Grace Evangelical Free Church March 19, 2023

**Joshua 14:8** Caleb: Wholehearted Follower

On six separate occasions (**Numbers 14:24**; **32:11-12**; **Deuteronomy 1:36**; **Joshua 14:8, 9, 14**) the Holy Spirit has recorded the fact that Caleb wholly followed the Lord. In a day when some who believed in God were content simply to follow, Caleb followed wholeheartedly.

**Joshua 14:8**: “**But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the Lord my God.**”

* **Grammatical Usage:** “**heart**” or in the Hebrew, “leb” meaning, “inner man” (mind; will; character); “**melt**” or “masah” meaning, “dissolve”; “**followed**” or “mala” meaning, “completely dedicated”.
* **Literal Interpretation:** “**But my brothers who went up with me made the people fail in mind and will; yet I was completely dedicated the Lord my God.**”
* **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. Caleb’s distinction provides a modern-day model:

1. There were three witnesses to the fact that Caleb wholeheartedly followed the Lord, and the same will be true of us if we are wholehearted for Him.

* Caleb himself was the first witness. What he was able to say of himself was not a sinful boast, but a sincere testimony.
* Moses was the second witness (**Joshua 14:9**). If we are wholly following the Lord, we not only know it in our own hearts, but those around us know it also.
* The Lord was the third witness (**Numbers 14:24**). Can the Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, say that of us? This is the supreme test, and the thing which matters most: what does the Lord say about my following?

2. These three testimonies suggest three great motives or reasons why we should wholeheartedly follow the Lord.

* That God may be glorified. There is only one kind of life that really glorifies Him, and that is the life that is wholeheartedly given over to Him. His command to every one of us is that we should be holy (**Leviticus 20:7**; **Hebrews 12:14**) - whole! (**John 5:6**; **1 Peter 1:15-16**).
* That others may be edified. Which life is the greater power and influence for the Lord – the life that is wholeheartedly His or the life that is only half His? One reason why the gospel is not making greater progress in the world is that many Christians who are wholehearted in everything else they do are only half-hearted in their Christian living.
* That I may be satisfied. This may sound a selfish motive, but it is not selfish. We all seek satisfaction, and true satisfaction is only found in wholeheartedly following the Lord Jesus. It was at the end of his life that Caleb uttered **Joshua 14: 8**.

3. What does it mean to follow the Lord wholeheartedly? What does it imply?

* Following the Lord wholeheartedly implies concentration. To follow the Lord wholly means to concentrate all, everything, on doing this one thing. We get a perfect illustration of this in the case of the apostle Paul, who said, “**Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead**” (**Philippians 3: 13**). Paul was determined to do one thing, and one thing only, and that was to follow the Lord wholeheartedly. To follow the Lord wholeheartedly implies an undivided loyalty: “**No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money**” (**Matthew 6:24**). Here is the whole idea of concentration and absolute allegiance to our one rightful Lord and Master: “**You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am**” (**John 13:13**), and compare the words of **Psalm 16:8**: “**I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**”
* Following the Lord wholeheartedly implies completeness, i.e., following the Lord completely. To follow Him completely means to follow Him utterly, absolutely, with heart and soul, and without any reservation (**Luke 9:61**). It means to follow Him in all that we are, in all that we do and in all that we say, and to do this wherever we are and under every circumstance - completely: my heart to love Him, my will to obey Him, my mind to think for Him, my feet to run for Him, my voice to sing for Him, my hands to work for Him, my eyes to see for Him and my lips to speak for Him. It means more than giving Him all that we have; it means yielding to Him all that we are (**Romans 6:13**). God wants our gifts and talents, but most of all He wants - us!
* Following the Lord wholeheartedly implies constancy. Most of us are far too intermittent in our following. We follow wholeheartedly one day, and only half-heartedly the next! **Luke 22:33** is where Peter’s intention was undoubtedly to follow the Lord wholly, and **Luke 22:54**, where we read that he completely failed to do this. AT this point in his life, Peter was not constant. To follow the Lord wholly is to follow Him all the time, and to go on following Him all the time. It means to be a Christian of set purpose (**Luke 9:51**; compare **Psalm 16:8**).

4. What is the conviction of wholeheartedly following the Lord?

Who is sufficient for these things? We cannot wholly follow the Lord in our own strength. Yet Caleb did wholly follow - so what conviction did he learn? It is an open conviction, and **Numbers 14:24** reveals it. Caleb wholeheartedly followed the Lord because he had a different spirit with him. Now, this is very important; do not fail to look up and compare **John 14:16-17** - “**another Comforter**”! Yes, that is the conviction: strength and power to follow the Lord wholly is not in ourselves, but it is in the Holy Spirit, and with the Holy Spirit indwelling and infilling us we can then do as Caleb did - wholly, fully, follow Him…our glorious Lord!

* **Conclusion**: What ‘spirit’ is within you? Is it “I can do all things” or is it “I can do all things through Christ?” Your life now…and to come…hangs in the balance.