

# A Mighty Man of God

**Text:** 2 Samuel 23:8-12; 1 Chron. 11:12-14

## **Introduction:**

1. The background:
  - David is nearing the end of his life (See Vs. 1). Soon the kingdom will be handed over to his son Solomon.
  - At the end of his life and reign this honour role of his chief mighty men is included. They were David's inner circle, his elite force of soldiers. These men were the cream of the crop out of the army of Israel.
  - Interestingly, we have the same list of mighty men mentioned in 1 Chr. 11 at the beginning of David's kingdom. So, we find these men mentioned at both the start and the end of David's reign. They were men of unwavering faithfulness and fierce loyalty to their king and his cause.
2. There exact figure of David's mighty men is unknown but there were approx. 30 (See Vs. 13, 23, 24, 39) who are described as the "chief of the mighty men" (See Vs. 8, 13). Out of this elite group of thirty, there were three tiers or ranks.
  - The first three – Adino the Eznite, Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite ad Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite (Vs. 8-17).
  - The second three – Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and one other (Vs. 18-23).
  - The remaining thirty (Vs. 24-38).
3. Every Christian is a soldier (2 Tim. 2:4) but not every Christian soldier is in the category of a mighty man. Do you want to be an ordinary soldier for King Jesus or an extraordinary soldier for His glory? What qualities characterize a mighty man of God? In this message we will find the answer to that question by focusing in on the exploits of Eleazar the son of Dodo with reference to the other two men also who made up this first group of three.
4. What are the marks of a mighty man? There are three:

*Observe firstly...*

## **I. THE STAND OF A MIGHTY MAN (VS. 9)**

Standing is a significant part of the Christian life and warfare (See Eph. 6:10-14). A mighty man of God has courage to stand...

### **A. In a Contested Partnership (Vs. 9a; 1 Chr. 11:13)**

1. Vs. 9 – "one of the three mighty men **with David**"
2. 1 Chr. 11:13-14 "He was **with David at Pasdammim**, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and **the people fled** from before the Philistines. And **they set themselves** in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines and the LORD saved **them** by a great deliverance."

3. Standing with our Heavenly Leader – Eleazar and the other mighty men were fiercely loyal to David their king. Verse 9 mentions that Eleazar was “with David” when this battle occurred. Their devotion was above average. How much more should we be loyal to the great captain of our salvation, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ Jesus!
4. Standing with our earthly leaders – the New Testament pastor is no king ruling as a monarch over the people of God. But he does face the brunt of the Lord’s battles in the work of God. He is in the front lines of service and needs men who will stand faithfully with him in the fight for truth and right. We are not talking about an unquestioning, cultic loyalty but a loyalty to stand in support with God’s man on the right side of truth. As the account will show, deserters tend to be in the majority, faithful men who will stand with the man of God are in the minority. Can the preacher count on you to stand and fight with him in the battle for the truth?

**B. At a Contested Period (Vs. 9a)**

1. It was a time of battle – the Philistines were on the attack! A mighty man of God discerns the movements of the enemy and knows when to fight.
2. It was a time of backsliding – the “men of Israel were gone away”, they “fled from before the Philistines” (1 Chr. 11:13). The same was true in the case of Shammah (Vs. 11). But a mighty man is a man willing to stand with a few, or even alone (See Vs. 8). Sadly, this is so often the case in the Christian life. It is far easier to desert the scene of battle than to stand and pay the price. “The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.” (Ps. 78:9) Desertion from the battle takes many forms, many of them with a fake spiritual veneer.
  - a. Silence – this is a big one! Men of God who will not speak up for the truth when it is under siege. They stand away from the battle field and let the few willing to take a stand take the beating.
  - b. Neutrality – I’m not for either side! Time usually proves that people who claim ‘neutrality’ are in fact on the wrong side of the conflict.
  - c. Hostility – instead of joining the fight against the Philistines they fight against those seeking to take a stand against the Philistines! In so doing, they join the Philistine cause.
  - d. Collaboration – taking the Philistines out for coffee instead of doing battle with them!
  - e. The lack of men willing to stand does not excuse us from taking a stand. On the contrary, the more desperate the situation, the more our responsibility is increased to stand and be counted.
  - f. Spurgeon: “...if other men are running away, Eleazar is called upon by that unhappy circumstance to rise above himself, and retrieve the fortunes of the day. It will never do to allow the enemy to triumph; and, therefore, if we have fought well before, we must now gird up our loins for extraordinary battle. Dear Christian brother, if you are solemnly

impressed that the condition of the churches is not what it should be, you must leave no stone unturned to set it right. Are your fellow-Christians worldly? You should yourself become more spiritual and heavenly-minded. Are they sleepy? Be you the more awake. Are they lax? Be you the more strict. Are they unkind? Be you the more full of love. Set your watch all the more strictly because you see that others are overcome, and be you doubly diligent where you perceive that others are negligent. Dare, like Eleazar, to stand alone, and from the shortcomings of others gather motives for a nobler life.”

### C. In a Contested Place (Vs. 9c; 1 Chr. 11:13)

1. In both the case of Eleazar (field of Barley) and the case of Shammah (field of lentils), the food source of the children of Israel was under attack. Either they wanted to plunder the grain or destroy it, thus depriving the people of God of their sustenance. The Philistines had a history of plundering the resources of the Israelites – “Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and **they rob the threshingfloors.**” (1 Sam. 21:1)
  - a. The spiritual food source for the believer is the Word of God and it has been under attack from the very beginning when Satan uttered those fateful words, “Hath God said?” in the garden.
    - i. We see this Philistine attack today in the modern versions with their deleted words, phrases and whole verses and in their loose translation method that has little to no reverence for each word of Scripture. We see it in their love of the mutilated, corrupt Greek texts of the Bible, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.
    - ii. We see this Philistine attack today in the attacks against the cardinal doctrines of the faith such as the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the bodily resurrection of Christ, the hope of the rapture and the literal second coming.
    - iii. Note: We dare not give an inch of ground to the devil or he will simply take more ground from that beach head (See Eph. 4:27) Illustration: Beach battles in WWII.
  - b. We are very good at waving our swords and standing on peaceful sections of the battle field where the enemy is currently inactive. But which field is under attack right now? Where is the enemy attacking right now? Which truth is being contested? What Biblical standard is under siege? That’s where we need to rally and stand firm.
  - c. Illustration: Nehemiah – the sword and the trowel
  - d. Neh. 4:16-21 “And it came to pass from that time forth, *that* the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah. (17) They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, **every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon.** (18) For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. **And he that sounded the trumpet**

**was by me.** (19) And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work *is* great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. (20) **In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.** (21) So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.”

2. Some areas under attack that need to be strongly defended by Christian dads today:
  - a. Our Purity – we are under heavy attack in this area today with the pornography and advertising industries warring for control of our hearts and minds as men. We need men of spiritual steel today to stand against this onslaught. If you are half hearted or passive on this issue, you will be swept away by the tsunamis of sensuality that are sweeping through our society. We need men like Joseph who are man enough to know their own weakness!
  - b. Our Masculinity – God created male and female and each have unique attributes that are to be welcomed and fostered. The world we live in today is in out and out war with the God given distinctions between men and women. Be masculine in your mannerisms and dress. Remember that the fashion industry is dominated by reprobate minds who have an agenda to blur the God given distinctions between men and women. The word of God strongly condemns both the feminisation of men and the masculinization of women. 1 Cor. 6:9 “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **effeminate**<sup>1</sup>, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,” 1 Cor. 11:14 “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.” Deut. 22:5 “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so **are abomination** unto the LORD thy God.”
  - c. Our Role – To be leader, provider and protector in marriage and the home. Men, you are called of God to be the spiritual leaders of your homes. 1 Cor. 11:3 “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.” 1 Tim. 5:8 “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

Observe secondly...

## II. THE SWORD OF A MIGHTY MAN (VS. 10A)

A mighty man of God uses the right weaponry in the battle.

### A. His Skilfulness with the Sword (He used it Accurately) (Vs. 10a)

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<sup>1</sup> Means to be soft and womanish, to be womanlike.

1. One of the marks of a mighty man is that he knows how to use his sword. If we are going to be mighty men for God, we need to be mighty in the Scriptures. Dear brother, how important is the sword of the Word to you?
2. The sword got the job done! It was powerful and effective. The Word of God is the only offensive weapon we have and it is all we need.
3. Heb. 4:12 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful...”
4. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable...”

**B. His Strength applied to the Sword (He used it Zealously) (Vs. 10b)**

1. “until his hand was weary” = battle fatigue set in with the passing of time. He reached the limit of his strength. There were many enemies and few men prepared to stand and fight. He was not weary of fighting but weary in fighting. There are some valuable lessons we learn through weariness:
2. **Weariness** keeps us dependent upon God. 2 Cor. 4:7 “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, **that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**” 2 Cor. 12:9-10 “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for **my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”
3. **Weariness** ensures God gets the glory. 1 Cor. 1:26-29 “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”
4. **Weariness** reminds us that the battle will only be won through God's power working through us. It reminds us that without Christ, we can do “nothing” (John 15:5). Spurgeon writes, “The mercy of it all is this, that he only became weary when he could afford to be so; that is to say, the Lord did not allow his weariness to overcome him till he had beaten the Philistines, and the people had rushed upon the spoil. We are such feeble creatures that faintness must cover over us at times; but what mercy it is that the Lord makes our strength equal to our day, and only when the day is over does he let us sink into ourselves...so it was a good thing for Eleazar to feel weary, for he would now understand where the strength came from with which he smote the Philistines...Let us ask ourselves whether, weak as we are, we have given up ourselves to the Lord. If so, all is well, he will use our weakness, and glorify himself by it. He will not let our weakness show itself to the point where strength is absolutely essential; and if he lets us collapse as Elijah did after his great

conflict was over, we must not be surprised...It will be well for you to know how empty and how weak you are, that you may ascribe all glory to the Lord alone. He is Almighty, however weak you may be."

### **C. His Sticking to the Sword (He gripped it Firmly) (Vs. 10c)**

1. "clave unto the sword" = the same word is used in Gen. 2:24 to describe a man cleaving unto his wife. Eleazar had such a firm grip on his sword, and had used it for so long, his hand was stuck to the sword. What a wonderful picture of what our relationship should be to the sword of truth. Get a firm grip on the doctrines of the Word of God and don't let them go!
2. Spurgeon: "According to some modern teachers, you are wise if you change your doctrines every week, because some fresh light may be expected to break in upon you. The advice is dangerous. O young man, I trust you will get hold of the grand old gospel, and always hold it, and never relax your grip of it."
3. Being involved in the Lord's battles has this wonderful effect that it welds the Word of God to your life. It becomes inseparable from your life.

*Observe thirdly...*

## **III. THE SUCCESS OF A MIGHTY MAN (VS. 10B)**

### **A. The Glory for the Victory – "the LORD wrought a great victory"**

1. The same thing is said of Shammah's victory (Vs. 12).
2. When the victory is won, all the glory goes to the Almighty God, not the mighty man.
3. Those who desert the battlefield miss the honour and privilege of being an instrument in the hands of Almighty God and having His power and might work through them. They miss seeing the miraculous victories.
4. Spurgeon: "The right thing to do is to work as if all depended upon us, and yet look to the Lord alone knowing that all depends upon him."

### **B. The Gains of the Victory – "and the people returned after him only to spoil"**

1. The 'spoil' was the booty of the war. The people returned after the battle was over to enjoy the blessings and fruit of Eleazar's labours.
2. There's a lesson here for the Eleazar's who fight the Lord's battles. Leadership involves bearing the brunt of the Lord's battles so that others can come behind and be blessed.
3. There's a challenge here for those who as a pattern of life, are consistently the enjoyers and partakers of blessings but who will not join in the battle and do any fighting for the Lord.
4. Spurgeon: "...there are plenty who have never done anything else who will be quite ready to claim the credit of all that is achieved."

**Conclusion:** Will you stand and be counted as one of God's mighty men today?