

07.17.11 / Joshua 14:6-15

Faith

Passage Insight

The passage for this week, Joshua 14:6-15, tells us a lot about faith, and in this we will see where our faith truly comes from. Caleb's claim in verses 7 and 9 is that he wholly followed the Lord, his God. This is central to the entire discussion of faith in this passage, for we see that Caleb's faith was not ultimately his own, but rather his faith was a product of the FAITHFUL ONE, God Himself. Our faith in something is only as good as the faithfulness of that thing to fulfill its promises to us, and we see here that faith in God is possible and viable because God Himself is faithful to fulfill His promises.

In Numbers 13 and 14, we read of Caleb, Joshua, and the other 10 spies being sent into the promised land to bring a report to Moses. While the other 10 were fearful and doubted that the land could be overtaken, focusing on their human capacity under the circumstances, Caleb and Joshua had faith that the Lord would do what HE had promised to do in bringing His chosen people into the promised land. Upon Caleb's demonstration of faith in the Lord, in Numbers 14:24 the Lord promises to bring Caleb into the land and to give him the land as an inheritance. Ultimately, it was THE LORD who made this promise to Caleb. We see a recounting of this in Joshua 14:10 and 12. We also see in verse 10 that it was THE LORD who kept Caleb alive to see this promise fulfilled, which we see taking place in verse 13. So, in summary:

- The Lord made the promise to Caleb
- The Lord kept him alive to see it fulfilled
- The Lord fulfilled the promise

As we've already mentioned, Caleb's faith was in the Lord, which only mattered because God Himself is faithful – our faith in something is only as good as the faithfulness of that thing to fulfill its promises to us. So, to look at Caleb's life of faith:

- For 38 years of wandering in the desert, he had faith in God, because God is faithful
- For 7 years of battle upon entering the promised land, he had faith in God, because God is faithful
- At every battle, he knew he would survive, because God hadn't yet fulfilled His promise, yet Caleb knew He would, and that he would live to see it
- Even at the time of this request, at 85 years old, he requests to fight again, knowing he will survive against these warring people, because he has faith in GOD to bring him through and to remain faithful in his promise to Caleb, trusting the Lord's strength, not his own (verse 12)

Here the rubber meets the road. At every turn, at every chance to doubt, even in circumstances where he faced what looked like possible death in battle for seven years, he had faith in and wholly followed the Lord, his God, because of WHO GOD IS, the FAITHFUL ONE.

The Lord makes us a promise as well, that if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, then we will be saved (Romans 8). For those who have made such a confession of faith, we still find ourselves in an exile of sorts and in the presence of sin in this lifetime, and we are unable to see Jesus physically. Despite that, we are given several promises, namely that He will never leave us or forsake us, that we have His Spirit with us, that He has gone to prepare a place for us, and that He will return for us. When we struggle with doubt, longing to see some physical proof of Jesus' love for us, we can be comforted by the truth that we are truly blessed when we believe in Jesus but do not yet see Him face to face (John 20:29).

This blessing is not a result of our mustering faith from inside of ourselves, but rather a direct result of who our God is. God promised Abraham a people, and He has delivered. God promised Caleb an inheritance of land, and He delivered. God promised to save us through a blood sacrifice, and He has done so through Jesus Christ. HE IS FAITHFUL. Our faith is grounded in the unchanging, perfect, holy, promise-keeping, FAITHFUL God. He has promised to restore us to Himself and to be with us forever, and it will be so.

Application and Prayer

Where Is Our Faith?

- 1) What do you put faith in apart from God (money, plans, family, friends, dreams, etc.)?
- 2) Tell about a specific time when this thing failed you.
- 3) How is God faithful and trustworthy where this thing is not?
- 4) PRAY
 - a. For the ability to see what you trust apart from God
 - b. For the desire to repent moment to moment
 - c. For a clearer understanding of God's faithfulness

Sources

- Prayer
- The Bible Knowledge Commentary