Sermon title: “That Forward Thinking Woman”

Sermon series: Women’s Season

The Rev. Olivia Maxwell

August 6, 2023

**Scripture: Joshua 15:13-20**

Joshua gave Caleb son of Jephunneh a section among the people of Judah, according to God’s command. He gave him Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron. Arba was the ancestor of Anak. Caleb drove out three Anakim from Hebron: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, all descendants of Anak. He marched up from there against the people of Debir. Debir used to be called Kiriath Sepher. Caleb said, “Whoever attacks Kiriath Sepher and takes it, I’ll give my daughter Acsah to him as his wife.” Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb’s brother, took it; so Caleb gave him his daughter Acsah as his wife. When she arrived she got him to ask for farm land from her father. As she dismounted from her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What would you like?” She said, “Give me a marriage gift. You’ve given me desert land; now give me pools of water!” And he gave her the upper and the lower pools. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Judah, clan by clan.

**Sermon Notes:**

Acsah was a forward thinking woman who knew what she wanted, planned ahead, and boldly asked for it. She had requested that her father give her farm land, but received desert land instead. She needed water to convert her barren patch into a fertile resource for future generations. She explained what she needed to fulfill her desire, boldly asking her father to give it to her. As a result, he bountifully gave her pools that supplied water from above and below in Hebron, only a half mile from the sea. Acsah practiced gratitude and praised God for her great gift.

Rev. Maxwell cited Sojourner Truth and Christine King Farris as examples of forward thinking women. They did not allow disadvantages to hold them back but moved ahead with their vision of the future. She noted Fani Willis as a woman who, similar to Caleb’s campaign against systems of oppression in Canaan, is standing up to injustice and racism today.

Acsah did not allow her circumstances as a victim of sex trafficking to stop her from pursuing what she wanted for herself and her posterity. Like her, women and men look to the future when they:

**1.** **Audaciously ask.** “Acsah is an example of knowing your worth, knowing your value, knowing whatever you discern as your request that you don’t have to be fearful in asking.”

**2. Accept assistance**. Rev. Maxwell noted that women have a natural tendency to help but often have trouble asking for help themselves.

**3. Anticipate desires**. “Half the time as women, in particular, we have to figure out what we want. It’s fine as far as material things, but [we may be] lost trying to figure out what our purpose is.” Women can get so busy “that we don’t stop to think what we really love and want.”

**4. Articulate needs**. “As women, sometimes we don’t necessarily take a moment to truly look at what we need and articulate it.”

**5. Activate praise**. Acsah praised her anointing in water, symbolizing Judah’s inheritance from God.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. When have you made an audacious ask in your life? What was the result?

2. When is it easy for you to accept assistance? When is it hard?

3. Do you know what you want for your life? How do you figure it out?

4. Are you able to articulate your needs? How does it feel when you do?

5. What role does praise play in your life and faith?

6. What changes will you make in your life as a result of today’s sermon?