

David's mighty men

Reading 2Sam 23:8-12

In this passage we read about king David's best soldiers, his elite bodyguards. We read in **1Chron 12:38** that as part of David's army they had **one purpose**: "All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, **to make David king over all Israel**; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind **to make David king.**"

Their purpose, the thing they lived for, fought for, the thing they most wanted to see was this – David being made king & his kingdom being extended. David was their king and also the rightful king of all Israel. His soldiers needed to fight tho' in order to make him king as there were many who opposed David – **1Chron 11:10** – "Now these were the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, **to make him king, according to the word of the LORD** concerning Israel."

I hope today that all of us have the same purpose – to make Jesus King.

What I want to do today is to have a look at some of David's mighty men and see what opposition they faced and how they reacted to them – did they surrender or conquer? What opposition did they face – if any and see how they helped to make David King.

1. Josheb-Basshebeth – v8.

This man is only mentioned once in the whole Bible, not very famous and I guess that not many of us have heard of him! He was one of the leaders of David's mighty men tho'. The verse tells us the main thing he was famous for: "**he had killed eight hundred men at one time.**" We don't know about the circumstances about this battle or how many other soldiers of David were fighting but what we do know is that this man was fighting against **overwhelming odds** – 800 soldiers of the enemy came to fight against him in one go!

Did he fight or surrender? Give up or win? We don't know how he did it, some people have suggested that he was in the mouth of a cave and the enemy came at him one by one. Whatever happened, we know that God must have helped him tho' because this would have been impossible for 1 man to do by nature.

Running away would have been an easy thing for him to do with so many soldiers coming against him, he could have though, "*there is no way I can win with such overwhelming opposition, the numbers are too great for me to cope with, I am only one person.*" But instead he stood his ground, fought & won. We need to realise that he was a soldier and as we read earlier in **1Chron 12:38** that they had fully committed hearts in making David king.

Anything that opposed David's kingship & the extension of his kingdom needed to be fought against. Because of his love for the king and because he wanted to be an obedient soldier he fought against overwhelming odds.

For us today, we face the same situation as Josheb-Basshebeth: the number of people in this town, in your school, in college, in your street who are not Christians is much larger than those who are saved. In your family you may be the only Christian.

You may feel overwhelmed with temptation – temptation to do certain things - and it seems relentless and overwhelming.

Maybe problems may come in and swamp you – problems in families, health, finances, worry & discouragement. All of these things can cause us to feel overwhelmed.

If we ever feel like that then what do we do – surrender or fight? Just like J.B we need to be obedient to our King and follow His orders. We need to fight wherever our King places us and if He has told us to do something we know that He is with us and **we will win if we don't give up.**

2. Eleazar (v9-10)

Eleazar helped king David overcome against the Philistines. We read about him that **next to him among the three mighty men was Eleazar the son of Dodo, son of Ahohi. He was with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel withdrew. ¹⁰He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword.** And the Lord brought about a great victory that day, and the men returned after him only to strip the slain.

All of the other soldiers of Israel fled and just David & Eleazar were left to fight! Again, we find that God's people are outnumbered but apart from that we see that Eleazar overcame **unbearable weariness** – he fought until his hand was so weary it froze to his sword.

Do you ever get weary? Not physically tired but just find it hard in living as a Christian? **Dan 7:27** tells us that one of the tactics of satan is to **wear out the saints of the Most High...** Wear out, weary, oppress & run down. This is just a wear down of our spiritual resilience, an erosion of our fortitude and zeal for God. Do you ever feel like this?

☞ Problems seem unrelenting – Job – one problem after the other!

☞ Failure in the same areas.

What should we do? Quit? Give in? Stay on the battlefield!

In **1Chron 11:12-14** we read the same story but it tells us in **v14** that Eleazar and king David, **But they took their stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and killed the Philistines. And the Lord saved them by a great victory.** Even tho' he was tired and it could have been an easy thing to give up **he stood his ground.**

BUT! Everyone else apart from him & David had fled! But they took their stand!

Four times in **Eph 6** Paul tells us to **take our stand**:

☞ **v11** - **stand against** the schemes of the devil;

☞ **v13** - **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand firm.**

☞ **v14** - **Stand** therefore,

One of the things we need to do if we want to win is to learn to stand. We can pray, fast, read our Bibles, witness and do all the things God tells us to do **but problems don't shift.** What do we do then? Give up? **Verse 13** – **having done all - after you have done everything, stand firm.**

There was a Christian called **Athanasius** who lived about 300 AD He was concerned about false teaching in the church that was becoming very widespread and popular so he stood against it. One of his friends came to him & told him how everyone was getting ready to oppose him but he just said "**then it's Athanasius against the world!**". He wasn't scared to be in the seeming minority. Remember, "**If God is for us, who can be against us?**"

Lighthouse story: Actual conversation between US navy & Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in October 1995:

Canadians: Please divert your course¹⁵ to the south to avoid a collision.

Americans: Recommend **you** divert **your** course 15 to the north to avoid collision.

Canadians: Negative. You will have to avert your course 15 to the south to avoid a collision.

Americans: This is the captain of a US navy ship. I say again, divert **your** course.

Canadians: No, I say again, **you** divert **your** course.

Americans: This is the US aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the 2nd largest ship in the US Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied by 3 destroyers, 3 cruisers & numerous support vessels. I demand

that you change your course 15 north. I say again, that's one – five degrees north or counter measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the ship!

Canadians: This is a lighthouse – your call.

We need to be like that lighthouse keeper, to stand our ground & be immovable in spite of all the threatenings we may receive! Decide today that whatever happen you are going to stand your ground, never surrender and go on to victory.

3. Shammah.

2Sam 23:11-12 – “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. But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. And the LORD brought about a great victory.”

The story of Shammah is similar to that of Josheb-Basshebeth & Eleazar – the other soldiers of Israel fled, Shammah took his stand but I want you to notice something very important about Shammah: **Look at what he defended – a field of lentils!** The Philistines came & attacked the Israelites and the Israelites fled. We read in these verses that just Shammah remained behind to fight. Is it because it was only a lentil field and the rest of the Israelites thought it was not worth defending? Maybe it would have been different if it was something more precious such as a strategic hill or town etc. Shammah tho' took his stand, fought for his king and defended the lentil field.

Today there are areas in life where most people seem to have run away from the fight, they turn & flee because to them “**it's only a lentil field**”. **But** even if it is **only a lentil field** in the opinion of others, it is still worth fighting for the king and defending it!

We need to stand for Jesus in the normal things of life, the routine, the humdrum, the daily grind of life. Some Christians live only for the spectacular, the big meetings, the famous preachers etc – but we need to be like Shammah – to live for Jesus in the normal day to day stuff.

- ☞ Raising family
- ☞ Day to day at work.
- ☞ Living in the routine of retirement
- ☞ Serving faithfully in church.
- ☞ Honesty
- ☞ Purity

Jesus, I'm doing this for You, I'm washing the dishes for You, I'm aiming to be a good employee for You....

Decide that no are of your life is too small or inconsequwntial to surrender to Jesus and His Kingdom. It is precisely becasue they are small and seemingly insignificant that we need to be vigilant – **if we are faithful over what, God will entrust us with what?** It is being faithful in the **little things** that counts!

Are you willing to do *little things* for Jesus? Not really that they are little things in His eyes but they may be in the eyes of others:

- ☞ Set stuff out for church.
- ☞ Teach in kids club.
- ☞ Housewife.
- ☞ Pray with your children.

Don't chase the spectacular or big – be like Shammah and see the importance of the insignificant for the Kingdom of God!

4. The heart of the mighty men

What made the mighty men live in such a way? Why were they so committed? **2Sam 23:13-16** And three of the thirty chief men went down and came about harvest time to David at the cave of Adullam, when a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. ¹⁵And David said longingly, Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate! ¹⁶Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate and carried and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it. He poured it out to the Lord.

David's men weren't just waiting for His commands to come blaring out – trumpet call, loud shout etc – they were ready & listening to the whisper of His voice, the glance of his eyes, the desire of his heart.

Are we like that for Jesus? If we want to be people who see Jesus made King in our lives and church then we need to:

- ☞ Listen for the whisper of His voice,
- ☞ Find out His desires,
- ☞ What He likes and do it;
- ☞ What He hates and leave off it.

Eph 5:10! (find out what pleases the Lord)

5. Conc.

God desires us to have a passion, a burning desire in our hearts to see Jesus made King over every area of our lives and His kingdom extended. We can only truly extend His kingdom tho' if our lives are being more and more conformed to His rule and are submitting to His ways.

Like David's mighty men we may need to:

- ☞ Struggle against overwhelming odds – temptation, being in minority.
- ☞ Overcome weariness – problems and things in life that wear us down, not just physically but as Christians.
- ☞ Make Jesus Lord and take a stand in the seemingly insignificant & humdrum.
- ☞ Listen out for His whisper and find out what pleases Him.

As we set our hearts to these things, we shall find, as did David's men, that our King, Jesus, stands with us in the thick of battle, He covers our back, fights with us and for us and we, together with Jesus, see His Kingdom & rule extended in our lives, our church and this locality.