn't want you to say, I hope I'll be in heaven. He wants you to say, I know I'll be in heaven.

If our salvation depended on our good behavior, our good works, we could never be quite sure that we deserve to go to heaven. But since our salvation depends upon Christ and his atoning sacrifice at the cross of Calvary, all who are born again are assured of eternal life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.

That's 1 John 5 and verse 13. Perhaps the secret of Caleb's strength on his 85th birthday was that he was free from all anxiety regarding his eternal destiny. Now I see that my time is up, and I trust that those of you who do not know the Savior will see the wisdom of trusting him before it is too late.

If you are a Christian, I trust you will have a desire to be wholehearted for the Lord Jesus Christ to live for him and to serve him day by day. May God bless you.

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