

# Caleb's Inheritance

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon  
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011

## Intro-

- I don't do the lottery, but I am amazed that around £2 million in lottery prizes are unclaimed every single week (lost tickets/ not checking tickets). Winners only have six months to claim their prizes.
- The largest unclaimed lottery ticket came to £9.4 million in 2005. The ticket was purchased in Doncaster and a town crier was unsuccessfully used to flush out the winner. Once the 180 day expiry had been reached the unlucky ticket holder could no longer claim and he or she became £9 million poorer.
- Anyone who dies without making a will — known as dying intestate — has their financial affairs handled by a Government department called the Treasury Solicitor. If no relatives can be found then the money goes to the Treasury. Relatives have 12 years to come forward (ultimate deadline is 30 years) before the money goes to the treasury.
- Over a typical year the Treasury Solicitor will take in about £18m from those not making a will and pay out £8m to relatives coming forward - leaving it with a tidy £10m which goes into the Government's coffers.
- Many are unaware of something that really belongs to them, and end up losing it. I wonder if you can see the inheritance which God has for you in your life? Psalm 2 speaks about the inheritance which God the Father has given freely to God the Son- the nations for His inheritance. Jeremiah 29:11 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'
- Today I'm here to tell you that you have an inheritance far greater than money. We know that we have an inheritance which can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for us. However, God has also given us things to inherit in our Christian lives before glory. He has called each one of us to be fruitful as Christians.
- Not all Christians reach their full potential and inherit all that they could whilst here on earth. This morning we will learn from a man who succeeded in claiming his inheritance, even when a whole nation around him failed. This man's name is Caleb.

## Read Joshua 14:6-15

The background to this passage is the book of Numbers chapter 13. In this passage, Moses, having just led the nation of Israel out of captivity in Egypt, chooses one man from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. He then sends them out as spies from Kadesh oasis into the land of Israel to bring back a report of the land, prior to taking the land for God. Out of the 12 men sent in, only Caleb and Joshua come back with a positive report. The rest of the men were filled with unbelief and persuaded the nation of Israel that they were unable to take the land which God has promised them. As a result of this God made them wander around in the wilderness for 40 years until a whole generation had died out. He then gave their children the chance to go in and take possession of what their parents had failed to take possession of. The only two adults that were left alive at this time were Caleb and Joshua. In the passage which we have just read Joshua has just divided the land of Israel amongst tribes of Israel, and Caleb is going in to take possession of his particular inheritance. What was it that made Caleb stand out from the others?

## **Caleb saw with the eyes of FAITH- v7 'I brought back word to him, as it was in my heart.'**

Do you see situations through the eyes of faith? The fears which the spies from Israel encountered when they were sent out to spy out the promised land, were very real:

- Fortified cities-- The cities were highly fortified, high walls and the people were heavily armed. After the Israelites had been wandering in the desert for 40 years. It

is doubtful they had many arms.

- The sons of Anak – 'Descendants of the Nephilim' (Giants). The Sons of Anak were not really the descendants of the Nephilim- these were wiped out by the flood. However, they were giants, like Goliath.
- Caleb overcame these fears by faith. His faith had an object: an all-powerful God, Who is greater than our fears. What are your fears concerning your inheritance of this land for God? What are your giants? What are your fortified cities? Bring all your fears under the fact that:
  - God is with you, as he was with Caleb. You don't stand in your own strength. God will never leave you nor forsake you. As he was with Moses, so he will be with you. As he was with Caleb, so he will be with you.
  - He has done mighty things for you, just as Caleb knew that God had done mighty things-- He had witnessed the Red Sea, opening up; therefore he figured God could take the land also. He has done the most difficult thing, which is to secure your salvation. Therefore he can use you to save others. We have a testimony of God's goodness to us in the past. Therefore, we have faith for God's goodness to us in the future. Also God has done amazing things only 100 years ago here in Wales, therefore, we know he can do it again, even in our day.
- Also, Caleb didn't follow the crowd's unbelief but was prepared to stand in a minority and believe God. When the other 10 spies influenced the whole nation of Israel into a state of panic Caleb and Joshua were able to go against the flow. What about you?
  - Some people are obsessed with numbers for validity. They are influenced by the crowd, or lack of it. We are not to be so concerned with church statistics, or the statistics of the area, but rather on 'What is God saying?'
  - To be swayed by the crowd is to put man and his opinions higher than God and his word.
  - Surely, when God speaks he can be trusted, even though others may be flaky. We don't have to follow their poor example – let's instead be as Caleb and trust our great God.
  - A Roman Catholic missionary, Vincent Donovan, worked with the Masai tribe in Tanzania, just south of Kenya. It was difficult work, and at times, his faith faltered. At one point, Donovan spoke with a Masai elder about the agony of belief and unbelief. In their conversation, the Masai elder pointed out that the word Donovan had been using in Swahili to convey the word "faith" was not a very good word in their language. The word they were using for "faith" meant literally, "to agree to." The Masai elder said that to believe like that was similar to a white hunter shooting an animal from a great distance. Only his eyes and his finger got into it. The Masai elder then said that for one to really believe is more like a lion going after its prey. The lion's nose and ears sense the prey. He sniffs the air and locates it. Then he crouches, and slithers along the ground virtually invisible. The lion gets into position, and when everything is optimum, the lion pounces. All the power of his body is involved and as the animal goes down, the lion envelopes it in his arms, pulls it to himself, and makes it a part of himself. This, said the elder, is the way one believes, making faith a part of oneself! Donovan nodded in complete agreement, almost overcome with the elder's wisdom. But the elder was not done yet. The old Masai became thoughtful. Then he said to Donovan: "We did not search you out, Padri. We did not even want you to come to us. You searched us out. You told us of the High God. You told us we must search for the High God. But we have not done this. Instead, the High God has searched us out and found us! All the time we think we are the lion. In the end, the lion is God!"

### **Caleb inherited because of full OBEDIENCE to God -v8,9 'wholly followed.' (x2)**

- A person of God may go through many problems in life, but fruitfulness will come to them if they wholly follow God.
- If we are to be successful in what God has called us to do here in Brynmawr we need to stick to His way in situations in life. Jesus said, 'No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God.' - God will

direct us in the line of ploughing, but unless we stick to what He has said, we will be all over the place.

- Sometimes people flit from place to place trying to get a prophetic 'word from the Lord'. They attempt to get a word which sits better with them than perhaps what God has already spoken to them. The question comes 'Have you done what God has already said to you?' Jesus said 'My food is to do the will of my Father in heaven and to complete it'. When Moses gave the law lords said do not turn to the right or to the left of it. In other words, we are called to walk in the path of obedience.
- Obedience led Caleb to inherit all that God had for him. It led him to fruitfulness. Are there any areas of disobedience in our lives, which we need to bring into line with God's Word? These are the areas which threaten the inheritance here and now which God has for us.
- There was a man who worked in a great forest. His faithful dog had burned to death a few minutes earlier in a great fire that had swept through the forest. The little dog had been left under a tree to guard his master's packed lunch and wouldn't leave it even when the flames roared around him. The worker was broken-hearted when he found the charred remains of his little friend. With tears streaming down his face, he said: "I always had to be careful what I told him to do, because I knew he would do it."
- How far are we prepared to go in order to be obedient to God? Obedience takes sacrifice. Caleb paid the price of obedience and he gained his inheritance. Jesus Christ was obedient even unto death. In the same way, His inheritance now reflects this. Our inheritance is reflected in our obedience.
- When God puts a full-stop let's not change it to a question mark. "Delayed obedience is disobedience." - Unknown.

### **Caleb was PATIENT enough to see the fulfilment of the promise of God – v7 '40 years old', v10 '85 years old'**

- Could you wait on a promise from God for 45 years? Caleb did. A whole generation died out as God waited for a generation to grow up. Who would be trusting and obedience to his promise. Caleb (and also Joshua) joined this belief in generation, but it would take 45 years to happen.
  - We live in a computer generation – people crave instant results. When I was younger, I was happy with my Sinclair Spectrum. Each game would take about 15 minutes to load from a cassette tape. I would then get the message on the screen ' tape loading error '. Young people today just would not wait for this.
  - We live in a world of fast food. People complain if their food takes 10 minutes to come to them.
  - We live in a world of instant television. Television on demand.
  - If we are not careful, we can approach God in the same way. Some things that God does happen instantly. Other things take many years, to be fulfilled. The best things in life are truly worth waiting for. Satan would love us to rush and spoil the inheritance that God has for us, to open our presents before Christmas Day. Are there things that God has promised you that you attempted to compromise rather than wait for God's best? Let me assure you God's best is worth waiting for.
  - Caleb had to wait with the others in the wilderness. The other's experienced God's blessings in the wilderness; manna from heaven, provision of quail and water from the rock. However this was not God's best for them, and they could have had a land flowing with milk and honey. Caleb knew that there was more. He could have joined the others for an easy life, but chose to wait for God's best.
  - Are you owning the vision which God has given you, or have you become disillusioned on the way? Even though it lingers wait for it, it will surely not prove false.

## **Caleb's STRENGTH came from the Lord -v11 ' I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me.'**

- The strong young man at the construction site was bragging that he could outdo anyone in a feat of strength. He made a special case of making fun of one of the older workmen. After several minutes, the older worker had enough. "Why don't you put your money where your mouth is," he said. "I will bet a week's wages that I can haul something in a wheelbarrow over to that outbuilding that you won't be able to wheel back." "You're on, old man," the braggart replied. "Let's see what you got." The old man reached out and grabbed the wheelbarrow by the handles. Then, nodding to the young man, he said, "All right. Get in."
- The lesson of Yodah from Star Wars is- don't judge a person's strength by their age, as his ally was 'the force'. Caleb was an old man up for a fight. You may be feeling old this morning, but are you up for a fight? The presence of the Lord makes all the difference- when we are weak He is strong. His power is made perfect in weakness. Paul starts off in Eph 1:19 by praying that God would somehow show them the 'exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe- according to the same power He used when He raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him higher than any power in the universe for all eternity. Paul finishes Ephesians by saying 'finally be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power'- Eph 6. We see that as 'putting on our spiritual pyjamas in case Satan gets us', but it is more the gear of a conquering, valiant army, modelled on the Roman Empire which was unstoppable. When Jim Carey put on 'The Mask' he would say 'somebody stop me!' as if he was unstoppable- we need to see who we are in Christ as Caleb did and take the territory allotted to us, for we can surely do it, as God is with us.
- You are never too old, or too young for God to use you. You are never too poor or rich for God to use you. You are never too educated or uneducated for God to use you. Let all excuses melt away with the realisation that, like Caleb, your strength comes from the Lord.
- Caleb asked Joshua to 'Give me this mountain', speaking about Hebron. We live in a place called 'big hill.' We can also ask God to give us this mountain and the surrounding areas. Each of the 12 tribes (except Levi) had land which was allocated to them. They each had an inheritance which they could say to God; 'Give me this mountain'.
- Hebron's former name was Kirjath Arba- town of Arba, the greatest of the Anakites ('im' is the masculine plural ending, hence 'Anakim'). The Sons of Anak were giants. This mountain took its name from the chief of the giants. Satan wants our land to have a reputation that comes from him. God, however, has other ideas and wants to raise an army of giant-slayers in the land. God wants us to make this territory God's territory; 'land of my Father'.
- Merthyr Tydfil. According to legend, the town is named after Saint Tydfil a daughter of King Brychan of Brycheiniog. The story goes that she was slain at Merthyr by pagans around 480AD; the place was subsequently named Merthyr Tydfil in her honour. Merthyr comes from the word 'Martyr'.
- The Cornish/Welsh word lann or llan occurs frequently in place-names. Originally meaning land, it gradually came to mean churchyard and then church and parish.
- The Gaelic word cil, meaning church, occurs in the many place-names of Ireland and Scotland starting with Kil-Kilmarnak.
- Kirk means church in Scottish dialects. So and Dunkirk is named after the church. Captain Kirk is really captain Church! Seeking out Newfrontiers!
- Where lords of manor houses wanted their own church in the vicinity the church would be called a 'Betws' or 'oratory' or 'house of prayer' of ..(and then the Lord's name, or the vicinity). E.g. betws y coed means prayer house in the wood.
- What will be our mark on the land? Many have gone before us and left their mark on this land. This land is our inheritance, this is our mountain, this is our window of opportunity. Are we up for it?
- "I don't think we're going to get out of this thing. I'm going to have to go out on faith." It was the voice of Todd Beamer, the passenger -- and Wheaton College graduate -- who said "Let's roll" as he led the charge against the terrorists who had hijacked United Flight 93, the one, you will remember, that crashed in the Pennsylvania

countryside. The whole world knows how brave Beamer and his fellow passengers were on September 11. But we now know more fully what buttressed that bravery: Faith in Jesus Christ. Todd died as he lived, a faithful evangelical believer. In an article titled "The Real Story of Flight 93," Newsweek revealed gripping details from the actual transcripts of the recovered cockpit voice recorder. "Todd had been afraid- more than once, he cried out for his Savior." After passengers were herded to the back of the jet, Beamer called the GTE Customer Center in Oakbrook, Illinois. He told supervisor Lisa Jefferson about the hijacking. The passengers were planning to jump the terrorists, he said. And then he asked her to pray with him. Beamer kept a Lord's Prayer bookmark in his Tom Clancy novel, but he didn't need any prompting. He began to recite the ancient prayer, and Jefferson joined him: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." As they finished, Beamer added, "Jesus, help me." And then, Beamer and his fellow passengers prayed a prayer that has comforted millions down through the centuries -- the prayer that David wrote in a time of great anguish: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want ... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. And then the famous last words: "Are you guys ready? Let's roll." We now know from the cockpit voice recorder that Beamer and other passengers wrestled with the hijackers and forced the plane to crash into the ground, killing themselves but foiling what was believed to have been the hijackers' plan to fly Flight 93 into the Capitol or the White House.

- I wonder what acts of bravery you will do with God's help. God has called you into His kingdom for such a time as this. There is a Caleb inside you waiting to get out. Why not make the choice today to step into all that God would desire for you to be and inherit the things He has for you.

### **Summary**

- Faith
- Obedience
- Patience
- Strength

**Song:** *Reign in me. The Lord has given a land of good things.*