

Caleb & Joshua

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 November 2011

[0:00] In Numbers 13, I'm going to talk about Caleb and Joshua, men of God.

The people of Israel have been two long years wandering, facing many enemies. There was heat and hunger, a lot of challenges.!

But the Lord had promised that they would go to the promised land through Abraham years ago.

And the Hebrews now stood on the edge of it in Numbers 13.

And Moses chose twelve men, twelve men to go out and spy out the land. They would have been like, if you could imagine, like commandos behind enemy lines. They had to go behind the enemy lines into the enemy's territory which God had promised to Israel.

They were princes and there was one from each of the twelve tribes. They were sent out like scouts. Like scouts to go and scout out the land. To survey the enemy.

[1:05] To see what the situation was that the children of Israel would go and face. To see how many soldiers and horses and chariots. To see what the walls and the gates of the city were like.

Now we've got to check out the readiness of this land of Canaan. To check out the state of the land.

And we see that as we pick it up from verse 17 of Numbers 13.

And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan. And said unto them, get you up this way southward and go up into this mountain and see the land. What it is.

And the people that dwell therein. Whether they be strong or weak. Few or many. And what the land is that they dwell in. Whether it be good or bad. And what cities they be that they dwell in. Whether in tents or in strongholds. And what the land is. Whether it be fat or lean. Whether they be worth their in or not. And to check out all of the detail of the land.

[2:05] To check out what they were going to face. And Moses says, and be of good courage. And bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first white grapes.

For forty days these men went behind enemy lines. They went and searched throughout the land. To gather intelligence. To carefully watch and scout out the land.

And Moses had told them, be of good courage. So they went up, we read in verse 21. And they searched the land. And they came, verse 23, unto the brook of Eshol.

And they cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes. And they bare it between two upon a staff. And they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs.

Here they were. They cut down a cluster of grapes. That they had to tie on a beam. That was carried between two men. It was a fruitful land.

[3:06] It was a fruitful land. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. The promised land was even better than they had dreamt it would be. Verse 26, it goes on.

And they went and came to Moses and to Aaron. And to all the congregation of the children of Israel. Unto 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. Verse 27. And they told him and said, we came unto the land where you sent us.

And surely it floweth with milk and honey. And this is the fruit of it. It flows with milk and honey. They showed the produce of the land. It was abundant.

It was flowing with milk and honey. Milk and honey showed that it was a rich and fruitful land. The milk showed that there was rich pastures there. For the herds.

[4:03] And that meant the delicacies of cream and cheese of milk. And then the honey was abundant too. Which shows us the land was flowering and fruitful. It was a place where you could have the sweetness of honey.

And the report went on. Verse 28. 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. By the coast of Jordan.

The spies had seen the descendants of Anak. These were huge men, giants. Strong and mighty men. It was sounding gloomy. The report was sounding gloomy now.

As much as it was a land flowing with milk and honey. As much as there was this rich abundance of fruit. There was some men here. The Amalekites were there. All of these other enemies of Israel.

[5:08] The cities were very great. And the giants were there. But then another voice pipes up. The voice of faith. The voice of faith is heard in the camp.

Verse 30. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses. And he said, Let us go up at once and possess it. For we are well able to overcome it.

This was the report of faith. The report of faith. The faithful report. Caleb says, Go forward. Go and possess the land. There are giants in the land.

Yes, there are giants. You may face some giants in this week ahead. In these months ahead. There may be giants down the road ahead for you. There may be giants in the days ahead.

Maybe they are called discouragement. Maybe they are called doubt. Or distress. Some of these giants. They may be called temptation. Or fear. Or failure.

[6:06] There are giants in the land. But let us go forward. Let us go. We are well able. Caleb was a man of courage. Caleb trusted in God's word.

He held on to the promises of God. God had said through Abraham that there would be a promised land. And he had promised it to the people of God. And he hung on to the promises of God.

He says, Let us go up at once and possess it. For we are well able to overcome it. Caleb saw that all was not lost.

We can overcome. Now the word Caleb is interesting. There's different views about what it means. But there's one definition of this name.

The word meaning of the name. Meaning of Caleb. And it means a dog raging with canine madness. That's how I read. A dog raging with canine madness.

[7:06] Now I don't know if you've seen some mad dogs. We went to a wildlife park. We were chased by a mad camel. It was a mad camel. And he was lunging in the back window.

Frothing at the mouth. And he just about beat my sister at the time through the back window. And I think my dad applied the accelerator when the camels started chasing us down this wildlife park.

And you know, a mad camel is one thing. But Caleb is, if you like, you could describe Caleb as a mad dog.

A mad dog. And there's a few preachers I think that lots of people call mad dog preachers. But we need some mad dogs. Someone with a British bulldog kind of faith.

That's what Caleb had. He was a mad dog. And others translate, or there's another definition of the name Caleb as a wholehearted. Wholehearted.

[8:06] Whatever the case, Caleb had a raging faith. He was bold. He was brave. He was valiant. And he was faithful. He had strength. And he had stamina. You know, he was like a dog with a bone.

Caleb was a mad dog for God. And Caleb was honoured by God. In Numbers 14.24, Caleb was called my servant by God.

A position of the highest honour. This title of servant had only been used of Moses up until that time. In Numbers 14.24, it says that Caleb had another spirit.

He had a different spirit. And he followed God fully. He followed God wholly. That's what we need to be. To be like Caleb of the Bible. Men of God.

Women of God. People with resilience. People with faith. People with toughness and courage to surmount any obstacle that lies ahead. With a reliance upon God's power.

[9:07] And obedience to God's promises. Hanging on to that. Because God is with us. That's what makes the difference. As we read in verse 31. As it goes on. 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. They were right. We are not able. That was logical. We are not able. But it wasn't faith talking. It wasn't faith talking through these men.

We be not able to go up against the people. For they are stronger than we. Who will you stand with? Will you stand with those who say we are not able?

Or will you stand with Caleb? Who says we are well able to overcome. Will you stand with those who've got a different spirit?

A different spirit. With those who follow the Lord fully. Wholeheartedly. Will you stand with the warriors of the faith? Or will you side with the wimpy men?

[10:14] Who lack the guts of faith. The cowardly. The critics. They'll huddle and tremble. They will discourage and doubt. Whose side are you on?

The majority. The majority. Was wimpy. Verse 32. And they brought up an evil report of the land. They brought up an evil report.

They said. Verse 32. 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 great stature.

They're saying. This land's going to gulp you up. The men. Are all huge. They're massive. Verse 33. 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. It was a true report. But it was an evil report.

[11:13] It was a report of doubt. A report of lack of faith. The Canaanites were so big. And so strong. Next to them they felt like little bugs.

Like grasshoppers next to giants. They spoke the truth. But they spoke from the human viewpoint. They spoke from their own strength. They were right. We can't.

We aren't able. But they missed the viewpoint of faith. Now friends.

We can make that same mistake. Some Christians have a gifting for criticism. It's been said to avoid criticism. Do nothing.

Say nothing. Be nothing. If you make a stand for Christ. You're going to get critics. You're going to be criticised. Not everyone's going to be happy for you.

[12:08] That you trusted Christ. That you're following Jesus Christ. As your Lord and Saviour. There will be some who will mock. And scorn. There are some who say all the reasons why not.

Why not follow God. Why don't you follow God. We're not able. It's too hard. It's too hard to live the Christian life. Some would say. Some people love to be negative.

It's been said of every ten persons who talk about you. Nine will say something bad. And the tenth will say something good in a bad way. No criticism. It's all around us.

Discouragers. That's what the ten spies were. They were pessimists. They saw all the reasons why not. All the reasons why we're not able. They were discouragers.

They closed their eyes to the blessings of God. They closed their eyes to the promises of God. They closed their eyes to faith. To what God could do. In all his might and power.

[13:08] They'd forgotten the miracles that God had done. They did not view the promised land. As promised by God. Through the eyes of faith. They could not see it.

They were blind to it. They became scared of the giants. You know we can get scared of the giants. We can get negative. We can be discouraged. But we're in a time of warfare.

People tonight. I read this interesting story. That in times of war. Discouragers are dangerous. In the American War of Independence.

There was a critical battle. Near Saratoga, New York. Just before the battle took place. One of the American soldiers. Frightened by the sight. Of the British Redcoats. Tried to talk his comrades. Into surrendering. Or escaping with him. And offers a chance. To come by and hear him. The man was arrested. Immediately court-martialed. And executed on the spot.

[14:03] Because he spoke disheartening words. To the soldiers. In the critical hour. He could have easily lost. The war for the Americans. Discouragers are dangerous. Don't sit in the camp.

Of the doubters. Of the discouragers. Of the critics. Don't sit with the ten spies. Who spoke the disheartening words. At the critical hour.

They spread gloomy tidings. About the power of the inhabitants. Of the land. They frightened the Hebrews. Making them think. That they were grasshoppers. In the sight of giants. Talking about the giants.

Being too strong. Too big. The land. Eating up its inhabitants. And they even looked back. To Egypt. What doubt. In Numbers 14. From verse 1. We read.

That they lifted up their voice. They cried. The people wept. And verse 2. The people murmured. Against Moses and Aaron. And the whole congregation said.

[14:57] Word God. That we had died. In the land of Egypt. Oh word God. We had died. In this wilderness. And then they talked about. The dangers. Of. The perils.

They faced. That. They'd rather have fallen. By the sword. Or. Or had returned. To Egypt. And verse 4. Let us make a captain. And let us return.

Into Egypt. They wanted someone. Someone. Someone who would take them. Back. To Egypt. Back to the slave. Slavery. Of the. Building pyramids.

In Egypt. That's where they were. Hauling great rocks. And. Building monoliths. To pharaohs. They thought. Maybe that would be better. To return. To Egypt.

And Moses and Aaron. Fell on their faces. In verse 5. Of Numbers 14. And it says. They tore their clothes. Joshua and Caleb. They tore their clothes.

[15:54] It was a sign of. Of. Of distress. It was a sign. Of. Of repentance. I guess. Before the Lord. It was a sign. Of.

Of. Crying out. To God. I believe. As they did so. And Caleb and Joshua. Spoke again.

With the voice of faith. In verse 7. It says. The land which we pass through. To search. Is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us.

Then he will bring us. Into this land. If the Lord delight in us. He will bring us. Into this land. It was the voice of faith. Again. Against all the odds.

Against all the signs. Against all the discouragement. If God is with us. Then he will bring us. Into this land. A land which flows. With milk and honey.

[16:48] Only rebel not ye. Against the Lord. Neither fear ye. The people. Of the land. For they are bread for us. Their defence is. Departed from them. And the Lord is with us. Fear them not.

So what do the people do? Verse 10. In a true democracy. But all the congregation. Bade stone them. With stones. You know. They got voted out.

It would seem. By the people. The majority wanted to go back to Egypt. The majority wanted to murmur. And complain. And see all the reasons why. It was too hard.

To serve God. But the two spies. Caleb and Joshua. Stood firm. The Lord is with us.

Fear them not. He goes on. Verse 10. And the glory of the Lord appeared. Verse 11. And the Lord said to Moses.

[17:45] How long will these people provoke me? How long will it be? And they believe me. For all the signs which I showed among them. You know. It had been reckoned. There were some 1 million people here.

1 million adults. In this community. It was massive. And yet 10 men. Caused all this congregation to murmur. Against Moses.

Numbers 14. 36. All. Of these 1 million. Murmured against Moses. Because 10 men. Gave a doubtful report.

10 men said. We cannot do. What God. Wants us to do. We cannot do. What God. Has promised. For us. We cannot do. What God has said. We will do.

But Joshua and Caleb. On the other hand. They were full. Of courage. And faith. Friends. The question is. Tonight. Are you a coward. Or courageous.

[18:41] Will you stand. For Christ. Or will you. Follow. The crowd. The 10 spies. Saw. With their physical eyes. They saw all the reasons. Why not.

Why it was too hard. To follow God. The inhabitants of Canaan. Were heavily armed giants. The 10 spies. Saw them too. But they saw more.

They saw that God. Was with them. They saw. By faith. Their spiritual eyes. Saw that God. Was with them. And that gave them courage. Caleb was a man.

Of another spirit. Who wholly. Followed the Lord. He believed God's promises. He believed the book. He believed what God says. He saw that God.

Was a covenant keeping God. Who would do. Just as he had promised. He would do. And that gave them courage. And friends. The word of God. Can give you courage tonight.

[19:36] The word of God. The promises of God. Are yay. And amen. Yes. And absolutely. Guaranteed.

It's rock solid. It's written in black and white. And read in some Bibles. It's God's word. And we can trust it. We can believe God's promises.

If he says come unto me. You can come. If he says I will save you. He will save you. You don't need to feel like it. Or feel worthy. But his word is yes.

And amen. It's absolutely. It's guaranteed. For time and eternity. His words are forever. They will not pass away. Believe God's promises.

Who are you going to follow? Are you going to follow the wimps? Who wimped out? And they missed out. It says. We read. That the ten spies died of the plague.

[20:34] And all the adults of the land. Who doubted. Died. In the wilderness. But Caleb. And Joshua. Went through.

To the promised land. God blessed them. God rewarded their faith. God blessed them. For their faithfulness. Who are you going to follow? You know.

There's a lot of people. Who come to church. And they're not fair dinker. They're not saved. We're glad you're here. But you're not saved. And some of you are honest enough to say so.

Some of you actually pretend to be saved. When you're not. That's a big problem. Better to admit. You're not saved. We come and hear the word of God. And hopefully. By God's grace and mercy. You'll come to that place. Of trust in Christ. But there's some people. Who muck around. Who play church. Who pretend. To be saved. When they're not. And that's a big mistake. To make.

[21:28] You know. There was a pastor one day. He was asked about his church membership. And he said. We have 800 members. And someone asked him. How many active members?

He says. All of them. Half are working with me. And half are working against me. You know. Some people. Come to church. They're not really. On board.

They're not. They're not saved. For one thing. And. They can sit in the. Camp of the critics. But let's stand. With the minority. Let's stand with the men.

The women of God. Those who. Wholly. Follow the Lord. Who wholeheartedly. Who fully follow Christ. And that's not to say. We're going to make. No mistakes.

We will. The good thing. The wonderful thing. About God's grace is. That. He. Helps us. Even when we're not worthy. Because. Absolutely. 100% of us.

[22:24] Are not worthy. Not one. Not one. Is worthy. Of his saving blood. Not one. Is worthy. Of his saving. Mercy. Not one. Is worthy.

But thank God. That the unworthy. Can be. Saved. That's the wonder of it. And it still. Happens today. That's the wonder still. That God's mercy.

Extends still. His invitation. Is still. Extended. And friends. Caleb and Joshua. They viewed the land. In faith. In the light of God's promises. They believed God.

They believed what he said. They believed the word of God. They weren't the men of doubt. They were the men of faith. Now both reports were true. Two men by faith. Trusted God.

And based their trust. On his promises. And saw the land. As theirs. Ten men. Trusted in themselves. They knew they could not win. Two men saw God.

[23:20] As their deliverer. Ten men believed. That man. Must deliver himself. And they could see. It was hopeless. Two men were willing. To let God use them. Ten men.

Opposed God's will. And hindered others coming. Two men rejoiced. In what God. Was to give to them. Ten men murmured. And denied God. Will you stand with the two.

Or with the ten. Will you look with the eyes of faith. And see that God is with us. Nothing is impossible with God. Or will you stand with those in doubt.

And unbelief. Who do not believe God. Or find some excuse. Some reason. Some alibi. Why they're not a Christian. Look instead with the eyes of faith. Look to Christ.

Look to him still. He says. Look. Unto me. Don't look to a church. Don't look to a dogma. Don't look. To a religion. Look unto me. He says.

[24:16] Unto me. As he extends. His nail pierced hands. He says. Look. Unto me. Look past. All the reasons. Why not. Look past. All the things. That would put you off Christianity.

Look past. All the faults. And failings of preachers. And men. And churches. And look unto Christ. Look unto him. And be ye saved. Look unto him.

With the eyes of faith. Look to him tonight. Don't listen to the evil report. That says it's too hard. To follow God. Look with the men. Who will trust God.

Look with those of courage. And faith. And march on. In faith. To confront the challenges ahead. You know.

To those who've denied. To those who've doubted. To the discouraged. God says. Have it your way. You will not enter into the promised land. And only Caleb and Joshua.

[25:13] The faithful. And the children of the time. Entered from the wilderness. To the promised land. And man. Dog. Caleb.

Still kept going. In Joshua 14. We read. How Caleb. Went on to battle. At the age of 85. Now is there any 85 year olds.

Or above here tonight. You may be sorry. You're getting a bit close to that. But. Whatever the case. God can still use you. In your later years. God's not stopped.

Using you. God's not finished with you yet. You've still got work to do. Don't hang up your hat. Don't hang up your shoes. Just yet.

You want to die with your boots on. Amen. And all the older people said. Amen. Joshua and Caleb. Caleb went to battle at the age of 85.

[26:08] In Joshua 14 verse 12. And what did he say? He said. If the Lord be with me. I shall be able. To drive them out. As the Lord said.

He's still hung on to the promises of God. He's still hung on to the word of God. He says. If God is with me. I shall be able. Friends. If God is with you.

You are able. You are able to see. Heaven's gates open. And. For you to enter in. If you've got faith to trust in. Then he's able to save.

His hand is not shortened. That it cannot save. God hasn't got some kind of. A limit. To the reach of his arm. You know. Have you heard the expression.

The long arm of the law. God's arm can reach you. No matter how far away. You feel that you are from him. He says that. My hand. Is not shortened.

[27:04] That it cannot save. You might be in. The most sinful. Of states. The most. Filthy. And. Godless. Of conditions.

Yet his arm. Is not shortened. That it cannot save. Neither his ear heavy. That it cannot hear. Thank God for that. He's still got an arm. That can reach out to you.

He's still got an ear. That can hear you cry. Friends. Tonight. The majority. Isn't always right. As we see from our account.

In this account. The majority was dead wrong. The ten were wrong. The two were right. The one million. Were wrong. And two.

Were saved. That puts it into context. Doesn't it? You know. The Lord says. There's few. That be saved. We don't know how. He counts. The few.

[28:03] But in that. And that account. It's pretty. Pretty strong odds. Against. Against you getting. Saved. Isn't it? You know. And the majority. Will knock. They'll doubt.

They'll discourage you. They'll mock you. If you do become a Christian. You can expect that. But. But. Don't be dissuaded. Don't be dissuaded. Just like Joshua and Caleb.

They started to pick up stones. To smash their skulls in. That was how serious it was. It can be dangerous to stand for Christ. It's not so dangerous in our land. But friends.

It's time to stand. To stand with the faithful. And it's not by any virtue. Of our own doing. Caleb and Joshua weren't saved. By their works. They were saved by faith.

It was faith. And it's still faith today. It's still faith. As they look forward to the cross. We can look back to it. And we can see what God has done. Friends. Trust him.
[28:58] Trust him. Trust him.