

What Kind of Men Are Mighty Men?

Text: II Samuel 23:1-8

Today, we come to the end of the life of David. There was one more battle David had to go through in his dying moments and that was to assure Solomon would sit upon the throne of Israel. There was one more heartbreak David experienced in having to make sure that his son, Adonijah did not become the king. We learn a very important lesson in David's dealings with the younger full brother of Absalom. The Bible says in I Kings 1:6a: "And his father had not displeased him at any time...." To be a good dad, we must be willing to be our child's parent before we are their buddy. If character is to be formed in the heart of a child, we must be willing to discipline our child, even at the price of our popularity with them.

There is a great redemption story in the life of David's wife Bathsheba, for she was instrumental with the prophet Nathan, the high priest Zadok, and Benaiah (who was to become the commander of the army) to place the rightful king on the throne.

The focus to which I want to bring your attention are the last words of David to Solomon and merge them with the attributes of David's mighty men.

1. GOD MAKES THE MAN.

II Samuel 23:1-3. David recognized it was God who raised him up and he admonished Solomon to allow God to raise him (Solomon) up as well. In the early part of Solomon's career he followed his father's advice and recognized God as his Supreme Source when he said, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" (II Chronicles 1:10). Solomon said at this same time in I Kings 3:7b and 9, "...I am but a little child: I know not...Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" We should always understand that God made us who we are. Samuel espoused this truth to Saul in I Samuel 15:17: "And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?" The psalmist said, "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Psalm 100:3).

The Bible tells us, "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psalm 75:6,7). By the way, the Bible says that Mount Zion, the city of the great King is on the "sides of the north" (Psalm 48:2). In essence, promotion comes from Heaven!

2. GOD REQUIRES A MAN TO BE JUST.

II Samuel 23:3b: "...He that ruleth over men must be just...." Micah 6:8: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Proverbs 11:1: "A

false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight." Proverbs 20:7: "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him."

3. A MAN WHO RULES MUST BE RULED.

II Samuel 23:3b: "...ruling in the fear of God." Living in the fear of God gives credibility to your leadership. The Bible says, "Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long" (Proverbs 23:17). Living in the fear of God is living in the awe and full respect that God is due. It is also living in trepidation if we don't obey Him. Without the fear of the Lord, we will be bereft of wisdom and knowledge (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 1:7).

The Puritan John Brown said, "The fear of the Lord is when God's smile is our greatest delight and His frown is our greatest dread."

4. A MAN THAT IS USED TO THE MAXIMUM BEGINS EARLY IN LIFE.

II Samuel 23:4a, b: "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds..." In the morning of our life we should be holy and pure before God. Don't believe the lie of the Devil that says that every young person must sow his or her wild oats. The Bible says, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind..." (Hosea 8:7). "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8). God uses people who keep themselves clean: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" (Psalm 24:3, 4). "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts..." (II Timothy 2:21, 22a). Caving into youthful lusts jeopardizes your full potential in the work of the Lord. Every year, every month, every day, every hour not given over to the Lord is wasted. Caleb said, "...I wholly followed the LORD my God." (Joshua 14:8). "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27). I wonder if the words of his father David were reflecting in his mind when Solomon penned these words in the final chapter of his life, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

The rest of the chapter of II Samuel 23 God dedicates to 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?

5. A MIGHTY MAN STANDS AGAINST THE ODDS.

In battle, Adino slew 800 men at one time armed with only 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). Benaiah, killed a lion in a slippery, snowy pit where either he or the lion would come out alive. He also defeated an Egyptian with his own weapon (II Samuel 23:20, 21).

6. A MIGHTY MAN IS A MAN OF UNDIMINISHED 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 23:10a). This is no double-minded man! James 1:8: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." Isaiah 50:7: "For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." This is a prophetic word of Jesus, which should challenge us to never give up (I Corinthians 15:58).

7. A MIGHTY MAN IS A MAN OF UNDYING LOYALTY.

II Samuel 23:39 speaks of "Uriah the Hittite..." This hero beautifully portrays the pristine attribute of loyalty. In the darkest days of David's life, he was surrounded by loyal men, none more loyal than Uriah, who would not betray David or David's men, even though the king betrayed him (II Samuel 11:11).

8. A MIGHTY MAN IS A MAN WHO IS WILLING TO STAND ALONE.

II Samuel 23:11, 12. The mighty man, Shammah will always be dear to me because of the association and friendship I had with a contemporary mighty man of God. On the day that Brother Lester Roloff, founder of homes for wayward young people died in a plane crash, he dictated a letter to be typed and mailed to me. Three weeks after his death, I received it. Miss Ida, his long time secretary 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 added a postscript: II Samuel 23:12, which reads, "But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory." Shammah defended the food supply for Israel, even when others fled. Shammah stood, even though he had to stand-alone. What a hero!

Archimedes, 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.

-Pastor Pope-