

God, Our Tower and Shield

Text: II Samuel 22:1-3, 31, 36, 51

When Solomon was romancing the Shulamite maiden, he complimented her by making reference to the tower of David. The exterior of the tower of David was decorated with the shields of the mighty men and could be seen for miles around. All knew the beauty of this sight. Solomon may have also indirectly been referring to the knowledge of the maiden's need for security and was letting her know that the best fighting force in Israel is at his beck and call. He was saying, you are beautiful and I am desirous to protect you with the same show of strength exemplified by this tower covered with shields and used as an armory. An armory is an arsenal, which is a building for storing arms and military equipment, especially one serving as headquarters for military reserve personnel. Solomon said, "Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men" (Song of Solomon 4:4).

Let me paint you a picture. The tower was the arsenal that told the citizens when the king and his men were out to war or when they were at home. Both messages were extremely comforting in this time of history when hostile countries were surrounding Israel. When the soldiers were out to war, they had their shields with them and when the people looked up to the tower, they knew all was well; the mighty men were in battle, protecting the country from their enemies. When the mighty men were at home, they hung their shields on the outside of the tower. History says this was a beautiful sight when the golden shields would glisten in the sun telling all who beheld them, the strength of Israel is home and ready to take those shields at a moment's notice and defend their country and her king.

Solomon's father, King David gives God thanks as he nears the end of his own life, for the help in defeating his enemies for these many decades. It is recorded, "And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my Rock; in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour; thou savest me from violence" (II Samuel 22:2, 3). In the first verse of this chapter, before he launches into his flight of high praise for God's overall protection during his lifetime, the Bible says, "And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul" (II Samuel 22:1). God tells us that David sang these words at the end of his life acknowledging that God had delivered him through all his lifelong battles, but then David adds, "... and out of the hand of Saul." At the time David originally sang these words, he had no tower. He was in his youth and on the run from King Saul, hiding in the dens and caves. David is giving us insight that true protection is not found in the towers of our construction, but our protection is from the Lord himself. I have seen where David hid in the rough terrain of Engedi. These high rocks were permeated with small caves in the canyon walls. I can imagine David looking out of these cave openings into the starry sky giving God thanks for being his tower of strength. "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him" (Psalm 28:7).

Collecting these thoughts together, please consider:

1. GOD IS OUR TOWER.

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2). David’s declaration affirms the Lord is his “High Tower”. The tower is not only the armory holding the power of assault, but it is the lookout point. Our Lord, our High Tower can see down the road of our lives. He sees every bend and every crook of our road. How wise to claim Proverbs 3:5 and 6, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

2. GOD IS OUR SHIELD.

“Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me” (Psalm 144:1, 2). Should we try to be our own shield and defender, we would fail. We have no innate goodness in and of ourselves, therefore we say, “You, oh Lord, are my Goodness.” We have no citadel in which to hide, therefore we say, “You, oh Lord, are my Fortress.” I have no defense and declare, “You, oh Lord, are my Shield.”

To walk outside the intimate fellowship with our Lord is to live without cover. No one can be compared to Him in might and strength. We sometimes hear and use the expression, “I’ve got your back” which means someone is there to help you out, they will watch out and take care of the things you’re likely to miss, that they are a second set of eyes and hands for you. Friends can miss it, champions can fail you, but we say with Jeremiah, “Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might” (Jeremiah 10:6). We agree with the Psalmist, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

3. THERE CAN BE NO SUBSTITUTE.

Everything accelerated under Solomon. Israel came from Tabernacle worship to Temple worship. David was a warrior king who had to fight for every square foot of territory. Solomon was a wisdom king that had the countries of the world in awe of his splendor. The Queen of Sheba had heard the rich and outlandish reports of Solomon, his kingdom, his riches and his wisdom but said, upon seeing for herself, “Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard” (I Kings 10:7).

The Bible says, “And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of beaten gold went to one target. And three hundred shields made he of beaten gold: three hundred shekels of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon” (II Chronicles 9:15, 16). David was a man of war. Solomon was a man of peace. David’s shields represented the might and protection provided by God. Solomon’s opulence was a commentary of Psalm 84:11: “For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will

he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Rehoboam, the rebellious and foolish son of Solomon who was not prepared for the responsibilities of a king, lost much. The Bible says, “So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king’s house” (II Chronicles 12:9, 10). We see Rehoboam exchanged the golden shields that had been stolen for shields of brass. The gold cannot be substituted for brass. The exchange shows we have no defense, anybody can take advantage of us, and we no longer have what we had in the former glory.

When we live a worldly life devoid of holiness and Christlikeness, we may be having temporary fun, but we have exchanged the gold for brass. Let us be determined not to drop our guard, not to allow the brass to take its place. To those who have never received Christ as Lord and Savior, all that glistens is not gold. Moses may very well have been the heir apparent to the throne of Egypt. If so, he gladly abdicated, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Hebrews 11:25, 26). At youth camps we always sing, “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.” The stanza that stands out this morning is the one that says, “Take the whole world, but give me Jesus.”

-Pastor Pope-