

Who do you trust?

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[0:00] Do you have or have you had a role model or role models? Even if you can't immediately think of a name, it's likely that you've had people in your life that you've respected and learned something from.

Christians are positively encouraged to have role models. But supremely the Lord Jesus Christ, as he lived an entire human life, but sinless.

And Peter says of him, he left us an example that we might follow in his steps. And we're actually called to become like Christ.

But we're also given other people to encourage us. There's a big list given to us in the Bible in the book of Hebrews in chapter 11. People who were definitely encouraging to us to think about and learn from, especially because of their faith.

They weren't perfect people, but they were marked out as those who trusted God. And the writer in that particular chapter says, I could tell you about many more, because there are many more.

[1:21] And there are good examples for us, because they demonstrated by their thoughts and their words and their actions, where their trust really lay. And indeed, that is the heading of this message today.

Who do you trust? The passage that we've just been reading is all about where people had their trust, who they were believing. And as we'll see, this has much to say to us.

The people in Hebrews chapter 11 were people who pleased God by their practiced faith. One of the people that the writer of Hebrews 11 does not tell us about specifically is someone we first encounter in Numbers chapter 13 and 14, and his name is Caleb.

And we read about him in that passage. He's quite prominent in that passage. It's rather curious. He doesn't appear in the book of Hebrews. But perhaps it's because we have quite a sufficient understanding already about this man from this particular passage.

And most important, we're given very clear, repeated evidence that he very much pleased God by his practiced faith. Caleb's story is particularly interesting because we're given a sufficient context to really appreciate the sort of person he is.

[2:46] We really get inside the head and the heart of this man. We see how he thinks. We see how he behaves. We see his emotions as well.

It's someone we can empathize with and understand. But in addition, this story is very helpful because it sets his life in contrast to the trust and the experience of many around him who did not follow the Lord.

It says of Caleb, the Lord said to him, I know him. He is of a different spirit. He follows me wholeheartedly.

But at the same time, running completely parallel with this story about this man is the story of thousands and thousands of people who are not following the Lord wholeheartedly.

And the two stories are set side by side. And I think we're meant to learn from that something. And part of that something is that if you're going to be someone who follows the Lord wholeheartedly, like Caleb, you're going to find yourself swimming against the tide.

[3:54] You may find yourself even swimming against the tide of people who claim to be followers of the Lord. And this very somber story that we've read talks about just a very, very few people who followed the Lord wholeheartedly in a situation and thousands of others who did not.

That's a lonely place to be. It's a difficult place to be. And that was the place that Caleb occupied. And it may well be the place that anybody who follows the Lord wholeheartedly will need to occupy.

Brothers and sisters, it is such a precious thing that we come together as a church so that we may encourage one another to follow the Lord wholeheartedly.

This is how we're going to look at Caleb's story today. We're going to firstly think about the context that this particular passage is set.

Secondly, we're going to think about the ingredients of practiced faith. And thirdly, we're going to look at the outcomes. So I start with the context.

[5:13] And here is the land that God had promised to the people through Moses. It was not an unknown land in the sense that it was completely unclear what God had in mind.

God had spoken about this land. And he had miraculously brought his people out of their slavery in Egypt, which is bottom left of the picture there.

You can't see it. But he brought them miraculously. It was a most amazing thing that he brought hundreds of thousands of people out of their place of slavery and onto a journey into this land that had been promised.

And they are now located in Numbers chapter 13 somewhere around here. You can see the small letters there. Kadesh. Kadesh.

Kadesh. And they are about to go into this land here. And you can see that it is populated by many other tribal people.

[6:17] And it's at this point that Moses calls for 12 leaders of the tribes of Israel to be briefed up to go into this land so that they can give a report of exactly what kind of place it is.

And he gives them some descriptions and instructions about how they should go about it. Find out what the land is like. Is it good and fertile or not?

What are the people like? What are the cities like? The towns in which they live? Give me some evidence if you can. Bring some fruit back to prove it. And I want you to notice that it's quite interesting to see that specifically in Numbers 13 and at the very beginning of the passage, we read that all of these spies were leaders of the Israelites.

They weren't just picked out by lot. They weren't just sort of picked at random. It wasn't just a question of put your hand up if you're up for this particular SAS type work. But they were already leaders of Israel.

They were people who were already respected. They had authority. They had background. And that was necessary because these were people who could be trusted. They had a certain gravitas.

[7:41] And it was one from every tribe. So no tribe was excluded here. There were 12 tribes and there were 12 people who went in, each a leader of their tribes. And Caleb was just one of those leaders.

And he's from the tribe of Judah. A significance that we haven't got time to go into particularly today. But from Judah comes the lion and the lamb.

Caleb and Joshua, they were part of that group that went into the land. And so they go on what turned out to be a 40-day expedition. And we know from the writing here, in very broad terms, that they travelled from Kadesh right up to the northern part.

Entrance to Hamath is up here. It's about 200 miles plus. And they also travelled as far as the Jordan River, over here, and as far as the sea, over here.

And they were able to identify who the different people were who were living in that land. So it was comprehensive. It was a good effort. That's a lot of miles to travel, isn't it?

[8:54] 500, 600 miles in 40 days. That's a lot of miles every day. And we know that they got as far as to be able to see people. I don't know if they had any communication.

They obviously didn't seem to be a threat because they weren't arrested. Or they didn't seem to have any trouble. So the Lord looked after them. And so they had a comprehensive expedition. They didn't just sort of tickle their feet in the waters down the bottom here and just sort of hang around for 40 days and just come back. They took the job seriously. And then they report back. And you can read about their report in Numbers chapter 13, verse 26. They gave Moses this account in verse 27. We went into the land to which you sent us.

It does flow with milk and honey. You said it was. God said it was. It does. It's abundant. There's a richness in the place.

[9:54] It's a great place. Think about the desert we're in. Compared to that, this is great. And here is its fruit. That's a great picture here of this sort of single cluster of grapes.

They needed a great pole to bring this single cluster of grapes back. It was almost like it was a bumper crop that they'd been able to evidence. And so there's the evidence.

It wasn't just something in their heads, but they were able to give evidence of the fruitfulness of the land. Verse 28.

But the people who live there are powerful. And here begins a rather gloomy catalogue of problems. And it's clear that even more was said.

Because at this point, the people began to grumble and complain and to shout out. And there was general disturbance in the multitude as this report was being given.

[10:54] So that Caleb had to silence the people. In their unhappiness of hearing about this bad report about the land. The difficulties that were going to be faced.

And he said, we should go up. And take possession of it. We can certainly do it. But the men who had gone up from him said, we can't attack these people. They're stronger than we are.

And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. Their report. Well, it had a lot of spin and untruth connected to it. Numbers 13, 26 to 33 gives us this mix of truth, exaggeration and lies.

And here are some interesting phrases which you can pick out. So look at your Bibles now at this point. Verse 32. They said, the land we explored devours those living in it.

[12:11] What does that mean? Whatever it meant. It was a very discouraging thing to be saying. It was almost like we are going to be overwhelmed in this land.

All the people we saw there of great size. Wrong. Not true. There were very few who were of great size.

They say, all the people in that land are of great size. Verse 33. We seemed like grasshoppers in their eyes.

Do you know how big a grasshopper is? He's tiny, isn't he? He's a tiny little creature. You can barely see a grasshopper. You can just hear his noise. Here I am.

Here's the grasshopper. How do I seem compared to this man? Goliath, who was meant to be very large, was probably something like maybe seven foot, eight foot tall.

[13:09] Okay? But here's the description they give of that situation. All the people are large. We're just like grasshoppers.

That's how we felt. And here's another one that the people recited back. And you have to look now in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 1 and verse 28 for this.

Deuteronomy chapter 1 and verse 28. Our brothers have made us lose heart.

They say the people are stronger and taller than we are. The cities are large with walls up to the sky. Walls up to the sky. Those cities are so great.

They hurry through the positives and quickly get on to the negatives. They're not just telling a story in order to let everyone have a proper appreciation of what lies ahead.

[14:11] But they're exaggerating and even lying in order to persuade both themselves and all the people that they shouldn't even think of going into the land at all. You can sense how the people react in chapter 13, verse 30.

There's consternation. People shouting out. In 14, verse 1, it says, All the people raised their voices and wept aloud. It was a terrible moment in the storyline.

And Caleb, together with Joshua, find themselves completely outnumbered and life-threatened. That's what we read, isn't it? That the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

I also ask you to note a deafening silence in their report. They have nothing to say about God.

They have nothing to say about God. As I read this passage, I thought to myself, does this have something to say to us?

[15:22] That by our silence, or by our behavior, are we giving a bad impression to others of what the Christian life is really like? Are we a grumbling people?

Are we a complaining people? Are we a people who look on the negatives and see the giants? Is that the impression that we give to others of what it means to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ?

That life is miserable and it's just full of problems? I hope we don't give a bad report of the Christian life to others.

So what next? Well, what next is a practiced faith? Caleb first, then Caleb and Joshua together respond to this chaos with a practiced faith.

I mean by that firstly, that what they now did was totally consistent with how they normally were. It was no surprise to God when Caleb spoke as he did.

[16:38] Chapter 13, verse 30. When Caleb silenced the people, he said, We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it. That wasn't surprising to God.

It probably wasn't surprising to the people who knew Caleb. Because Caleb consistently led his life in this way.

Chapter 14, verse 24. My servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly.

It's present tense. This is the way he lived his life. It's a lovely sentence. First, Caleb is called God's servant. My servant.

Secondly, he's different to the rest. He's got a different spirit. Thirdly, he follows me wholeheartedly. That's the way he lives day by day. The only way to have a faith which will stand the greatest tests like this is to have a faith that deals with the everyday of life.

[17:40] Are you putting your faith? Are you putting your faith into practice now? And by practice faith, I mean secondly, that they now did was exercise their faith.

They put it into practice. They applied it. It had consequences for them. It's a bit like a gym where there are various apparatus, I'm told.

The weights, the rowing machine, the moving walker, the exercise bike. How many of you go to a gym, by the way? Hands up, those who go to gyms.

Oh, they're very embarrassed about telling us they go to gyms. Here's a picture of a gym.

There's a great place with Dean that when I go to the nice pub to have a roast meal there, I see all these people in a sort of great glass bowl. And they're all doing amazing things at nine o'clock at night.

[18:49] And you're thinking, why do it? Just have a nice walk home. But here's the gym. Here's the gym. And you can do great things to your body. But you can't spend all your life on a rowing machine.

You've got to have a balanced exercise regime. And if you go there, you might get yourself a personal trainer. And the personal trainer will say, hmm, yes, Mr Fry, I can see your body mass index is this.

I can see that one leg is a bit different to the other. I can see you've got particular problems with this or that of your body. So what you need is to do five minutes on this and ten minutes on that, quarter of an hour on that.

And if you do that regime regularly, you will find great improvements. So that, I am told, is the way things are done. And no doubt people could live to tell the tale of how great it is.

But I think there's something to be seen as a parallel, an example from the gym here. As we think about what a practiced faith is all about.

[19:52] So I would like to suggest that we've got three key apparatus here to do with a practiced faith. And the first is this. It's the word of God. A practiced faith depends upon the word of God.

Yesterday, I was still in my pajamas when I had a knock on the door and two Jehovah's Witnesses were outside. It was a good thing I was still in my pajamas because it stopped any conversation. But as I said, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ or I trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gentleman nodded sagely and said, it's good to find faith in these days.

Faith is so rare. And as I closed the door, I was thinking, yes, but it all depends what you mean by faith. People have all sorts of faith.

People have faith in Brighton Home Albion. Misplaced. What is faith? What is faith? What is Bible faith?

[20:51] What is it about? It may have feelings and emotions connected to it, but it's never described in those terms. Now, the first building block and the first sort of exercise apparatus for a living faith, a faith that God recognizes, is the word of God.

The word of God. The promised land was the land that God himself had promised. That's what it is. It wasn't a land that they had promised themselves.

It wasn't they looked at a map and said, this little bit of the Middle East would suit us fine. It was a land that God had promised to give to them. Exodus chapter 3, verses 7 and 8.

Exodus chapter 3, verses 7 and 8. This, I think, is the first time that the land is mentioned. And God speaks to Moses.

And he says, I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I've heard them crying out because of their slave drivers. And I am concerned about their suffering. So, I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians.

[22:10] And to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land. A land flowing with milk and honey. The home of the Canaanites.

Hittites. Amorites. Perizzites. Hivites. And Jebusites. Ah. A land flowing with milk and honey. That went into the DNA of the people, didn't it? And that's why it came up again.

Even those leaders who proved to give a bad report. They said, it is indeed a land flowing with milk and honey. Where did all this start? It started with God speaking to Moses.

And saying, that's exactly what I am going to do. I'm going to give you this land. This is what it's like. These are the people who are there at the moment.

But I'm giving it to you. Because I've seen the oppression of my people. And I'm doing this as a gracious gift.

[23:11] This is the word of God. And Moses was told to go and tell the people about this. He wasn't to keep it to himself.

It wasn't a private agenda. He didn't have a little sort of cabal of people. Only a few people knew about it. That everybody of the people of Israel, everybody was to know about this.

From the youngest to the oldest. I mean that. The children to the very oldest of those people.

Everybody was to know about this. This is the word of God.

It's not for a few select people. It's for all people. All God's people need the word of God. The faith that pleases God.

Indeed the only faith that pleases God. Is a faith that receives and responds to God's word. The Bible. And this is what Caleb is doing. He's not just taking a different viewpoint.

[24:15] He's not just naive or an optimist. That's not what's going on here. He's as realistic as the others. There are issues. There are difficulties to be addressed.

It's going to be hard. But that's not the basis of how he lines himself up to go into the land. No. It's because God has promised this land.

You don't get a full sense of that attitude in the Numbers passage. But have a look at Deuteronomy chapter 1 verse 21. It's on page 179.

Deuteronomy 1 verse 21. Where this sort of story we find in Numbers is being repeated. Moses is talking.

He says in verse 21. See the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it. As the Lord, the God of your fathers told you. Do not be afraid.

[25:18] Do not be discouraged. So there they are. They're on the borders of the promised land. And Moses, who had heard the word of God years and years and years before, is now coming to them again.

And he's saying, right, this is the moment. This is the time. This is when God wants you to go in. This is when God is going to fulfill what he promised to do.

Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. Because the Lord your God has given you the land. That's the starting point. What has God said?

So we could say it this way. Faith that pleases God finds out what God has said. So you do need to know your Bible. And says, that's the basis on how I'm now going to act.

There's such a fundamental connection between those two things. This is what God has said. I'll know my Bible.

[26:30] I'll find out what it means. I will now live my life according to that. As I state that connection, that seems so simple, that people might well be thinking, there must be more to it than that.

There must be something more sort of esoteric or aesthetic or emotional about it. There must be something more than just what you're saying there. I'd really like another version of faith.

But no, this is the Bible version of faith. It takes what God has said. And regardless of how you feel about it, it does it. God says, thou shalt not steal.

Faith says, I will not steal. God says, you shall not have another man's wife. Faith says, I will not have another man's wife.

The Bible says, don't take the name of God in vain. Faith says, I will not take the name of God in vain. That raw simplicity is the nature of faith.

[27:54] Brothers and sisters, that's what we're called to do. In the book of James, we read about people who make the disconnection.

I've got faith, but it's not seen in practice. James says, faith without works is dead.

Being alone. A faith that doesn't show itself in practical obedience of life, embracing what is right and rejecting what is wrong, is not a faith that pleases God.

We read another place about the fact that the devils have a faith because they believe in God.

We don't want that faith. Doesn't change the devils, does it? What has God said?

[29:00] That was the beginning of the problem for the ten spies. And then through them, the whole nation. They completely overlooked and forgot what God had said. And then the matter came down to human wisdom and judgment.

Isn't this always the devil's tactic, as it was in the Garden of Eden? When Satan said to Eve, what did he say? Has God said? Has God said?

It puts that little doubt in Eve's mind. The very dawn of time. The very beginning. There was something that God had said very clearly, and the devil came along and said, has God really said that?

So here's a challenge to us. To be getting to grips and to know our Bibles, and not to be taking scissors and taking parts of it out because it doesn't suit us. So we have to embrace the whole of what God has said.

If the devil can make us doubt God's word, then his work is very successful.

[30:08] Now here's a kind of a case history that we might follow. Hebrews chapter 13, verses 5 and 6. It's on page 1211. Hebrews chapter 13, verses 5 and 6.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have. Okay? So here's a starting point. It's a very good, challenging starting point, isn't it?

If you find yourself in a situation where money is beginning to be too dominant in your thinking and where you are discontented with your life situation, this is how faith works.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have. How do I grapple with that? How do I deal with that? Because God has said, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.

That's the promise that's made to all the children of God. Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. So you're going through a rough patch, difficult time.

[31:31] You've got some practical difficulties in your life situation. Here's an encouragement for you. Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. Can anybody here give testimony to that reality?

Can anybody here say that God is a God who never leaves us or forsakes us? Can you say that? I think that's most voices.

Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. I'm going through a hard time. Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. I will look after you. I will live my life on the basis of that truth.

So we say with confidence, as you've just said, and you can shout it out loud if you wanted to, the Lord is my helper.

I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? That's the conclusion. That's the testimony. That's the outcome. Believe me, it's one of the few blessings of growing older.

[32:35] Growing older, you have storylines. You're able to look back. You're able to say, yes, 20 years ago, I was going through that situation. Was God there?

Did he help me? Yes, he helped me. I'm here to tell the story. I can say it, I will testify, the Lord is good. The Lord is my helper.

What can man do to me? What a great, liberating position that is, isn't it? Aren't we a blessed people?

What is God saying to you? What is God saying to you? As you read your Bible every day, and I hope you read your Bible every day, it's a dangerous, but dramatic thought, and a prayer.

Lord, what do you want to say to me today? What is it that you want to say through your word today? And if you dare to pray that prayer, you might expect God to speak to you.

[33:44] And if he speaks to you, then a practiced faith says, that's what God is saying to me. That's what I will do. That's what I will put into practice. I'll believe it.

And it shows, by the way, I'm going to live my life. What is God saying to us as a church? How does he want us to put our faith into practice?

How important it is that all our attitudes and decision-making are mingled with a faith that knows and grasps God's good word.

And I was just reflecting on that thought. We had an AGM here in the church recently. And you could say, well, it's just a business meeting.

But how important it is as a church that our meetings are never just business meetings. They're never just occasions for passing on knowledge.

[34:48] They're never just occasions for sort of taking a vote on the basis of sort of collective human wisdom. They need to be mingled with faith. And they need to be shot through with an understanding of the good word of God.

Both his warnings and his encouragements. His promises. So if we face a financial crisis, we're not at the moment.

Praise God, we're not. But it's been the case in the past. Well, what do we do? Well, we could run off to a bank and try and get a loan or something.

But surely, surely, our first recourse is to the God who made heaven and earth. And we come to him in prayer. And so you might think about that in your own personal life.

As well. How important it is that we have attitudes and decision-making which is mingled with a faith that knows and grasps God's word. If you're facing a big decision today, then you may be.

[35:59] Next-door neighbour popped up yesterday and she said, I'm selling up. I'm going off to Goring. Oh, I'm very sad about that. Why are you doing that? Well, you know, this, okay, well, you may be trying to sell up and downsize and go off to Goring and so on.

But is that just a human decision? Is it just a question of, you know, I just want to do that because this, that, and the other? Where does God's word come into that?

Or does that just go into a compartment that is sort of labelled stuff that isn't to do with God's word? It's very easy to be following the ways of everyone else in this world and not to be fed, strengthened, and encouraged by the word of God and what he wants us to do.

Now, the second piece of spiritual apparatus, our gym apparatus, is the goodness of God and our wavering conviction that God is good and that he always, and I mean always, wants the best for us. Deuteronomy chapter 1, verse 27 is very telling. Just in case you think I might be misreading this at all, you turn it up in your own Bibles.

[37:18] Numbers, Deuteronomy chapter 1, verse 21. It's on page 179. And this is what what we read.

You were unwilling to go up. You rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. You grumbled in your tents and said, the Lord hates us. Gosh, that's a strong word, isn't it?

Not just the Lord hasn't, isn't looking after us. He's forgotten us. We're all alone. But this is what the people said. The Lord hates us.

So he's brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us. What basis for saying that? He delivered them from slavery.

He miraculously brought them over the Red Sea. He fed them in the desert. He'd given them water to drink. He'd given them his word. He'd looked after them and protected them. He'd brought them to this very place.

[38:25] All of which, as we read in our passage, was a sign of his miraculous work. All of which was a sign of his great love towards them. And at this particular point, they say, the Lord hates us.

I don't suppose many people in this room would have actually dared to say something like that. But we might come rather close to it. We might come a bit close to that point.

Where we say, well actually, God doesn't really love us. Even if they had received the word of God, they were always fatally damaged by the feeling that God didn't mean good for them but harm. Doubt in the goodness of God is a terrible poison to faith. It's a fatal discouragement. Interpreting events through the prism that says that God has it in for us, that God wants us to deprive us of good things, is exactly Satan's tactic.

Isn't that what he said to Eve in the garden, eventually? First of all, he said, has God said? And then when she said, oh yeah, well God has said that we shouldn't eat of this, blah, blah, blah. Oh yes, it's because God knows that when you eat of that, you'll be like God.

[39:48] He's only doing that to stop you. He's only doing it to block you, to prevent you in your life. That's the kind of seminal, satanic temptation which he just carries on doing in the rest of life for all of us.

Not so Joseph who was able to say about his own life, often very traumatic. He said, you guys, you brothers, you meant it for harm, but God meant it for good.

It's the prism you look through your life in. Here's a liberating thought. If you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, all things work together for good to those who love the Lord who are the called according to his purpose.

All things work together for good. That's the word of God. We go back to our Bibles.

We go on that spiritual apparatus. What's the Bible say? All things work together for good. What am I going through? Something that's pretty bad. What's God promised? All things work together for good.

[41:11] Why do all things work together for good? Because God is good. Because God is good. Because he loves us. He loves us so much that he sent his son Jesus to die upon a cross.

To die for you and for me. To die for us sinners. That's how much he loves us. That's how much he demonstrates his love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

as if God was saying, do you want any more proof? I can't give you any more proof than this. How much I love you.

My son died for you. He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not with him freely give us all things? Freely give us all things.

Whatever it is for your good, he will give you. he wants you to have. What is for your good? Every good and perfect gift comes down from God.

[42:22] Are you in this dangerous and gloomy place where you cannot imagine that God means good for you? Maybe you're not a Christian at all and you come in here today and you think, well if there is a God I haven't got much evidence.

of how much he loves so I've given you some evidence and I'm saying this is how much God loves you. Jesus Christ, the son of God came from heaven to earth to die upon a cross for people just like you.

You need to do what the Israelites kept on failing to do which is to read your story, look back and see how good the Lord has been to you in everything. how liberating that is.

But you have to go to the gym. You have to go on the exercise bike which says God is good.

Because it's one thing to say I can see the promise of God but God doesn't mean it for me.

He doesn't love me that much. You have to go on the exercise bike that says God is good because it's true. And it was a fatal, fatal issue for those people at that time that they couldn't see that God was good and meant good for them.

[43:41] And the third apparatus that we need to go on is the power of God. It's to embrace the thought of the power of God. God is with us. Could they win these battles that they were facing in their own strength?

Absolutely not. It didn't matter if there were a million of them. They would never win the battles. That very last part of the passage we read horribly proves the point as they rush off in their own strength without the presence of the Lord in order to fight a battle and they lose.

They lose because God isn't with them. But they'd never been called to do that in the first place. They'd always been called to recognize that their help came from God alone.

Numbers 14, verse 9. Only do not rebel against the Lord. Do not be afraid of the people of the land because we will swallow them up.

Their protection is gone but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them. The Lord is with us. We had earlier up on the screen Joshua 1, verse 9.

[44:59] For the Lord your God is with you. The Lord your God is with you. It's about power and strength. It's about seeing God at work in his unanswerable and glorious power.

The Lord of hosts, the God of Jacob is with us. So here's another case history, a case example for us.

1 Corinthians 10, 13. 1 Corinthians 10 starts off with a passage that talks about all the disasters that happened as the people rebelled against God and the temptations and testings that they went through and how they failed that.

But here we go. 1 Corinthians 10, 13. How does that apply to us? What does it mean for us today? These things happen to them as an example for us.

No temptation has seized you. No temptation or trial would be good to put in there has taken you except what is common to man. And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

[46:04] But when you are tested, tried, trialed he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. And so I say to myself and I say to you brothers and sisters whatever situation you are facing God will provide a way for you to handle it to his glory.

Amen? It's true. Whatever situation you're facing so many of us we've got propensity to certain sorts of sin and we say I don't have the strength to deal with this.

I can't deal with this. It's true you can't. You can't. But God's power is sufficient. We have to believe that.

That's a plain understanding of that text that verse. If you're facing a situation at the moment where you're just so miserable and depressed and discouraged because you're failing the Lord constantly I draw your attention to this word and I say this is the word of God God means good for you and thirdly he has the power to give you victory in that situation.

Victory in that situation. It is not right that we should be constantly coming in to the church year after year after year and proclaiming exactly the same sort of unbridled unconquered sins.

[47:39] We should be making progress in holiness. There are victories to be gained. There's the Lord's power to be seen and it's there.

It's there. Is it a battle? Absolutely. Is it going to be hard? Yes.

Shall we fall down sometimes? Yes. But will we know victory in Jesus Christ or be constantly defeated? No. We shan't be constantly defeated.

We can know victory. And there are outcomes. Outcomes really matter.

This is not theoretical. God is forever saying to us see what happens. See what happens next. See what happens.

[48:43] See the result. we have the rather solemn privilege of being able to look over thousands of years of Bible history and to see what happened to these people when they disobeyed God as well as seeing the outcome of the lives of those who followed him.

So Hebrews 13 verse 7 is an interesting passage. It just talks about the fact that remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

That's why it's such a desperately sad thing when leaders fall. Because people are meant to be able to look at the outcome of the leaders ways of life and to imitate their faith and to be encouraged by that.

God says look at the outcomes. And there's some very very different outcomes of this particular story we've been reading. There are terrible outcomes. Although a remnant is preserved of that generation only Caleb and Joshua got to enter the land.

everyone else dies in the desert. Everyone of the age of 20. The program is shunted into a sad signing for 40 years. The next generation suffers.

[49:51] Did you notice as I read and I tried to make emphasis upon the point that when we read in that passage it says your children are going to be shepherds in the desert for 40 years and they're going to suffer because of your behavior.

behavior. I find that a very very sad thought. That our children might suffer because of our behavior. Our unbelief.

That the next generation should be jeopardized in any way by the lack of belief of us today. The next generation suffers. There's personal tragedy.

Personal tragedy. Terrible tragedy. Ten leaders of Israel were wiped out that day. They were not allowed to live. They'd spread the bad report.

And there was community tragedy. My spirit will not always strive says the Lord. How often can a man or woman reject the kind offers of God's mercy? How often can we choose unbelief rather than trust in God?

[50:53] How often can we read our Bibles but not do what God says? How often can we doubt God's goodness? How often can we choose to live according to our own wisdom and power? How often can we carry on in this way before God, not our prime minister, says enough is enough?

Enough is enough. There's a...

It's a telling story. The thieves on the cross, one got saved, the other blasphemed, didn't he? People have rightly said, well, one got saved and it was a demonstration that there is still grace. But don't think you can carry on rejecting God's ways. grace. I think there's so many stories here in the Bible of people who did reject God's ways and we see the end and the outcome of those things. And it would be a terrible and a sad thing if you're just in that place where your heart is growing harder and harder and harder because you're not trusting God. You're not putting his word and his goodness and his power into practice in your life.

[52:24] Because you'll wake up one day where these things will not have any more significance for you at all. And that's why God says in these passages several times, why do these people keep on showing contempt?

Why do they keep on showing contempt? Why do they keep on showing contempt? Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him. He will direct your paths. How glorious to receive by God's grace a heart that embraces a God who speaks, loves, and has the power to do every good thing that he wants to give us in life.

Let's pray. Our Father, we do come to you today so conscious that there is a big disconnect in the things that we say and the way that we live.

Our progress in knowing you and walking closely with you is so painfully slow. There seem to be so many setbacks. We confess our sin before you. We confess our weakness and our failure.

[53:41] We confess that we have not lived as we should have lived. But, oh Lord, we thank you for the encouragement of your word. word that beckons us. We thank you for your word that gives us so many promises and encouragements.

We thank you for your goodness. You have not let us go. We thank you, Father, for your power, that your power is made perfect in our weakness. Lord, we want to commit ourselves today in all our weakness and frailty, but depending upon your grace, to be your followers, to be wholehearted, to have a different spirit, to follow you completely.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.