

WAITING IS GOOD! Pastor Lynn Peterson 5-27-07

Last month I talked about the story of Caleb and Joshua when they spied out the Promise Land. For those of you who were here do you remember the odds of the positive vs. the negative? That is right. There were 12 spies. Ten were negative and only 2 were positive. One out of six. The story was that they found a land flowing with milk and honey. They called it magnificent. But then what did the ten say? [28But the people living there are powerful, and their cities and towns are fortified and very large. We also saw the descendants of Anak who are living there!](#)

Now the descendants of Anak were giants. So what they were saying was, we can't take the land---- there are giants in the land. And what were they really saying? We don't believe God is able to deliver us. They were afraid. That was unbelief.

It got worse. The ten negative spies talked the whole community into unbelief. We talked about the importance of finding those 1 or 2 people who can speak into our lives with encouragement and encourage us in the positive. Don't listen to the 80 plus% who say it can't be done and it certainly can't be done by you. They will steal your destiny. Don't let them.

Caleb's response pleased God. ["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" \(Numbers 14:24\).](#)

God said Caleb had a different spirit.

When we become discouraged we need to ask the Lord to plow up our hard hearts of unbelief and make them soft for him and make them hearts willing to wait for and believe all his promises like Caleb did.

And if you remember I said that the waiting tests our heart to see if it is soft or hard with unbelief. Satan who is author of spirit of unbelief wants us to be impatient. God teaches us patience and to wait on him. Waiting on God is the key for growth. Waiting on God is the key for growth. Waiting on God is the key for growth. And I said, waiting on the Lord is good good good good! And you all nodded in agreement. At least I think you did. No one raised their hand and said, but.....

Now in a sermon I can get away with saying that. Today I want to examine that a little closer.

I still believe that waiting on the Lord is good, good, good. I haven't changed my mind. But I just want to give you a little more information so you know what you are agreeing to. Just why is it good and what is the purpose of waiting for our promises? I believe we should wait because God tells us to wait, because it tests our hearts, because it is a time to draw closer to God and because it gives God time to refine us.

Let us look at Joshua and Caleb. God was pleased. He said "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" (Numbers 14:24).

I have often wondered why God didn't say, "Joshua and Caleb had a different spirit". Why did He just say Caleb had a different spirit? I think that because Joshua was Moses' assistant. Do you remember how Joshua waited on the mountain for Moses to come down with the Ten Commandments and the law? I think it was assumed that people knew that Joshua was in line with Moses. Joshua was a party line guy. He was Moses assistant. He and Moses were tight. But Caleb didn't have any titles that we know of so God is making sure that Caleb gets the honor and respect he deserves. That is my thought anyway.

So God was really really pleased with Joshua and Caleb. So God killed off the 10 negative spies and then the next day he gave Joshua and Caleb the promise land.... Hello! Are you listening? It didn't happen that way. God did kill off the 10 negative spies. But then God waited 40 years until the rest of the rebels died of old age. God could have zapped 'em. Who messed that up? Why did it happen that way? It was that darn Moses who was always interceding for those stiff neck people. Meddling Moses. That is what Joshua and Caleb could have called him. Meddling Moses. If Meddling Moses hadn't interfered Joshua and Caleb could have gotten to the Promise Land a whole lot sooner. That is if they didn't have a different spirit. What does Scripture say?

Chapter 14 of Numbers

1 That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. 2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! 3 Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" 4 And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt." See that is what happens when you listen to the 10 negative and not the 2 positive.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. Okay, Moses and Aaron interceded but listen to who else interceded. Verse 6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh jih FUHN nee, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Wow! You think people give you a hard time How would you feel if you gave a great pep talk and the whole group you were trying to encourage talked about stoning you. Thankfully God put a stop to that. The Bible

says, Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites.

11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

then Moses said, "Hey wait a minute" 13 Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By your power you brought these people up from among them. 14 And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that You, O LORD, are with these people and that You, O LORD, have been seen face to face, that Your cloud stays over them, and that You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. 15 If you put these people to death all at one time, the nations who have heard this report about you will say, 16 'The LORD was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath; so he slaughtered them in the desert.'

Moses continues,

17 "Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: 18 'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.' 19 In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now."

and what did God say?

20 The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. 21 Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, 22 not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times-- 23 not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. 24 But 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.

Do you know that when God withholds judgment and waits, we have to wait too? Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes, but do you think they knew it would cost them 40 years?

Where I am going with this is that waiting is costly. You all waited when I said waiting is good, good, good. It is good but it is not easy. If Caleb was going to tear his clothes and intercede for the people, then he needed to be prepared to see God's mercy. And God's mercy for others cost him 40 years. What if Caleb interceded for the people and then got tired of what it cost him. What if he started complaining about the wait. What if he got bitter? The wait definitely tested his heart. And he truly had a different spirit.

The waiting tests our heart to see if it is soft or hard with unbelief. Satan who is author of spirit of unbelief wants us to be impatient. God teaches us patience and to wait on him. Waiting on God is the key for growth. Waiting on God is the key for growth. Waiting on God is the key for growth. If you want to grow, wait, it tests our hearts.

Do you know what today is? It is Pentecost Sunday. The followers of Christ waited as they were directed. Acts 1:4 (NLT) In one of these meetings as he was eating a meal with them, he told them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you what he promised. Remember, I have told you about this before. Acts 2:1-4 (NLT) On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, the believers were meeting together in one place. [2] Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. [3] Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. [4] And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. Pentecost Sunday celebrates the fulfillment of their obedience. It was quite a day. Definitely worth the wait.

The good news for us today is that the Lord has said through prophetic people that we have already crossed over. We get to take the Promise Land in the sense of our city. That wait is almost over. But we are still waiting. And we are waiting for other promises to be fulfilled. Don't give up!

Let's look at what God says about waiting in other places of Scripture.

Isaiah 30:18 But the Lord still **waits** for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who **wait** for him to help them.

First God waits for us. Then we wait for Him. I think He waits a lot longer for us than we wait for Him. Think about it. My dad accepted Jesus at age 86. God waited on my dad 86 years. I accepted Jesus as a child but God has had to wait for me in other areas. He is still waiting for me in some areas of my life. I am going to read that verse again so you can think about it. Isaiah 30:18 But the Lord still **waits** for you to come to Him so He can show you His love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who **wait** for Him to help them. He waits for us to come to Him. This isn't just about salvation. How many times have you heard people say, oh, I don't want to bother God with that. He has more important things to do." Sometimes God is waiting for us to bring those 'little' things to Him. And they probably aren't little either. He waits for us to come to him so he can show us his love and compassion. He wants to help us. We are not the only ones who have to wait. God waits for us. Aren't you glad He does? I think we forget how patient He is and how long we make him wait.

Habakkuk 2:3 But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, **wait** patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.

This seems contradictory. We are told to wait patiently and that what we are waiting for will not be delayed. I am sorry but when I have to wait I think things have been delayed. It seems

that I have a great need to tap into God's timing and to learn His heart on this.

One of my favorite verses is:

Isaiah 40:31 But those who **wait** on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Don't you want to be like an eagle who can soar effortlessly? The key to that is to wait on who? Wait on the Lord. How is it that waiting will cause us to soar? When we get desperate for God He draws us closer to Him and He will refine us and give us his heart. You know the Scriptures say that our thoughts are not his thoughts

Isaiah 55:9 (NLT) For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. But it doesn't say that He will not share His thoughts with us. If we are soaring effortlessly, it will be because we have held onto our promises and cried out for him and he has drawn us close to him and matured us and given us His thoughts. We cannot soar without him. Do you want fruits of the spirit? Fruit grows on trees, not small plants. A fruit tree takes years to develop before it will bear fruit. The tree has to wait until it matures. This is why we are told in Hebrews 6:12 it takes "faith and patience" to inherit the promises. Patience means we have to learn how to wait. Do you want fruit? Fruit takes time.

Galatians 5:5 But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive everything promised to us who are right with God through faith.

We are told to eagerly wait and expect to receive the promises. We are not just sitting around doing nothing. We are waiting eagerly with expectation cooperating with whatever the last thing Jesus has said to us.

Psalm 5:3

Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord.

Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.

This speaks of relationship. When we value and treasure a relationship with the Lord, He is so pleased. All throughout Scripture the Lord speaks of King David with such tenderness and love--My faithful servant David. David waited expectantly.

Romans 15:4 Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we **wait** patiently for God's promises.

We are told we will wait for God's promises. That means when you get a promise, you usually have to wait for the fulfillment of it. So how do we do that?

When you hear a promise from His word, just claim it and you bring it before your God you have a just claim. You are not arrogant, you are not presumptuous you are not prideful. You have a just claim. And as you claim it and cry out to God, you will be drawn closer to God..... Let us look at Caleb's claim.

#Joshua 14:6-13

A delegation from the tribe of Judah, led by Caleb son of Jephunneh jih FUHN nee the Kenizzite, came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb said to Joshua, "Remember what the LORD said to Moses, the man of God, about you and me when we were at Kadesh-barnea. kay desh-bahr NEE uh ⁷I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the LORD, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan. I returned and gave from my heart a good report, ⁸but my brothers who went with me frightened the people and discouraged them from entering the Promised Land. For my part, I followed the LORD my God completely. ⁹So that day Moses promised me, 'The land of Canaan on which you were just walking will be your special possession and that of your descendants forever, because you wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God.'

¹⁰"Now, as you can see, the LORD has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old. ¹¹I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then. ¹²So I'm asking you to give me the hill country that the LORD promised me. You will remember that as scouts we found the Anakites living there in great, walled cities. But if the LORD is with me, I will drive them out of the land, just as the LORD said." ¹³So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave Hebron to him as an inheritance. ¹⁴ Hebron still belongs to the descendants of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite because he wholeheartedly followed the LORD, the God of Israel.

Caleb waited 40 years in the wilderness and another 5 years while they were fighting for the land for the 12 tribes before he made his request for his mountain and Hebron. He had a claim. He hung onto the promise.

What do we know about Hebron? It is located 19 miles south of Jerusalem. It is 3000 feet above sea level. Centuries before Caleb, Abraham lived there for a time and purchased a field and a burial plot at Hebron. Centuries after Caleb, King David ruled his first 7 years at Hebron. Hebron has an abundant water supply and rich soil. It was and is an extremely valuable city. And Caleb didn't just get the city, he got the hill country with it. This was his inheritance. He got to pass it down to his children and to the generations that followed. The promise was good.

And did Caleb have to listen to any murmuring and complaining about why he got all that land? No. There was not one peep out of the Israelites, because they knew that he had had to wait. No jealousy to deal with. The wait took care of that.

The Caleb's anointing to slay giants started with wholeheartedly following the Lord. He had a different spirit. And he was willing to wait. Moses promised the land to him. Caleb waited

patiently for the land and Joshua fulfilled that promise by giving him the land as his inheritance. Caleb basically said, thanks for the land, I will kill the giants and take the land. He might not have had the fortitude to fight the giants without the wait. We don't know. What we do know is that after the wait, he had what it took to kill the giants.

Why should we wait for our promises?

1. God says so. God wants us to hang onto our promises. Do you have promises that you feel God gave you but they still haven't come to pass? Aren't His promises "yes and amen"? **2 Cor1:20 For as many promises as are of God, in Him they are yes, and in Him are Amen, for glory to God through us**

We have words about our state and our city and we wonder when Lord, when will revival come? We need to hang onto His promises. Moses said in **Joshua 23:14 (NLT) "Soon I will die, going the way of all the earth. Deep in your hearts you know that every promise of the Lord your God has come true. Not a single one has failed!**

Not one promise of the Lord fails. We need to be willing to wait for our promises. God waits for us. Shouldn't we be willing to wait for Him?

2. It is a test. It tests our hearts in a number of ways. There is the love test. The Lord wants to know if we really love Him. Are we fair weather Christians who only get excited and love God if everything is fair or better? The Lord knows we love Him when He blesses us and supplies all our needs. But will we still love Him even if things aren't going so good and He has allowed some troubles to touch us? The big question in the face of adversity is will we love God or will we be offended by Him. Caleb was not offended by God. He didn't get bitter. We have a choice. Will we get bitter or better. Let's get better.

There is the heart test. Is our heart hard with unbelief or is it soft like Caleb's? Let us pass the tests.

3. When we get desperate it draws us closer to God. When we have prayed and prayed there is a desperation that comes over us as we cry out to God. I have seen it in some of you. It is good to be desperate for God. I get desperate to see my son safely in God's kingdom. It draws me closer to God. God loves it when we are desperate for him. Think of how he felt about David. Whenever your heart groans to encounter Him, remember this: He wants it more than you do. And will God deny Himself? In **2 Tim. 2:13** we are told that **He cannot deny himself.**

(2 Tim. 2:13 (NLT) If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.)

4. It gives God time to refine us. We may be waiting because God is waiting for us to get rid of a bad attitude. Or maybe our attitude is good as Caleb's was but God wants to teach us more of His heart. When we do well with what we have God gives us more. I believe He gave Caleb more of His heart. Do you want to have the Lord's heart in all circumstances? Let Him refine you. It will be worth the wait.

Waiting on the Lord's promises is good!

Caleb kept his spirit of belief for 40 years. He killed the giants and he got the land that was promised to him. Caleb represents the spirit of belief. He was willing to wait. He was willing to believe God's promise to him. It tested his heart. It drew him closer to God. And it was a key for his growth and refinement.

Waiting for the Lord is good! As Caleb did, we can choose to keep the spirit of belief and wait for our promises. And when the time comes we will kill the giants and get the land that was promised to us.

We can represent the spirit of belief. We can be willing to wait. We can be willing to believe God's promises to us and allow God to test our hearts and draw closer to Him. Our waiting is a key to our growth and refinement. God has incredible blessings and miracles for us if we are willing to wait for our promises.

We wait for God's promises because God tells us to wait, because it tests our hearts, because it is a time to draw closer to God and because it gives God time to refine us.

Let us wait eagerly and expectantly for all that He has promised us.

Let us pray.