

**INTRODUCTION:**

This morning, I would like for us to study the life of a man in the Old Testament whose name literally means “**Dog**”—And I am not talking about d-a-w-g, which is kind of cool today... I’m talking d-o-g!

- I don’t know if we appreciate what that kind of name would have meant for a baby boy who was born as a slave among the Israelites in Egypt, because as we look at the Scriptures, we find that to call someone a dog was a tremendous insult.
- Today, we normally think of dogs as cute little house pets (and even with this being the case, we would hardly call our children dogs today), but it was so much worse in ancient Israel.
- Dogs were considered unclean.
- They were scavengers, and almost every time we read about dogs in the Bible, it was not a good situation.
- Eventually, the term came to describe those who were outsiders, and even in the closing chapter of the New Testament, the Bible makes a contrast between those who are in heaven and those who are not.
- In **Revelation 22:15**, the Bible says, “*Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*”
- And so we have a picture from the Scriptures—not of a cute little Chihuahua, but of a jackal or a coyote.
- We can hardly imagine, then, that a little boy would be given the name “**Dog**.”
- He was born as a slave in Egypt, he was given the name “**Dog**,” but he grew up to be a national hero among the people of God.
- In Hebrew, the man’s name was Caleb.

In the Scriptures, we find that his father was a Kenizzite.

- This means that Caleb was not even a Hebrew by birth.
- The Kenizzites were descendants of Esau and were therefore distant cousins to the nation of Israel.
- In fact, they were long-time enemies, but somewhere along the line, the Kenizzites converted to Judaism and were adopted into the Hebrew nation.
- The fact that Caleb, as a foreigner, was given such a name as a child among the Israelites, has caused some people to assume that he was abandoned as a child.
- Even today, in a normal happy family, at least, we can hardly imagine being there in Salem Community Hospital when the parents put “**Dog**” on the birth certificate.
- Nevertheless, Caleb was ultimately accepted into the tribe of Judah, the tribe of royalty—the tribe of David and the tribe of Jesus Himself.
- I should point out that there were two other famous Gentiles who were also adopted into the tribe of Judah—Rahab the prostitute and Ruth, who became the great grandmother of King David.

Regardless of his background, however, we know from the Scriptures that Caleb became a leader among God’s people.

- In fact, and this is a little unusual for great leaders from the Bible, but when we look through the Scriptures, we cannot find a single sin that is attributed to Caleb.
- This doesn’t mean that he was sinless, but it is interesting.
- With most heroes of the Bible, we have a rather balanced picture.
- We think about Abraham—he sinned.

- We think about Moses—he sinned.
- We think about David—he sinned.
- We think about Peter, and Paul—we have a record of their sins.
- But with Caleb, the Bible is silent.
- Some have described Caleb as the Barnabas of the Old Testament and have called Barnabas the Caleb of the New Testament.
- The Bible does not say very much, but six times in the Scriptures, we find references to Caleb having “*followed the Lord completely*” in his life.
- This morning, I would like for us to study the life of Caleb.
- Why is he described as having followed the Lord completely?
- And what can we learn from this man’s life?

I’d like to suggest two basic lessons...

**I. First of all, we find from the Scriptures that CALEB WAS A MAN OF COURAGEOUS FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD.**

When Caleb first comes on the scene, he is 40 years old.

- Moses had led the people out of Egypt.
- They had crossed over the Red Sea on dry ground, they had traveled through the wilderness, and they were now standing on the eastern bank of the Jordan River.
- Please turn with me and notice **Numbers 13**.
- On this occasion, Moses requested that each of the tribes select one man to form a group of twelve men who would cross over the Jordan River and spy out the land of Canaan in preparation for the invasion.
- And right here, we find that Caleb was a leader among the people.
- Judah was the largest of the 12 tribes, with 74,600 fighting men, and Caleb was selected by those men to represent their tribe on this mission.
- We pick up with **Numbers 13:17-14:10**...

*17 When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country.*

*18 "See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many.*

*19 "How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications?*

*20 "How is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.*

*21 So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath.*

*22 When they had gone up into the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)*

*23 Then they came to the valley of Eshcol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two men, with some of the pomegranates and the figs.*

*24 That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the sons of Israel cut down from there.*

*25 When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,*

*26 they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.*

27 *Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.*

28 *"Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.*

29 *"Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."*

30 *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it."*

31 *But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us."*

32 *So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size.*

33 *"There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

14:1 *Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.*

2 *All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!*

3 *"Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"*

4 *So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."*

5 *Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel.*

6 *Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;*

7 *and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.*

8 *"If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.*

9 *"Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."*

10 *But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.*

And again, as we look back over this passage, we find that Caleb was a man with courageous faith in the promises of God.

- Along with the 11 other spies, Caleb went into the land of Canaan. They all saw the same things.
- They all looked at the same fortified cities. They all considered the same evidence.
- They all took turns carrying back that huge cluster of grapes—so large that they had to suspend it on a pole that was carried between two men.
- These twelve men had also seen the 10 plagues in Egypt. They had seen the power of God.
- They had seen the crossing of the Red Sea. They had seen the destruction of the Egyptian army.
- They had seen the dead bodies of the Egyptian soldiers washing up on the shore of the Red Sea.

But we notice starting in **verse 25** that after 40 days the spies returned, and ten of the spies started out with a very negative report—the people are strong, the cities are fortified and large, and there are giants in the land.

- Apparently, the assembly got rather noisy and upset, because in **verse 30** Caleb had to quiet the people.

- Caleb’s conclusion, though, was that God would give them the land.
- In **Numbers 14:8**, Caleb said, *“If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.”*—The very land that God promised to Abraham way back in **Genesis 15**.

After Caleb’s speech, the people accepted the report of the other ten, and they got so upset that they prepared to appoint a new leader instead of Moses and return to slavery in Egypt.

- And then in **Numbers 14:10**, *“all the congregation”* decided to kill Joshua and Caleb with stones---but, God wasn’t about to let that happen and He intervened.

We learn, though, first of all, that Caleb was a man of rock solid faith in the word of God.

- God had made a promise, and Caleb knew in his heart that God would keep that promise.
- Like father Abraham, Caleb could see past the difficulties of the present and could see the foundations of a city whose architect and builder is God.

What I find encouraging is that Caleb did not tone down the difficulties.

- Caleb did not disagree with the other spies concerning the presence of those giants.
- Caleb did not argue about the size of the giants.
- There is an interesting note in **Numbers 13:22**—the spies found that the largest giants, the greatest warriors, had all settled in a place called Hebron—this will be significant in just a moment.
- But for now, we find that Caleb was a man of courageous faith in the word of God.

As we ask ourselves **“So what?”** as we try to apply all of this to our lives today, we need to look at the power of Caleb’s faith to stand up even in the minority.

- We see in **Numbers 13 & 14** that Caleb is outnumbered by at least 10 to 1, and I say 10-1 because at this point Joshua doesn’t really say too much.
- In **Numbers 13:30**, Caleb is the one who stands up on his own and has the courage to contradict the report of other ten spies.
- Caleb stood in the minority, because the minority was right.
- Caleb was not scared by the numbers.
- It seemed that the whole world was against him, and in the face of a national rebellion, Caleb had the courage to stand up to a mob of nearly 3 million people and beg them to stand up and fight with the Lord.
- And we find in **verse 10** that if the Lord had not stepped in, that crowd would have stoned Caleb to death.
- Caleb would have died in a stampede back to Egypt!

As we tie this back to our Christian faith, we remember the words of Jesus in **Matthew 5:10-12**, *“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

- By faith, Caleb could see the wisdom in what Jesus would later say in **Matthew 7:13-14**, *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

As our young people go to school tomorrow morning, they will need the kind of faith that Caleb had.

- I am certain that some of our students will be given opportunities to mention creation when a science class is suggesting the theory of evolution.
- When our students face these small challenges in their youth, it will only prepare them all the more for defending their faith later in life.
- If our faith is strong enough, we will not be afraid to speak out—even in the face of opposition.
- We need to remind ourselves, then, that Caleb was a man of faith in the word of God.
- He stood up to the majority, and God blessed him for that decision.

In the rest of **Numbers 14**, the Lord makes a promise.

- In **verses 22-24**, the Lord said, *“Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.”*
- Caleb was a man of faith, which means that he was looking to God when the other men were looking to themselves.
- He believed in the word of God, which allowed him to stand up to the majority.

In the following verses, God will tell the people that all of those who grumbled, all of those 20 years old and upward, will die in the wilderness over the next forty years—one year for every day that the 12 spies spent in the land of Canaan.

- The only two exceptions were Joshua and Caleb.
- They would be the only two adults from the current generation who would be allowed to cross over the Jordan River.

## II. **At this time, we fast forward roughly 45 years, and I’d like for us to look at a second lesson from the life of Caleb. Not only was he a man of courageous faith in God’s word, but we also find that CALEB WAS A MAN OF ENDURANCE.**

His faithfulness was not a one time deal, but he was faithful for a lifetime.

- Let us turn to and notice **Joshua 14**...
- All through those 40 years in the wilderness, we do not hear very much from Caleb.
- But over those 40 years, roughly 1 million Israelites die in the wilderness.
- All of those 20 years old and older have died, and Joshua and Caleb are the only ones left from that older generation.
- And so they arrive in the Promised Land. They cross over the Jordan River.
- In the opening chapters of **Joshua**, they conquer Jericho and Ai.
- They push forward, and then they get to the point where it’s time to divide up the land between the 12 tribes.
- They start casting lots, and the land is divided...but then after a silence of 45 years, there is an old man who speaks up on his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The man’s name is Dog. And as the land is being divided, this old man has a reminder. That brings us to **Joshua 14:6-15**...

*6 Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea.*

*7 "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart.*

*8 "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the LORD my God fully.*

*9 "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God fully.'*

*10 "Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today.*

*11 "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in.*

*12 "Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken."*

*13 So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.*

*14 Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully.*

*15 Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war.*

Caleb had quietly wandered with 3 million whiners over a period of 40 years.

- He had seen them die in the wilderness.
- He had watched the new generation grow up and develop, but throughout that whole time, Caleb's heart was in the land of Canaan.

He could have complained himself... He could have become bitter.

- Caleb could have become jealous over the fact that Joshua was picked to lead the nation when Caleb was the one who spoke up first.
- Caleb could have become disillusioned over the failure of those other spies.
- But we find that Caleb's faith stayed strong.
- Caleb knew that if the Lord would have let him take the land back then, that he could also take it now.
- His age was not a factor.

And then we get down to **verse 12**.

- We remember how the giants had settled on Mt. Hebron.
- On his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, at least 25 years older than his peers, at a time when he should have been getting his senior citizen discount, Caleb says, **"Now then, give me this hill country!"**
- Certainly all of us would understand if Caleb had been a little tired.
- We would understand if Caleb had asked for the ranch-style condo with a ramp out front.
- We would understand if Caleb had just encouraged the younger warriors to take over.
- We would understand if he had decided to retire.
- We would understand if Caleb had asked for a special servant to assist him in his old age, and Joshua would have granted that to him.

- In fact, Caleb would still have been a hero, and I would still be preaching about him this morning as a good example for us to follow.
- But as the land is being divided up, Caleb interrupts the whole process and basically says to Joshua, “**Give me the biggest, baddest mountain in all the land!**”
- With God’s help, I could have taken it then, and with God’s help I will take it now.”

Over the past 45 years, Caleb had been dreaming.

- He had been longing for this day to come.
- He had been dreaming of the Anakim.
- He had been dreaming of those fortified cities.
- He had been looking forward to claiming his inheritance with the Lord’s help.
- On his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, Caleb wanted the most difficult land to conquer.
- Caleb wanted the uphill battle. In so many ways, Caleb was ideally prepared. Caleb had been there.
- Caleb had seen those fortifications.
- Caleb was faithful at the age of 40, and he was faithful at the age of 85. Caleb was a man of endurance.

As younger Christians, let us never underestimate what God can do through those who are older than we are.

- Here at this congregation, we have some members over 50, who have endured many years against the world of opposition and have remained faithful on God’s behalf here in Salem.
- Let us learn from their experience and let’s allow them to step in and give their advice.
- For those of us who are younger, let’s remember that God needs more people like Caleb here at the Salem congregation.
- His faith started when he was young and continued until he was very old.

I should point out that Hebron was a significant place in the history of God’s people.

- As the highest point in the land of Canaan, Mount Hebron was a cool and well-watered place...
- It was also important for some other reasons.
- The land promise was originally given to Abraham on Mount Hebron.
- You might also remember that Abraham later purchased a burial plot on Mount Hebron, and eventually Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah, were all buried there.
- Later, after Caleb conquered it, the city was given to the priests as a place to live, and under the Law of Moses it was officially designated as a city of refuge.
- Later on down the line, it became the capital of David’s kingdom for 7 ½ years.
- In Hebrew, the name Hebron means “**fellowship.**”
- It was well-fortified and difficult to take, but Caleb was a man of endurance and asked permission to capture that city with the Lord’s help, and before we get to the end of the next chapter, Caleb has completely removed the giants from Hebron.

### **SUMMARY & CONCLUSION:**

Here at the end of this morning’s lesson, we get back to something we noticed at the beginning. Six times in the Bible, Caleb is described as being completely devoted to the Lord.

- We’ve learned this morning, first of all, that Caleb was a man of courageous faith in God’s word.
- And we’ve learned, secondly, that Caleb was a man of endurance.

He was able to do these things because he was completely devoted to the Lord.

- Literally, that phrase means that he was full or flooded with the Lord.
- We need more people today who allow themselves to be flooded with the Lord.
- We need people with courageous faith—who can stay strong even when they're in the minority.
- And we need people who keep that faith strong even as they grow older in the Lord.

### **INVITATION:**

There may be someone here this morning, who would like to follow Caleb's example of faith.

- God has promised that our sins will be forgiven if we put our trust in the sacrifice of His Son by turning away from our sins and allowing ourselves to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins.
- Do we believe that promise?
- In **Mark 16:16**, Jesus said, ***“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”***
- If you believe what Jesus said, you can let us know about your decision as we sing the next song.
- Let's stand and sing...