

Goal-Setting With Caleb

We come to a new year. The New Year is famous for making new year's resolutions. A new year is a fresh start, so we set goals for the coming year.

How many of us kept our new year's resolution from last year? How many of us remember them?

Today I'd like us to see an example of a man who set very high and godly goals, and yet was able to meet these goals. And I'd like his style of goal-setting to set the tone for our individual goal-setting.

"Where there is no vision the people perish"

Our model is Caleb. Caleb whose name means "attack" is first introduced to us in Numbers 12. Here Moses sent spies into the land of Canaan to explore it. 10 of them came back with a negative report, "grasshoppers!" Caleb and Joshua came back with a positive report, "grapes!" They saw the same thing, but Caleb and Joshua saw possibilities whereas the 10 saw obstacles. The 10 and the murmuring people were never allowed to enter the land. Caleb and Joshua were.

In our passage in Joshua 14, they are now 40 years later in Canaan and dividing it up. It's Caleb's turn, and he chooses beachfront property right? He chooses a lush and beautiful grape farm, right? No: verse 12, He chooses the hardest assignment. "Give me this mountain".

Caleb, being 85 years old, wants the mountain city of Hebron. Here the places are well defended and what's worse, the people living there are Anakims, giants! He had the choice of any land, and he chooses the hardest assignment of them all.

We say, "Well, he was a really positive thinking guy! Well, Caleb really believed in himself! Caleb was a real go-getter." No, Caleb is an example of the kind of faith every believer can and should have.

I. Caleb's Goal was a God-Sized Assignment "if so be that the Lord"

What does this mean? Caleb wanted an assignment that was much too big for himself, he wanted one that only God could accomplish. He purposefully chose a God-sized assignment, something way out of his league. Why?

Because Caleb enjoyed putting the power of God to work. He enjoyed testing the power and promises of God. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"

God is pleased with children that step out for His glory with their dependence fully on Him. Caleb didn't have a backup plan here, it was all or nothing. Caleb chose a God-sized assignment, so that God would be required at all times.

In our Christian lives, are our goals God-sized? All too often we choose men-sized goals. E.g. "I'll go to Sunday School this year". We know deep down we can handle this with or without God. If God isn't with us, it's OK, the task is small enough to handle by myself. And that's why the power of God isn't there.

God enjoys His children stepping out in great ways. His standing invitation is in Jeremiah 33:3: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not"

God desires to work mightily! His power is not the problem. "According to your faith be it unto you." were the Lord's words. When last did we create a vacuum that only God could fill?, William Carey's statement was "Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God", Sometimes, the simple truth is: "Ye have not because ye ask not."

Just like in Caleb's time you have faith killers today. We make a God-sized Task: We desire great additions to the church or much spiritual growth in the people. Soon, the Faith-killers arrive, "Oh, but we don't have transport. We don't have the leaders. The church hall is too small. We won't be able to handle it.", Problems, not possibilities! Do you think it's out of God's will for the church to grow? For families to be more Christlike?

The slogan of a faith-killer, "We've got to be practical." Endless reasons why the God-sized task cannot be tackled. It shows our hearts are cold. We are not ready to put the power of God on display by launching out in faith for His glory. Notice, Caleb's goal was specific and based on God's promises. He named exactly what it was. He didn't say, may I receive some part of Canaan and may I defeat those there. He was specific.

Caleb's goal was based on a previous promise of God. God promised them the land, He said, "only be strong and very courageous, be not afraid...." Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Rom 10:14). We get caught up in philosophical questions "Does God want us to start this ministry? Is this of God or not?"

Those who wish to live in the safe land of unbelief will get their wish, they will wander around in a barren land of fruitlessness.

II. Caleb's Goal was for God's Glory

Forty years before, what was the problem that the other 10 spies raised? Giants. They said, 'giants will crush us'. Now, off Caleb goes to the exact thing that people said would stop Israel. Caleb wanted to prove finally to all doubters the power of God. He wanted it on display. God is a giant-killer. He wanted big victories for God's Name.

This tells us something about the man. It's as if Caleb feels the name of his God has been insulted by those spies 40 years ago, He's out to vindicate it. He wants a big victory for God's Name. See, Caleb's goals revolved around God's glory, God's reputation. Caleb didn't set goals that were selfish, they revolved around the name and glory of God. See, many today twist faith into some kind of lottery ticket, "I win big with God". But how does that glorify God? I can be sick and poor and still glorify Him, in fact, much more. No, real faith is stepping out FOR God, relying on God.

Are we concerned about the reputation of God? Are we zealous that His name be held high in our lives and in the church?

What victories do you need to win for the name of God? Maybe it's a repetitive sin. God's enemies see it. God's enemies laugh at the name of God. "I want that mountain" is to be our cry.

When you try to defend a sin in your life for selfish reasons, less guilt, better life, more respect, you won't succeed. You can't beat the flesh with the flesh. But when you launch out for the name of God, He empowers you. What great victories is God expecting us to fight? What would constitute a big victory for God and a big defeat for Satan?

Consider that in the Disciples' prayer Christ teaches us to pray "Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come" That is the same principle. May God's reputation be lifted up today. May His rule and power be seen by all.

But notice that Caleb did more than just set goals, he made the necessary effort to achieve them. One of the biggest problems that Israel had was the fact that they did not completely drive out the Canaanites, but chose to coexist. They became a thorn in their sides.

You may say, "I want that mountain of prayerlessness." Well, you've got to keep fighting that battle day by day in the power of the Spirit, while you drive it out. It may be a battle that goes on and on, but if you want that mountain badly enough, you'll fight until you get it.

But often we are like the Israelites, it just seems like too much effort. Why drive out my temper, my laziness, my speech, my rebellion? Life is OK now, but they will come back to be a thorn in your side.

Caleb sought great victories for God's reputation.

III. Caleb's goal was the joy of serving God, not greatness. Notice Joshua 14:13 and then 21:9,13.

What's going on here? Well, as the land is still being divided up a bit later, the Levites require some land. As priests, they seem to have no earthly inheritance, no portion of land that they owned. Yet they needed a place to live in. Who comes to the rescue? Caleb, who willingly gives up the city he fought for so they can live in it, and he goes and lives in the suburbs.

Caleb could have hung onto Hebron, "No, it's my city, I fought hard for it, it's my trophy." He could have used Hebron a monument to the name of Caleb, Hebron the home of Caleb, giant, killer. But no, he gives it up for God's people. Caleb's goal was not greatness, but usefulness. Caleb correctly saw himself as a servant. Servants do not seek to be great. They seek to be useful to their Master.

It was one of the favourite arguments of the disciples, "Who is going to be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" We might judge the apostles, but don't we do the same thing? "I bet I'm a better Christian than so and so." "So and so teaches OK, but I think I teach better." A Chinese girl was asked what the difference was between the church in China and the church in the West and she said, "The competition between the saints." We only compete when we're seeking greatness. But as servants we seek usefulness. That's

why Jesus said, "Therefore whoever will be great among you shall be your servant."

Usefulness means my reputation, my pleasure, my very person comes second to doing my Master's will. I want to be used by Him, even if I am forgotten. Even if I am unknown, I want to do what God wants me to do. Useful to the Master, not great for myself.

Caleb didn't seek a name or a reputation. Don't try to build your name. Don't try and build a ministry around yourself. God's not in the business of exalting His servants. He exalts His Son, and the servants are in turn blessed. But don't run after fame, recognition or the approval of everyone, that 's not being useful.

"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake"

(Psa 115:1)

Do you have goals this year? Without it, you will just wander in the wilderness another year.

1st Let your goals be God,sized assignments. Be it for your ministry, set a goal that is in God's will, according to His promise, but too big for you to handle.

2nd Let your goals be for God's glory. Look into your life and see what is bringing disgrace to His Name. Don't be like the Israelites who let the Canaanites coexist, you will have to set a battle plan and fight it out till they go.

3rd Let your goal be for the joy of serving – usefulness, not personal greatness. The greatest blessing is to be a servant, not a star. He that exalts himself will be abased. He that humbles himself will be exalted.