

Ittai

By Dr. Dennis Leatherman

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Bible Text: 2 Kings 15:13-23

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Mountain Lakes Independent Baptist Church

1000 Broadford Rd
Oakland, MD 21550

Website: www.mlibc.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/mlibc

2 Samuel chapter 15.

A little boy who was in Sunday school, they were studying the Old Testament kings, like King David and various ones and the teacher made the statement. She said, "All right. We studied these powerful kings and queens in the Old Testament. Is there something, a higher power than the kings of queens?"

And a little boy jumped up and said, "Yes, aces."

And so you got to be a little worldly to figure that one out.

2 Samuel chapter 15. I just want us to notice verse number 21. The Bible says, "And Ittai," believe is how you pronounce his name. Since I am the pastor and the one preaching, that is the way we will now pronounce his name. "Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."¹

I want us to look this morning at this fellow by the name of Ittai. Let's pray together and ask the Lord's blessing.

Father, I thank you, Lord, for the service and just the joy it has been already to be in the house of God and the fellowship we have had. Lord, the music has been heart stirring and I have been blessed. I thank you for the little children, moms and dads that bring their children out to church and get them under the influence of the things of God at such a young age. Lord, just bless them for that. Lord, now as we look into your Word, I ask that you would open our hearts and minds, that we would be receptive to what you have for us, God, as always, Lord, I recognize that in and of myself I have nothing to offer of any spiritual or eternal value. But, Lord, you have everything to offer. And so I yield myself to you. I present my body to you, Lord, as a conduit, as a channel for your Spirit to work through and apply the Word of God to our lives as you know we need. Bless this hour now. Speak to our hearts I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

¹ 2 Kings 15:21.

You may not believe this, but my wife and I very much enjoy going to symphony orchestras. We don't go very often. Last I checked Oakland does not have a symphony orchestra. But when we lived outside of Denver we would go down on occasion and we have been trying to make plans to go up to Pittsburgh. We enjoy that.

And some time ago I read of a fellow by the name of Eugene Ormandy. He was in an Hungarian born Jewish conductor. For 44 years he served as conductor for the great Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. He was known, I am told, the books tell us that he was known for his integrity. He was a man of his word. He was a man of integrity.

We are told that he was a great leader, that those that worked under him recognized and appreciated his great leadership skills and what he was as a man. And one thing they said stood out about Eugene Ormandy, as I understood, was his great passion for what he did as a conductor, passion for the music and the influence it would have. On one occasion it is said that he was leading the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra so passionately he had literally dislocated his shoulder while he was leading the orchestra, so caught up, so intense, so given over to what he was doing, he dislocated his shoulder.

I have read that and I got wondering. How passionate am I as a Christian about anything of real and eternal value.

I have never dislocated my shoulder preaching. I have bruised my knuckles a few times. But how passionate are we about what we say we believe? How does it affect us?

In the Sunday school hour we looked at Romans nine at the apostle Paul and how burdened he was for his people to the extent that Paul said, "I would be willing to give myself as a sacrifice as Christ did for others to be saved."

How real are the truths that we say we believe? How real are they to us? The fact that Jesus is coming again some day, what does that mean to you? Is that simply some cold statement? You know, we sing in church and we talk about, or is it a reality that grips our heart and stirs us and affects how we live?

What about heaven and hell? What about the new life we have in Christ?

I would say for those of us that it is nothing more than just words, that all these things are simply biblical, quote, unquote, facts, then there is something wrong with our heart, something that needs to be stirred. The reality of all this, our eyes need to be opened to the reality of this.

This man Mr. Ormandy was a great conductor no doubt, very passionate. As I look in the Bible and I study the life of David, I find that David was a very passionate man, extremely so in all areas of life. And we have touched on this occasion before. But whatever David did he did with all his might. Whatever David was involved in he was passionate about that. It had his whole heart. It had his whole strength and focus and commitment.

As a boy when David was shepherding the sheep, as David would shepherd it wasn't just some job where he is filling time punching the clock. Man, when David was shepherding sheep, man, he was shepherding them with his heart soul and mind. And if a bear or a lion came and tried to disturb or take one of his sheep, David didn't just run him off. Man, he killed it with his bare hands. Brother, he felt strongly about those sheep. He had given himself fully to shepherd those sheep. And there was not a bear or a lion in the world that was going to touch his sheep. Brother, he will kill him with his bare hands. Passionate.

When it came to being a soldier in King Saul's army David was passionate about it. He was not just another soldier. Brother, he was out there to defeat the enemy. If they are going to war against the Philistines, David isn't just going to kill what he has to. Man, he is out after 10,000 of them. He is going to kill every single one of them if he has to. Man, it is heart, soul, mind, strength and body out after the enemy.

If there is a giant blaspheming the nation of Israel and the God of Israel, David isn't just going to stand back and complain about this guy and find fault with him and criticize the other soldiers. He is going to stand up and say, "Is there not a cause?"² Can't somebody go out there and defeat this enemy of Jehovah?

David takes five stones and the Bible doesn't say he walks out there. He doesn't kind of sneak up on him. Brother, he goes running out after Goliath, slinging that thing around and pops him in the head. David was passionate.

Shepherd, a soldier. When David was praising God he was praising God with his whole heart. He was playing that harp. Man, he was playing the harp. And some of the greatest songs of... not some... *the* greatest songs of praise ever written were written by King David praising God.

If he was shepherding, he was doing it passionately. If David was soldiering, he was soldiering passionately. If he was praising God, he was praising God passionately with his whole heart. And, sad to say, when David was sinning, he was sinning with his whole heart. When David failed he completely failed.

He was a passionate man.

David's passion—or you could call it zeal—was noticed by the people of Israel. And not only did they notice how passionate their king was, but that passion became a strong attraction to men of like passion, men who felt as strongly about life and who felt as strongly about their God and their nation as David did were attracted to him.

And they shared his passion and they shared his zeal. And so over time as David was king of Israel, he became surrounded by men who were very, very zealous for the Lord

² 1 Samuel 17:29.

and very, very zealous to defend and expand the nation of Israel. And David had an amazing team.

In our text, 2 Samuel chapter 15, David had been king for a long time. A number of tragic events had taken place in the life of David. As I mentioned a moment ago, when David sinned, he sinned terribly.

At this point in time, 2 Samuel 15, David's family had begun to fall apart. After his sin with Bathsheba that action had tragic effects on the family of David. And his family, as I said, was falling apart.

His one son Amnon had raped one of David's daughters. Then the family began squabbling. Absalom became obsessed with killing Amnon for raping Tamar. And that bitterness that was directed to Amnon who eventually, two years later resulted in the murder of Amnon, I believe that bitterness in Absalom's heart was turned against his father David. And it appears that Absalom became very bitter against his daddy for not dealing with Amnon perhaps.

Absalom was a very good looking man, apparently a very strong leader and he began an insurrection. And he would stand out beside the gates of the capital city Jerusalem. And when people would come to the city to see David and discuss their problems and deal with the issues of state, Absalom would intervene. He would say, "What is your problem?"

And they would tell him. He was the king's son.

And he would say, "Oh, well, you know, the king said that. This is what I would do."

And very subtly and over a period of time Absalom began winning the people of Israel's hearts over to himself from his father, very subtly, very deceitfully, very wickedly.

Now by the time we get to our text it is full blown rebellion. Absalom had risen up with an army against his father. And it was a *coup d'état* I guess you could say. They were overthrowing the government.

I believe this is probably... well, no doubt, it was one of the most difficult times for David politically we could say. And, I would imagine, it was intensely difficult personally. It is his own son. And we find in later Scriptures, David loved Absalom deeply though their relationship was severed or their relationship was severely damaged. David loved his son Absalom.

So here we have one of the most difficult times in David's life politically and, no doubt, personally. Rather than fight his son, David says, "We are going to flee the city. Absalom is coming with the armies. David is a warrior. He knows how to fight. If anybody could defeat an approaching army it was David. Whether he had a large army or just a handful of soldiers, he could take care of himself.

The issue wasn't whether he could defeat Absalom or not. But he chose to flee rather than fight.

Now there was some strategy involved in that. And we can notice that in Scripture. I don't have it here, but if you study this carefully there was probably some strategy involved in David pulling out at that time rather than confronting Absalom. But I tend to feel that there was more than just strategy involved in David fleeing. I think there was some sympathy involved. As I said, this was his son. I do not believe David wanted to go war against his son.

I know for a fact that David did not want his son killed. And I don't believe he even wanted to go to war. So this was a difficult time in the life of David.

As David fled the city of Jerusalem, Absalom approaching on one end and David slipping out with the other, a number of people came to David's aid.

If you would, look with me at verse 15 of our text, chapter 15 of 2 Samuel. The Bible says, "And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint."³

Boy, what a great team, huh?

Verse 16:

And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house. And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.⁴

Now look at this. "And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king."⁵

So David has a number of people who said, "We are on your side, David. We are not siding with Absalom. We are going with you."

One of these folks who stood loyal to David caught my attention as I was reading through this in my devotions. And that is the fellow in verse number 19.

"Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us?"⁶ Ittai, he comes out with David.

³ 2 Samuel 15:15.

⁴ 2 Samuel 15:16-17.

⁵ 2 Samuel 15:18.

⁶ 2 Samuel 15:19.

Now, I got studying about this fellow named Ittai. Who is he? He is mentioned only briefly in Scripture. We know almost nothing about him other than he was a Philistine. He was not a Jew. He was not raised up in the synagogues of Israel. He was not taught the songs that David had written of Jehovah and the praise of Jehovah. He was not, as a child, taught of the great writings of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy—and taught the great principles of God’s law. None of that. He was raised a Philistine in a pagan home.

But here he is coming out with David as David flees from his son’s rebellion.

As I read some history books and Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias on this fellow Ittai, a number of them said he was a proselyte to Judaism. Now no doubt that is true, but I don’t know about you, but that word proselyte has a negative connotation in my mind. To me it sounds simply like an outward conformity to some other religion. Are you... follow with me on that?

I see it more like he was a convert to the worship of Jehovah. He simply did not accept... he simply did not submit or conform to the ceremonies and the rituals that Israel had as a nation and as the people of God. He was a convert to the worship of the true and living God Jehovah. A Philistine converted to the worship Jehovah.

But more than that he was a Philistine—now remember, Saul killed his thousands, but David his what? Tens of thousands of Philistines. Here we have a Philistine now who has converted to the worship of Jehovah and has become a loyal soldier for David. What a unique guy.

One thing that to me became apparent about Ittai and that was this. There was something about David that won him over. Ittai appears to have been charmed by David to the point that he would declare his dedication to David even unto death. There was something about the character of David. There was something about the passion of this King of Israel that stirred Ittai’s heart to the point that he pledged his loyalty to David even if it means death. What a man David was. What a man this man Ittai was.

As I thought about David and his passion and his character and his zeal, and even with the tragedies of David’s life, that this man would be so enamored by David that he would commit his life to David even unto death. I thought of that. I thought how much more, how much more should you and I who know how good our Lord is and how pure and how holy our God is, how much more should we make the same commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ who is passionate in his love for us, who is passionate in his lordship as King of kings and Lord of lords? How much more should he deserve our commitment even unto death?

Ittai.

I noticed several things about Ittai. And the first thing I notice and we used as our text verse 21. “Ittai answered the king, and said, As...”⁷ Listen to this statement. “As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.”⁸

What a statement. What a commitment he made to this great man of God. And, as I said a moment ago if that was true of Ittai in his commitment to David, how much more should our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ be true for us?

Now let’s notice the timing of his commitment or I put the chronology of his commitment. When, the time when he did this.

Well, the first thing I notice, he committed himself to David when he was least popular. Look with me, if you would, again, at verse 12, the second part of verse 12. We will read all of 12.

And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. [And look] and the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.⁹

This was a time when the nation had turned against David. This was the one point in the king’s... the reign of David when he was least popular. If they had Gallup polls back then, David’s popularity would have been at an all time low. He would have been down there around Nancy Pelosi or something like that. Can I get an amen?

And Absalom’s poll would have been skyrocketing. And people would have said, “Absalom is the answer to our problems.”

And Ittai commits himself to David when he was least popular. Do you know why? Because he was committed to David not for what he could get out of David, but he was committed to David for who and what David was as a person. Many people follow Christ when he is popular. Many people will profess Christ when the crowds are professing Christ. But I don’t believe that impresses the Lord.

What we need are men and women, young and old, who are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ whether he is popular or not, who are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ not for what we get out of him, but simply for who and what he is.

Ittai was committed to David when he was least popular. We live in a day when the name of Jesus is awfully popular. There’s TV stations completely committed, quote, unquote, to the name of Jesus. There are churches who are absolutely packed out for the name of

⁷ 2 Samuel 15:21.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ 2 Samuel 15:21-22.

Jesus. You can buy... we were in the store yesterday and you can buy, I saw, they had key chains with the name of Jesus on. You can buy sunglasses that have things on. You can buy every trinket known to man that is, quote, unquote, Christian. Am I right or wrong?

Jesus sunglasses.

You know, I am afraid so much of this popularity is today? I think it is simply a marketing strategy. And what we need are people who are not committed to the name of Jesus if it is associated with worldly music, that are not committed to the name of Jesus if it makes me feel good or it gets my groove on or it somehow makes me feel like I am on top of the world. We should be committed to Jesus for who and what he is.

There is nothing wrong with crowds. The Lord knows we work hard to try and get a crowd here. Amen? But we want folks who are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ittai said to David, "I am going with you, man. If it means I die, I am with you. The whole nation can turn against you, but I am standing with you, David."

God, give us some churches. God, give us some men and women who have been saved by the blood of Jesus who stand with Jesus Christ, whether he is popular or not. If the whole world turns against him, we are with you, Jesus.

And, by the way, the whole world will turn against him. You could say they already have in a lot of ways.

How much more should and I who know how good our Lord is make the same commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Some follow the Lord Jesus for who he is. We need folks who will hold to the fundamentals of the faith whether they are popular or not. We are a fundamental independent Baptist church. We are not afraid of that word. We are not ashamed of that word. We do not apologize for that word.

Now we may need to explain that word. We may need to define to some people what we mean by a fundamental Baptist church. By that we simply mean this. We hold to the fundamentals of the Word of God. We hold to the most basic truths necessary to be what is Bible considers a Christian. And there are certain truths in Scripture that are absolutely not negotiable. And there are certain doctrines given to us in God's Word that we are told hold to whether they are popular or not, whether anybody else in the world holds to them or not. We must hold to the Word of God.

Ittai committed himself to David when he was least popular. Ittai committed himself to the Lord when he first came to know David.

If you would, look at verse 20 of chapter 15.

Ittai says, "I am going with you."

David responds. In verse 20 he says, "Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee."¹⁰

David is saying, "Man, you just showed up. You just got on board with this thing. You have just been converted over. Are you sure you really want to sell out to me at this point in time? You are new here."

And Ittai said, "Yes, right from the get go, right from the start I want to be sold out for you, King David."

It is best, I believe, to sell out to the Lord as soon as you come to the Lord. As soon as a person is saved, they ought to stake... they ought to stake their claim with Christ. They ought to stand up and be counted. They ought to just say, "Hey, I am dedicating my life, my heart, my soul, my body, my all to the Lord Jesus Christ. He saved me from sin and hell. I am new at all of this, but I am the Lord's."

He was a... just came to know the Lord as Savior.

It is very important, as I understand the Scriptures, it is very important when a person trusts Christ as Savior the most important thing they do at that point, I believe, is to follow the Lord in believer's baptism. When a person gets saved, they ought to be baptized as soon as possible. Baptism has absolutely nothing to do with whether I am saved or not. But baptism has everything to do whether I am coming out for the Lord or not.

My wife and I were married on February 14th, 1987. That deserves gifts right there for remembering my anniversary tremendously. I should get pork chops for that.

Trick was I got married on Valentine's Day. How can you forget it?

By the way, my happened to get married that same day.

Now I forget what point I was trying to make.

When we got married and Jessie and Elsie or Jessie and Helen did this yesterday, they exchanged rings. When my wife and I got married I gave her a ring. She gave me a ring. But that ring didn't make us married. We didn't have to have a ring. My grandparents got married. They didn't have a ring. Is there anybody here you are married and never got a ring? Anybody? Some people do that. There is nothing wrong with it.

We exchanged rings. We could have... when... before we took the vows we went to the... I was going to say Walmart, but the jewelry store. No, there wasn't Walmarts then. We

¹⁰ 2 Samuel 15:20.

went to the jewelry store and we tried those rings on. Putting that ring on, did that make us married?

Did we look like it walking around with that? Yeah. Somebody walked in. Hey, they must be married. We weren't. Had the ring on.

You know you can be baptized and not be saved. In fact, there's a lot of people get baptized, never been saved. You can put a wedding ring on. It doesn't make you married.

We got married I said, "With this ring I do thee wed." I put her on. That didn't make us married, but that let everybody know, hey, we are a married couple.

We came out publicly. Yup, I am married. I am married.

That is what baptism is. Baptism is saying, "I trusted Christ as Savior. I want everyone to know whose side I am on. I want everyone to know where I am at. I want everyone to know where I stand."

And there is a case to be made from Romans chapter six that Romans is actually an act of dedication on the part of the believer to give myself to live for Christ and not for the world anymore.

Ittai committed himself to David as soon as he came to him without hesitation. "I just showed up yesterday and I am selling out for David today."

Hey, you may have just been saved recently, in recent weeks, months or years. And I am saying to you, "Don't falter. Don't hesitate. Sell out to Christ now as a new believer."

So the chronology of Ittai's timing was when David was least popular and when he first came to know David.

Then the next thing I noticed, quickly, is the character of his commitment to David. Verse 19. It is completely voluntary. In fact, David tries talking him out of it. He is not twisting his arm. "You had better live for me, buddy, or else." It is not that way at all. Something about David, something about his passion, something about what a good man he is, something about his integrity just stirs my heart. I voluntarily give myself to serve David till death.

No arm twisting. Hey, if Jesus is who he claims to be, if Jesus is as good as the Bible declares him to be, then let's give ourselves to him fully and freely.

It bothers me when somebody makes a profession of faith and you absolutely have to beat him over the head to get him to come out to church. It bothers me when somebody claims to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, somebody claims to have accepted Jesus' death and suffering the judgment of God for their sins. They say, "Yes, I have accepted

that.” Then you have got to absolutely twist their arm to get them to be faithful to the Lord. That bothers me. Something is not right.

Our God is good. Jesus is who he claims to be. We ought to love him and freely give ourselves to him. Nobody twisted Ittai’s arm. David didn’t have to beat him over the head.

What is wrong with Christians in America today? You have got to intimidate them and brow beat them to get them to live for God, to get to them to commit themselves to Jesus Christ.

Listen. As I said, we are... we want to fill the church. But we are not after a crowd. We are after folks who are committed to Jesus. Jesus.

Today in Christianity you have more loyalty to a style of music than you have to the Savior of the world, more loyalty to a form of entertainment than we have to the living God.

It is voluntary.

I notice also it was very solemn. The character of his commitment to David was voluntary. It was very solemn. He didn’t go about this flippantly. He didn’t go about this just emotionally. And I think we can use some emotion, amen? But it wasn’t just an emotional knee jerk reaction.

“Oh, poor David. I am going to go to him.”

It wasn’t just something of a temporal response to a pitiful situation. This was something that was very solemn in the heart of Ittai, commitment to Christ should be a heart and soul decision, not just something we flippantly, oh yeah.”

Jesus says, “You ought to count the cost.” Jesus says, “You put your hand to the plow, you look back, you are not worthy.”

We had a young girl years... this is a long time ago. Came on a Sunday morning. I preached the gospel. She came forward, trusted Christ as Savior. She was so excited she was in her mid 20s I would guess. She was so excited. She made public the fact that she trusted Christ and she stayed after everybody was gone. My wife and I were talking.

She goes, “Man, this is the greatest thing in the world. I want to be here. I want to be part of Sunday school. I am going to join the choir. I want to do this. I want to do that.”

I mean, she was fired up. She was committed, quote, unquote.

Sunday night she came back. I preached a message on living for God, nothing profound or I didn't think. And as soon as we said, "Amen," man she was out that back and I could tell it wasn't her favorite message she ever heard.

I thought, well....

Being the fearless, courageous pastor I am, I sent my wife to go visit her. That is the truth.

She said, "I am never coming back to that church again."

"What's up?"

"He has no right to tell us how to live. He has no right to tell us what is right and wrong."

Hey, I will be the first to stand up. Dennis Leatherman has no right to do that. But God has every right to do that. And we don't want a commitment to Christ that says, "I will commit myself to Christ, but only if it is according to my qualifications. I will commit myself to Christ, but I am going to do it my way. This is not something I am taking seriously. It is simply an emotional reaction I am doing and if it demands anything from me I am out of here."

Ittai was very solemn. "I am committed from my heart and soul."

I see his commitment to David was very public. He didn't try and sneak over and, "Hey, David, by the way, I am with you, man. David, I got your back."

I am always worried about when people are behind me. I got your back.

This is very public. You read it. It is right in front of everybody.

"Hey, Dave. I am with you, even if it means dying. I am yours."

Hey, nobody sneaks their way to heaven. God doesn't want any secret service agents. God wants his people to be out and out for him.

Now I am not talking about blowing our own horn or trying to convince people what great Christians we are... I am simply saying, "Let's let this world know where we stand. Let's let this world know who is our king, who is our God, who we have committed ourselves to. Let's not make them guess whether we are Christians or not. Let's make it clear."

I had a fellow years ago, he never did get saved. An older man visited our church for a while. I went and visited him. I shared the gospel. I'll make it kind of a short story, but I will make it shorter because, man, you guys mean business, don't you?

I shared the gospel.

He said, “Man, this is real to you, isn’t it?”

The fact of the matter is yes, it is real to us. It is public.

So we have the chronology or the timing of his commitment, the character of his commitment. And last of all, I end with this, the consequences of his commitment.

Look at verse 21.

“And Ittai answered the king and said, ‘As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be.’”¹¹

He became David’s servant.

The word servant there literally means slave. He is my slave. Ittai said, “I will be your slave,” kind of what James is to me this summer.

What was he doing? He was giving up his will for David’s. Can we do this for Christ who gave himself for us? Can we say, “I surrender my will, my plans, my dreams, the things I want. I surrender that up to Christ. And, Lord, in place of my will, I put your will.”

Here is what so many of us want to do. We want to determine what we are going to do. We are going to determine what our life is and how we are going to invest it. Then we want God to approve it. That is the wrong way.

We come and say, “God, I have no plan of my own. I have no will of my own. All my will I yield to you and your will becomes my will.” Can we not yield our will to God in all areas of our life?

Now when I make a statement like this and you preach on this subject, we think of big stuff: mission field, ministry, yielding my life.

Wait a minute. God wants every area of life yielded to him. Hey, can I get a little personal here? God wants how we handle our money yielded to his will. Right or wrong?

How we spend our time, what type of friends we have, huh? The places we go, the things we allow to influence our life, everything about us. Can I be so bold as to say even our very appearance? How we adorn ourselves. A slave.

¹¹ 2 Samuel 15:21.

Not only had he become David's slave, he became David's soldier. He was going to go to battle for David. He might lose an arm. He might have a scar across his face when it is said and done. He may lose his life. Can we do the same for Christ? Are we willing to be persecuted for Christ?

Hey, on the job it requires me to compromise a biblical conviction, if I am going to keep my job. Am I a soldier for Christ? Huh?

My family, if they know that I am a Christian, if I take a stand for the Lord in my family they will ostracize me, they will mock me, they will make fun of me. Are we a soldier for Christ?

Our great Baptist forefathers gave not only arms and fingers, tongues, they gave their bodies to be burned at the stake. Soldiers for Christ.

What about your average American Christian? If I give a tract out they will think I am funny. If I dress the way the Bible says they will think I am in a cult.

I have heard it all.

A guy said to my wife, we were down at the ice cream stand years ago. He says, he came up and he says, "Are you a Christian?"

She goes... we are sitting there side by side and she goes, "Yeah."

He goes, "I can tell. You dress holy."

I told my wife, "He thinks you dress holy, he should see my socks and underwear."

And then he became David's associate. Whatever David's condition was, Ittai was going to share in it. If David was exalted as King of Israel, boy, Ittai is going to rejoice. But if David is run out of the city like a dog then Ittai is remaining loyal.

And this world and our county may get up and praise Jesus and talk highly about Jesus and if his name is declared and if the gospel is preached we rejoice in it. But if our nation runs Jesus out like a dog, we remain loyal to Jesus.

And I am telling you. Our nation is not heading in the direction of exalting Jesus. We are going in the opposite direction. And whether we are real or not—now I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet—but I am saying this. Our commitment to Jesus Christ is going to be tested in the coming years. You mark my word. We have leaders of... political leaders of our country going to other nations saying we are not a Christian nation. That is not the direction that is good for America.

And so are you saved? Have you trusted Christ as Savior? Do you know for sure your sins are forgiven and you are on your way to heaven? If you don't do that, you die in

your sins, that is the worst thing that could possibly happen to you, separated from God for all eternity in the horrible fires of the lake of fire.

Are you saved? If you are, if we know Christ as Savior, then let's do what Ittai did. He committed himself to David. Let's commit ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are with you Jesus, even unto death, publicly, voluntarily selling out for you.

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, help us, Lord, to be for real. Lord, in good times and bad time, when it is easy and when it is hard, when it is popular and when we are made fun of, help us be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ.

With our heads bowed and with our eyes closed I wonder if there is some this morning who say, "Preacher, I know I am saved. There is no doubt about it. I know Christ has saved me. The Bible... I have a Bible basis for my salvation." But you say, "Preacher, I have not come out for the Lord like I should.