

“Be a Wholehearted Servant!”

Joshua 14:6-12

Intro. – Want to highly recommend following book: *Quiet Strength a Memoir*. It was written by Tony Dungy, former head coach of the Indianapolis Colts. Amongst the many quotes I could use let me use the following: “My purpose in life is simply to glorify God. We have to be careful that we don’t let the pursuit of our life’s goals, no matter how important they seem, cause us to lose sight of our *purpose*. I coach football. But the good I can do to glorify God along the way is my real purpose. I want to help people see the path to eternal life through Christ, to enjoy an abundant life now, and to fulfill their God given purposes here.”

Tony Dungy is a man I want to personally meet. Not because he’s a well known former coach and player of the NFL. Not because he’s recognized around the world. Not because I’m into meeting celebrities. I want to meet this guy because I’m persuaded he is one of very few men who really get it. Get what? He gets the fact that we are created for one purpose and that no matter our occupation or means of earning a living, our purpose is to worship and serve Christ the King and to take as many with us to heaven as possible.

With that in mind let me introduce you to another man who got it. His name is Caleb. Here is a man telling of his life’s experience. He has had a grand yesterday. He has a noble today. He is looking expectantly to tomorrow. “If you want to know the source of whatever is of worth in me,” he in essence said, “All that I am, or hope to be, I owe it to the fact that I’m a servant of God!”

Mind you, Caleb is not puffed up or conceited. He is not bragging; instead, he is testifying. If Caleb is guilty of any boasting, he is guilty only of boasting in the Lord!

Not only does Caleb claim to have been a follower of God, but, he is permitted to use a word to describe his following that most would not dare to use. Caleb uses “I” words: “I have given my individual allegiance... I have given whole hearted devotion... I have given the loyalty of my whole soul...”

This is not to say Caleb was perfect/sinless. When one is wholehearted in their devotion, say to their work, it doesn’t mean they are perfect businessmen does it? It does mean one gives their all. Such certainly is the case of Caleb. He really was a wholehearted servant of God!

With such in mind I want to address myself to the church family. Caleb’s wholehearted devotion to God is the sole reason for the great success made in his life!

What do you desire of life? How are you going to pursue “success”? Just what is your purpose in life?

Purpose: to see what potential lies ahead for each of us when we are wholehearted servants.

Here’s the kind of man a wholehearted servant is – Let’s look at the life of Caleb:

I HE WAS A MAN OF FAITH

- Caleb’s faith is worthy of our examination...

A. Faith’s Source

1. By looking at Caleb, reminded that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the God’s Word...
2. Where you and I lack in faith stems in direct proportion to our lack of knowing and applying God’s Word...
3. Caleb was not lacking in faith. Why? Caleb knew God’s Word... trusted it... set about to do it!!

B. Faith’s Example

1. First example was his returning with other spies in checking out the land of Canaan...
2. All the spies were not in agreement: 10 were bad and 2 were good
 - a. both sides agreed the land was worth possessing...
 - b. majority saw the obstacles and thought they were too big to overcome
 - c. minority (Joshua and Caleb) saw otherwise... (note: how many times Bible majority wrong)
3. Caleb stepped forward and spoke with conviction!

- a. he declares an awareness of the obstacles, but they can be overcome: “Let us go up at once and possess it... These giants will be bread to us... God’s given us the land. Victory is ours if we but dare to claim it!”
- b. such is at the very heart of FAITH!

C. Faith’s Asset

1. What an asset faith was to Caleb – while the majority whined and doubted because of obstacles... Caleb claims victory even getting the job done.
2. Doubters look at problems and come unglued... Caleb looked to God grew in confidence/strength!
3. It’s the Calebs that subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, out of weakness are made strong, win friends and family to Christ, worship wholeheartedly and serve rather than complain and whine.
4. There’s nothing more common today, than that of a talented failure...

II HE WAS A MAN OF COURAGE

- natural outcome of faith = courage... Bible full of examples of courage – Caleb one of my favorites:

A. Courage to Buck the Majority

1. Remember it was Caleb/Joshua who said, “Let’s go up...” while majority said, “No way!”...
2. To take such a stand meant sneers/jeers and physical danger – mob ready to stone them both...
3. Just because majority wants/desires something, when contrary to will God – takes courage to buck

B. Courage to Tackle a Powerful Enemy

1. Caleb knew walled cities and people of Canaan were strong; nevertheless, willing to bet his life that God would give the victory... knew God said He would!
2. Dare your faith, brethren... God will provide victory in due season if we faint not!

III HE WAS A MAN OF PATIENCE

A. He Was Outvoted

1. His resolve to take the land was voted down – note: shows no anger, resentment, didn’t withdraw and refuse to have anything further to do with this faithless bunch...
2. Even with their glaring faults, he believed these people had a chosen mission given to them by God and that in order to be a part of it he would have to influence them for the good.
3. Point: you’ll be outvoted... discouraged... but patiently work with God’s people = hope world!

B. He Worked and Waited

1. Imagine the disappointment/distress this man of faith had when compelled to turn his face from the Promised Land to wandering in the wilderness for forty years!
2. Never once are we told he whined/complained or said “I told you so!”
3. Instead, I believe he gave his heart/soul to training/upbringing of coming generation...

In order to be a wholehearted servant of God we must continuously be developing this grace...

IV HE WAS A MAN OF ETERNAL YOUTH

A. Fifty Years After Wandering

1. 85 years old (not dog years either)...
2. Find him as winsomely young as ever... his attitude unchanged... “We can do it!”

B. Confidence in the Future

1. Too many find “youth as folly... manhood as struggle... and old age as regret...”
2. Caleb had the audacity to be eager for tomorrow:
 - a. time has a way of taming us, or darkening our dreams and dampening fires of enthusiasm...
 - b. for 50 yrs he waited and now at 85 he was ready to tackle hardest job yet...

He who wholeheartedly follows the Lord will find the means to staying young though body grows old!

Conclusion: Conclude with something very personal to me. A preacher in Calumet City, Illinois/Hammond, IN area took a young boy and filled some terrible voids in that boy's life. This preacher urged this boy to do something with his life... to do better in school... to take better care of his personal appearance... to be responsible... to make wise choices. Most importantly, this preacher filled voids by his example and teachings of Christ... This young boy eventually met a wonderful Christian girl in the church. This preacher took this boy to Cincinnati Bible Seminary and urged him to attend and to prepare himself for the ministry. Well, one thing led to another, and eventually this boy did become a preacher and the girl he married after she had become and RN. This preacher performed the wedding ceremony...

Robert Monroe Lillie was this preacher. He is a man we affectionately called Uncle Bob. The boy he influenced with the Gospel was Sherman Nichols, my dad. Dad use to call Uncle Bob, "R.M" or Robert. It was his way of expressing/showing his love and respect for this man. He always had a picture of RM hanging in his office. Uncle Bob would constantly be in our home. I was around and knew Uncle Bob better than I knew my own grandparents. Why? My parents wanted their kids to have the kind of influence RM would give... Taught me to love cars... More importantly he taught me to love the Lord and His Church... Robert Lillie was in the beginning stages of Christian Service Camp...

Robert Lillie died July 9, 1977... He didn't leave any wealth or land to my Dad and Mom... but he did leave the gripping memory of one who followed the Lord wholeheartedly. Color Robert Lillie a Caleb – a wholehearted servant of God full of faith, courage, patience and zeal!

My point? What kind of legacy are you leaving right now? What really matters to you at this point in your life – education, job, your family? Where does God figure in on your life? I declare to my brothers and sisters in the Lord here and to all assembled here today that no one can leave a finer legacy than that of being a wholehearted servant of God!