

43. The Book of 2Samuel—23:8-23

“Be a Mighty Man of God”

(6/25/17)

King David is one of my all-time favorite Bible heroes.

I love his ruggedness and courage, I love his reckless faith for God—he was a man’s man.

You remember that David was anointed king of Israel by Samuel while Saul was still on the throne.

When Saul heard that David had been anointed king, he purposed to kill him and remove him as a threat to the throne—this led to 10 years of running from Saul, living in caves out in the Judean wilderness.

One of the reasons I love David so much is because he had such a tremendous heart for God—in fact God called David *a man after His own heart*.

Now David had this amazing ability, because of his heart for God, to inspire those around him.

While David was out in the wilderness running from Saul word got out and suddenly men came from all over the land to join up with him.

1 Samuel 22:2 (NKJV)

² And everyone *who was* in distress, everyone who *was* in debt, and everyone *who was* discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.

Not exactly the kind of guys you'd think would make a good army—but as these men spent time with David an interesting thing began to happen, a transformation began to take place.

This rag-tag group of misfits, malcontents and outcasts became a super-elite group of fighting men—possibly the finest soldiers the world has ever seen.

However, in 2Samuel 23 some of David's army were singled out for special mention and their exploits recorded which won them the title of *mighty men*.

These were the best of the best—the Green Berets and Navy Seals of their day!

In the N.T. the Son of David, Jesus Christ is called our Captain and we who have joined ourselves to Him are called His soldiers in 2Timothy 2—but there's a difference between being a soldier of Christ and becoming one of His *mighty men*.

Not everyone in David's army was awarded the title of mighty man—that was an honor bestowed upon the toughest and most valiant soldiers.

What does it take to be a mighty man of God? What are the qualities in a Christian's life that would cause Jesus to bestow on one of His own the title of *mighty man* (or woman)?

To find out let's take a look at a few of David's mighty men because I believe that the Holy Spirit is holding them up to illustrate for us the qualities that God is looking for that make someone a mighty man of God.

I. Adino—Man of Prayer (v.8)

2 Samuel 23:8 (NKJV)

⁸ These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.

The KJV says, “*he lifted up his hand and killed 800...*”

The lifting up of the hands in Scripture is analogous to prayer. (Ex.17:8-16)

The famous prayer warrior S.D. Gordon said,

“Prayer is striking the winning blow—service is simply gathering up the spoil. The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing, but it is the chief thing. The great people of earth (the mighty men and women of God) are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray”.

If you want to be a mighty man of God then you must be one who lifts up your hands to God in prayer which is the only way the enemy is going to be defeated.

1 Timothy 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands...

This is the number one priority for mighty men and women of God—they must be men and women of prayer.

Persistence in prayer is the key—Adino lifted up his hand 800 times (that’s a lot of lifting!).

Moses on the mount had to keep lifting his hand until the victory was won.

Jesus, in Luke 18:1, said that men and women of God “*always ought to pray and not lose heart*”—in other words praying faithfully and consistently till the battle is won.

“A young man in Bible school offered to help David Wilkerson years ago when he was ministering on the streets of New York City. Wilkerson asked him how much time he spent in prayer. The young student estimated about 20 minutes a day. Wilkerson told him, ‘Go back, young man. Go back for a month and pray two hours a day, every day for 30 days. When you’ve done that, come back. Come back, and I might consider turning you loose on the streets where there is murder, rape, violence and danger...If I sent you out now on 20 minutes a day, I’d be sending a soldier into battle without any weapons, and you would get killed.’”

The great revivalist Charles Finney once said,

“I have never known a person sweat blood; but I have known a person pray till the blood started from his nose. And I have known persons pray till they were all wet with perspiration, in the coldest weather in winter. I have known persons pray for hours, till their strength was all exhausted with the agony of their minds. Such prayers prevailed with God. This agony in prayer was prevalent in Jonathan Edwards' day, in the revivals which then took place.”

Notice that Adino was called “chief” among the captains—I believe those mighty in prayer will be given the highest honor in heaven.

“I want to pray more consistently but every time I try, I’m never able to stay committed—I feel like such a failure.”

To everyone here who wants to pray but finds no strength let me read you a quote from Andrew Murray’s book, *Living a Prayerful Life*:

“Many a person has turned to his place of prayer under bitter self-accusation that he has prayed so little, and he has resolved for the future to live in a different manner. Yet no blessing has come—there has not been the strength to continue faithful, and the call to repentance has had no power because his eyes were not fixed on the Lord Jesus. If he had only understood, he would have said, “Lord, you see how cold and dark my heart is. I know that I must pray, but I feel I cannot do so. I lack the urgency and desire to pray.”

He did not know that at that same moment the Lord Jesus in His tender love was looking down upon him and saying, “You cannot pray. You feel that all is cold and dark. Why not give yourself over into my hands? Only believe that I am ready to help you in prayer.

I long to pour my love into your heart so that you, in the consciousness of weakness, may confidently rely on me to bestow the grace of prayer. Just as I will cleanse you from all other sins, so also will I deliver you from the sin of prayerlessness-only do not seek the victory in your own strength. Bow before me as one who expects everything from his Savior. Let your soul keep silence before me, however lame you feel your state is. Be assured of this: I will teach you how to pray.”

II. Eleazar—Man of the Word (v.9-10)

2 Samuel 23:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. ¹⁰ He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.

Eleazar held on to the sword so tightly in battle that his hand became “molded” to it—in other words, it literally became an extension of him.

To be a mighty man of God you must be a person whose hand sticks (Hebrew is “glued”) to the sword until it becomes a part of you.

Of course, the sword of the Christian is the *Word of God*—“*and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (Ephesians 6:17)

Three times in the wilderness Satan came against Jesus and all three times He countered with God's Word by saying, "*It is written...*"

It's interesting that Eleazar's name means, "*God is my helper.*"

In John 14 Jesus called the Holy Spirit "the Helper".

It's also interesting that *Eleazar* and the *sword* are connected in 2Samuel 23:10—even as Paul called the Word of God the "Sword of the Spirit" in Ephesians 6.

The Holy Spirit is telling us thru this that you can't be a mighty man or woman of God if the Word of God isn't literally a part of you!

A Christian whose sword has been separated from them is easy prey for the enemy.

In the Christian classic, *Pilgrims Progress* (written by John Bunyan), there is a scene in which a terrible allegorical battle is portrayed between Apollyon (Satan) and Christian:

"Then Apollyon seeing his opportunity began to close in on Christian and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall and Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, 'I am sure of you now.' And with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But as God would have it, while Apollyon was preparing to take his last blow, thereby making an end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand and caught his sword saying, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise,' and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him back away like someone who had received a mortal wound.

When Christian saw this, he went at him again saying, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.'

And with that Apollyon spread his dragon wings and sped away, so that Christian saw him no more for a time."

John Bunyan knew that spiritual warfare is waged and won by how effectively a Christian holds onto and wields the Sword of the Spirit.

One pastor said,

“Are you wearing your Bibles out? I hope so. You must be in the Word consistently and continuously. You cannot grow unless you’re taking in consistent Bible teaching and Bible study. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Your faith grows stronger as you take in the nutrients and spiritual calories of the meat of the Word.”

III. Shammah—Man Faithful in Service (v.11-12)

2 Samuel 23:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. Then the people fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. And the LORD brought about a great victory.

Many of Israel’s battles with the Philistines were over crops—because they were the staples of their diets.

Stealing them served two purposes—1) You gained strength and health for your side; 2) You starved out, weakened and eventually destroyed the other side.

David no doubt assigned Shammah and the other soldiers the job of guarding this field of lentils.

Lentils are legumes (member of the bean family) and are highly nutritious providing not only complex carbs for energy but also protein for muscle strength and repair.

So, David assigned Shammah the job of guarding this field of lentils and when the Philistines came to steal this crop—he saw it as his responsibility to stand his ground and fight.

You see, the land belonged to the Lord (Lev. 25:23) and was given to Israel to use for His glory (Lev. 18:24–30).

Shammah didn't want the Philistines to capture and control what belonged to God, for the Jews were stewards of His land—and therefore, he was going to be faithful to his King and his God—even if it meant his life.

And so, when everyone else ran, Shammah stood firm against the enemy and was faithful in service.

1 Corinthians 4:2 (NKJV)

² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

One pastor had this to say—

“What has the Lord given you to do? Maybe your job is to change diapers in the nursery, to serve in the rest home, or to teach third grade Sunday school. Stand your ground even when everyone else splits. Be like Shammah—until the King releases you, stick with your job...God is testing us today. Have we stood our ground? Have we kept our commitment?”

One of the great qualities of a mighty man of God is *faithfulness in service*.

So many today have deserted their post or fallen to sin and removed themselves from service.

We hear a lot of talk in Christian circles about “men of faith”—but what the Church desperately needs today are *faithful men*.

Men and women who are loyal to their King and are going to stand their ground and fight the enemy, no matter what it takes, so that territory that belongs to our God won't be stolen by the devil.

This would include fighting for the truth of God's Word—but also fighting for your marriage, your family, and for other believers in Christ that the modern day 'Philistines' (the flesh) and the devil might not steal them away from the Lord.

IV. David—Man of Worship (v.13-16)

2 Samuel 23:13-16 (NKJV)

¹³ Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴ David *was* then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Bethlehem. ¹⁵ And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate!" ¹⁶ So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took it and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD.

David himself becomes the fourth example of a mighty man of God.

David had won the title of *mighty man* after he killed Goliath; and then after Saul made him captain over a part of his army he killed so many Philistines that they wrote a song about him—“*Saul has slain his thousands but David his ten thousands.*” David here, as a mighty man of God, exemplifies a man of *worship*.

When three of David's men heard him say how much he longed for a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem where he'd grown up (not giving an order just expressing a desire)—they purposed they would get their king a drink of that water.

And even though Bethlehem was surrounded by Philistines—these men broke thru the enemy's line risking their lives to bring David a skin of water from that well.

But when David's men brought back the skin of water from the well of Bethlehem and gave it to him, having risked their lives just to offer him a drink of water—David refused to drink it.

No doubt, he reasoned in his heart, *"These men risked their lives to bring me this water—this is 'blood-water' and the blood belongs to the Lord (Lev.17:8-13). Only God is worthy of that kind of devotion and sacrifice."*

So he poured it out to the Lord as an offering—in Exodus 30 a drink offering was called a 'libation'.

David took that skin of water, which at that moment was the most precious thing that he had, and poured it out as a drink offering to the Lord.

And in that act of devotion and sacrifice David was exemplifying true worship.

It's reminiscent of Mary's act of worship as recorded in John 12 (Explain).

2 Samuel 24:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing."

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

V. Benaiah—Man of the Staff (v.20-22)

2 Samuel 23:20-22 (NKJV)

²⁰ Benaiah *was* the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. ²¹ And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian *had* a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. ²² These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men.

Benaiah didn't let the pit, the cold or the snow stop him from taking on the lion.

A mighty man doesn't let his circumstances stop him from doing battle against Satan who the Bible says, *"goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."*

One pastor said,

"You may feel like you're in a pit, like it's winter in your heart for God and your walk is all snow and ice but—you can't let that stop you from doing battle with the enemy—there is too much at stake."

Benaiah took on an Egyptian who was 7 ½ ft. tall and overcame him using a staff to defeat him.

Egypt in Scripture is a type of the world, and the staff in Scripture is a symbol for the pilgrim—the way we overcome the world is to be a pilgrim.

Don't get comfortable, don't settle down and make the world your home.

As Christians we are pilgrims just passing through on our way to our heavenly home.

Keep your heart set on things above and you will have victory over the world.

When you lose sight of eternity you will be tripped up by the world which, if seen through the eyes of the flesh, can appear to be a spectacular place, but when seen through the eyes of faith is an empty place that's passing away. (I John 2:17)

A mighty man never befriends the world—he fights against the world as Benaiah did.

A mighty man (or woman) of God is a man of: ***Prayer, the Word***, someone who is ***faithful in service***, a ***worshipper*** (giving what is most precious to their Lord), a person who ***doesn't let their circumstances keep them from doing battle with the enemy***, and one who ***overcomes the world*** by never getting tangled up in it because they see themselves as a pilgrim who is just passing through it.

A Final Thought on Spiritual Warfare comes out of 2Timothy 2:3-4—

2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NKJV)

³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

This gets into the “mindset” or “attitude” of a soldier of Christ.

A soldier can have the finest body armor and weaponry that money can buy but if he doesn't have the mindset of a soldier, if he refuses to fight or defects from the battle—then it's all worthless.

You see, before you will be willing to endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ—you first must think of yourself as a soldier of Christ!

A good soldier of Jesus Christ is a person who has only one thing in mind—to obey Jesus and endure whatever hardship it takes to win the battles you face on His behalf.

God has given us everything we need to win this war—but we must have the “mind of Christ” and not a “carnal mind” in love with the world.

Too many Christians are AWOL when it comes to spiritual warfare—and that’s because they view the Christian life as a ‘playground’ instead of a battleground.

For them it’s all about socializing, networking, fellowship and fun—and not about fighting the battles of the Lord.

They are not fighting the good fight of faith—they are double minded, trying to serve two masters—God and the world.

That is always a recipe for defeat and never the mindset of a mighty man or woman of God.