

2 Samuel 23 - Man-up in the service of the King

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[0:00] 2 Samuel chapter 23, we're going to be looking at that together. We have come almost to the end of our series in the book of 2 Samuel. I'm not going to read David's last words from verse 1 to 7.

I'm going to pick it up in verse 8 just for the sake of time for the reading. Normally, I will ask someone else to do the reading. Sometimes I do it myself, but often I will ask someone else to do it. This morning, there are so many names in this passage this morning that I felt if I gave it to anybody in church, they would never, ever speak to me again. And so I'm going to attempt them. I ask for your forgiveness.

Just because I'm the pastor of the church does not mean that I am any better at the pronunciation of Hebrew names written in English characters or in Hebrew characters, for that matter. So please do forgive me for the names that I get wrong.

But we're picking it up in verse 8, and we're going to read through to the end of the chapter. These are the names of David's mighty warriors.

[1:00] Joshab, Bashabath, Atachemonite, was chief of the three. He raised his spear against 800 men whom he killed in one encounter.

Next to him was Eleazar, son of Dodai, the Ahite. As one of the three mighty warriors, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines, sorry, when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas-Damin for battle.

Then the Israelites retreated. But Eleazar stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day.

The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead. Next to him was Shammah, son of Agi, the Harite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them.

But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory. During harvest time, three of the 30 chief warriors came down to David at the cave of Adaleim, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

[2:19] At that time, David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. David longed for water and said, Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem.

So the three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem, and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it.

Instead, he poured it out before the Lord. Far be it from me, Lord, to do this, he said. Is not the blood of men who went at risk of their lives?

David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty warriors. Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zariah, was chief of the three.

He raised his spear against 300 men whom he killed. And so he was as famous as the three. Was he not held in greater honor than the three? He became their commander, even though he was not included among them.

[3:21] Benaniah, son of Jehiada, a valiant fighter from Kezziel, performed great exploits. He struck down Moab's two mightiest warriors. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.

He struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaniah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.

Such were the exploits of Benaniah, son of Jehiadah. He too was as famous as the three mighty warriors. He was held in greater honor than any of the 30, but he was not included among the three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard. Among the 30 were Ashiel, the brother of Joab, Elam, son of Dodo from Bethlehem, Shammah, the Herodite, Elikah, the Herodite, Helez, the Palite, Ere, the son of Ikesh from Tekoa, Abazir from Anoth, Sibkaph, the Hushite, Zalmon, the Ahalite, Mahariah, the Nethathalite, Heldad, the son of Banna, the Nethalite, Ithai, the son of Riba from Gibeah in Benjamin, Benaniah, the Pirithite, Hidai from the ravines of Gash, Abi Abilon, the Abraphite, Azimeth, the Bahuramite, Ihlaiab, the Shabalonite, the sons of Jashin, Jonathan, never been so grateful for the word Jonathan, son of Shammah, the Harite, Ahim, the son of Shari, the Hazorite, Elaphat, the son of Hashbi, the Mahakite, Eliam, the son of Ahithophel, the Gilanite, Hezro, the Carmelite, Parah, the Arabite, Igal, the son of Nathan from Zobah, the sons of Hagri, Zelech, the Ammonite, Natali, the Birithite, the armor-bearer of Joab, the son of Zariah, Iriah, the Ithite, Garab, the Ithrite, and Uriah, the Hittite.

[5 : 30] There were 37 in all. Well, this is God's word. Let's pray together and ask that he might help us understand it. Father, we've read a list of names of people that you know and we don't.

And Lord, it's extraordinary to us that passages like this are in your word. And so we ask, Lord, for your help this morning, that we might understand these words truly. But we pray even more boldly for more than just understanding with our minds.

We pray that you might be at work by your spirit, that we might hear your voice, that we might respond in obedience and faith. Lord, do something in our church this morning, even through the frailty of my mispronunciation of all these names and my weakness as a preacher.

Please do something this morning for the sake of your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen. I wonder if I was to ask you this morning just to close your eyes for a moment and think, what is a typical Christian?

What is a typical Christian? What's coming to mind as you think? What do they look like? Are they black or white? Male?

[6 : 48] Female? Young? Old? Cool? Uncool? Uncool? I don't know, as you think about it, what you come up with, but I know that when the producers of TV shows do something like that, they come up with people like, I don't know, Doc Cotton, the Vicar of Dibley, Mrs. Bouquet.

The stereotype Christian in our culture is an older white woman who is fussy, weak, easily upset, and knows their Christian faith to be something probably implausible to those around them.

They live somewhere in suburbia, don't they, or in the Oxfordshire countryside, and they probably drive a Honda Jazz at about 15 miles an hour in the middle lane of the motorway.

You know the stereotype. Now, we know, don't we, that that's not right. You only have to look around you this morning to know that's not right, but I want you to see from our passage this morning how not right that stereotype is.

Because in 2 Samuel chapter 23, we meet a list of mighty warriors headed by this guy, Josheb Bashabeth. I doubt before this morning that any of you had heard of him this morning.

[8 : 01] Josheb is the most honoured of David's men. He is the top of the list of God's faithful soldiers. And in our contrast to the stereotype in our minds, or at least the stereotype in the minds of TV producers, our hero this morning, Josheb, is a man.

He's almost certainly a man of colour. He's anything but weak. If he did ever drive a Honda Jazz, it would only be in hot pursuit of someone who was trying to get away from him, and he'd be probably driving it on two wheels most of the time.

Josheb appears in verse 8, doesn't he, topping the list of courageous men who trusted the Lord, protected David, and were committed to God's covenant promises. Now you might have noticed as I read the passage that the men themselves are divided into two groups.

There's the three and the thirty. The three are led by this guy, Josheb, and are complemented by Abishai, who in verse 18 wasn't included in the three, but was honoured above them and commanded them, whatever that quite means.

The thirty are headed by Benanias, son of Jehida, who wasn't accounted among them, but was also part of the bodyguard and ran the bodyguards. Look at the detail of all this with me just briefly.

[9 : 14] Josheb, we're told, in verse 8, killed 800 with his own spear all in one go. Eleazar, in verse 9, was the guy who, when everyone else ran off in the army, he courageously stood his ground, fighting so hard that his hand locked on the sword that he was using.

The rest of his mates in the army did return once he'd finished killing, but only to strip the dead after they'd fallen at Eleazar's hand in verse 10.

Shammah, slightly amusingly, I suppose, stood his ground in a field of lentils, right? Obviously, he really liked lentils. Everyone else fled, but Shammah wasn't going to flee. He stood there, not moved, defeating on his own all who came at him.

Abishai, who doesn't make it to the three, imagine not making it to the three, even though he'd killed 300 men on his own. Benaniah, in verse 20, is the giant slayer of his time, coming against the biggest and the best of other nations and winning, killing an Egyptian who was a giant.

He even kills a lion, presumably with his bare hands, I think, that's how we're to read it, in a pit on a snowy day, maybe even without his shirt on, I think that's how you have to imagine it, isn't it?

[10:32] You see, basically what you find in 2 Samuel 23, in contrast to our stereotype, what you find in 2 Samuel 23 is that big men, real men, courageous men, serve the king, God's king, Jesus.

You know, in the stereotype of our day, this is more like Anthony Joshua than it is like Doc Cotton. This is more like Tyson Fury than it is like the Vicar of Dibley. Now, I should say at this point, if you're a woman in the room, I'm not trying to make you feel uncomfortable this morning, nor should you think that this is that kind of stereotypical image of aggressive muscular masculinity, the type that's been so abusive and damaging, especially to women over the centuries, that this passage is not commending that at all.

I'll show you that in a moment. But I do think that our passage this morning, although it's not recommending that kind of muscular masculinity, the kind of toxic masculinity that we hear about, the passage does still have something to say to the men in the room, especially.

So if you're a man in the room, let me speak to you directly, just briefly. What you're going to find in 2 Samuel 23 is that real men, courageous men, are not half-hearted in their service of God's king.

It's not what they're like. Real men, courageous men, are not the guys who play it coy when it comes to following the Lord, just following him when it suits or when it doesn't interfere too much, but whose real passions and interests lie elsewhere, not really following the Lord.

[12:07] We just do that on a Sunday. Nor are the real men, the courageous men, living their lives out on the streets picking fights with smaller kids or taking knives into school to prop up their low self-image.

It's not what courageous men do in 2 Samuel 23. They're not snorting coke in the toilets of a seedy nightclub. They're not dealing weed on the streets or joining gangs just to get a sense of belonging. In 2 Samuel 23, big men, real men, courageous men, the kind of men that we should long to be, those men are losing themselves in the service of God and his king.

And that is the example that's been set up for us this morning. In a way, the application of 2 Samuel 23 to you, if you're a man this morning, is basically something like this. Man up and take following Jesus seriously.

And if you're a woman in the room, please don't think that this has nothing to say to you. The truth is, as a woman in a church where the men are not rude or abusive or dismissive, a church where the men in the church are losing themselves in service of King Jesus is the kind of place where women long to be also.

[13:27] These are the kind of men that you want to marry. These are the kind of men that you want leading the church. These are the kind of men you want helping at youth group, serving in the church. And besides all of that, actually the truth is that all of us need to man up or woman up, as it gets said in our house, in the service of the Lord.

That's what we need to do. Man up, woman up. Take courage and serve the Lord. So let me show you three ways the passage teaches us to do that. And the first one is this, man up or woman up if you prefer that, and trust the Lord and not yourself.

Trust the Lord and not yourself. I think this is what we're to notice in the passage is that it's not so much the great feats of the warriors, but the repetition of this phrase, the Lord brought about a great victory that day.

That phrase is there in verse 10. If you look down, it's again repeated in verse 12. In other words, these great warriors find their greatness not so much in the size of their biceps, but in the fact that they are instruments in the hands of the Lord.

Interestingly, their physical appearance is never mentioned, is it? Actually, it's only mentioned in a negative way in its weakness with a hand that gets locked to a sword getting noted.

[14 : 42] Now, I'm sure these were probably big guys, but the truth is they were not the kind of guys who were taking those pictures in the gym of their muscles and then posting on Instagram, right? Some of those guys, you know who they are, don't you?

Maybe you are one yourself. It's not those here, right? That's not what they're doing. These men, if you were to ask them, where does your strength and your prowess come from? How is it that you have achieved these great things in service of the Lord?

They would say, oh no, that's really easy. Let me give you a simple answer to that. The Lord did it. The Lord did it through me. You know, you're not to imagine, are you, that Joshua killed 800 men by himself because he fancied it.

It's not like he's at the gym one day and going, I wonder what I could bench press today, right? I wonder if I could take 800 men by myself. He's not thinking that at all, is he? I think what you're to imagine is that he did that.

He took on 800 men on his own because everybody else had fled. That's exactly what happens to Eleazar and Shammah, isn't it? They trusted God, not themselves, even when everybody else thought that all hope was lost.

[15 : 50] These are men of courageous faith, men who in the midst of battle believed that the Lord's promises were still trustworthy, that God would deliver whatever the odds because they were fighting for God and his king.

Now, just for a moment, well, maybe not just for a moment, for the rest of the sermon, but for this moment in particular, engage your brain if you can because we need to do some work here in order to see the application. Now, you need to remember that in David's day, the great promises of redemption, so your Bible is dominated by promises of salvation which run from the beginning to the end.

They are hinted at to Adam, they are spelt out to Abraham. I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, you will belong to me, says God to Abraham.

Now, that great promise to Abraham in David's day is administrated through the nation of Israel and his role as king of Israel. The promise is demonstrated by the success of a nation, if you like.

How do I know that God has a promise to save people in the Old Testament? I see it in the success of God's king and this nation of Israel. That's how I see it. Now, that arrangement, that administration of the promise made to Abraham, that ends at the end of the Old Testament when the nation of Israel are exiled and then they return to Jerusalem in weakness and defeat.

[17 : 17] And then comes Jesus, the Messiah in the New Testament and he inaugurates in his blood what he calls a new covenant. A new covenant. I am taking these promises of redemption, says Jesus, which dominate your Bible from the beginning.

Those are now administrated through me. I am the one who is able to give you membership of God's people, forgiveness and love and a knowledge of God.

The New Testament, the new arrangement. And in the New Testament, God's people are no longer just one nation, are they? In the New Testament, God's people are a church made up of people from all nations under the leadership of God's king, Jesus.

And the promises of Abraham, the promises of God to Abraham are no longer administrated then by the sword of a nation but by the preaching of a church where men and women from every land are invited to join God's people not by surrendering to Israel but by trusting in Jesus Christ and joining the church.

Knowing that forgiveness comes not from a sacrificial system in a temple in Jerusalem but from the fulfillment of that in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. So the new covenant, the promise of the Lord is not this land will be ours but that this church will be his and his church will grow, his church will flourish and it will be full of people from every tribe, every language, every nation and that King Jesus will not let us down but will return one day in power and glory to take his people to be with him in a world that he remakes by his power and his glory forever and ever and ever.

[19 : 02] Now that means that when you and I read 2 Samuel 23 the application is not find a field of lentils and stand firm, right?

You'd do well to find a field of lentils in London anyway, wouldn't you? No, that's not the invitation, is it? The invitation is not to wrestle in a pit with a lion but rather the invitation is stand your ground, live your life trusting Jesus Christ alone, believing in his promises that he has made to build his church that he will not leave you, that he will not let you down and that you can trust him.

Invest your hopes, he says, invest your service in the promises of God to build a people of faith. You know, manning up or womaning up means not giving up on those promises, the promises of God to exalt King Jesus and present him with a beautiful church.

And so just like for Josh Ebb and Eliezer and others where real men trust the Lord to keep his king, so today real men, real women trust the Lord to keep King Jesus on the throne for eternity.

So much so that not giving up in trusting the Lord, the best way to live, the only true thing to invest in is not our own fame and our own glory, not prosperity and comfort but trusting in standing our ground on the promises of God knowing that God the Father by the Spirit through the work of the Son will keep his promise.

[20 : 30] So let me try and give you I think essentially a contemporary Josh Ebb or Eliezer or Shammah story. Here the warrior is a mother.

Her son has left home. It's a true story. It's a friend of mine. Her son left home. He got into drinking heavily and fighting.

He was depressed and self-harming. He had absolutely no interest in the gospel despite having been raised in a Christian home where he had been taken along to church where his parents had shared the gospel with him day on day, prayed for him over and over yet still fighting, drinking, self-harming.

That was his life. And it went on not just for a few months. It went on for years and years and years. And then came the global pandemic, COVID. And Tom started to think.

And he remembered the gospel that his parents had told him. The seed sown over his childhood. He dug out his Bible, his old Bible and he started to listen to sermons because she could do that online in COVID for the first time.

[21 : 42] And he gave his life to Christ. His parents, his mom, is a warrior in 2 Samuel 23 terms. What about a young person who is willing at school to talk openly about being a Christian?

Who's bullied for holding fast to the Bible's message even when teachers are laughing at them? Holding fast to their commitment to honour God with their body, to speak of Jesus every opportunity they get despite everybody coming at them?

They're a warrior, aren't they? What about the man who faces the full onslaught of the world, the temptation to live for pleasure and live for comfort? Who's told by everybody else that life is about the woman on your arm, the money in your bank, the car in the car park, the name on the wall at work and yet they refuse.

I'm going to trust the Lord. I'm going to trust his promises. I'm going to live for Jesus. I'm going to give generously. I'm going to invest in gospel priorities. I'm going to spend my time and my energy encouraging others at church.

I'm going to make sure I'm there when the church gathers because I want to be there to encourage and bless and strengthen others. They're a warrior. They're a warrior because real men, real women, trust Jesus and live for him.

[23 : 06] Secondly, man up and sacrifice yourself or woman up and sacrifice yourself. In the centre of the passage is an intriguing account of these three warriors bursting through enemy lines to get David a drink.

It's an odd story, isn't it? David at the time is hiding in the caves in the stronghold. He's on the run from Saul who's trying to kill him and there's a garrison of Philistine soldiers who have set up camp in Bethlehem and David is longing for a drink from the well near the city gates.

Not presumably just because he was generally thirsty, although he might have been, but really here's the sense that he longs for home. Nothing tastes quite like the water from your own well, does it?

You know that when you go away on holiday and you drink the water from the tap and this tastes weird. That's it here. I long to be in Bethlehem. I long to be home. And it's almost as if the warriors sort of, they're not commanded, are they?

They're not ordered to go and do this. It's though they listen to David and think, do you know what? David really wants? He wants a drink from that well back in Bethlehem. Okay, come on lads, let's go. And so they break through the enemy lines and draw some water from the well.

[24 : 16] How on earth did they do that? And they bring it back to David. And then oddly, David gets it and he pours it out before the Lord. I think as an honour to the men who got it for him.

You know, I used to think, surely they would be slightly irritated by David pouring it out. Thanks very much. Pours it on the floor. But I think we're to see that they are being honoured by David.

David, your sacrifice is so valuable, I will pour this out before the Lord. I think in that sense it's quite like the story in Mark 14 where the woman at Jesus' feet pours out perfume on his head as a sort of ceremonial sign that Jesus was worth more to her than the expensive perfume.

Jesus, for her, was worth everything. Just like David's thirst for home was worth the warrior's lives. David, we love you even more than our own lives, he says.

I honour you for that, says David. Now here what you've got is a picture of a warrior with devotion to the pleasure of his king. I will do whatever it takes to bring joy to my king, say these warriors.

[25 : 24] And so for us to do that same translation work, yeah, the same work that we were doing before, and we can think, can't we, the rule of life for the Christian is I live my life to bring joy and delight to King Jesus.

Not out of mere duty or formality, but because the joy of the king is my joy and my purpose. Let me try for a moment just to see how this might apply for us as a church corporately.

We were talking as leaders just the other day that it feels like in many ways we are entering into what essentially feels like a completely new season for us as a church. For a number of years we've been trying to purchase the freehold and that looks like that's now settled.

The hall on the back roof has been leaking for a long time and that is now repaired. The bank account that had so much money in it at one time is now empty. There is a merger on the horizon with Redeemer Queens Park.

And we're really here, aren't we, on the shoulders of the sacrifices of those who've gone before us. The legacy that was given to us that's enabled us to do those things, to purchase the freehold, to repair the roof.

[26 : 29] The hard work of many in this room who've taken on roles in the church to keep things going. And now, again, we're being asked, we're not being commanded, we're being asked, aren't we, to consider the pleasure of Jesus greater than the comfort of familiarity as a church.

The question before us essentially in this new season is, do we want to stay as we are or are we willing to change and move forward for the pleasure of Jesus?

Because there are people in these flats around us, in this community in which we live, that belong to Jesus and our job is to go call them to come home to him. And he's asked us, hasn't he, to be his mouthpiece?

I wonder, I like to imagine this, it's not here in the story, but you imagine, maybe these three warriors tried to persuade somebody else to come with them on that night to go break through to collect the water from Bethlehem. Maybe Abishai, perhaps.

Hey Abishai, we've got an idea. What's your idea? Oh, what are we going to do? We're going to, you know the garrison of Philistine soldiers in Bethlehem? Oh yeah, I know, I've heard of that.

[27 : 39] Yeah. Well, they're guarding the well in Bethlehem, aren't they? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. We're going to break through and we're going to get some water for David to drink from the well. Are you nuts? Are you, are you crazy?

You know, don't you, that David is not instructing any of you to do, there's no command to go do that. Why are you doing it? Oh no, we, no, we want to see the look on David's face when he sees the water from the well.

We can't, we long to see that. Don't, are you in? Abishai says, no, you're crazy. You, you go if you want to go. You're crazy. You go. I'm staying right here.

And what does the passage say of Abishai? He was never included among them. He was never included among them. Where are we going?

We're about to risk it for Jesus. We're giving this, we're going there, we're doing that. You do, do you realize that you don't need that? Jesus doesn't, we don't have to do that.

[28 : 39] You don't have to give a legacy to mission. You don't have to sacrifice your weekends to go door to door. You don't have to serve on the refreshment rotor. You don't have to serve in the children's ministry. You don't have to change.

You could stay where you are. You could stay as you are. Oh yeah, I long to see the look on Jesus's face when I see him and he says, you sacrificed it for me.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Thirdly, man up and be faithful to Jesus. I hopefully have demonstrated one thing to you in my reading of the passage this morning and that is that I am not

very good at Old Testament names.

It's nice of you to laugh at me as I read the passage. You know, I don't know about you but I read some of these names and they go through my head but they fall out the other side. But even still, even with, even with a brain like that, I've noticed that there is an omission on this list.

I wonder whether you've noticed it too. There's somebody whose name you would expect to be on there whose name is not there. It's a name that's come up all the way through 2 Samuel but is now excluded from the list of warriors and mighty men.

[29 : 47] What is that name? Well, it's the name Joab, isn't it? Joab is the commander of David's army. He too was an amazing warrior, right?

You know how Joab got his job? Can you remember that story in 2 Samuel? Joab got his job because David said, listen, if you, if you will do this for me, you can be the commander of my army. I want to take the city of Jerusalem.

No one had managed to conquer the city of Jerusalem. It was too well defended. But David said, this is the city I want for myself. This is going to be the city of David. Someone conquer this for me. And if you conquer this, you can be commander of my army.

Joab says, I'm in. And he climbs up the water shaft to conquer the city of Jerusalem and defeats the city and hands it over to David. And so it's a massive surprise as you get to the end of the book that Joab is not there.

He's not in the three and he's not in the 30. Why? Well, if you've read 2 Samuel and you've been with us, you'll know that's because Joab is unfaithful, isn't he? He refuses David's orders time and again.

[30 : 50] He takes matters into his own hands. He manipulates the king. He murders people when he doesn't get his own way. In the end, Joab is actually punished by David's son Solomon who executes him next to the altar in the tabernacle.

And you see here, I think, is the point in 2 Samuel 23. Real men, real women of God are faithful to the king not just on occasion but in their lives.

courageously staying true to King Jesus. Living their lives for him. Joab was faithful in moments but not in the end.

He betrayed and was unfaithful. I went for coffee this week with a friend who's pastoring an Anglican church not very far from here, just over in Hampstead.

We've got a lot of mutual friends as well. We went to theological college around the same time. He was actually a couple of years younger than me. He didn't look it but I'm sure he was. Anyway, he and I were chatting together and we were saying about the people who we knew who we'd trained with and how sad it was how many of them were no longer walking with the Lord.

[32 : 04] It wasn't difficult for us although we reflected on people at college who were brighter than us and that was most of them and who had gone on to do amazing things but who had made a mess of their ministries, blown up their lives with scandal and sin, people who'd fallen out with one another, people who'd covered over the sins of others, people who'd been unfaithful to their wives even for years and years and pretended to be otherwise, people who'd bullied their staff members, people who'd refused to submit to the authority over them and had bounced out of ministry.

The conversation was kind of sad. Lots of people had started, not many people had finished and that's it here. These men get named on the list because they finish with David and they keep going to the end.

Joab did not. And so for you and I this morning, the call this morning is not just follow Jesus. The call is keep following Jesus to the end.

Keep following him. Don't just look back and say, I remember a great time of closeness with the Lord. But know those today. So we're to man up, woman up, trusting, sacrificing, and keeping going in faithfulness to the Lord Jesus.

It would be wrong though, I think, to end a sermon there because we have to ask one more question before we finish and that's this question, the question, why? Why? I don't know whether you've thought about that.

[33 : 35] why would these men do that for David? Right? Why the trust? Why the sacrifice? Why the faithfulness? Now the obvious answer to that is it's because of who David is.

Yeah? David is God's king. He's not just a nobody. He is God's promised king. He is appointed to be the king of God's people. He is the holder of the promise of God.

He is the administrator of the blessing of God. It is David as God's king who is handing out the blessing of belonging to God's people. And David himself is the great warrior, isn't he?

He is the boy who went to a giant with a few smooth stones. He didn't just kill an Egyptian as another soldier but he went as a boy with a stone and a sling.

David is the one who they sang about who had killed thousands of people in his great battles. The courage of these men comes from David's status.

[34 : 36] Why? Why are you doing this for David? It's because of who he is. Their courage comes from David's status. And so for us, why would we, why would I stand in front of you this morning and commend to me and all of us, listen, I think you should trust Jesus with all that you have.

I think you should sacrifice to him in large ways and small ways. I think you should be faithful to him all the days of your life, living only for him. Why on earth would I say that to you?

Because of who Jesus is. He's God's anointed king, the eternal son from heaven. He's the one sent to bring his people home. How do you know that?

Well, not because he went to a giant called Goliath armed with a pebble, but because in an even more remarkable way, he went at the giant of sin, death, hell and Satan himself with a wooden cross and he defeated it all, defeated them all.

He rose from the dead in triumphant victory. He rescued us from the clutches of our sin, promises us resurrection, life with him. Jesus smashes death, destroys the devil, rises to new life and says, come follow me.

[35 : 52] And that's why we're to be faithful to him. That's why we're to sacrifice to him. And that's why we're to trust him because of who he is. Perhaps you've never thought about it like that this morning before.

Or maybe you're kind of half-hearted in your following of Jesus. Well, listen, if that's you this morning, my encouragement to you is not so much to dig deep and see whether there might be courage to live for Jesus there.

Please don't do that. Please don't think that I'm saying to you this morning, work hard to trust Jesus. I'm not saying that so much as saying, look to Jesus. Look at who he is.

Recognize that he is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. All of us in this room one day will stand before Jesus to give an account of the lives that we've lived. And the more that we see that, the more that we know that, the more that we'll find by his spirit we are courageously given to live the Christian life whose praise and his glory.

If I can put it like this, and I mean this reverently and not in a flippant way at all, Jesus' identity, if you like, is the protein shake of the Christian life. If you want to build up strength as a Christian, look at who Jesus is over and over and over again.

[37 : 07] Jesus is the man's man, isn't he? The ultimate man. The man of love and generosity, of sacrifice and service, of faithfulness and trustworthiness.

is the man to whom all of us one day will be united in what truly is marriage, isn't it? As the church becomes his bride.

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the parable of the master who goes away and leaves his servants with money to invest and work while he goes away. He gives different amounts to different people what he says according to their ability.

And the master then returns to see what they've done. For two of those servants, they've lived courageously, haven't they? In the light of the master's returning, he says this, and I'm going to end with these words. His master replied, well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful with few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come, share in your master's happiness. We long to hear that, don't we?

[38 : 09] Come, Lord Jesus. Let's pray. Let me leave a few moments, just as quiet as you might reflect on what the Lord has said to you. Amen. Heavenly Father, we want to be like these soldiers here, warriors of the faith.

We want to trust you and King Jesus, absolutely. We want to consider the joy of Jesus worth even the greatest sacrifice.

and Lord, we pray, make us faithful to the very end, we ask. Keep us trusting you and living for you. Lord, we know that the strength to do all of that, none of that lies within us.

We long that you might do that work by your spirit as we see more clearly who Jesus is. Leave us this morning with a really clear impression of the greatness and worthiness of Jesus that we might

want to and take courage to live for him in every area of our lives.

Please, we pray this morning, even especially for us as a local church at this point in the life of our church. May we not falter in our courage to live for you.

[39 : 57] May we, like those who have gone before us, consider all things or loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord and living for him.

In his name we pray. Amen. Amen.