

Ninety-Nine And A Half Won't Do! Part 5 – Caleb

Description

6 Then the people of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunne
7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh
8 But my brethren who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt; yet
9 And Moses swore on that day, Surely the land on which your feet have walked
10 And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five y
11 Yet I am as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me; as my strength was
12 So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke that day. For you

Joshua 14:6-12 AMPC

This is quite possibly my favorite passage in the Bible, spoken by possibly my favorite individual in the Bible. To fully understand what is going on here, I recommend that you go back and read Numbers chapters 13-14 to understand Caleb's origin, and the promise that he is referencing, As a snapshot, at the time of this passage, it has been 45 years since God sent scouts into the land of Canaan to report back to the people the blessings that God had prepared for them in the promised land. Joshua and Caleb were 2 of the 12 scouts sent to survey the land, and they were the only ones to return with a positive report, reflecting true faith in God's promise. Because of that, Joshua and Caleb were the only individuals over the age of 20 to survive the wilderness and enter the promised land. In the previous 13 chapters of Joshua, the children of Israel had spent the last 5 years since they had crossed the Jordan, fighting to remove the current inhabitants from the promised land, but had not completed it unto this point. The previous chapter and this one detailed the land that remained to be claimed, and the tribes that were still waiting to inhabit their allotment. Given the chaos and scrambling going on, it is quite commendable what Caleb chooses to request given the circumstances.

To fully understand the depth of the moment in the passage above you should go back and read Numbers chapter 14, specifically verses 23-25. Caleb received a promise from God because he chose to BELIEVE God's words to him as a young man, and because he held strong to God's promise in spite of his experiences after seeing the promised land. At the age of 40, Caleb along with Joshua and 10 other men scouted the land of Canaan, and brought back evidence of its fruits and riches to the people of Israel. Because he didn't waver when the people chose to doubt, God allowed him and Joshua to survive the wilderness, and enter the promised land. For 5 years he along with Joshua and the rest of the people fought the inhabitants of the land in an effort to obtain their tribal allotments. Caleb could have chosen to be content with surviving the wilderness, entering the promised land, and settling for whatever allotment of land that was available at that time; BUT Caleb knew what God had promised him 45 years earlier. What was unique about Caleb is that he possessed and expressed a type of faith that was definitely uncommon during that time. What caused him to believe God when nothing during his lifetime provided evidence of God's love and power except for their deliverance from Egypt? Why would a man born in bondage, and one who had most likely witnessed the murder of his people, the killing of young male children, and elders die in captivity who had dreamed and believed that God would deliver them, possess so much faith?

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen

hebrews 11:1

I believe that Caleb was modeling a principle that Paul later explained in the book of Hebrews. Caleb understood that he served a God who spoke into existence that which did not previously exist. He understood that he served a God who worked outside of logic and reasoning. Caleb understood that he actually had the greatest deal imaginable, because all he had to do was believe, because it was God's responsibility to make it happen since he promised it. Caleb knew that anything less than everything God promised was not a failure by God, but actually a failure by him, because the fact that God promised it, meant that he already had it. The only thing that could prevent Caleb from receiving his full allotment was if he no longer believed it was his. In the last verse of the main passage, Caleb says, "If the Lord will be with me, I shall drive them out just as the Lord said." Caleb knew that the difference between 99.5 and 100 is the presence of God, and making sure that he remained in alignment with God's word.

Reflection Time

How long does it take before you stop believing that God will do what he promised to do? Does time weaken or strengthen your faith? How can you improve your endurance? Can you remember a time when you didn't stand strong in your spiritual conviction(s)? Take some time to read and pray so that when tough times present themselves, you can remain strong.

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