



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

A Fulltime Faith

October 3, 2021

Joshua 14:6-15

Clint Pressley

⁶ Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. 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 him word again as it was in my heart. ⁸ But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the LORD my God. ⁹ And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' ¹⁰ And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. ¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. ¹² So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said."

¹³ Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴ Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁵ Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba. (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim.) And the land had rest from war.

(Pastor prays)

Almost everyone has heard of Moses. You don't even have to go to church much to know something about Moses. He was the great liberator of his people and, at his staff, the Red Sea parted. And his faithfulness, The Ten Commandments were given. Moses, who had been so close to God that his face shown to the degree that his people asked him to put a veil over it. At his hand, the first five books of the Bible were written.

By anybody's account Moses was a great man. Standing in the shadow of Moses all those years was his loyal servant Joshua. Joshua was a great leader in his own account, picking up the mantle of Moses and leading God's people into the promised land. He was a tremendous warrior, a man of great godly capacity, and even has a book in the Bible named after him. But, there in Joshua's shadow is a man who is sometimes forgotten. A man who has shown the same level of bravery and commitment as Joshua, and for 45 years he operated behind the scenes. And yet, Chapter 14 stops in the midst of allotting the land to God's people to put a spotlight on Caleb.

Caleb is best known for what he says in verse 10-12: "I am 85 years old and still as strong as I was when I was 40 years old; give me this mountain." And that is certainly admirable and inspirational but I want to know, what's behind that? What makes a man talk like that? It's got to be more than bravado and chest-thumping. And the more I looked at Caleb, the more I saw a phrase that kept showing up. It's in Joshua 14:8, 9 and 14. It's in Numbers 14:24, Numbers 32:12 and Deuteronomy 1:36. It is a phrase that is seen six times in the Bible and three times in this passage. It is said of Caleb, "he wholly followed the Lord his God."

Don't you want to be a person who wholly follows the Lord? That regardless of what else might be said of you, it could be said that you wholly followed the Lord? The church doesn't need any more "halfway Christians" with part-time faith living mediocre lives. God is calling you to wholly follow Him, and I think this passage shows us how.

A full-time God Calls For a full-time Faith

Let's see what that looks like in the man named Caleb.

See the value in fellowship

Let's get into the context. The majority of the land has been conquered and the next 7 or 8 chapters cover the allotment of the promised land to the various tribes of God's people. But in verses 6-8 an old friend and fellow soldier of Joshua steps forward. ⁶ *Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me.* This passage takes us back 45 years to Numbers 13-14 when Joshua and Caleb spied out

the land. They came back and stood alone together giving a good report. And here in verse 6 Caleb is saying, "Joshua, you of all people know what we have been through together." It's a brotherhood forged in fire and baptized in faith and centered on trust and faithfulness. I just want to pause and reflect here. Here is a microcosm of what it actually means to be the church.

Here at Hickory Grove we are very concerned about doctrine. We seek to preach Biblical doctrine and teach that to the best of our ability. For instance, our doctrine of salvation, our Gospel, which is that God is holy and Man is a sinner, separated from God. That sin is not just separation but it is calling for condemnation and judgment. The sinners living outside of Jesus are living under the condemnation of God. But the Gospel hope is that God is not just the judge but also loves His people. He gives us Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, who lived a life of perfection and kept all of God's law in the way that we can't. And the reason for the cross is that it is there, at the cross, where Jesus takes all the sin of every sinner who will ever be saved and takes the punishment. He died on the cross. God raised Him from the dead. And the promise of the Gospel is: you turn from your sin and believe that. You look to what God has done for you at the cross of Jesus. That is salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus. That is our doctrine of salvation. This is what holds us together, our common faith – the Gospel.

So the grace that saves us is the same grace that makes us one in Christ. What a great gift of God to have brothers and sisters in Christ we can rely on. We trust them, they support us, we can pray together and correct each other. It's having someone who will rejoice with you during the good times and be concerned when something bad is going on. It's someone who is seeking and hoping for only good for you. What a great gift Christian friendship is. And here in the Old Testament is Caleb saying to Joshua, "remember when it was only me and you." We don't live our lives as isolationists, but we live congregationally in community, pressing for unity and not division as we live our lives to the glory of God.

Courage in your convictions

Listen to Caleb and the great courage he has in his convictions. This is interesting because we haven't heard from Caleb in 40 years, since Numbers. Listen to how he recounts the story in verse 7-9. *"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 him word again as it was in my heart. ⁸ But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed*

the LORD my God. ⁹And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' “

What he is saying is, I was willing to stand alone. Or another way – because I wholly followed the Lord, I didn't have a choice but to give a good report. My obligation is to honor God and trust Him regardless of the consequences. If you remember the story in Numbers 13-14, Caleb and Joshua were the only ones who gave a good report, and because the people of Israel wouldn't go with Joshua and Caleb, they wandered 40 years in the wilderness. And although he was faithful, he had to suffer the wandering like everyone else.

It's costly to be a convictional Christian. We are feeling it more and more, especially in the world of gender politics. It is the goodness of God to make males and females, heterosexuality. We are created in God's image, as man and woman, and it is good. The goodness and flourishing of God's creation is actually displayed in womanhood and manhood. And as Christians who believe what the Bible says, more and more it will take God-given courage to humbly— but boldly— stand alone.

You can strengthen that courage in a couple of ways. One of the ways that God strengthens our souls is when we worship together. It's strengthened when we pray together, when we lift up the name of Jesus, when we sing songs and hymns and psalms, when we praise God together. When we open the Bible together and we hear the word of God read and then taught. I think that God strengthens us in worship. I think that God strengthens us when we have good accountability. It's why we do more than just gathering in church. It's why we are in each other's lives. So that we can pray together, care for one another, correct each other. So we can disciple one another.

The Bible teaches that iron sharpens iron. Christians can sharpen one another. I think what is going to make you strong is more and more Bible intake. How you are going to grow and be strong and courageous is by having the word of God inside of you. I think when you are obeying what God is calling you to do, it strengthens you. There is a confidence-building factor to you being obedient. I think when you spend more time on your own personal sin, instead of everybody else's, you understand the grace of God. It strengthens your heart to flourish in forgiveness.

What we see in Caleb here is the value of fellowship and the courage of conviction. I want to give you another thing.

Anchor yourself in the word

Let's go back to verse 6 and look at what Caleb bases his petition for the mountain on. ⁶ *Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. Caleb based his petition on what the Lord said. In verse 6 it says, "what the Lord said to Moses." In verse 10 it says, "since the time the Lord spoke this word to Moses," in verse 10 again it says the Lord kept me alive "just as he said." In verse 12 it says twice, "the Lord promised on that day."*

Five times Caleb hammers the point home of **what God said**. Here is a dependence on God's Word and I won't stay here long except to say that the number one factor in your growth and strength as a Christian will be your knowledge of and dependence on God's Word. The number one resource for your soul, healing for your heart, strengthening your faith, equipping for your life and conviction of sin is the Bible. And it is a *steady intake* of the Bible. What changes do you need to make to anchor your life in the Bible? We have a full-time God who expects your full-time faith.

Be grateful for God's provision

Join me in verse 10 and listen to the beginning of Caleb's speech, and let's see how he gives all credit to God for every good thing and provision. ¹⁰ *And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. ¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming.*

This speech is filled with thankfulness. It shows humility, perspective, attitude and removes bitterness. It develops a reliance on God, fights pride and pushes you to pray. It recognizes dependence and elevates grace. It glorifies God.

What if God removed everything you haven't thanked Him for?

Grow deep in patience

Maybe the hardest to develop and, I think, the most amazing attribute of Caleb is patience. We see in verse 10 that 45 years Caleb waited on Moses' promise. Moses died and every one of the original people who came out of Egypt died. All that was left was Joshua and Caleb. And this is the first time he's spoken up since it all began. How did Paul say this in Romans 5:3-5? *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame,* God is refining and shaping and strengthening you.

Develop a clear and unremitting purpose

Here's the section we love so much. And as you age, you will love it more! I think it speaks to Christlike aging well. At the core of this is not health and vigor but an unremitting desire to honor God with the years you have remaining here on Earth. A love for the Gospel, a love for worship and for the church, a love for the mission and rejoicing in the truth. It's a growing hunger to see Christ lifted high. And the inspiration is God-honoring.

Joyfully trust the Lord

Caleb's request brims with a God-centered optimism. It's a hope that God will provide. It's one of the privileges of age. With age you learn not to panic and to trust God. You learn to walk through a lifetime of pain building endurance and trust with a full-time faith in a full-time God.

That's how I want to close today, with a call for you to trust. So join me now as we pray.

We will pray that we will trust Him by faith in Christ. We will trust Him with our children or, if we were without children, we will trust him with aging parents. We will trust Him with our futures, our jobs and our marriages. We will trust Him in our suffering and sin and trust Him to give grace. A full-time God calls for a full-time faith.

(Pastor prays)