



RECEIVE YOUR INHERITANCE, PT2

As I was planning this sermon, I spotted a trailer drop for a new movie that's just been released. The name of the movie?

Tenzing.

Who was Tenzing? Tenzing Norgay was the sherpa who helped Sir Edmund Hillary get to the summit of Mount Everest in 1953. And as Hillary himself admitted on several occasions, without Tenzing, he couldn't have done it – and I think it's safe to say that together, Hillary and Tenzing were the first *men* to reach that peak. The little game of 'you first; no, you first,' is irrelevant, right? And the film, I'm guessing from the title, will seek to correct the received narrative (and about time, too).

But what the film will no doubt also explore is the kind of attitude that gets you to the top of a mountain in the first place. That's what we're going to think about, today.

Joshua 14:6-15

Often, the purpose of life doesn't go much further than shovelling breakfast down ourselves or the kids, getting to school and work, earning enough to make ends meet, looking forward to a break, etc. Now these things are important, obviously! But what the Israelites recognised is that we are also called to an even higher purpose – playing our part in advancing God's kingdom.

In this passage, we're introduced to a character who got this – quite literally. Who's the character? Caleb.

The first mention of Caleb is Numbers 13, where Moses picks 12 tribal leaders, one from each tribe, to spy out the Promised Land. Sadly, it doesn't end well. The spies come back, report on the agricultural potential of the land, and 2 of them, Joshua and Caleb, say "We can do this. God will give it to us!" But the other 10 say, "We can't. The people are huge ... we'll be slaughtered!" The people go with the faithless majority rather than the faithful minority, and as a result, God makes them wander in the desert for 40 years 'til all the no-bots are dead.

All that was 45 years ago. But now the Israelites are in, the land is being parcelled out, and the focus is back on Caleb, now 85 years old, and in particular, his attitude. What kind of attitude? A 'wholehearted' or literally 'whole' one (*maley* in Hebrew). An 'all-in' heart.

What does that look like biblically?

4 things in particular:

1) It's an obedient heart (vs7-8). 40+ years before, Caleb understood the mission – but also what God could do. And that impacted Caleb's approach to everything.

This got me thinking about why the 10 reacted as they did. They were scared, right? Which is understandable, kind of. Except ... they'd seen what God had done in Egypt ... walked through a gap in the sea ... experienced His care for them in the wilderness. But despite all that, their fear of human beings outweighed their faith in God.

Caleb, on the other hand, believed in God's ability to do the incredible, and that was the source of his obedience. And come Joshua 14, he's still got it. And so must we.

2) It's a persistent heart (vs9-10). 45 years later – half an average lifetime – Caleb is recounting all of this to Joshua. And reminding him of God's promise to him.

No doubt about it, 85 is, well, quite old! Yet Caleb is still spoiling for a fight. The message? Hold on. Keep going. Don't give up. Whether you're in your 20s or your 120s, whether it's praying for a BFF or being a witness to your family or serving in a ministry or waiting for it to start, no matter how long you have to wait, don't give up.

It may be that things will work out differently to how you expected. And if God has something else for you to do, He'll let you know. But whatever the outcome, however long it takes, whatever you're feeling ... don't give up.

3) It's a fervent heart (vs11). Do you think Caleb ever wondered to himself, "Is this ever going to happen"? Or "Man, I feel a whole lot older / achier than I used to"?

Maybe. But I think the point he's making is that there's something within him that overrides all that. Not just a penchant for extreme sports – a love for

God. To see this land taken. To see God's will done. And that's what makes the difference. He's passionate about this because he's passionate about God. And we need to be, too.

And remember: in the Bible, mountains were places of challenge, yes, but also for meeting with God (think Sinai, Zion, Carmel). They are not mutually exclusive (in fact, they often go together)! And Caleb is up for *both*.

4) It's an expectant heart (vs12). Look at how Caleb closes. To paraphrase: "I've been waiting for this moment for 45 years, Joshua. Now *give me my mountain!!!*"

What do you notice? It's a request; a demand, almost. I'm reminded of Jesus' words in the sermon on the mount: "Ask, and it will be given you." Or in the upper room: "Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it." But note: Jesus doesn't mean using His name like it's some kind of talisman. He means praying in accord with His purposes.

Are you praying that God's purpose will be done, in you? No matter how difficult? *That's* what Jesus meant and what Caleb was asking for. And *that's* why he received it.

Give Me An Undivided Heart ...

Joshua blesses Caleb and gives him Hebron as an inheritance. But that's not where the story ends. Because in 15:13-19 Caleb takes out 3 Anakite leaders and captures a couple of cities, too. And then you get this couple of verses, where his daughter Aksah pays him a visit and does something pretty counter-cultural: she asks for an inheritance (in this case, springs of water), something that would commonly be the actions of a son. And he gives it. The point? Caleb's example inspires his daughter, his tribe (their story is recorded), and us (we're still reading it today!).

That's the power of a wholehearted attitude.

So how has this story spoken to you? Maybe we know we had a zeal for God that if we're honest has faded. Maybe it's age, maybe it's disappointment, maybe it's the demands of work or family or our 21st century lifestyles. And I get it. But how many of us could admit that these things are sometimes excuses rather than explanations: that our lives are often shaped by our choices driven by our hearts. And our hearts are not what they should be.

To quote the line from the trailer: "John, I've watched how hungry you are. He's hungrier than you."

We know what Caleb was hungry for. What about us?