

What Makes a Mighty Man?

Text: II Samuel 23:11, 12

David was about to die and he gives Solomon some wise and good advice. In II Samuel 23:1 we see God identifies David as an anointed man and a man who had a song. David admonishes his son in II Samuel 23:3 to be just and rule in the fear of God. It is torture to live in fear of man. One sure way to overcome the fear of man, which is a snare (Proverbs 29:25), is to possess the fear of God. One who fears God, fears no man. In II Samuel 23:4 David encourages his son to remember his Creator in the days of his youth, a truth that Solomon never forgot in word, although he did forget in deed (Ecclesiastes 12:1). In II Samuel 23:5 David brings up the value of life's unrealized purposes. This was mentioned more specifically in II Chronicles 6:7-10 and in I Kings 8:17-20. Solomon understood that God had given David the desire to build Him a house, although David was not permitted to build it. The Bible declared David's desire was a good thing, because it laid the groundwork for Solomon with materials and vision (I Chronicles 22). David gives Solomon a final warning in II Samuel 23:6, 7 of the dangers of the heathen idolaters. One of the saddest commentaries of Solomon's life is that he ignored David's warning and he reaped the consequences as spoken of in I Kings 11:1-8.

In the rest of II Samuel 23, God dedicates a very important key to David's reign. The key is found in the fact that David was surrounded by "mighty men." What kind of men were they?

(1) They were men of undying loyalty. We see this illustrated in Asahel (II Samuel 23:24) who did not fear Saul's strong man, Abner when it came to defending David. II Samuel 2:21: "And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him." And we see this so beautifully portrayed in Uriah (II Samuel 23:39). In the darkest day of David's life, he was surrounded by loyal men like Uriah, who would not betray David and David's men, even when the king betrayed him (II Samuel 11:11).

(2) They were men of tenacious determination. Men who never say die, like Beniah who fought "lionlike" men of wild and strong natures. Beniah even fought a real lion in a snowy pit where footing is insecure and escape is eliminated. Then he took on the Egyptian, killing him with the enemy's own weapon (II Samuel 23:20-22).

(3) They were men who stood against the odds. In battle, Adino slew 800 men at one time armed only with his spear! (II Samuel 23:8). Abishai killed 300 enemy combatants with his spear and killed vengeful Ishbibenob, the giant, son of Goliath, saving the very life of David his king (II Samuel 23:18; II Samuel 21:16, 17).

(4) They were men of undying resolution. I love the phrase found in II Samuel 23:9, 10 where we are told that although Eleazar was totally exhausted "...his hand clave unto the sword..." (II Samuel 23:23:10a).

(5) They were men of total commitment. Today, I would like us to focus on Shammah as we find him in II Samuel 23:11, 12. He was a man totally committed to his God and his king. I had the privilege to preach for and with Brother Lester Roloff in the last days of his life. He would often preach thematically. A text would burn in his heart and at almost any chance he had as an evangelist, he would drive home the point of that certain text to whatever congregation he was preaching. Three weeks after his tragic death, I received a letter from him. Just before taking off in the plane he later died in, he handed Miss Ida, his long time secretary, a dictated recording. He said, "Have this typed up for me; I'll sign it when I get back." Three weeks after he died, I received a letter from him. Miss Ida explained that although he did not return, she thought he would like for me to have the letter he wrote to me the day he died. It was a warm and personal letter. He signed off and then put at the bottom of his correspondence, P.S. II Samuel 23:12. I could hear him speak that verse and I can see him as he looked down at me while he preached saying, "Brother Johnny, we've got to stand, boy, we've got to stand!" Shammah really shows us how to fulfill the admonition of Paul who said in Philippians 2:15, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Archimedes (c. 287 BC – c. 212 BC), the Greek mathematician, philosopher, scientist and engineer said, "Give me the place to stand, and I shall move the earth." A variant translation says he said, "Give me a place to stand and with a lever I will move the whole world." For Shammah, he did not move, but the world around him did. We can learn much from this mighty man of God. Consider:

I. THE TROOPS AGAINST US

II Samuel 23:11a: "...And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop..." Wicked people are willing to lay their differences aside to fight against righteous people. As a rule, the Pharisees would want to have little or nothing to do with Pilate. But they hated Jesus so much, they were most willing to work with him. Matthew 27:1, 2: "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor." Then we see Pilate and Herod band together in Luke 23:12: "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves."

When you stand uncompromisingly against the wrong and for the right, Satan usually sends in a team effort to bring you down.

II. THE TREASURE BEFORE US

II Samuel 23:11b: "...where was a piece of ground full of lentils..." Around 512 BC Sun Tzu, military general, tactician, writer said something to the effect that an army must march on its stomach. In other words, a well-fed troop will fight well. In any war, access to food is vital to keep up your strength. This may very well be the reason why the Philistines wanted the peas and why our hero,

Shammah was willing to defend the pea patch. His goal may have been to deprive the enemy and feed God's army.

Jesus understood the importance of maintaining strength by eating. He said in Mark 8:3, "And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far." By the same token, we will faint if we are undernourished by not feeding on the Word of God. Our Lord said in Luke 4:4, "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

III. THE TESTING AROUND US

II Samuel 23:11c: "...and the people fled from the Philistines." Shammah was left to stand alone. God forms and molds His servants in the alone times. Those times when you have no one but God to lean upon will be the times that you must decide to trust God and let Him alone be your source of strength (II Samuel 22:30-44).

IV. THE TERRITORIAL DEMARCATION

II Samuel 23:12: "But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines...." There was nowhere to hide in the middle of this field of lentils. Like all pea patches, trees and rocks were removed; there was nowhere to hide. Our hero, Shammah did not come to hide; he came to dig in and fight to the finish. And he was determined that the finish would come to the enemy, not to him and more importantly, to Israel!

V. THE TRIUMPHANT SAVIOR

II Samuel 23:12b, says, "...and the LORD wrought a great victory." Not only did Shammah experience this, but his king, David knew this well, who declared in I Samuel 17:47b, "...the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands." And because it is God that gives the victories in our battles of life, God must, in turn, receive the glory! I Peter 5:11: "To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

-Pastor Pope-