

## I. Intro.

A. Happy Father's Day. It's great to have a chance to celebrate dads. Thanks for being here. And "good on ya." Mother's Day has traditionally been a high attendance day at church. Father's Day – not so much. When you ask Moms what they want to do, they say "I want all my kids to go to church." When you ask Dads, golf tends to pop up a bit higher on the list.

B. We are going to be in the book of Joshua looking at a man who is a man's man and who ends well and – in doing such, has something to teach all of us. But before we go there, let me set it up by noting some things about men.

II. At Christ Church we have a variety of programs for men. (As we do for women. In fact, at the moment, the All-Campus events for women are really strong). But most churches have a lot of programs for women because most churches have far more women than men. Christ Church has about an equal number of men and women, which is probably because we work really hard at it.

A. And we work really hard at it because:

1. We've found that that is what it takes to get men's attention;
2. And because we believe that reaching men is one of the best ways to reach and serve entire families;
3. And because many men are struggling.

B. Years ago, we had a ten-year run of hosting Men's Fraternity. A few hundred men came out on Friday mornings – we continue to have Friday morning program for men, which is winding down now but will be winding up as we head into the fall. Back then it started at 6:00 and a few hundred men were involved – which many found surprising.

III. When people ask how we got that many men out, we noted that in addition to appealing to men to learn to be better husbands, fathers, friends, sons, bosses and the like, the program was based on the idea that:

A. many men had been hurt: 1) by dads that pushed too hard; 2) by mom's who didn't let them grow up; 3) by a lack of friends; 4) or by a lack of clarity about what it means to be a man.

B. And to that end, I would start every year by rehearsing a list of bad stats:

1. Ninety percent of the major crimes in the US are committed by men
2. Ninety-one percent of violence was started by men.
3. Ninety-four percent of all drunken drivers are men.
4. Ninety-five percent of all the burglaries are from men.
5. One hundred percent of all the rapes.

C. This is not the whole story – there are ways (such as risking your life to help someone – in which men far outpace women) – but since then, things have gotten much more pronounced.

1. Girls now significantly outperform boys in education. They are more likely to be "school ready" at age five than boys are, and by high school, account for two-thirds of students ranked in the top 10 percent.
2. The gender gap widens even further in higher education, where women now earn more of every category of degree: undergrad, masters and PhD.

3. Men are also losing ground in the labor market, where labor force participation among prime-age men (25–54) has dropped by 7 percent in the past half century.

D. I could go on:

1. noting – among other things – that five of my fraternity brothers have died deaths of despair.
2. Or noting the spate of recent books. For most of the last twenty years, they were written by pastors talking about working with men. About five years ago things started to change:

a) Jordan Peterson, the Canadian psychiatrist started filling large lecture halls talking about the challenges being faced by young men and calling them forward; Josh Hawley, the conservative senator from Missouri just came out with a book on men. About a year ago Richard Reeves, from the Brookings Institute – a liberal think tank - came out with a book on men: *Of Boys and Men: Why the Modern Male Is Struggling, Why It Matters, and What to Do about It*.

E. All of this to say, many men are struggling. We can't solve all of this today, but we can look at a man who ends well – and that is a blessing to everyone. And that seems an appropriate thing to do on Father's Day. The man of the hour is Caleb, and his story is found in the Book of Joshua.

IV. Our text comes from Joshua 14, which is the first book after the Pentateuch.

A. Genesis sets everything up. Exodus follows – key book. So excited about our study this fall. Then we have Numbers (which focuses on the 40 years between Mt. Sinai and entering the Promised Land), Deuteronomy (which is the second – *deutero* is Greek for second – giving of the law - *nomos*) and Leviticus – everyone's favorite – which was written for the Levitical priests.

B. Then Joshua – which is about the Conquest of the Promised Land. It covers from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua.

1. After Moses brought the people out of Israel, he took them to Mount Sinai to get the Law. Then they headed to the Promised Land, stopping at the Jordan River before crossing into it. At that point Moses sent spies to scout the land. But ten of the spies say it can't be done, the people decide not to enter the Promised Land and spend the next forty years wandering around the desert.

2. We first hear about Caleb – our focus today - in Numbers 13, when he was one of the spies sent in to look around. (The plan was to look at the land so they knew how to conquer it and how they would divide it among the 12 tribes. The distribution would be by lottery, but they had to divide it up first). Caleb was the representative from Judah – which was one of the largest tribes.

3. They spent 40 days on their reconnaissance mission, traveling along the mountain ridge from the south (in Hebron) up to next to what is today Syria and then back down. As you may remember, all twelve of the spies liked what they saw but thought that taking the land was going to be a challenge. But two of the spies – Joshua and Caleb – said, God will deliver us. We need to enter the land.

4. The other ten say: we will be killed. It's a high drama moment. We read about it in Numbers 13:30

a) Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”

b) <sup>31</sup>But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” <sup>32</sup>And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. <sup>33</sup>We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

5. Well, the majority report carries the day. The people panic. They say they wished they died back in Egypt.

a) They almost stone Joshua and Caleb.<sup>1</sup>

b) And as a result, they will spend the next forty years wandering around the desert, until every adult – except Joshua and Caleb - die.

6. It is a bad moment. It’s a pivot point at which they made the wrong decision and it messes up the rest of their lives. And it is so bad, we will read about it later on in the Bible, in places like Psalm 95, where we read about God being mad at the people for forty years.<sup>2</sup>

7. Everyone who voted no dies. Even Moses dies. The only ones who are allowed to go into the Promised Land are Joshua and Caleb. And at the end of the Pentateuch they end up back at the Jordan River with Joshua in charge. And this time they cross.

a) I leave for Israel later this week. We will be at the Jordan River and one of the things we note is how Joshua led the people to cross the Jordan (this is Joshua 3), and how the Jordan was a faith barrier. And how it had a swift current. And you can’t see in it.

C. So, we now hear from Caleb a second time – it is 45 years later. They have crossed into the land.

#### V. Joshua 14:6

**A.** 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 yrs old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. (he’s talking about the spy mission) 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. <sup>9</sup>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.’

**B.** “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! <sup>11</sup>I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out;

1. Perhaps not. I remember meeting one of Sheri's friends at some party. She did Iron Man competitions. But at some point, she said she was not an athlete and so I was confused and I thought, she is not who I think. But she was.

2. Later, I am trying to get people straight and Sheri says, "Oh, you need to know, if men went out for football in high school, they still say they are an athlete 40 years later. Women do not."

3. So, perhaps not all men are great in the self-awareness part.

**C. I'm 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.**

1. He is talking about Hebron, which: 1) was a particularly nice area, and 2) it was an historic area (this is where Abraham had bought property to bury Sarah; and 3) it was a heavily fortified area – which meant it would be very hard to take.

**D. 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."**

1. Realize what he is doing here. Realize what he is asking for. He is signing up for the hardest battle. This is the place where the warriors made everyone look like grasshoppers.

2. Caleb is saying, "Bring it on. I wasn't scared 45 years ago and I am not scared now."

**E. <sup>13</sup>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.**

VI. In this series, we are looking at the stories of various people – looking to leverage insights from how they lived so we might live better. When we study the life of Caleb, several qualities immediately stand out.

A. It's obvious he trusted God. We are privy to two episodes in his life, and in both of them, he is focused on trusting and obeying God.

B. It's obvious he was an independent thinker - not swayed by popular opinion.

C. It's obvious that he is resilient. He failed in his first assignment. He did not find a way to persuade the others, but he stays the course. He found ways to manage his heart and life that worked. He did not grow angry or cynical.

1. For forty-five years, Caleb had wandered in the wilderness through no fault of his own. He suffered the same hardships and trials as those who had disobeyed God. Yet, his zeal to serve the Lord had not waned.

D. He takes risks. He sees past problems. There is a lot to learn from Caleb.

E. And a lot to learn from the Book of Joshua. Many do not like it because it's pretty bloody. But, those that see that miss all that is going on.

1. We are seeing promises fulfilled: the people of God are now: 1) a nation; and 2) in possession of the Promised the Land. The plan is coming together.

2. We see God's power over nature – the Crossing of the Jordan parallels the parting of Red Sea;

3. You see the Gospel in play - especially with Rahab, the prostitute who is saved by faith (not by works, she is a prostitute) and not only ends up in Hebrews 11 (the hall of faith) and mentioned more in the New Testament than Joshua, but is in the blood line of Jesus.

4. And the violence that is on hand is pointing ahead to Jesus. Joshua secures the land via violence. Jesus – the new and better Joshua - secures Heaven by taking the violence upon himself.

VII. There are things a number of obvious things about Caleb. We do well to learn from them. But I want to highlight two. He finished strong.

A. Caleb doesn't coast. At 85 he is still signing up for big projects. At 85 he is saying, "give me this mountain!"

B. To my embarrassment, I found the word *retirement* in the Bible a few months ago. I say, "to my embarrassment" because I am on record stating that it's not in there. And then I found it in Numbers 8.<sup>3</sup>

1. The Levites had their main jobs from the age of 25 – 50 and then they were to retire and serve as assistants to those doing the main work. Given the physicality of the work they did, this makes sense.

2. No doubt you've heard that 70 is the new 50 and related claims. And well, yes but no. There are ways in which we live longer and in better health, but there are limits.

3. I was out on a walk a few months ago. It was a snowy day.

a) Had to cross this fence. No problem – except: 1) couldn't lift leg high enough; 2) wobbly on top; and 3) no muscles to lower myself down.

4. So, at some point, we cannot – and should not – do the work we can no longer do. But there is more to do than fish or golf or shop. There are ways to serve. And this makes life so much more meaningful.

C. A lot of people are writing about this.

1. Drucker said – the biggest change in the last fifty years has been the second life (most of which is wasted);

2. Arthur Brooks has a very interesting book out on the last third of life. It's called *From Strength to Strength*

3. John Piper has his contrast between the two women in his church who died . (I have put a link to that seven-minute clip in my sermon notes.)<sup>4</sup>

D. I will simply note, I saw a lot of people out yesterday at the Renew's Big Build Day. We had four work sites and we stood up four homes.

E. One of the great joys has been to see the number of people serving via Renew .

VIII. He provided cover for others.

A. I have heard about the TV program *Jury Duty*. It seems as though Sheri and I are among the few who have not seen it. But it sounds like it is based on a classic sociology study – the Asch Experiment - in which everyone is in on something except one person. And they all give the wrong answer, and the subject conforms.

B. Caleb provided cover for many to choose to follow God. That may be part of the way you – and here I will call out Dads (it applies to everyone, but I will call out Dads). This may be one of the ways you serve. You take the hits on behalf of others.

IX. We are all writing our own story. We've looked to learn from a variety of people in this series.

A. Of course, Christianity is not ultimately this I do, it is this he did. But we are to do. And from Caleb we learn the value of being faithful through the end. Of signing up to take the hill country in our old age.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 14:10

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 95:8 “Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 8:23 - The Lord said to Moses, <sup>24</sup>“This applies to the Levites: Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the tent of meeting, <sup>25</sup>but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. <sup>26</sup>They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the tent of meeting, but they themselves must not do the work. This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites.”

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/boasting-only-in-the-cross/excerpts/dont-waste-your-life>