

Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**The New Testament Church  
Pastor Charles Mendenhall**

Father, I am who this Bible says I am. And I have what this Bible says I have. And blessed God I can do what this Bible says I can do. I can do all things through Jesus because He strengthens me. I can't fail for God is in me and God can't fail. Hallelujah! Thank you for The Word. Amen.

Usually when we think of the early church we think of the miracles that took place and the Book of Acts is an account of the first 40 years of the early church. We fail to see the challenges and the ceiling that the adversary attempted to put on them that they broke through into a greater measure of glory.

The adversary is always trying to put limits on us. Even in the local church as is with us individually we must break through these limits and go to a higher level. In the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt finally Pharaoh became somewhat frustrated and he told them they could go worship God but they had to leave their families and flocks behind. He wanted them to compromise along the way and they wouldn't. Pharaoh then told them they could if they took their flocks but had to leave their families behind. In the end they took their families and flocks.

Within compromise there is the potential for complacency to enter in. We can do that in our Christian walk and we will decide that we aren't going to search for all that God has for us. We can get to the point of being comfortable and decide to stay there. It is a decision that is made unconsciously over a period of time.

If the spirit of faith is to prevail in the next generation the veterans need to be mentoring.

In Joshua chapter 14 Canaan Land had been possessed. It took five years to do so and receive the benefits. Caleb came to Joshua who was the leader and asked for his inheritance.

**Joshua 14:7-12 (KJV)**

***<sup>7</sup>Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.***

***<sup>8</sup>Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God.***

***<sup>9</sup>And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God.***

***<sup>10</sup>And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.***

***<sup>11</sup>As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.***

***<sup>12</sup>Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.***

Caleb could say in the last chapter of his life that he wholly followed God. Numbers account says that they were of a different spirit. That spirit was that of faith and a can do spirit. It wasn't of a failure mentality.

At 85 years old Caleb made the statement that he was still as strong as he was at 40. God never changes. He is just waiting and looking for someone to step out and believe Him.

We need to be continually taking inventory to see what our motives and desires are. Are they rooted in selfishness? Are they rooted in pride and complacency? Or are they rooted in the plan of God?

We didn't see the barriers the early church had to break through. Barriers aren't easily broken. In the local church we have to change our mentality to see like God sees. We must remember that Jesus died for EVERYONE. We must realize and understand the priority of winning people for Jesus Christ.

The church has the mentality of let's clean them up and get them just right and then bring them to church. You don't clean the fish before you catch them; you catch them then clean them. Paul stated in Romans 12:1-2 that it is by the renewing of our mind we start being changed.

All the works of the flesh were going on in the New Testament church. Even the twelve that Jesus chose were not perfect but he taught them. He even picked a thief that never changed.

So what do we do as a church? Everyone wants no one to miss heaven. If we think that way we are going to get our hands dirty in relationship to dealing with people. If you want to grow you will experience sticky situations.

The leaders in the following verses determined what priority to them was.

**Acts 6:1-7 (KJV)**

**6 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.**

**2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.**

**3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.**

**4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.**

**5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:**

**6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.**

**7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.**

The early church didn't know what to do with the Gentiles. For ten years in the Early Church it was thought that only the Jews could be saved.

In Acts chapter 10 God appeared supernaturally to Peter and Peter went to Cornelius's house and preached the gospel to someone who wasn't of Jewish decent. He perceived and started his preaching

with saying that God was not respecter of persons. People not only got saved but were baptized in the Holy Ghost, spoke in tongues and prophesized. The gospel was no longer contained.

In Acts chapter 15 the religious people got into a squabble with James and some of the church leaders over the converts. It was over being circumcised. They were trying to bring them under the law. James spoke out and told them the forefathers couldn't keep the law so why the troublesome burden should be put on the new converts? It's like saying today to someone new in the church they can't dress a certain way or smell that way in church or have tattoos, etc.

A judgmental spirit if not of God. We all have a right to our opinion but if not of the right attitude we don't. Show the maturity that you say you have.

It is impossible to have a growing church without problems arising. If we have enough common sense the barrier can be broken. We can be part of the problem or part of the solution. It is our responsibility to be part of the solution.

**Ephesians 4:29 (KJV)**

***<sup>29</sup> Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.***

An incident may occur that is not good but the talk about the incident can be far more damaging than the incident itself. There may have not been any talk if not for the incident may be true but the talk about what happened can cause more problems than what happened.

**Ephesians 4:16 (KJV)**

***<sup>16</sup> From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.***

Every one of us has a gifting. We have a supply to give to the rest of the body. When every member in love gives that supply increase happens and it's built up.

Father, here I am. I want the spirit of Caleb even in my old and even in my young age. Give me a mountain, you will enable me, you will empower me. Use me oh Lord in building your church. Touch my lips Lord. Lord touch my lips, I speak right things. Provide me opportunities to mentor the younger generation. Thank you Lord. I humble myself, I ask you to forgive me for wrong attitudes. I am back in the traces and I will fulfill your calling on my life. Great are you oh Lord!!