

THE LONG WAIT:

JOSHUA 14:6-16

SERVING GOD WHOLEHEARTEDLY

NUMBERS 14:6-15: MOSES SENT 12 SPIES TO SPY OUT THE PROMISE LAND:

We are told in Deu. 6:5 that we should love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and strength. The question is how? Does it mean that we should first learn to love the Lord? The answer is yes. When we learn to love the Lord, then our heart, soul and strength will be into all we say and do, and all we say and do will be done as unto the Lord. Our lives will honor the Lord. Our service will be done as unto the Lord, wholeheartedly. Does this mean that we serve only when things are going well? No, it means we serve the Lord wholeheartedly in the good times and in the troubled times, especially in the troubled times. This scripture shows us a man whose life was known to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

I am talking about Caleb, one of the twelve spies that Moses sent to spy the land of Canaan that was promised to the children of Israel by the Lord. The story is recorded in Numbers chapter 14: 1-14; 45: The men who went to spy the land were obedient, they went and spied the land and came back with their reports. They agreed that the land was fortified, very fertile and there were giants there.

Ten of the spies convinced the group that they would be unable to defeat the inhabitants of the land. The other two Caleb and Joshua, agreed with them that the city was well fortified, and giants lived in the land, but with the Lord on their side they would be able to defeat the inhabitants and receive their inheritance that was promised to them by the Lord. Caleb and Joshua were not able to convince the people that God was able to fulfill His promise. Because the children of Israel did not believe Caleb and Joshua, but they believed the other ten spies, God

told them that all who were age twenty-one and older would not enter into the Promise Land except Caleb and Joshua.

1. Caleb served God wholeheartedly, he was able to trust Him even when the task seemed impossible. He stated that with God they would defeat the enemy. He knew that his God was able, regardless of how difficult the situation appeared. He knew that with God all things are possible and that they could do all things through God who gives the strength and the will to do it.

2. Caleb was forty years old when he went to spy on the land. God promised him that his inheritance would be the very place where he walked in the Promise Land. Although he brought back a good report, he had to suffer for forty-five years with the disobedient members of his group. Forty years in the wilderness and five years while Joshua divided the land and gave it to the nine and a half tribes as their inheritance. He learned that the actions of others can and did affect him. He had to learn to serve Joshua before he could receive his inheritance.

Nevertheless, he served wholeheartedly. He did it for forty-five years, he also learned patience during that time. He did nothing wrong, but he still had to wait until everyone received their inheritance before he got his. He did not complain, he remained faithful trusting the Lord wholeheartedly, knowing that He would fulfil His promise to give him the land on which he walked when he was sent to go and spy on the land.

3. His waiting did not weaken him physically or spiritually. When all his brethren received their inheritance, he went to Joshua and asked for his portion of inheritance. (Joshua 14:11-12.) Caleb could be bitter because he did nothing wrong to be punished with his brethren by wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Instead of being bitter, he was better. He said he was then eighty-five years old and was as strong then, as he was at age forty. He said the giants

still remained in the land, but with God, he would conquer them. He did not tell Joshua that because he was eighty-five years old, he should give him the plains as his inheritance. No, he told Joshua to give him those mountains that were occupied by the giants and well-fortified because, the Lord being with him, he would be able to drive them out. He was not relying on his strength, but he knew that the giants and their fortifications were no match for the God he served. He did not say that he could, but he WOULD drive them out. He was confident. Joshua gave him his inheritance and the land had rested from war after he took possession.

4. Is there anything that is preventing you from serving the Lord wholeheartedly? Caleb had to suffer with his brethren because of their unbelief, he had to learn to wait, and he learned patience; but he continued to serve the Lord wholeheartedly. Are you facing giants, and you see yourself as grasshoppers in their eyes because they are so powerful? Are you looking at the fortifications and the great walls? Let me encourage you to keep your eyes on the promise and the One who made the promise. He is able. Learn to wait, serve wholeheartedly, remain faithful, be strong in the Lord, you will receive your promise and enjoy peace. Remember who you are, you are a child of the great King. No giant you face is a match for Him. He never lost a battle. There are no fortifications that He cannot breakdown. He will make the mountains as the plains. He provides rivers in the desert and makes a way where there is no way. Trust Him, face your giants and claim your mountains. He is the God of the mountains, and He is with you.

The scripture tells us in Isaiah 40:31 “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Caleb waited forty-five years and declared that at age eighty-five he was as strong then as when he was forty. He was not afraid of the mountains or the giants, because he knew that God was with him.

5. CONCLUSION: God is faithful, He fulfills all His promises. Although Caleb had to wait forty-five years before he received his inheritance, he remained faithful and served with his whole heart. There are times when our blessings are delayed because of the actions of others. Caleb spent forty years in the wilderness with those who did not trust God to defeat the giants; when he got his inheritance the giants were still there, yet he claimed it and his message was the same, that with God, he would drive them out of the land. Those who did not believe died in the wilderness and never enter the promise land. All started out well, but only Caleb, Joshua and their offspring were able to enter into the promised land and receive their inheritance. It is good to start well but that is not good enough, we must finish well. There will be giants and fortifications along the way; but with God, we can drive them out, break down the fences and possess the land.

Verse fifteen says that the land had rest from war. He fights our battles, and the battles are His, if we involve Him in our fights. God wants to stretch you. Caleb knew something about the God on the mountains. He knew that the law was given to Moses when he met God on top of the mountain. God spoke to them from the mountains. When they were in the wilderness, they could not touch the mountains because they belonged to God. He claimed the mountains because God was with him. He wants us to climb our mountains and face our giants. The battle belongs to the Lord, we must claim our possessions and occupy the land. He will give us rest; He is the God of the mountains.