

Caleb: A Study in Faith and Fire

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Caleb is a fascinating character
 - 1. We don't get to know much about him, except...
 - a) The story of the spies
 - b) The story of Hebron
 - 2. But the stories of Caleb are full of faith and fire!!
 - a) Reflecting a possible translation of his name
 - (1) More than "dog"
 - (2) ISBE suggests "mad dog"
 - b) You gotta love a Bible hero named "mad dog"
- B. "But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it."
Numbers 14:24, RSV.

II. HAD A DIFFERENT SPIRIT

- A. Contrasted with Israel's spirit of...
 - 1. Timidity
 - 2. Caution
- B. Caleb was
 - 1. Courageous
 - 2. Willing to throw caution to the wind (if God was involved)!!
 - a) Not foolhardy; he didn't follow repentant Israelites into the land after God told them no.
 - b) He knew where the ability came from!!
 - c) Willing to throw caution to the wind
- C. God, make us more like Caleb, full of faith and fire!
 - 1. In our worship
 - 2. In our evangelism
 - 3. In our love for each other
 - 4. In our giving
 - 5. In our work for the Master and His church
 - 6. In our following the vision
 - 7. God, make us "mad dogs" for Your service!

III. FOLLOWED ME FULLY (WHOLEHEARTEDLY)

- A. Israel's obedience was a mixed, half-done bag...

1. sometimes obeying, sometimes not; sometimes obeying tentatively, half-heartedly
 2. Complaint, resistance, and second-guessing God was part of their regular M.O.
 3. Doubt that failed, no matter how many times God provided or rescued them, to believe
 4. Leaving God's will ignored and undone
- B. **Caleb understood real faith — real faith goes “all in”**
1. Illus — Poker
 - a) if you've been dealt an unbeatable hand
 - b) you shove all your chips into the middle — all in!
 2. Caleb was confident that with God on their side, they had an unbeatable hand and he was “all in” — no need to hold anything back
 3. **There weren't any half-measures with Caleb**
 4. **He also understood** that partial obedience was **really disobedience**
 5. **So, when God commanded...**
 - a) Wait for Moses to come off the mountain? OK!
 - b) Don't pick up manna on Sabbath? OK!
 - c) Follow Moses, not Aaron, Miriam, or Korah? OK!
 - d) Attack Canaan from the south? OK!
 - e) he followed...
 - (1) whole-heartedly
 - (2) obediently
 - (3) unflinchingly
 - (4) unhesitatingly
 - (5) full-tilt
 - (6) LIKE A “MAD DOG”
- C. We, also, must follow the Lord fully—wholeheartedly
1. We follow the same God, who still provides and saves
 - a) Would the Lord's hand be shortened just as we are on the threshold of accomplishing great things for His glory?
 - b) BY NO MEANS!!
 - c) Sometimes the only thing standing in our way to great things for the Master...
 - (1) is not the circumstances
 - (2) is not the Lord
 - (3) IS US!!
- D. **God, help us follow you fully — more like Caleb, full of faith and fire!**
1. whole-heartedly
 2. faithfully
 3. unflinchingly
 4. unhesitatingly
 5. full-tilt

6. LIKE A “MAD DOG”

IV. **DESPITE HIS AGE WAS WILLING TO TAKE ON GIANTS**

(Read: Joshua 14:6–15)

A. Caleb (“Mad Dog”):

1. I’m 85 and I’m claiming God’s promise to me,
2. **Give me Kiriath-arba (Hebron) — city of giants**
 - a) Not only was Caleb not ready to retire, he wasn’t even ready to slow down!!
 - b) He was looking for challenges!!!!
3. Just as an observation...
 - a) Can you imagine how that had to inspired the younger folks?!
 - b) Illus — my first golfing experience with the old men in front of me
 - c) What great courage, inspiration, dedication, and challenge this must have given them
 - d) “If that old man can do it, I know I can do better!”
 - e) You gotta love ol’ “Mad Dog”

B. Too often we look for the easy way, the rose-garden, the cake-walk

1. But great victories don’t come to those seeking the easy way
2. **Great victories come to those willing to “take on the giants”, the challenging projects.**
3. And my older brothers and sisters, we need to be leading the way
 - a) not just pointing the way
 - b) not just suggesting the way
 - c) not just exhorting the way
 - d) LEADING THE WAY, just like ol’ “Mad Dog”, Caleb

C. **May God help us to be willing to take on “giants” like Caleb, full of faith and fire!**

VI. **CONCLUSION**

A. **Great success and victory are given to...**

1. those with a different spirit
2. those who follow the Lord fully
3. those who are willing to take on giants!

B. In becoming a Christian

C. In following Jesus

D. Come