

# Caleb - The Faithful Hero

Lesson 01 of the series "Heroes: Fighting for Right in the Age of Wrong"

## 1. Through a series of mighty miracles God rescued the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt and guided them to the Promised Land.

"When the Egyptians oppressed and humiliated us by making us their slaves, we cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors. He heard our cries and saw our hardship, toil, and oppression. So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and powerful arm, with overwhelming terror, and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey!"

Deuteronomy 26:6-9 (NLT)

*Life Application:* God is almighty! There is no problem too big for Him to handle.

"For nothing is impossible with God." Luke 1:37 (NLT)

## 2. In spite of this, when the Israelites reached the border of the Promised Land they were afraid to go in!

a. Most of the spies who had been sent to scout out the land brought back a bad report and spread fear.

"(The spies) cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it on a pole between them! ...After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned... This was their report to Moses: "We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak!" 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. But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. 'We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!' So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: "The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that's what they thought, too!" Numbers 13:23-33 (NLT)

*Note:* The descendants of Anak were physically large people. Goliath most likely was a descendant of Anak. (see Joshua 11:21-22)

*Life Application:* Our tongues can do enormous damage when we spread fear, rumors and lies.

"It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell."

James 3:5-6 (MSG)

b. The Israelites were so afraid they decided to go back to slavery rather than trust God.

"Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night... "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!" they complained. "Why is the LORD taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?" Then they plotted among themselves, "Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!" ...Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! And if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. Do not rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!" But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb. Numbers 14:1-10 (NLT)

*Note:* Because of their unbelief an entire generation of Israelites missed out on God's blessing. "...not one of these people will ever enter that land. They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice. They will never even see the land I swore to give their ancestors... You said your children would be carried off as plunder. Well, I will bring them safely into the land, and they will enjoy what you have despised. But as for you, you will drop dead in this wilderness... suffering the consequences of your sins." Numbers 14:22-23,31-35 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We must never forget all that God has done for us.

“They did not keep God’s covenant and refused to live by his instructions. They forgot what he had done— the great wonders he had shown them...” Psalm 78:10-11 (NLT)

*Life Application:* Following Jesus does not mean we will never face huge challenges or have troubles.

“Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” John 16:33 (NLT)

*Life Application:* God wants us to trust and obey NOT live in fear.

“I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.” Psalm 32:8-9 (NLT)

“God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”

2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

### **3. Caleb remained faithful throughout his lifetime.**

“Today I am eighty-five years old. I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then. So give me the hill country that the LORD promised me. You will remember that as scouts we found the descendants of Anak living there in great, walled towns. But if the LORD is with me, I will drive them out of the land, just as the LORD said.” So Joshua blessed Caleb... and gave Hebron to him as his portion of land... because he wholeheartedly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. (Previously Hebron had been called Kiriath-arba. It had been named after Arba, a great hero of the descendants of Anak.) Joshua 14:7-15 (NLT) (see also Joshua 15:13,21:11)

*Life Application:* God wants us to remain faithful.

“But my servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have. He has remained loyal to me, so I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will possess their full share of that land.”

Numbers 14:24 (NLT)

“The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” 2 Chronicles 16:9 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from this past Sunday's message?
2. Merriam-Webster defines a "hero" as "a person who is admired for great or brave acts or fine qualities." Do you know any heroes who have been awarded medals, honors, or citations? What did they do? Why did they do it?
3. Read Numbers 13:23-14:10. Why were Caleb and Joshua unafraid? Why were the other ten spies terrified? Why did the other Israelites want to stone Joshua and Caleb? Who can you most identify with in this passage? Why?
4. Read Psalm 78:10-11. Spend some time as a group recounting prayers God has answered for you in the past. Why do we tend to forget what God has done for us when we encounter a new set of problems? (This is a good reason to journal!) "A dull pencil is better than a sharp memory any day!"
5. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the kind of life Jesus promised his followers?
  - Matthew 10:24-25
  - Mark 13:19
  - John 16:33
  - Acts 14:21-22

Why do we act surprised when we face difficulty? Why does God allow this? (see James 1:2-4)

6. James says that a tiny spark can set an entire forest on fire and that the tongue can also do incredible damage with just a few words. (James 3:5-6) Have you experienced the consequences of careless words / a sinful tongue? If so, what happened? What can we do to control our tongues better than we do?
7. Spend some time as a group discussing and praying about huge challenges that people in your group are facing. Ask God to give you wisdom, courage and favor.