

JOSHUA 14
CHARACTER MATTERS!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 14 as we continue our study through this amazing book on victorious Christian living.

And we have been looking at the division of the land; on the east side of the Jordan River for Ruben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Keep in mind that they were outside the Promise Land.

And also, for the tribes on the west side of the Jordan River, in the Promise Land. And we will see that more as we read on in future chapters of Joshua.

And as we will see this morning, and the main point of our study here in Joshua chapter 14, is the character of a man named Caleb! In fact, I have called this study, **CHARACTER MATTERS!**

When we look at character today, it seems to be lacking. We see it in the lives of politicians who, many times lack character. We see it with Hollywood, and again, many times they lack character. We look at what takes place at work and we see many who lack character.

And we can go on, but let me ask you this, what is character?

Noah Webster described this word, “*character*” like this, “By way of eminence, distinguished or good qualities; those which are esteemed and respected; and those which are ascribed to a person in common estimation.”

In other words, someone you can trust, someone who does what is right, is the idea.

But, what does the Bible say about Christian character? Listen carefully, because as we look at Caleb, we will be looking at the character that emanated from his life. We are told,

Character is defined as strength of moral fiber. A.W. Tozer described character as “the excellence of moral beings.” As the excellence of gold is its purity and the excellence of art is its beauty, so the excellence of man is his character.

Persons of character are noted for their honesty, ethics, and charity. Descriptions such as “man of principle” and “woman of integrity” are assertions of character. A lack of character is moral deficiency, and persons lacking character tend to behave dishonestly, unethically, and uncharitably.

A person’s character is the sum of his or her disposition, thoughts, intentions, desires, and actions. It is good to remember that character is gauged by general tendencies, not on the basis of a few isolated actions. We must look at the whole life.

For example, King David was a man of good character (1 Samuel 13:14) although he sinned on occasion (2 Samuel 11). And although King Ahab may have acted nobly once (1 Kings 22:35), he was still a man of overall bad character (1 Kings 16:33).

Several people in the Bible are described as having noble character: Ruth (Ruth 3:11), Hanani (Nehemiah 7:2), David (Psalm 78:72), and Job (Job 2:3). These individuals’ lives were distinguished by persistent moral virtue.

Character is influenced and developed by our choices. Daniel “resolved not to defile himself” in Babylon (Daniel 1:8), and that godly choice was an important step in formulating an unassailable integrity in the young man’s life.

Character, in turn, influences our choices. “The integrity of the upright guides them” (Proverbs 11:3a). Character will help us weather the storms of life and keep us from sin (Proverbs 10:9a).

It is the Lord’s purpose to develop character within us. “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart” (Proverbs 17:3).

Godly character is the result of the Holy Spirit’s work of sanctification. Character in the believer is a consistent manifestation of Jesus in his life. It is the purity of heart that God gives becoming purity in action.

God sometimes uses trials to strengthen character: “we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Romans 5:3-4). The Lord is pleased when His children grow in character. “You test the heart and are pleased with integrity” (1 Chronicles 29:17; see also Psalm 15:1-2).

We can develop character by controlling our thoughts (Philippians 4:8), practicing Christian virtues (2 Peter 1:5-6), guarding our hearts (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:18-20), and keeping good company (1 Corinthians 15:33). Men and women of character will set a good example for others to follow, and their godly reputation will be evident to all (Titus 2:7-8).

- <http://bit.ly/2ZaaNed>

And look at how this is played out in the history of our nation. I will share this with you and then I will show you why they did what they did. We are told,

Good character flows from an accurate knowledge of God. The founders of our country understood this, as is evidenced by some quotations from some early state constitutions.

The Constitution of the State of Massachusetts, 1780:

The Governor shall be chosen annually; and no person shall be eligible to this office, unless, at the time of his election . . . he shall declare himself to be of the Christian religion.

Chapter VI, Article 1 [All persons elected to State office or to the Legislature must] make and subscribe the following declaration, viz. “I, _____, do declare, that I believe the Christian religion, and have firm persuasion of its truth.”

The Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania, 1776:

Frame of Government, Section 10. And each member [of the legislature], before he takes his seat, shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz: “I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governour of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked, and I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine Inspiration.”

The Constitution of the State of Vermont, 1786:

Frame of Government, Section 9. And each member [of the legislature], before he takes his seat, shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz: “I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governour of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked. And I do acknowledge the Scripture of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine Inspiration, and own and profess the [Christian] religion.”

The Constitution of the State of North Carolina, 1776:

Article XXXII That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments . . . shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State.

In 1835, the word “Protestant” was changed to “Christian.”

- William J. Federer, *America’s God and Country: Encyclopedia of Quotations*, pp. 429, 504, 623, 483

Imagine some state trying to do that today, it would be shot down immediately. But why was it so important for them to get leaders in office that were Christian?

I believe it was because of their character, that the nature of Jesus should flow from their lives.

Now, please understand that it does not mean they were perfect, but if the fruit of the Spirit is flowing from their lives, there is a tremendous blessing for those who live where that leader is overseeing!

And thus, character is important.

This morning, in the verses we will be looking at, I have broken them down into three main points and then we will look at the conclusion of these things. So these three main points are as follows.

JOSHUA 14:1-5 – TRIBAL BOUNDARIES

JOSHUA 14:6-10 – CALEB’S CHARACTER

JOSHUA 14:11-15 – CALEB’S REQUEST

With that said, let's begin reading in Joshua chapter 14, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at the topic – ***CHARACTER MATTERS!***

JOSHUA 14

VERSES 1-5

We have seen in Joshua chapter 13 the division of the land on the east side of the Jordan River for the 2½ tribes; Ruben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh.

They rejected God's offer of living in the land of Canaan, the Promise Land and decided that this land was better, and, in the end, they were the first to be taken into captivity.

Beginning here in Joshua chapter 14 through Joshua chapter 19 we see the division of the land for the remaining 9½ tribes on the western side of the Jordan River, in the Promise Land.

And we see Joshua, Eleazar the high priest and representatives from each of the 9½ tribes on the west side of the Jordan River supervising the casting of these lots for their land.

Back in Numbers 34:16-29 we see Moses give these instructions on how it was to be done and these officers or representatives who would oversee this.

Now keep in mind that God was directing the division of the land and how was this done?

Jewish tradition tells us that the name of each of the 9½ tribes of Israel were drawn from an urn and simultaneously the boundary lines were drawn – but however it was done, God was in control.

Remember what we are told in Proverbs 16:33 says, “**The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.**”

That is always the case, the key is, are we listening?

We also see here Joshua explaining that the tribe of Joseph was divided into two, according to the two sons of Joseph; Manasseh and Ephraim.

You still have 12 tribes dividing up the land, not 13 because Levi was not given a portion of the land. God spread them out in the 48 Levitical cities throughout Israel! In fact, remember what we were told back in Joshua 13:33, “**But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.**”

What I want to focus on this morning in our study is this man named Caleb, from the tribe of Judah. Again, character matters in our lives and what we see in this man is the character of God come forth! And my heart’s desire is to have that godly character flow from my life so that people can see Jesus and I am sure you feel the same way!

So let’s read on and see what this man named Caleb is all about.

VERSES 6-10

There are two points in these verses that I want to bring out regarding the life of this man named Caleb, his character. And remember in these verses we will be looking specifically at, ***CALEB’S CHARACTER!***

And the first point I want to look at is this, ***CALEB WALKED IN THE SPIRIT!*** Let me show you what I mean.

In Joshua 14:8 we are told that he “**wholly followed the LORD [his] God.**” And the point I want to bring out is that Caleb was a man who was filled with the Spirit and that is why he was able to walk the way that God wanted him to walk!

We also see this in Numbers 14:24 where we are told, **“But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.”**

Caleb was one of the 12 spies that spied out the land of Canaan during the time of Moses. And only he and Joshua came back with a good report. The other spies said the land was great but there were giants in the land, we are like grasshoppers before them, their cities are strong, we can't defeat them.

And these ten spies convinced the nation not to enter the Promise Land, only Joshua and Caleb believed in the promises of God.

And for Caleb, he walked in the Spirit you might say, he followed the Lord!

Interestingly enough, the name **“Caleb”** means ***“wholehearted.”*** I like that. He didn't follow the Lord when he wanted, when it was convenient for him, when it would work out for him, he did not follow the Lord halfheartedly.

No, Caleb followed the Lord wholly or wholeheartedly and so should we!

Now, what does it mean to wholeheartedly follow the Lord?

Paul, in Philippians 3:13-14 said, **“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”**

In other words, Paul is saying that his concentration, his focus is upon the Lord and he is not going to let anything, or anyone distract him from the call of God upon his life!

Jesus put it like this in Matthew 6:24, **“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”**

You see, what is the focus of your life right now? Is it upon the Lord or are you focused on what you are going to do when you get out of church?

Caleb was a man who was focused on the Lord and because of that, he followed the Lord as he submitted his life to the guidance of the Spirit of God! He had a different Spirit than the others!

To be *“filled with the Spirit”* means to be constantly controlled by the Spirit in our mind, our will, our emotions, and of course in our actions.

In Psalm 16:8 David said, **“I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.”**

In other words, our focus will determine where we are going, who we are following. For David, and for Caleb here, they were focused on the Lord and no matter what, nothing was going to move them from following the Lord!

What about you? Are you willing to go against the flow of the world and wholeheartedly follow the Lord no matter where He is leading you?

Make no mistake about it, this is a walk in the Spirit, following the Spirit of God as He is leading us! That was Caleb and I pray we have that passion to follow the Lord wholeheartedly!

The problem many times is that as we get older, we get complacent. We get tired of fighting.

Caleb was 85 years old at this time and these wars, these battles were intense, and they were going on for some seven years!

How do I know that?

Caleb was 40 years old when he went to spy out the land. The wilderness wanderings lasted another 38 years, which would make him 78 years old.

And now he is 85 years old and thus, the conquest of the land of Promise lasted 7 years and then the land was divided, as we see here.

This is so important. When you look at Caleb you see that his spiritual life did not weaken as he grew older, but it was even stronger.

That is what God desires for us, to continue to grow and mature in Him, to trust in Him more, to fight those battles even against the giants!

Yes, we are growing older, but may we never grow weaker in Jesus!

May we walk in the Spirit and see the amazing things God can do in us and through us as we completely surrender our lives to Him!

So we see here that ***CALEB WALKED IN THE SPIRIT!***

The next point I want to bring out is that ***CALEB BELIEVED IN THE WORD OF GOD!***

In Joshua 14:9-10 we are told, **“So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children’s forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.’ And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old.”**

Caleb believed in the promises of God, that this land in Canaan would be theirs and God kept him alive so that he could inherit this land!

Now we read that and we think, ***“That is awesome. He trusted in the promises of God!”***

But let me ask you this. How did Caleb know that this land was theirs? There was no contract that the land was going to be given to them. There was no evidence that they would ever have this land.

So, how did he know that God was going to do this?

It was all by *FAITH*, and when I said faith I am speaking of *FAITH IN GOD AND HIS PROMISE TO HIM, THE WORD OF GOD!*

Listen to what we are told in Numbers 14:26-38, after the ten spies convinced the children of Israel not to enter the Promise Land as God had instructed them. We are told, **“And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, “As I live,” says the Lord, “just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.”** Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord. But Joshua the son

of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.”

Because of Caleb’s faith in the Lord and the Lord’s promises to him, he would enter the land of Canaan and take possession of it. And that is what we are seeing here in Joshua chapter 14, the land being given to Caleb, a portion of it.

Now think about this for a minute. Yes, God had promised this to the children of Israel, including Caleb, the Promise Land.

But now Caleb is 50, then 60 and 70 and do you think he began to doubt what God had promised him?

I don’t think so. God made a promise and Caleb knew that God was more than able to bring that promise to pass. You see, Caleb didn’t think that the promises of God had an ***“expiration date”*** attached to them simply because he was getting older.

He believed in what God promised him and I love that. He never gave up and neither should we!

And here’s the thing. I think this is an area where we as Christians struggle with, believing and obeying the Word of God.

God has told us what He desires in His Word. He has told us how to walk by faith. He has told us what is coming and as I look at things in this world, I think it is coming very quickly.

The key is, do we believe them?

I don’t think we do. Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

A recent nationwide survey completed by the Barna Research Group determined that only 4 percent of Americans had a “biblical” worldview.

When George Barna, who has researched cultural trends and the Christian Church since 1984, looked at the “born- again” believers in America, the results were a dismal 9 percent.

Barna’s survey also connected an individual’s worldview with his or her moral beliefs and actions. Barna says, “Although most people own a Bible and know some of its content, our research found that most Americans have little idea how to integrate core biblical principles to form a unified and meaningful response to the challenges and opportunities of life.”

A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. “[It’s] any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man’s relations to God and the world,” says David Noebel, author of *Understanding the Times*.

For example, a 2-year-old believes he’s the center of his world, a secular humanist believes that the material world is all that exists, and a Buddhist believes he can be liberated from suffering by self-purification.

Someone with a biblical worldview believes his primary reason for existence is to love and serve God.

Whether conscious or subconscious, every person has some type of worldview. A personal worldview is a combination of all you believe to be true, and what you believe becomes the driving force behind every emotion, decision and action. Therefore, it affects your response to every area of life: from philosophy to science, theology and anthropology to economics, law, politics, art and social order - everything.

For example, let's suppose you have bought the idea that beauty is in the eye of the beholder (secular relative truth) as opposed to beauty as defined by God's purity and creativity (absolute truth). Then any art piece, no matter how vulgar or abstract, would be considered "art," a creation of beauty.

A biblical worldview is based on the infallible Word of God. When you believe the Bible is entirely true, then you allow it to be the foundation of everything you say and do.

That means, for instance, you take seriously the mandate in Romans 13 to honor the governing authorities by researching the candidates and issues, making voting a priority.

Do you have a biblical worldview? Answer the following questions, based on claims found in the Bible and which George Barna used in his survey:

- Do absolute moral truths exist?
- Is absolute truth defined by the Bible?
- Did Jesus Christ live a sinless life?
- Is God the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe, and does He still rule it today?
- Is salvation a gift from God that cannot be earned?
- Is Satan real?
- Does a Christian have a responsibility to share his or her faith in Christ with other people?
- Is the Bible accurate in all of its teachings?

Did you answer yes to these? Only 9 percent of "born-again" believers did. But what's more important than your yes to these questions is whether your life shows it. Granted, we are all sinners and fall short, but most of our gut reactions will reflect what we deep-down, honest-to-goodness believe to be real and true.

Here is the big problem. Nonbiblical worldview ideas don't just sit in a book somewhere waiting for people to examine them. They bombard us constantly from television, film, music, newspapers, magazines, books and academia.

Because we live in a selfish, fallen world, these ideas seductively appeal to the desires of our flesh, and we often end up incorporating them into our personal worldview. Sadly, we often do this without even knowing it. . . .

If we don't really believe the truth of God and live it, then our witness will be confusing and misleading. Most of us go through life not recognizing that our personal worldviews have been deeply affected by the world. Through the media and other influences, the secularized American view of history, law, politics, science, God and man affects our thinking more than we realize. We then are taken "captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

However, by diligently learning, applying and trusting God's truths in every area of our lives - whether it's watching a movie, communicating with our spouses, raising our children or working at the office - we can begin to develop a deep comprehensive faith that will stand against the unrelenting tide of our culture's nonbiblical ideas.

If we capture and embrace more of God's worldview and trust it with unwavering faith, then we begin to make the right decisions and form the appropriate responses to questions on abortion, same- sex marriage, cloning, stem-cell research and even media choices. Because, in the end, it is our decisions and actions that reveal what we really believe.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

Make no mistake about it, we have seen an increase of pressure for Christians to accept immoral lifestyles, immoral sexual activity, immoral actions, all kinds of drug activity. And, sadly, we are seeing some Christians giving into this.

We have to not only stand upon the Word of God and obey it, live it, but we must believe in the promises of God to us. It is that important!

Let me share with you some Bible verses so you can see the importance of trusting in God's Word.

We are told in I Thessalonians 2:13, **“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”**

Today we hear people say that the Bible is just the words of men. That is not what the Thessalonian believers saw it as. They saw it as the Word of God, and it transformed their lives. Maybe so many Christians are struggling today because they do not believe this and there is no transformation or change in their lives!

Paul tells us in II Timothy 2:15, **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**

We don't make the Word of God say what we want it to say, but we have to rightly divide the Word of God, the truths of God!

Paul told Timothy that he was to **“rightly divide”** God's Word or “to cut straight.” The Geek word, ORTHOTOMEIO, (or-thot-om-eh'-o) was used of a craftsman cutting a straight line, or a farmer plowing a straight furrow, or a mason setting a straight line for bricks.

Things are such a mess in the church today because Pastor's, leaders, teachers are not doing this, but they are making the Bible say what they want it to say instead of what God is clearly saying. They are not rightly dividing the Word of Truth!

In Hebrews 4:12 Paul wrote, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**

The Bible is not just a book, it is God's Word's to us, and they are opened up to us by the Spirit of God.

And Isaiah 55:11 follows along with that idea of God working in us by His Word. We are told, **“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”**

Don't stop the work that God wants to do in your life. Be open to what God's Word is saying to you, be open to what the Holy Spirit is showing you.

And don't depart from what He is saying, as Job 23:10 tells us, **“I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.”**

God is not going to tell us something that is bad, that is evil that we are to do. God has what is best for us, and, even though we may not like it all the time, we need to obey His Word!

And here's the thing, Jesus said in John 17:17, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”**

Make no mistake about it, God's Word applied to our lives will set us apart from the morality, the lifestyles of the world! And that is a good thing. We are not to follow the ways of the Word but the ways of God and to do that we follow His Word, which is truth!

And the last one I will share on this is from James 1:22-23, as James reminds us,

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

God’s Word applied to our lives will change us. And it is not just reading the Word of God, as important as that is. But if you read it and don’t do anything about it, then you are hearers only and you are deceiving yourself. You must apply the Word of God to your life, it is that important. We see that with Caleb, that he believed the Word of God and applied it to his life and so must we!

Paul was also a man filled with the Spirit and obedient to the Word of God. He lived what he said he believed.

And, at the end of his life he was able to say, **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”** II Timothy 4:7.

Paul was a man of character and it was seen in his life. He was filled with the Spirit of God and he believed in the Word of God as I have said. May we have that same passion as Caleb and Paul.

VERSES 11-15

In these verses we see ***CALEB’S REQUEST*** and it was very specific. He said, ***“Give me this mountain!”***

Our prayers tend to be, ***“Lord, save everyone in the world. Amen.”*** That would be great, but I think we need to be a little more specific than that, like Caleb was.

Now you may be thinking, ***“This is crazy, I don’t want any mountains!”***

Let me say this, I think there are mountains in our lives whether we want them or not and not only that, but we should be praying about these mountains in our lives. What do I mean by that?

Listen to what Jesus said in Mark 11:22-24, **“So Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.’”**

And yes, people have taken these words to unbiblical conclusions, so what is Jesus speaking of when he speaks of praying for mountains to be removed?

Is Jesus speaking of physical mountains here?

Sure, Jesus can move anything, but I also believe He is speaking of those mountains in our lives, those obstacles that are preventing us from doing the things that God wants us to do, God will remove them.

The key here, of course, is all that God wants you to have, not what you want necessarily. This is not ***“get whatever you want”*** theology as some teach.

John said in I John 5:14-15, **“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”**

You see, we are asking the Father as if Jesus were asking, as His representative. Thus, the first thing we need to do is to ***PRAY IN THE WILL OF GOD!***

And yes, we can ask God to move that mountain in your life and believe it by faith. And wait and see the salvation that God will bring to the situation and understand that the salvation He brings may be different than what you are thinking, it usually is but it is what is truly needed, it is what is best!

I am sorry that today, prayer is a lost practice. E. M. Bounds, in his day saw this problem and he wrote,

What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men, men of prayer.

- E. M. Bounds (August 15, 1835 - August 24, 1913, American Pastor, author, and attorney)

A mountain represents an oversized situation that is limiting your progress and blocking you from moving forward. And there is no way you could move it on your own, not a chance! And it can be overwhelming, and it is!

What about you this morning? Are you facing major issues, mighty mountains in your life right now? Do you think this mountain in your life is just too big for God to move?

What did Caleb ask for? Did he say, *“Give me this hill over there?”*

No, he said, **“Give me this mountain”** and not only that, but giants occupied this land, the Anakim. And they lived in fortified cities! Not an easy task from a human perspective.

But Caleb knew that the Lord had given the land to them and thus, he was ready to do battle and see that mountain moved!

And for us, these mountains, not hills, can be marriage issues. Something so big that you are losing hope and you are ready to give up!

Maybe it is anger issues in your life and people push that button and you explode. It is just the way you are, at least that is what you think and there is no way that this mountain can be removed in your life!

What about drugs or alcohol, you have been on them for years and there is no way you are going to be able to stop. This mountain is way too big. And that is true, it is too big for you, but what about God, can He move that mountain in your life and set you free?

Maybe it is relationships, and it seems like every time you say something, someone is offended. Relationships are broken and you just don't know what to do any longer. You just feel that this is such a big mountain in your life that no one can move it!

It could be pornography, laziness, slothfulness, your tongue or what you say, it could be work related, it could be someone in the neighborhood, it could be all kinds of mountains that we have just given up on and we are settling in on failing, whatever will be will be mentality!

I want you to be encouraged this morning that those mountains can be removed, and we will see that here with Caleb. This guy is 85 years old and he was a tough old dude. He did not give up. He wanted to finish the work that God had called him to do, to take this land even though there were giants living there in fortified cities!

In regard to this man Caleb, one writer summed it up like this,

He was not, in his old age and advancing years, seeking a soft spot or comfortable little corner of the country to settle in. No, no, no! Instead the tough, grizzled, old war horse was prepared to take a whole rugged mountain range for himself. It was the stronghold of the sons of the ferocious giants of the Anakim . . . He was not a man to shrivel up in fear at this late stage of his life. “Give me this mountain!” he exclaimed in an outburst of triumph. “Just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

- Phillip Keller

As we have seen, the first thing you need to do is ***BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR PRAYERS!***

I am not saying we tell God what to do, we always pray for His will to be done. But be specific.

The next thing we see here in the life of Caleb is that ***HIS PRAYER WAS GREAT!*** And we talked a little about this.

But he did not ask for some small hill that was occupied by people that were 90 years old. No, he asked for the mountain that had the giants living there in fortified cities. You see, he was not going to gain this victory by his might, but by the Lord’s. God promised the land to them and now it was up to God to give them this victory and move that mountain!

Remember what we are told in Jeremiah 33:3, **“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”**

God wants to do great things in us and through us, but we must call to Him, ask Him and see that salvation that he will bring!

And this is key, it must be ***BASED UPON THE WORD OF GOD!*** You can’t ask for God to do something that is contrary to His Word.

We see Caleb asking the Lord for this mountain to be removed according to what the Lord has said or according to the Word of God!

In Deuteronomy 1:36 we see these words spoken to Caleb, **“except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord.”**

Now Caleb is just acting according to the promise that the Lord has given to Him and we need to do the same.

Also, and I think you can clearly see this, ***CALEB WAS FEARLESS!***

And look at how this is played out. Before they entered the land the Lord spoke to the children of Israel and said to them in Deuteronomy 9:1-3, **“Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, “Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?” Therefore understand today that the Lord your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you.”**

Okay, it is one thing to know this, but it is another to act upon it. ***“Lord, do you have anything else besides those giants?”***

Don’t lose the perspective here. God promised them this land. He was going to give it to them and all they had to do was walk by faith. And that is what we see Caleb do. He was fearless!

Another point we need to put into practice, that we see here in the life of Caleb, is that we need to be ***CONFIDENT!***

And let me clarify that. I am not saying that we are confident in what we can do, but we are confident in what the Lord can do in us and through us to move that mountain in our life!

For me, when I first came up here to Manitowoc, I was confident in what the Lord told me, that He was going to bring me to Manitowoc to be the pastor of this church.

And I have to tell you, in knowing what the Lord told me has given me the confidence these last 24 years to continue on in the work even though there has been so much opposition to the work. His Word to me gave me the confidence I needed and still need today!

Look at what we are told here in Joshua 14:12, **“Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.”**

He is basically saying, *“I am going to walk by faith and see the salvation that the Lord will bring to this situation!”* He was confident in the Lord and will to take those steps of faith!

And lastly, we see that ***CALEB WAS HUMBLE!***

Caleb was not proud in his accomplishments but in what the Lord has done in his life, how the Lord had preserved him all these years! He said, **“. . . It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.”**

Remember what James said about humbling ourselves. He wrote in James 4:10, **“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”**

Pride will bring us down. And many times, we do think we know better than God and we do it our way. And in the end, we fail miserably, and we wonder what went wrong.

Humble yourself before God and let Him lift you up and remove those mountains in your life!

And the *CONCLUSION* to this is simple, “**And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.**” Joshua 14:13-15.

God gave Caleb the victory and removed that mountain in his life just as He wants to do in our life if we will let Him!

May we be men and women with ***GOOD CHARACTER!***

May we be men and women who are ***FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT!***

May we be men and women who are ***SPECIFIC WITH OUR PRAYERS!***

May we be men and women who ***PRAY GREAT PRAYERS!***

May we be men and women whose ***PRAYERS ARE BASED UPON THE WORD OF GOD!***

May we be men and women who are ***FEARLESS!***

May we be men and women who are ***CONFIDENT!***

May we be men and women who are ***HUMBLE!***

What mountains do you want God to move in your life? Have you given them to Him? You need to!

And may we see those mountains that God will move in our lives come crashing down and He will get the glory for what He has done. All He asks of us is to walk by faith!

Character is so important in our lives and it is the things of God that are filling our lives that will produce godly character in us, as we have seen in the life of Caleb!

Let me close this morning with these words from Warren Wiersbe, who wrote, “We are never too old to make new conquests of faith in the power of the Lord. Like Caleb, we can capture mountains and conquer giants if we wholly follow the Lord. No matter how old we become, we must never retire from trusting and serving the Lord.”

AMEN TO THAT!