

# Caleb as a Cameo of Faith

Joshua 15:13-16

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, January 21st 2024

## I. Introduction

In today's sermon we are going to begin to look at three cameos that illustrate what it means to walk by faith. Obviously all Christians *begin* their Christian journey by a faith that trusts God alone for salvation and completely relinquishes confidence in ourselves. But you know what? Every day we are called to walk by faith - to think, feel, and act by the power of the Spirit. And a lot of people are mystified by this. They think, "Really? I'm to do my carpentry in the power of the Spirit? What about changing my baby's diapers? What about driving on the freeway?" And the answer is, "Yes." We are to do everything to God's glory (whether we eat or drink), and to do everything by faith (since Romans 14:23 says that whatever is not from faith is sin), and we are called to trust the Spirit to enable us to do it in such a way that it becomes pleasing to the Lord. I just finished reading a new book on marriage by Scott Brown that is not yet published. It was a preview copy. But his book shows how everything we do in marriage either showcases the relationship of Christ to the church or fails to, and it makes the same point about depending on the Holy Spirit. Scott Brown says,

The command to "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) is a present imperative. It indicates continuous spiritual activity in the moments of life. This means that family life is spiritual life in the "now" moments. There is an ever-flowing stream of the fullness of the life of God coursing through you as you teach, change diapers, deal with sin, and mediate conflict. It saturates vacation, work, sorrow, joy, poverty, abundance—and everything else in between. This is your life. This is how your role as a husband and a wife works. This is spiritual activity which reflects "the fragrance of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15).<sup>1</sup>

Does everything you do reflect the fragrance of Christ? If you are walking by faith, it does. Now it is true, you have not been called by God to conquer a district of Canaan that looks impossible, but you have been called to trust God's power to help you to conquer your carnal desires, your fleshly habits, your laziness, loving the unlovable, doing everything in a God-oriented way, forgiving others when we don't want to, and even trusting God to transform your labors at work from the mundane to something that will count for eternity, etc. It all takes faith. And for many of us, we can go for days at a time without living by faith. So I hope we can all be challenged to strengthen our faith as we look at these three characters. And I really wanted to look at *all* three today, but there was no way I could do

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<sup>1</sup> This book will soon be published: Scott T. Brown, *Getting the Picture Right in Your Marriage* (Church and Family Life: Wake Forest, NC, 2024), p. 47.

justice to all three. So we are *mainly* going to look at Caleb today, and then finish up the passage next week.

## II. Caleb, a model man of faith (vv. 13-15)

We already saw in chapter 14 that Caleb was a man whom God had endowed with great faith - faith that took on the impossible giants in the land. I think everyone gets that. His human eyes might have been tempted to think that his rag-tag militia was no match for these giants, but because God had *promised* that they *would* be defeated, he took steps of faith to achieve the impossible.

And speaking of taking steps, people often make faith passive, but it shouldn't be. I read about a Scotsman (who I think lived in the 1600s) who ferried people from a ship to the shore in his rowboat. And one of the people who was being ferried noticed that he had the word faith on one paddle and the word works on the other paddle. And being curious, the passenger asked the row-man what the meaning of those two words was. And the row-man (who was a Christian) had apparently been using these two words to fish for spiritual conversations. It was his way of witnessing. Anyway, he said, "Let me show you." He dropped one oar and rowed hard with the oar that was labeled "works," obviously making the rowboat go round and round in circles, then he dropped the "works" oar and rowed feverishly with the faith oar, also making the boat still spin in circles. Then he picked up both oars and made his way to shore. He said, "You see, that is the way it is in the Christian life. Dead works without faith are useless, and faith without works is dead also, getting you nowhere. But faith and works pulling together make for safety, progress, and blessing."<sup>2</sup> I thought that was pretty cool.

And to bring it down from theory to example, I could just passively pray to God to restore the foreign language section of my brain that was lost with encephalitis. That would be faith without works. That would just be asking God to restore it while doing nothing. Or I could restudy Greek, Hebrew, French, and German without asking God to restore it. That would be works without faith. But faith trusts God while entering into studies. Every day during this past year I have seen God come through as I have trusted Him to do the impossible through me *while I was doing my duty*. Well, let's see how faith in God's enabling changed Caleb's actions from merely ordinary actions to actions of faith that were blessed by God.

### A. His faith helped him to not be captive to his past (v. 13a)

First, faith enabled Caleb to not be held captive by his past. There was plenty in his past that could have chained him down - and *would* have chained many an ordinary person down. For example, Caleb began as a slave in Egypt, but had anything but a slave mentality. In contrast, most of his generation had died in the wilderness precisely because they had

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<sup>2</sup> I don't know where this illustration came from, but it was clipped from an article called "Bible Friend."

failed to put off a slave mentality. But Caleb refused to be chained to his past. Likewise, his ancestry was Gentile, but by faith he claimed his right in Judah. According to many commentators, his name means “dog,” but he refused to allow other people’s labels to define his life. He didn’t allow that to bother him; instead, he humbly accepted the name. And next week we will see that Caleb’s father was different than Othniel’s father. Othniel’s father was a man of faith who named his son, “God is my protector.” Anyway, whether Caleb’s name, “dog,” was a nickname or the name that his father gave to him, we do not know for sure. I assume that it *was* his father who named him that. But he was able to live down that name. Likewise, Caleb is by now at least 85 years old, yet he does not allow his old age to slow him down. One commentary says, “It is sad when believers allow ‘old age’ to make complainers out of them when they ought (like Caleb) to be conquerors.”<sup>3</sup>

Brothers and sisters, do not allow your past (even your very recent past) to dictate defeat for today. By faith move into God’s will for your current day and do God’s will trusting God to come through and to transform your efforts from the ordinary into something that is truly pleasing to Him and that will make a difference in His kingdom.

### **B. His faith was based on God’s Word (v. 13b; cf. Numb. 14:24; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:6-15)**

Second, Caleb’s faith was based on God’s Word. Taking on this impossible city was *not* a reckless act of presumption. What some people consider faith is actually presumption. Verse 13 continues: “Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua.” God had given a command to Joshua to give Caleb land. Because God commanded it, Caleb could claim it. His faith was based on God’s Word, whether the Word was a command or a promise. And by the way, if God commands you to do something, that is just as much a basis for faith as if God promised that you could do something. A generation before, in the book of Numbers, he told everyone that since God had commanded them to conquer Canaan, they *could and should* have faith to conquer. During the forty years of wandering, Caleb followed the Lord wholly and trusted God’s timing for his future, and in the meantime (while he was wandering with Israel in the wilderness) he trusted God for his words, his actions, and his attitudes. After the forty years, in Joshua 14:12 he asks Joshua, “Give me this mountain.” That was the very mountain that the spies had said was impossible to take. But impossible or not, Caleb was determined to conquer the land because God had commanded it.

And that same Word is the foundation for *our* faith as well. When God commands us to conquer our fleshly lusts, we *must* not give up in despair. We must fight valiantly with the belief that we will eventually win the battle. God does not command something that He is unwilling to enable us to do. When God promises that faithful parents can pass on the faith, we must not despair when the children don’t immediately latch on to it. We must persevere in investing in our children, praying for our children, disciplining our children, and investing

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<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993).

in their lives with the belief that they will eventually embrace the things that we have shared in faith. Sometimes God makes us wait a while before we see the results, but faith never wavers in believing God's Word. Claim both the commands and the promises of Scripture as a basis for your prayers. But that assumes that you are becoming familiar with God's Word, right?

### C. He trusts God to use the share that he got (v. 13a,c)

Third, Caleb trusted God with the stewardship he had been given. What kind of a stewardship was it? Verse 13 says, "namely, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak)." Hebron was a good place for grape vines, olive trees, sheep, and goats, and not so good for other kinds of farming. It was also a strategic place for defense. We will see that the very reason that it was tough for Israel to conquer also made it easy for Israel to defend, once they got it. It was 2,050 feet above sea level on a spine of the Judean hill country and very difficult for anyone to conquer for two reasons - because of geography and because it was a stronghold of the giants.

It wasn't the lush pastures that Manasseh got. It wasn't the teaming waters of Galilee. It wasn't the rich farmland of other places in Israel. In fact, we will see that at least part of his land was arid desert that lacked water.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the word that is used for Othniel's land was Negev, which is wilderness. But it was a gift of God, and Caleb used it to God's glory in the book of Judges. He made the most of this land.

And you might wish you had a different allotment than God has given to you, but if God has willed you to live in a small house, with a lower salary, and with other challenging circumstances, take that allotment with joy, and make the most of it. When we are faithful with little, God often gives us more. Caleb turned his allotment into an incredible asset in the first chapter of Judges. The point is that faith thrives wherever God places us. I've been reading through the story of Joseph recently. Joseph thrived wherever God placed him - even in prison.

### D. Faith often has to reconquer (v. 14 with Judges 1:10-15) what has been conquered before (Josh 10:38-43; 14:14-15)

Fourth, faith often has to reconquer what we had previously gained the victory on. This might take a little bit of explaining for you to understand where I am getting this from. Verses 14-15 say, "Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher)." Liberals like to say that verses 14-16 are a contradiction of chapter 10. Chapter 10 says that *Joshua* conquered Hebron and Debir and that the land had rest - and that it had rest before this time. So what is going on? Well, verses 14 and following show that both Hebron and Debir had to be reconquered *after* the

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<sup>4</sup> Called the Negeb. Gordon H. Matties, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Joshua*, ed. Douglas B. Miller and Loren L. Johns (Harrisonburg, VA; Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 2012), 306.

death of Joshua. And the reason we know for a fact that it was after the death of Joshua is because Judges 1 repeats this exact story, including the marriage of Othniel to Achsah, and says that all of this happened *after* the death of Joshua (Judges 1:1). Some of Joshua is arranged topically rather than chronologically. So, putting both passages together, commentators point out that Joshua did indeed take Hebron and Debir, but (as Andrew Bowling words it), sometime “after Israel’s devastating sweep through the south, remnants of the Anakite population reestablished themselves and had to be reconquered in this later campaign by Caleb.”<sup>5</sup>

So that’s the meaning; that’s the background. What about the application? Well, all of us have had similar discouragements, haven’t we? Perhaps you have made major victories against pornography, or anger, or feelings of hopelessness, and you feel on top of the world. You are a victor; you are a conqueror; you are praising the Lord and ready to go on to other battles. Then, all of a sudden, you find yourself falling into those previous sins. It is easy to despair when that happens, but faith trusts God in even those circumstances and immediately fights those battles all over again trusting God for the victory. Brothers and sisters, never give up. Faith perseveres even when the enemy comes sweeping in once again.

### E. He trusts God against great odds (v. 14)

The next thing that I love about Caleb is that He trusts God against all odds. They had previously driven the giants out, and those giants had fled to other cities - especially the Philistine cities. But now three giant Anakim had retaken Hebron and Debir with their armies (and I believe this was while the Israelite armies had been fighting elsewhere) and they were determined to hold this place as their own. And since Caleb knew it was God’s will to dispossess them, he is not satisfied with living side-by-side with these giants. We will see later in this book that there were some other tribes that *were* content to live side-by-side with the enemy, but not Caleb. Verse 14 says, “Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.” I’m sure a lot of the giants in their army were killed, but we know from later Scripture that these three and a lot of other Anakim fled to the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, and perhaps other areas. They will once again be a menace in later history, but at least they were no longer a menace to the Calebites or the Othnielites. Judges shows that these families faithfully protected their territory.

But the point is that this was a daunting war. Hebron was a tough place to conquer in the first place (just based on geography), but it was doubly tough when it was occupied with the fierce Anakim. But when God commanded him to battle them, Caleb does so, not worrying about the odds.

And you may have your own besetting impossibilities. God always makes sure that there are some impossibilities that every Christian will have to conquer at some point. It may be

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew C. Bowling, “Joshua,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 150.

an unbelieving relative whom you have witnessed to for decades with no results. Don't give up. Or it may be a habit you are trying to break, or it may be an attitude you are trying to conquer. If God has given His Word, have faith to act upon that Word and to believe God for the victory. Don't just use one oar - use both oars of faith and works, or a working faith.

#### F. He trusts God by possessing all his possessions (v. 15)

The sixth thing Caleb illustrates is a willingness to possess *all* his possessions. Not all the Israelites did this, but *he* did. He didn't stop with Hebron. Verse 15 again: "Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher)." We will look at the significance of the name change next week since it illustrates Othniel's faith, not Caleb's. But let's apply this verse to ourselves.

Many times Christians are satisfied with the victories they have already made, and they think they deserve a break, so they coast spiritually. But if you aren't going forward, you will eventually start drifting backwards. It's just the way life works. Let me read Philippians 3:12-16. This is the testimony of Paul - and you would think that if *anyone* could coast, it would be the apostle Paul who had served the Lord faithfully for 24 years by the time he wrote Philippians. You might think that he could relax a little bit. But no, listen to his testimony. This is Philippians 3:12-16.

Phil. 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 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, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

In other words, he is saying that just as he keeps striving to press into God's will for his life, he calls other mature people to keep possessing their possessions. What do I mean by that? Well, the Bible says that we are complete in Christ, but many Christians act anything but complete. They act as if their failures are not their fault; God has not given them enough. They are not actively possessing everything that they have in Christ. Another example of what I mean- 1 John 5:4 says, "everyone who is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." Yet how many Christians act as victims rather than victors? The Scripture is not adjusting their perspective. How many of you have possessed the joy that God says should be your strength? How many of you have possessed the peace that passes all understanding? When you study Romans 12 and pray over each word, you will find plenty of room for growth. I have. The book on marriage that I read last week has inspired me to strive to be a better husband and to reflect the love of Christ more fully to my wife. Faith keeps possessing more and more of what Christ has purchased for us.

### G. His faith in grooming leaders to be men of faith (v. 16)

The seventh thing that I see in Caleb is that his faith in grooming leaders spurred those leaders to be men of faith as well. This point may take a bit of explaining, but let's read verse 16 first. It says,

And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife."

You ought to read the cynical comments some commentators make on this verse. People accuse Caleb of insensitivity to his daughter, chauvinism, demeaning women, and violating contract law by forcing her to marry. (And we will see that she was not forced. She was not the kind of woman that would be forced.) But anyway, these liberals also accuse Othniel of being greedy, opportunistic, and being manipulative. They accuse Achsah of being manipulative, a feminist, and an angry petulant woman. And sometimes they contradict each other in their accusations. Amy Cottrill says that this verse proves that women were simply treated as personal property that could be bartered or disposed of at will.<sup>6</sup>

But all of these accusations completely miss the *point* of the passage and miss the repeated statement that Caleb *fully* followed the Lord. That statement that he fully followed the Lord is made five times about Caleb (Numb. 32:12; Deut. 1:36; Josh 14:8,9,14). It's really emphasized. Since the Lord had commanded marriages to be freely entered into as covenants, Caleb could not have been said to have *fully* followed the Lord if Amy Cottrill is correct. No way. When we look at the cameo of Achsah, we will see that she willingly and fully enters into this marriage covenant in faith. But she valued her dad's judgment.

So let me try to paint the picture of what *I* think was going on. And we need some background material to do this.

First, in Numbers 13-14 Caleb had seen that it is not enough to have leadership skills. All twelve spies must have had leadership skills that had already been recognized by all. They would not have otherwise been selected. But ten of those spies had major character issues, and it's not surprising since God says that they lacked faith. Caleb saw firsthand the incredible damage that leadership can produce when the leaders lack faith. Because God emphasized so many times that they failed to follow the Lord fully and because they lacked faith, Caleb was not about to elevate anyone to leadership who did not have those qualities in spades. Thus, as Hélène Dallaire points out, Caleb had spent the previous forty years grooming faithful leaders underneath him. And you can look at her commentary to see the

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<sup>6</sup> Amy C. Cottrill, "Joshua," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom, Jacqueline E. Lapsley, and Sharon H. Ringe, Revised and Updated (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 107.

proof of that.<sup>7</sup> But it makes sense. Since like produces like, he no doubt mentored leaders to be sold out to God, to live by faith, and to have mature character qualities. So my first observation is that all of the leadership team that Caleb speaks to in verse 16 were men like Caleb. He is not giving his daughter to just anyone who happens to win a battle. These were quality men who had proved themselves in years of battle and testing.

My second observation is that if this is true- if all of the leadership team consisted of men who fully followed the Lord, lived by faith, and had mature character, and had been tested, then it is also safe to say that Caleb considered any of his leadership team to be men who were worthy of his daughter. So which one to pick among equally qualified candidates?

Third, given the respect that Caleb and his daughter exhibit for each other in the remaining verses of this pericope, it is safe to say that they had had conversations many times of who might be a worthy husband. In obedience to the Lord, Caleb had faithfully been raising *children* to be sold out to the Lord. They no doubt talked about this a lot. Perhaps they had even discussed a test that might show God's will on whom to marry. In any case, since God says five times that Caleb wholly followed the Lord, it is safe to say that he would want to have *her* freely enter into this covenant, as the law dictates. She trusted her dad's judgment, but more importantly, she trusted God's guidance. When we look at her, we will see that she is a woman of faith.

Fourth, Kirjath Sepher would have been a tough place to conquer. I should have included a map of the archaeological dig that show the original walls to be thirteen feet wide. It was a tough city to conquer, and anyone who led the charge on that city must have considered Achsah, Caleb's daughter, to be a bride worth sacrificing for. Now, Caleb could have done this himself, but I believe he was led to let someone else do so. Why? I think it was a fleece.

And Othniel obviously desired to marry her, so by taking this challenge, *Othniel* was clearly making a free choice to enter into the covenant of marriage. Scholars are divided on whether he was a much younger half-brother who shared the same mother but had a different father or (and this is a much more likely theory that sticks more closely to the order of the words in the Hebrew) Othniel was the son of Kenaz, with *Kenaz* being Caleb's younger brother.<sup>8</sup> In other words, on the second theory Othniel was Caleb's nephew. That's the way I take it, and some paraphrases translate it that way. But either way, the evidence indicates that Othniel, who was much younger than Caleb, would have been close enough to

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<sup>7</sup> Hélène M. Dallaire, "Joshua," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Numbers–Ruth* (Revised Edition), ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 976.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon Keddie summarizes the two theories, saying, "Othniel was very probably a youth at the time of Caleb's spying mission. He is first mentioned in Joshua 15:17 as the 'son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother'. This could be read either to mean that he was a nephew of Caleb or that he was a half-brother with the same mother but a different father (Caleb was the son of Jephunneh)." Gordon J. Keddie, *Even in Darkness: Judges and Ruth Simply Explained*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1985), 35.

Caleb's family to have noticed Achsah for a long time. He was not entering into this blind. Nor was Achsah. They both knew what they were getting into.

But more importantly, this was likely a test of faith. Just as Caleb knew that the only reason *he* was able to conquer Hebron was because God had *led* him to conquer Hebron and had *blessed* him with success, he knew that anyone whom God enabled to conquer Kirjath Sepher would be a man of exceptional faith who would be worthy of his daughter.

So I don't see this as a bargaining chip or trading his daughter for favors. Caleb could have done the conquest himself, since this was slightly easier than Hebron. I see this as a fleece set out before the Lord, and the Lord giving his green light to marriage by giving Othniel a miraculous victory. Now, you can argue with me on that point, but that is my take after reading all of the evidence.

#### **H. His faith was passed on to his daughter (see below; also see Deut. 1:36; Numb. 14:24)**

The eighth major point is that Caleb's faith was passed on to his daughter. We will look at her faith next week, but I want to point out that God often uses parents of faith to raise up children of faith. Just as God used Caleb's passionate zeal for the Lord to raise up faithful leaders like Othniel, He no doubt used Caleb's zeal to follow the Lord to raise up one daughter and three sons. Yes, he also had three sons (1 Chron. 4:15). We call this covenant succession. And God had promised covenant succession to Caleb two times: once in Deuteronomy 1:36 and once in Numbers 14:24. God promised to bless his children.

But here is the thing - covenant succession does not happen automatically even when God has promised it. It takes the oars of both faith and works in the hands of the parents in order to achieve it. Making great sacrifices on behalf of your children is not enough by itself. Nor is faith enough all by itself. It takes investing in our children *with* a firm faith that God will bless those investments. Again, both oars are always at work where genuine faith is present.

#### **I. His faith did not begin here. (Numb. 14:24; 32:12; Deut. 1:36; Josh 14:8,9,14).**

But the last thing that I see in Caleb is that his faith did not automatically appear when some huge need arose. It was because he had *continually* been living by faith on the *smaller* issues over the past forty years that he had the faith to take on Hebron and to trust God on getting his daughter well-married. I'll just read one of the Scriptures in your outline. Numbers 14:24 says, "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."

That passage mentions three things that accompanied and illustrated his faith. The first was a different spirit. Different than what? Different than the ten spies. The ten spies were thinking like the world and only obeyed the Lord when it was easy to do so. So what made Caleb's spirit different? He had been fertilizing the soil of his spirit with the Word of God,

watering it with grace, and exercising it with a working faith. Those things expel the world's ways from our heart. A worldly spirit cannot exist without those things. In contrast, when we fertilize our spirits with worldly entertainment, and worldly reading, studies, conversations, friendships, political thinking, and customs we should not be surprised if trusting God in everything seems strange. If you have your children spend twelve years in pagan training in school, don't expect them to suddenly live by faith when they are out of high school. Likewise, if we have been watering their spirits with self-help, self-affirmation, self-worth, and all the other graces of the world (and I call the self-worth movement's values graces of the world because they are counterfeits of God's grace), we should not be surprised when our children don't see the need for *God's* grace 24-7. Make sure that your spirit and the spirit of your children is different from the ten spies. It's not enough to be *outwardly* Christian. The ten spies were that. But their *spirits* were not that different from the world. So the first thing that accompanied Caleb's faith was that his spirit was different from the compromised Christians around him. He didn't care that they thought he was *way* too radical - and they *did* think that he was too extreme and too radical. The book of Numbers was quite clear on that. But Caleb's spirit was set apart to the *Lord* and what the *Lord* thought and what the *Lord* wanted.

The second thing that accompanied his faith in those verses was a servant heart. God calls him "My servant Caleb." The ten spies were *self-serving* and *self-saving*. They didn't want to take risks for the Lord. They didn't want to make sacrifices for the Lord. In fact, they were ready to stone Caleb and Joshua for being too radical because it made them feel judged. Being self-serving is the opposite of being a servant of the Lord. Brothers and sisters, commit yourselves to being servants of the Lord who delight in serving Him rather than selfishly serving self.

God says that the third thing that accompanied his faith was that "he has followed Me fully." It was not a half-hearted Christianity. If you want to be a man or woman of faith, make sure that you are sold out to the Lord and committed to following Him fully. Don't pick and choose which things you will follow God on. That's a sure way to kill faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

I wish I could have covered all three cameos today, but there is just too much to say about the wonderful marriage of Othniel and Achsah. So I will save those two cameos of faith for next time. But let's imitate Caleb by using both oars throughout the day and every hour of the day - the oar of faith and the oar of works. Let's close in prayer.

Before we sing Psalm 44A, let me point out that this Psalm portrays the conquest of Canaan as involving both faith and works. Verse 2 does not attribute their success to their actions. It says, "Success did not come from the sword in their hand, nor by their arm's strength did they conquer the land. But rather it was by the light of Your face, Your right hand and arm, for You showed them Your grace." But were they very involved? Yes. Verse 3 affirms, "Through You we will surely push back all our foes..." So it was an active faith that recognized that without God they could do nothing, but that they could do all things through Christ who strengthened them. So singing this inspired Psalm, let's affirm the need for the oars of both faith and works.