

**Title:** David's Mighty Men  
**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 23:8-39  
**Series:** The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:

- a. Hebrews chapter 11 is often called the New Testament's hall of faith.
  - i. It pictures both men and women who forsook the comforts and needs of this world to identify themselves with the suffering of Christ and His people.
- b. Our chapter today is similar, although less well-known.
  - i. This chapter demonstrates the importance of boldness and determination amid trouble and persecution. We have a list of men who sacrificed everything for God and His kingdom.
    1. It is an honor roll of kingdom servants.

2. Verse 8-12 - The King's Mighty Men - These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite; he was chief of the three. He wielded his spear against eight hundred whom he killed at one time. (9) And 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. (10) He 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. (11) And next to him was

Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines gathered together at Lehi, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the men fled from the Philistines. (12) But he took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines, and the LORD worked a great victory.

- a. From our verses, we learn that trusting in God allows the follower of God to defy the odds in any situation.
  - i. All these episodes are individual feats, requiring great courage to stand alone and change the course of events despite overwhelming odds.
  - ii. We acknowledge the bravery and courage of David's three warriors. These men stood firm when others fled, believing in God despite overwhelming odds. They exemplified the bravery of a young David against the giant Goliath. God, who used these men for His glory, immortalizes their names.
  - iii. But, despite what we might think, these stories aren't just about human determination. Verses 10 and 12 reveal the real reason behind the bravery and victory: **God brought about great victory** (lit., salvation)."
    1. The true hero of our stories is God, who chooses to use ordinary people like us for His glorious purposes.
  - iv. So the victory was ultimately a gift from God. It was His doing. All of God's servants must understand this truth, or else we risk turning our successes—or ourselves—into idols.

- b. Let's focus on the first of the three great men, **Josheb-basshebeth, the Tahchemonite**. Notice his commitment and bravery as he faced an entire army alone. It's remarkable.
- i. We know that, as Christians, the odds are always against us.
    1. We are often overcome by the amount of ungodliness that surrounds us.
    2. In our story, Josheb-Basshebeth was outnumbered 800 to
  - ii. Now, in the face of such great odds, it is most probable that Josheb-Basshebeth felt incredible fear. Fear is a normal human condition, and it helps assess danger and promote self-preservation.
    1. Yet Josheb-basshebeth would not succumb to fear but to trust.
      - a. We all remember the Words of God to Joshua in **Joshua 1:9** "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
        - i. To be brave does not mean that we must not feel fear; it means that we will act courageously despite our fears. We must master fear with faith.
      2. Beloved, overcoming our fear is only possible when we remember God's promises.

- a. Promises like **Leviticus 26:8** Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.
- b. So Josheb-Basshebeth believed in God and gave himself to the impossible, and the **Lord brought about a great victory**.

3. The church is in desperate need of these types of Christians.

c. Our second mighty man of valor is **Eleazar, the Son of Dodo**. Eleazar remained with David even when their army abandoned the king and the king's cause because of fear. Eleazar remained faithful in the midst of a faithless generation.

- i. As individuals, we must stand even if all around us flee. Sometimes, we must live in faith but do so alone.

1. **2 Timothy 4:16-17** At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! (17) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

- a. Remember that Eleazar was with David. David is a picture of Christ. As long as Eleazar was with David, Eleazar stood on solid ground.

- i. He fights back to back with David.
  - ii. Beloved, if all you have is Christ, you have more than enough!
- ii. According to our passage, Eleazar's sword became an extension of who he was; **he rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword.** The sword and the man became one. His hand cramped around the hilt and could not be removed from the sword without immense pain. Beloved, this is how the people of God must fight. They must hold onto their only weapon, the Sword of the Spirit. The word of God must become the weapon we cling to in the fight against this world's sin.
  1. **Ephesians 6:17** and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,
  2. **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- iii. Finally, beloved, notice that the men of Israel returned only for the spoil. They returned when all the work was done when there was no more danger to themselves. They returned when there was no more bleeding or injury. They all returned, but they remain nameless in the

Chronicle of Scripture. Men who flee are not worthy.

d. Finally, we read about **Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite**:

- i. Shammah comes against the Philistines when the Philistines have encroached into Israel. The enemy was taken over the land of God.
  1. This land was known for its lentils. It was God's land, and it gave forth the blessedness of His bounty.
- ii. Tragically, we read again that the men of Israel fled. In their running, they abandoned the very blessings that God had given to them. They quit and allowed the enemy to take over part of Israel. This is what acting upon fear does, and sadly, we see this happening within the church today.
- iii. But Shammah **“took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines.”**
  1. We need men and women who defend what God has given them, even if everyone else surrenders God's gifts.
    - a. Too many men are abandoning their spiritual responsibility. They surrender the blessings that God has given them to the enemy.
  2. I also want you to notice the location that Shammah chose for his defense of God's Land. **His stand was in the midst of the plot.**

- a. He stationed himself in the very middle of the land in defiance of the enemy.
- b. The enemy could not ignore him. How can you ignore a man in the middle of the field you have just taken?
- c. Also, we must notice that Shammah did not allow himself an exit plan by standing in the middle of the open field.
  - i. It's as if he drew a circle with his sword around himself and said, "You can take the rest of the land given to you by the people of God, but if you want this portion, this small portion that I control, you'll have to kill me."
- d. Beloved, God will work through courageous Christians willing to fight for their God-given blessings.
  - i. Families
  - ii. Churches
  - iii. Faith
  - iv. Future
- e. Because these three men trusted the Lord deeply, the Scriptures say, **"...and the LORD worked a great victory."**

3. Verses 13 -17: The King's Desire: 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. (14) David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines

was then at Bethlehem. (15) And David said longingly, “Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!” (16) Then 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 (17) and said, “Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?” Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

- a. The three mightiest of the men of valor come to David as he is taking refuge from the Philistines in a cave. The Philistines have set up a garrison in Bethlehem, six miles south of Jerusalem, and are there to kill David, who had just been anointed king. They fear David and feel betrayed by him, as David had, at one point, tricked them into thinking that he was defecting to their side.
- b. David had fought a long campaign against the Philistines and Saul and had been away from home for an extended period. He was feeling homesick and longing for a drink of water from his hometown’s well.
- c. Beloved, notice the complete submission of these three men to their king.
  - i. When the three heard the longing of their king, they went to Bethlehem to draw water for him.
    1. This demonstrates a great resolve and commitment to the king.



2. It is imperative that we, who serve the King of kings, should have the same resolve.
  - a. The Christian motto must be, “Whatever the King wants, the king gets, no matter the personal cost to me.”
  - ii. These men broke through the camp of the Philistines.
    1. This is incredible; they risked their very lives for something as ordinary as water. They had jugs of water in the cave, but the King wanted a special kind of water. So they fought their way in and out, bled and were wounded to draw water for the King.
  - iii. When the men return, David is flabbergasted. He cannot believe the love of these men. David realizes how seriously these three warriors have taken his words. David realized that the men risked their lives. So David did something unexpected and yet holy. David made the ordinary water into something extraordinary—a sacrifice to the Lord.
    1. The Bible tells us that **David poured it out to God** (v. 16b). David's action would not provoke his men's anger but their admiration because it was not an act of waste but worship. '**Far be it from me, O God,**' David exclaims, '**that I should do this!**' (v. 17a), and adds, '**Isn't this the blood of the men who went at the cost of their lives?'** (v. 17b). He cannot believe the risk his men ran.

It is the water of Bethlehem, but to David, it represents the blood of his men. Blood belongs to God. Therefore, he dare not drink it. He poured it out, not because it was trash but a treasure.

- a. There is a lesson for you and me here. In the hands of the King, the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

2. Oh, Beloved, what does the King want from you? It might seem small, mundane, or insignificant, but when we faithfully bleed for the Kingdom's cost and fight to give our Lord the King whatever he desires, our efforts will become glorious in His hands.

- a. Beloved, discipleship has always come at a cost.

#### 4. Verses 18-39: Faithfulness to the King -

- a. The last half of our passage lists all the others who composed the group of thirty. There are no great details to consider, only an honor roll of David's elite men.

- i. Over time, some of these men would die in battle (e.g., Asahel, v. 24; see 2 Sam. 2:18-23), and others would be added. But their names are here, each of them one of David's most esteemed and loyal troops.
- ii. We know little about them, but we do know that they fought well. Since David was God's covenant king, their fighting was for God's Kingdom.

- b. Beloved, God never gets tired of naming the names of his people.
5. Verse 39: God's Grace Remembered - Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.
- a. Beloved, we know that memories can often wound us.
  - b. Uriah the Hittite is mentioned in David's list of faithful soldiers, although David was not loyal to him. Uriah reminds us of David's betrayal.
    - i. This mention of Uriah prevents us from making an idol of David. Even here, this list reminds us that the kingdom victory was not secured by men but by the grace of God, and that same grace had helped and forgiven David, would also keep the name of Uriah alive forever.
    - ii. David's worst failure did not blot out Uriah's faithful service, which this list honors.
  - c. What a beautiful truth we find here. It teaches about the transformative power of divine grace and the healing it brings to our deepest wounds and darkest memories. The idea that even in our lowest moments, there is still a thread of grace holding us and offering comfort is incredible. We are reminded that there is always hope for redemption and renewal for God's children.

## 6. Benediction –

- a. **Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

**Public Reading of Scripture**  
**Psalms 46:1-7**