



HG255: Mountain Top Experiences
Hebron: Mount Of Inheritance

Joshua 14:1-12

Home Group Study Notes

26 March 2023 - Revd Christine Williams



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker

How do we know where God is leading us?



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



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Joshua 14:1-12

Home Group Sermon

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Today we are in the hill country of Hebron. Hebron is now a city, 927 meters above sea level, and it is about 30km south west of Jerusalem. In order to understand the story in our reading, we need to refresh our memories about the story so far. Abraham was a man of faith who trusted God and became the father of the nation. He was a nomad so he did not own the land that he had moved his flocks and herds onto. Yet God spoke to him and told that he would give to Abram's descendants all the land that he could see. He had a great view. He could see a long way from Hebron. 'Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar for the Lord.' Gen 13:14-18. (Maybe Paul could have done a Bible study series of significant trees in the Bible. The trees at Mamre would certainly feature.)

The only land that Abraham ever legally owned was a field with a cave that he bought to bury his dearly loved wife Sarah. It was at Mamre in Hebron. (Gen 23). Later Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were also buried there. It became a very special place for the Jews. (Once there was a cathedral built on the site but now it is in Arab occupied lands and there is a mosque.) Many years after the time of Abraham, his descendants were slaves in Egypt and were led into the wilderness by Moses under God's guidance. God gave them the law on Sinai, and the rules about how he should be worshipped. The people were being formed into a nation as He was teaching them to rely on him for everything, their food, their water, their health and even their success in battle.

Finally, the people approached the Promised Land and Moses chose one man from each of the 12 tribes to spy out the land. Among them were Caleb from the tribe of Judah and Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim. Moses asked the men to see whether there was a strong fighting force and walled cities in the land that God was giving them. He asked them to look at whether the soil was good quality and what was growing there and he asked them to bring back some of the fruits of the land. They journeyed up through the Negev to the west of the Dead Sea and explored the area around Hebron but they also travelled on beyond the area round Jerusalem north as far as Rehob. Many of the cities were strongly defended and had walls around them.

The men of Hebron (who were the descendants of Anak) were a lot taller and broader than any of the Israelites who felt dwarfed by them. The spies found large bunches of grapes, pomegranates and figs which must have been lovely after a diet of manna and quails. They cut down branches of vine with the grapes and after 40 days of exploration, they carried the fruit back to the camp.

All the people gathered together to hear their report. Numbers 13. 'Yes, the land is very fruitful, but the people are powerful and the cities are fortified. There are tribes settled in all the areas we visited.' But Caleb said, 'that is all true, but nevertheless we can do it.' He and Joshua, said, 'the land is good, if God is pleased he will lead us into that land and give it to us, but do not rebel against God. Do not be afraid of those people.' You can read the whole story in Numbers 13-14.

Long story short! The people rebelled and took the view of the 10 who were afraid to enter the land. Soon afterwards the 10 doubters died of plague. God punished the people for listening to them by making them wait another 40 years in the desert until all of that generation had died out. When they tried to enter the land without God's blessing there was a rout and they never tried it again on their own without God's authority. Joshua and Caleb were spared; they were the only 2 people to leave Egypt and also enter the Promised Land. Numbers 14: 24 God said, 'because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.'

Caleb was in a minority of two, but he was a man of faith. He had faith in a great God who would deliver the people despite great obstacles. And so we come to the story in today's reading. The Israelites had crossed the Jordan and entered into the promised land. Some areas had been successfully won in battle but before the whole land was conquered, it was divided up into areas by tribe. Judah, Caleb's tribe, was allocated the southern part of Canaan. Imagine a line from the north end of the Dead Sea west to the Mediterranean Sea. It was the region south of that line so far as it was it was fertile before reaching the Negev desert. Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron were all in Judah. The area Caleb, who was now about 85 years old, chose for his family, as his inheritance, was in and around the city of Hebron.

I think there were 2 reasons why he wanted Hebron. The first because of its' history. It was where Abraham had lived and where he was buried. It was where he had talked with God as a friend and where God had made the promise about inheriting the land. Abraham and Caleb had so much in common. They were both men of faith who took God at his word. If God said he would do something then he would. They believed the promises of God and they acted on them accordingly. I think that Caleb was encouraged by the story of Abraham's faith.

The second reason I think Caleb chose Hebron was because it was the city of the giants. Caleb liked the challenge. He might be 85 but he liked a challenge.

The descendants of Anak were big strong men. Caleb trusted in God. God was going to win the battle for them. It made no difference to God if the city walls were strong and people were giants. Caleb's attitude was that If this is part of His plan then God will win them the victory. So here is a man whose very name spells out a way of living that would dramatically change our lives and our church if we followed his example.

C is for Courage. It took courage to boldly state that the people should enter the promised land when the others said it was too dangerous. It would have been distressing for him to discover their lack of faith. Daily they had received the manna to eat. Daily God had provided water in the desert. But they could not trust him to deliver them into Canaan. It meant for Caleb the long wait until he could enter the land. But he never lost his vision of the future because he was

A is for Anchored. His faith was anchored on the promises that God had made to Abraham and Moses that the people would eventually go into the land and possess it. Time was not an issue. Caleb could have patience when necessary. But it *would* happen because God had promised it.

L is for Lively. Caleb is good example of the way that God can use older people. it's dangerous to write older people off. Not only was he still alive when the others had died but he was lively. In verse 10 he said that he was 85 but as strong as the day Moses sent him off to be a spy. And he was still strong to fight in battle should it be necessary. God was blessing him with strength and stamina. But he did not just have physical energy he had:

E is for Energetic faith. He did not shrink from the task of defeating the large men of Hebron. He loved the challenge. 'The Lord helping me I will drive them out as he said.' V12 That was his energetic faith speaking.

B he was Bold to claim the promises of God. God said he would inherit Hebron so he would inherit Hebron. God said the descendants of Abraham would live in the land of Canaan and assuming they trusted in him, so they would.

CALEB Courageous, anchored in the promises, lively, with energetic faith, and bold to stand up for what is right.

We have so many promises to hold onto – to be anchored onto. God's faithful love. Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. The promise of power through the Holy Spirit. The promise of words to say when we are facing challenging situations. Have we been claiming those promises and others not mentioned? Don't underestimate what God can do. If he has promised it then he will deliver.

Caleb claimed his inheritance. His inheritance was to be settled in the land of promise. Our inheritance is in what Jesus has done for us on the cross. We have become God's children.

As children inherit from the father, we are inheritors of his Kingdom. And because of it we can look forward to our inheritance with the saints in glory. The spirit is the guarantee of this inheritance (Ephesians 1:14) Our promised land is knowing that we have our place in the Kingdom of God. We are his and nothing in this life and nothing after this life can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Our prayer today is to become more like Caleb. To be strong in faith. The battle is the Lord's not ours.

Prayer: *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.*
(Ephesians 3:20-21)

I learned this little song when I was in Sunday School:

*12 spies went to spy in Canaan, 10 were bad 2 were good,
What do you think they saw in Canaan? 10 were bad 2 were good.
Some saw giants big and tall, some saw grapes in clusters fall,
Two saw that God was over all, 10 were bad, 2 were good.*

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Emmanuel Church Text 2023



*The LORD bless you and keep you: the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you: the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26*

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Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1: Make a list of the promises God has made to us?

2: Are we claiming everything God has promised? Which promise on your list (Q1), is most significant to you? Which do you need to claim right now?

3: What helps us to maintain our trust in God when life gets busy or when we get frail?

4: What do you like most about Caleb?

5: What is our inheritance?

6: How do you imagine you may serve the church when you are 85?'



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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