

Wholehearted to the End

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. See, I don't always get that response in my home church when I say that. But I like trying twice because the second one's always better. Good morning. Yeah, see, it's always better the second time.

Yeah, I'm really looking forward to our time together in God's Word this morning. But I've already been blessed and encouraged. Thank you for that extended time of prayer. I just was blessed by doing that with you, getting to hear some of the stories in those prayer requests, but to pray along with you for the things that God has put on your heart this morning.

So thank you for that. Before I begin, though, I just want to introduce myself briefly. So my name is Dallas, and this is my wife, Marcy. And I am the Global Ministries Pastor at Hillsdale Baptist Church in Regina, where I've been for 20 years.

And I have three kids, now four, including my daughter-in-law, but no grandkids yet. I think I'm ready for grandkids but not ready for the title.

But we'll see what the Lord has in store. For the last few years, I've also served as the board chair of the Baptist General Conference of Saskatchewan.

[1 : 07] And so as a result, it was my privilege this last year to be part of the interview team with your church and some of your men regarding joining our denomination. And I was really encouraged by what I heard during that time about you as a church, your heart for the Lord, for the gospel and his word, your heart for ministry and for your outreach into your community, and also the way that you are working to care for your pastor.

I love the way you shared about Josh and the need to pray for our pastors. And so just for that reason and so many more, we are encouraged to have you now as part of the Baptist General Conference of Saskatchewan.

And we're blessed to have you. And we'll see what the Lord has for us as a part with you being part of our denomination together. And we look forward to that. But another one of the reasons that I'm excited to be here is that when Pastor Josh and his family were in Regina, they actually moved to our church while I was the youth pastor there.

And so Pastor Josh was in my youth group. And I won't tell you a bunch of bad stories about him while he's not here, in part because I just don't have any. Pastor Josh has just always been a good guy.

I had the privilege actually of, with him and one of his friends, we met together probably for a couple years for breakfast once a week to talk about things of the Lord and what it meant to walk with him.

[2 : 30] And so to be here this morning in the place where he serves faithfully is a real blessing to me. And to see that he is continuing on in his love for the Lord and his love for ministry is an encouragement.

So that's another one of the reasons that I'm grateful to be here this morning. In my life, I have had the privilege of many spiritual mentors and influences.

And just for the sake of this morning's message, I wanna highlight one more for you. And that is my grandfather, Jake Rempel. Now, I know that you as a church have supported from my understanding Nipwin Bible College.

And my grandfather was the president at Nipwin Bible College for many years. And he is 92 years old now. And I talked with him just on the phone just a few weeks ago just to tell him of my great appreciation for him, his faithful walk with Jesus Christ and his desire to do ministry.

And so he was telling me about what some of the things that he is doing. He works at the food bank a few times a week. He is on the advisory board for a new church in his area. And he will be actually preaching a couple times in August.

[3 : 38] He also mentioned that the prison in Prince Albert asked if he would come in and do Bible studies with the men in the fall, which he is planning to do, Lord willing. And did I mention he's also planning to do a couple stucco jobs this summer?

He is 92 years old and going strong in his walk with Jesus Christ. And I am so thankful for his example. He is wholeheartedly following the Lord even into his old age.

And I share his story with you this morning because he is a living example of the kind of story that we're gonna see from God's word. And so I wanted to highlight his story a little bit for you. But today we are gonna look at the story of a man named Caleb.

Now, of course, many of you are gonna know the story of Caleb. And maybe even as I mention his name, there's a song that starts ringing in your head. 12 men went to spy on Canaan. And? And? Two were good. Okay, I'm not gonna sing the whole song for you this morning. I won't put you through that. But many of you will know this story, of course. But we also know that while all of the spies saw the goodness and the bounty of the land, 10 of them responded with fear and disobedience.

[4 : 49] They said, we are not able to go up against these people. And it was only Joshua and Caleb who responded in faith and said, no, let's go and take this land. And we are able to overcome it. Sadly, the people of Israel listened to the 10 spies who gave the bad report.

And they responded in disobedience by not taking what God had promised to them. And we also know that God's punishment for this disobedience was strong. The people were sent into the wilderness to wander for 40 years.

And all of those who were 20 years old and older were all going to pass away before they would be able to enjoy the promise. It would only be Joshua and Caleb because of their faith along with the next generation that would inherit the land according to God's promise.

And so then that brings us this morning to Joshua, the book of Joshua. And you can turn in your Bibles already to Joshua chapter 14 where we'll be looking this morning.

But at this time, the older generation had passed away and Joshua had taken over leadership from Moses. And the first 12 chapters of Joshua described the people taking the land. And then in chapter 13, after listing the land that was still to be conquered, the task begins of dividing the land between all the different tribes.

[6 : 05] And we see that in chapters 14 to 19. And then in bookending, both of those, or all of those chapters, 14 to 19, we see the land given specifically to Joshua and Caleb who had faithfully followed the Lord.

Which serves to emphasize for us God's faithfulness to them. And that their example of faith, Joshua and Caleb's example of faith is what the rest of the tribes would need in order to take what was promised to them and experience God's blessing.

So with that background, let me start reading for us in verse 6 of Joshua chapter 14. Now the people of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal.

And Caleb, son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, said to him, You know what the Lord said to Moses, the man of God, at Kadesh Barnea about you and me? I was 40 years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land.

And I brought him back a report according to my convictions. But my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the Lord, my God, wholeheartedly.

[7 : 12] So on that day, Moses swore to me, The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever because you have followed the Lord, my God, wholeheartedly.

Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for 45 years since the time he said this to Moses while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, 85 years old.

I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out. I am just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day.

You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.

Then Joshua blessed Caleb, son of Jephunneh, and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb, son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, ever since because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly.

[8 : 21] Now, as I read through the book of Joshua this last year in my personal devotions, I found myself inspired by this story specifically. It really is incredible to see a man at 85 years old still so filled with passion and strength for the things that God had called him to do.

And in this passage, we see Caleb described three times as one who followed the Lord God wholeheartedly. That's a pretty great way to be known, to come to the end of your life and to be known as someone who wholeheartedly followed the Lord.

And so I just want to take a little bit of time to talk about that this morning. What did it mean for Caleb to follow the Lord wholeheartedly? What can we learn from this hero of faith? Now, this phrase itself points us to the idea that this is someone who is all in, right?

This is someone who is all in with his relationship with God. But in looking at this passage this morning, I want to point out three things that I think it looked like in Caleb's life. What did it look like to wholeheartedly follow the Lord God?

And so those things, three things are this, that Caleb endured, he acted, and he believed. So he endured, he acted, and he believed.

[9 : 38] I want to talk about each of those. And so let's start with the first one. The first example we see of Caleb wholeheartedly following the Lord is that he endured in faith. He held on to the promise that God had made to him.

Verse nine again. So on that day Moses swore to me, the land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.

Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for 45 years since the time he said this to Moses. Moses. Now think about that for a minute. 45 years, Caleb held on to the promise.

I don't know what your patience level is like, but 45 years of holding on to a promise is a long time without seeing movement towards that promise in many ways.

But 45 years he held on. And this wouldn't have been without challenges. Remember who he was walking in the wilderness with? And often rebellious and faithless people.

[10 : 42] And yet, in the midst of that, he held on to the promise that God had made to him. You know the stories, right? All the complaining and the grumbling and the lack of faith. As I was preparing for this message again this week, I found myself wondering what that would have been like for Caleb.

I think it would have been very easy to throw a bit of a pity party at some point. Right? Lord, why am I suffering along with this faithless people? I believe in you.

I'm ready to follow you. Why am I also being punished? I'm also sure it would have been easy during times of particular difficulty to wonder, is God ever going to keep this promise that was made to me?

Now, we of course don't know what was actually in Caleb's heart. The Bible doesn't tell us. But what we can see is that later in his life, at 85 years old, we see the fruit of someone who held on, who endured in faith in the promise that was made to him.

At 85 years old, Caleb remained ready to receive the promise. And he acknowledges specifically in verse 10 that he knows that it was God who had kept him alive. Why? In order to fulfill that promise.

[11 : 55] And so after all of these years of waiting, Caleb was not going to miss out on the blessing for being faithful. So, this is one example of what it looked like in Caleb's life to wholeheartedly follow the Lord.

He endured in faith that God would keep his promise. And so let me pause here and ask you this morning, those of you who are here, are you enduring today with faith in God's promises?

You know that the Lord has made some incredible promises to you, right? And the scriptures are full of the Lord's promises to us. Let me highlight a few. For one, through faith in Christ, we not only can have a relationship with God today, but we have the hope of one day spending eternity with the Lord.

Free from earthly pain, right? Free from earthly pain and the reality of sin. I can't wait to be free from the reality of sin. The scriptures have made us incredible promises.

He has promised that we can grow in holiness today through his indwelling spirit as we wait for that future day when we will finally be free. He has promised, as was reminded in our prayer time, that he is our great provider, that he is going to give us everything that we need today.

[13:10] that is an amazing promise. And of course, I could go on because the scriptures are full of God's promises, but the question is, how are you doing this morning with enduring faith?

Are you clinging on to the promises that God has made, believing that he will do everything that he has said? Now, as a guest preacher, I don't know the stories that are represented in this room. I don't know them. I heard a little bit through the prayer time. But I can assume that there are numbers of you who are following Caleb's example in enduring faith. You are clinging to the promises of God.

You are longing for the blessing that comes when God fulfills everything that he has said. But I can also assume that for some of you who are here this morning, this hasn't been easy.

Maybe God has brought some really difficult challenges your way. Maybe even recently. It could be physical, it could be relational, it could be some spiritual challenges that you are wrestling through.

[14:12] But in the midst of those challenges, you have clung on to faith. Can I encourage you, please continue to hold on. I know it would be tempting to be impatient or discouraged, but we need to remember who God is and what he has said in his word.

That he will do everything that he has said he will do. And so my prayer for each of us is that we will see the long-term endurance of Caleb and his example and that we will hold on to faith.

We're going to come back to this in a few minutes, but whatever comes our way, we need to remember that God has never failed to keep any of his promises. If you turn later in the book of Joshua to Joshua 21, what does it say in verse 45?

It says, not one, not one of all the Lord's good promises to Israel failed. Every one was fulfilled. This is the God that we serve. not one of his promises to Israel failed.

We need to remember that as we hold on to faith. If we are to wholeheartedly follow the Lord like Caleb, we will need to endure. 45 years he held on, but he endured in faith and he was about to receive his reward.

[15:25] So that's number one, enduring in faith. But his receiving of the blessing connected to the promise that was made to him would also require action. It would also require action.

See, Caleb not only held on to the promise of land that God had made to him, but he remained ready to act in order to receive the blessing. Right? Go back to verse 11. I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out.

I am just as vigorous to go to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord had promised me that day. Now first, I don't know how that sits with you, but I'm still as strong today at 85 years old.

That's pretty awesome. I could tell you again a side story about my grandpa. Two years ago I did a stucco job with him. It was the four, actually the three generations, my grandfather, my father, and myself were stuccoing together.

And there were some low parts on the wall and I was starting to complain a little bit that my knees were getting sore. My grandpa comes over and taps my shoulder. Don't worry, grandson, I'll take care of that spot. That's just not nice.

[16:31] That's just not nice. At 92, he still had all that strength and vigor, right? But here, Caleb, it's different. I'm ready to go out to battle in the same way as I was back then at 85 years old.

That's just amazing. But he understood that receiving the promise that God made to him was going to take work on his part. And we need to remember that he knew it wasn't going to be easy.

It says in verse 12 that he remembered that the Anakim were there. These were the great men that the Israelites, the spies, saw when they went into the land the first time that made them feel like grasshoppers in their presence. He knew that this is where he was going.

And in verse 15, we read that Hebron, which was given to him, was originally named after the greatest of these Anakites. That's the land that he's going in to take. In addition, he remembered that there were great fortified cities in the land.

But all of this changed nothing. Caleb remained ready to act to take the land that was promised to him. So let me pause here again.

[17:35] What can we learn here from Caleb's example? Well, if you've been in church for any length of time, you will not be surprised to hear me say that real faith in God takes action.

In order to receive all the blessings of the promises of God, we not only need to endure, but we need to do the will of God.

Hebrews 10.36 makes this clear. Here's what it says. You need to persevere. That's the first part we talked about with Caleb, enduring in faith. You need to persevere so that when you have done action, done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. So let me just pause and point out two big overarching ideas that show us how this receiving of the blessings of promises and action work together.

First, as I already highlighted, God has called us to grow in holiness, right? We know that that's what God's word has said. He's called us to grow in holiness. And if we put our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, God promises that we are forgiven and we are set free from the power of sin.

[18 : 52] This is truth. This is past tense if we have put our faith in Jesus Christ. But then, we are commanded to put to death the sin that remains in our lives. Our continued enjoyment of freedom and forgiveness in our walk with Jesus Christ is going to take work on our part.

He's given us work to do. So let me just ask the question here. Are you actively pursuing the victory that God has promised as it relates to sin in your life?

Because He's promised it, but it's going to take some work on your part to receive all the blessings of that. What might it look for you, what might it look like for you to act on that today? Maybe even as I mentioned that to you this morning, God is already prompting you by His Spirit of some things that He's been asking you to do.

If you want to experience all the blessings of freedom and forgiveness that God has promised, then we need to act to put to death the sin that is still there in our lives. So that's one example of how promises and action work together.

Here's a second example. God has commanded us to expand His kingdom by going out and making disciples of all nations. And He has promised that the good news of the gospel will go out. When you read the book of Revelation, what does it say?

[20 : 08] That every nation, tribe, and tongue is going to be represented before the throne of God. But how do we get from the promise to there? Right? We get the command. Right?

The Great Commission. Go into all the world and make disciples. It's not going to happen if we as believers simply come to church on a Sunday morning and sit in a chair. That's not how we're going to get to what we see in Revelation.

So again, let me ask the question. Are you acting on God's command here in order to receive the blessing? How are you involved in making disciples? Are you serving here in this church as part of that overall mission?

Are you sharing your faith with those that are around you here in Davidson but also in the surrounding communities? How are you involved in acting on this promise that God has made? That His word will bear fruit?

That people will come to faith in Jesus Christ? I'm looking forward to on your behalf of what's going to happen this next day with five day clubs. Or this next week with five day clubs. As those of you who walk out in action what God has commanded you to do with faith in the promise that God has made so that you will receive all the blessings of that.

[21 : 14] I will continue to pray for you as a church in that regard this week. From talking with Pastor Josh and your elders I know that many of you are doing this and this is fantastic.

See we as followers of Jesus Christ we have work to do. God has made many many incredible promises to us but again enjoying all the blessings of those promises is going to take some work on our part.

And it won't be easy. Like Caleb we have some giants that we will need to face along the way as we work at these things. But here's the thing what are we missing if we don't? One of the sadnesses in my heart for my own life but for the church of Jesus Christ in general is I wonder what blessings what spiritual fruit are we missing out on because we are not acting on our faith.

We are not doing the will of God. I don't want to miss anything that he has for me. But what are we missing out on if we don't act? Caleb wasn't going to miss out. At 85 years old he remained ready to act and receive God's blessing.

But then maybe one last comment here. If it hasn't been clear yet this is not a challenge that's just for the young people. If you are here this morning you're in the later years of life see the challenge of Caleb's example.

[22 : 33] There is no retirement from doing God's will. Right? We don't retire from doing God's will. And I know that none of us has promised the health that we see in Caleb's life at 85 years old or like my grandfather in his example at 92.

I know none of us are promised that. So it may look a little different as we get older but we don't retire from active obedience. to God. As one commentator said Caleb didn't simply look for an easy task suited to an old man.

He asked Joshua for mountains to climb and giants to conquer. How cool is that? Do you know some people like that here at Davidson Community Bible Church?

Men and women young or old. People who are actively walking out their faith and watching for how God is going to bless and fulfill his promises.

Are you one of those? I pray that this church will be filled with those kind of people who understand that wholeheartedly following the Lord enjoying his blessings will take some action on their part.

[23 : 39] All right, last point. Where did this kind of enduring faith and active obedience come from? Where did it come from?

Was Caleb just a special human being? Is this even attainable for us today? I think we need to finish up with the key right here. Caleb endured in the promise that God had made.

He was willing to act in order to take the land that was promised to him regardless of the giants because what? Because he believed in the Lord and that the Lord was going to be with him.

Verse 12. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified but the Lord helping me I will drive them out just as he said.

Just as he said. It is so easy for us to set the heroes of faith up on a pedestal. Right? But we need to remember that these stories that we read in God's word of the heroes of faith those stories aren't really about them.

[24 : 45] These stories are about the Lord. They are normal human beings like us with struggles and weaknesses. What makes them heroes of faith is their belief in who God is.

Right? Their belief in a great God who is with them and will do everything that he has said. This is what causes them to attempt what seems incredible to us. Right? Not because of them but because of who the Lord is.

We can see the clarity of the object of Caleb's faith back in Numbers 14 when they came back to the land when they came to the land the first time. What does he say there? As one writer put it Caleb essentially says to his fellow Israelites look the Lord is going to give us this land because it's already his.

Right? The people who are living there they've lost their protection from their sovereign creator. So let's go take it. It's already ours. And then 45 years later Caleb's faith in God remains the same. What does it say here in our passage? With the Lord helping me I'm going to drive them out just as he said. And I think it's important to note here that this isn't blind faith.

[25 : 46] Right? This isn't blind faith. Caleb had seen God act on behalf of his people. He saw God deliver his people from slavery in Egypt. He saw God lead the people across the Red Sea.

He saw God provide daily manna for his people 40 years in the wilderness. This isn't blind faith. And this is part of what made Israel's disobedience the first time when they came to the land so devastating.

You saw God do all of these things and you don't believe you can take the land? Did you forget who God is? Caleb along with the rest of the people had seen God act on their behalf.

But while others responded with fear and disobedience Caleb was ready to go. Give me the land.

The Lord is with me. As I reflected in preparing this message I felt like this was a place I often come to as I prepare to preach.

The reality of who God is. That he is with us and how that it really changes everything. Now is this because it is something that's easy to go back to?

[26 : 52] Am I simply reading something into the text that I want to see? Or is it because this is just such a significant idea in the scriptures and what it really means to wholeheartedly follow the Lord?

I think it's the latter. See if you're struggling to wholeheartedly follow the Lord today it is likely because in some way you have lost touch with how great God is.

It's likely that in some way you've forgotten what he has done in your life. You've forgotten who God's word says he is and what he is able to do in your life and that that God is with you.

And so as I prepare to wrap up this morning let me take a minute just to remind you of who our God is. The same powerful God that Caleb believed in that we are reading this morning in God's word. The same powerful God that Caleb believed in who he saw act on Israel's behalf is our God. Same God. He is the sovereign creator who rules with power and authority over everything that he has made.

[27 : 56] He is the God who is already victorious over sin and death through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Who he sent, why? Because he loves you so much.

And if we have put our faith in him he has made us his children and he has filled us with the Holy Spirit giving us strength to do everything that he has called us to do. In fact God's word said it's the same power within us that raised Christ from the dead is in us today.

And then one day Christ will return to judge the living and the dead and all those who are found faithful are going to spend eternity with this great God. This is who our God is.

Do you believe that? Our great and glorious king and he is the one who is with us. See Caleb believed in a great God and that this God was with him.

It was Caleb's faith in this God that allowed him to endure in the promise. 45 years he clung to that promise because of who he believed God was. And the same belief in that God is what allowed him to confidently say at 85 years old give me the land I'm going to take it because I believe God is with me I can take it.

[29 : 10] This is what it looked like for him to wholeheartedly follow the Lord. And so the big question for you this morning is are you wholeheartedly following the Lord? Are you enduring in faith in everything that God has promised?

Are you ready right now to do everything that he has called you to do in his word and receive all the blessings that he longs to pour out in your life? And are you doing those things because of who you believe that he is and you know that he is with you and he loves you?

This is the kind of life that will bring God glory and will give you his blessing. So here's what I'd like to do and we do this in our church in Regina a lot and I love it.

I'm just going to pause for a minute. I want to allow you to respond to the Lord. What is the Lord saying to you right now? How is he calling you to respond to him? Talk to him about that for just a moment and then I'm going to close in prayer.

Okay? So let's just pause. Please speak to the Lord and then I will pray. Amen. Amen.