**Masculinity**

2 Samuel 23:8-39

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 **Jeff:** All right, let us pray. Our gracious God, we thank You for this day. We know that each day is a gift from Your hand, and we are delighted to receive it from You. We are thankful for the evening that You’ve given to us as well. And we’re thankful for the pattern of this that comes to us every day, this pattern of death and resurrection. Father, we delight to remember that there will be a day when we close our eyes in this life and we awaken to Your face, Your glorious face. And we’re thankful for that anticipation, and we look forward to it. But until that time we pray that we would receive each day that You give to us with thanksgiving and vigor. And we pray that we would determine to make it as useful as we possibly can, not only for the well-being of those who are close to us but for the well-being of Your kingdom.

 Father, we ask that You would then use this day and our time together this morning to be a benefit to us and to others. Lord, help us to come to grips and to grapple with Your word and its implications for our lives.

 Father, we certainly pray for a couple of men who have been mentioned this morning. Father, we pray for Matt Garvic. And we’re thankful for him and for the testimony of his life and for what You have done in it. We’re thankful, Father, for the way in which You have worked in him, following Christ. And Father, we pray that You would be with him as he experiences what could be troubling news. And yet, as we read in Psalm 112, the man who is Your man is not troubled by this startling news that can grip him. And Father, we just pray that Matt would have his eyes fixed upon Christ. We pray that he would be resolved to set his face like flint toward Christ in life or in death. And we pray, Father, on his behalf that You would give him many more years and that there would be success in this surgery. We’re thankful for the routine checkup and for the discovery of the problem. We look at that as a kindness in Your providence and pray, Father, for more of those kindnesses to be given to him. Father, we pray for him not only to be preserved throughout the surgery, but we pray for it to be a success. We ask, Lord, that You would be with him in his recovery. But we also pray for his family, and ask that Your hand would be upon them, that You would be ministering to them and even using this difficulty, this hardship, for their well-being and their spiritual good.

 Father, we also ask that You would be with Jim O’Brien. Surround him with Your love and care. We pray that You’ll minister to him. And we pray, Father, that You’ll be with him in his problems and issues that he faces. And Father, we ask now as we turn our hearts toward You in Your word, we pray that You will bless and strengthen us by Your abundant grace. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

 **Brave Men:** Amen.

 **Jeff:** Okay. Well this morning we’re going to turn our attention to 2 Samuel chapter 23, and we’re going to look at verses 8-39. Now when we look at verses 8-39 this morning I think we’re going to see—at least I hope we see- something of a projection, not just in the text but wi4th some things I’m going to pull in along the way that have to do with the life of David.

 But before we do that I want us to turn to verses 8-39 of chapter 23. Don, are you able to read that for us today?

 **Don Maurer:** Yes.

 **Transcriber’s Note:** NKJV.

 *“These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.*

 *“And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned to him only to plunder.*

 *“And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.*

 *“Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David said with longing, ‘Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!’*

 *“So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. And he said, ‘Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?’ Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.*

 *“Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of another three. He lifted his spear against three hundred men, killed them, and won a name among these three. Was he not the most honored of three? Therefore he became their captain. However, he did not attain to the first three.*

 *“Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, and killed him with his own spear. These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the first three. And David appointed him over his guard.*

 *“Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, Heleb the son of Baanah (the Nethophathite), Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai from the brooks of Gaash, Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite,”* (Oh, Abba!) *(Laughter)*

 *“(Of the sons of Jashen), Jonathan, Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite (armor-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah), Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, and Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.”* This is the word of the Lord. *(Applause)*

 **Jeff:** We’re gonna study Ephesians 5 today; I just wanted Don to read that. *(Laughter)*

 **Don:** Jeff, Abba is in the Old and the New Testament. *(Laughter)*

 **Jeff:** Uh-oh! Thanks for reminding me. *(Laughter)* All right. So today I want us to continue to think about what it is to be a man. And I want to start by thinking about heroes. Where have all the heroes gone?

 **Don (singing):** Where have all the heroes gone? *(Laughter)*

 **Ted Wood (singing):** Long time passing. *(Laughter)*

 **Jeff:** I think we have a tendency in our age—I don’t know about you, but this is at least what I’m getting in our day—heroes are going by the wayside. We really don’t want heroes anymore. We find them not to be believable. For instance, when we have a hero in our heritage and history what do we do? We try to find ways to tear him down and make him much less of a hero. What has stepped into the place of the hero is the anti-hero. And so we have Marble comics making an anti-hero; I forget his name. He was very sarcastic and kind of a miserable person who only does things because they’re convenient for him to do, and they have some way of hidden gain. And so he is an anti-hero. And that has become the hero today.

 I think that is an incredible change. And we need to ask the question: Why is this the case? And I think that Mark Twain actually gives us the answer in some ways. *“Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.” (Laughter)*

 And why is that? Well, I think the reason for that is that we have a tendency to look at somebody who is a hero by his virtuous traits. And what do we do? We recognize what is lacking in ourselves, and we know that there is something lacking in him. And so we try to find what is lacking in him so he can be just like us.

 But one of the things that I think is really interesting is that we’re living in a hero culture. So we have in one sense the pulling down of heroes that we had always thought to be heroes. And yet there’s the elevation of everyone as a hero.

 I don’t know if you’ve experienced this, but I went to a Veteran’s Day memorial service. And they carted my old third-grade teacher up there. I was praying for the event, and they carted my old third-grade teacher up there. And as she passed me she gripped my ear. (No, I’m just kidding.) *(Laughter)* But when it came time for her to stand up and speak, one of the things that I was really struck by was that she did not focus on our service men and women at all. What she did was, she redirected the whole speech and the whole event of the day away from service people to thinking about little third-graders who were heroes, and then other school teachers among her profession who were heroes. And at the end of the day everybody became a hero instead of the heroes who were actually there to be honored.

 And so there is really almost this dichotomy; there is almost this dizzying tension here between no one’s a hero because we can’t stand a hero, and so we’re going to have to replace him with the anti-hero. And yet we’re going to make every person in the abstract a hero just by virtue of being a person. That’s the world in which we live, and it’s a great temptation for us just to fall into that kind of thinking.

 I think that’s a terrible way to think. The Bible is very clear that there were heroes. There were heroic people and we need to continue to think that way.

 Now you may say to me: Well, wait a minute. Isn’t it true that when you look at a hero like George Washington, and he said, “I cannot tell a lie,” we say to ourselves, “That’s a lie.” *(Laughter)* And yet we know that’s not necessarily the full portrait of the man. We know that this is a man, and if you’ve ever read anything about George Washington you know he was a man of virtue, clearly a man of valor. He had his faults and foibles, but I’ll tell you what: what a man! I mean, if you’ve read anything about him, you know the man was seeking in many ways to do the right thing in many areas of his life. And so in my mind he certainly counts as a hero, at least in our country.

 And so yes, there is a sense in which it’s true that as Christians we have to acknowledge that yes, heroes are faulty as well. And as we strive to be mighty men ourselves, we know we’re going to be flawed, maybe in some ways that we know and in some ways that everybody else knows. But that should never keep us from striving to be mighty men, right?

 So that’s what I want us to think about today. I want us to do this by looking at three points. I want us to look at *a model man.* What is a model man? When we think about a hero, what are we thinking first and foremost about, especially when we think from a Biblical paradigm?

 And then I want us to think about *the main attraction;* I’ll explain what I mean when we get there. And then *know who you are.*

 It’s an interesting thing. We think about heroes and we think about them having their own problems, and we think about David having his own problems. I want to spend a little time thinking about him over the contour of his life. And I think it will be interesting to see at that last point.

 But first of all let’s think about a model man. I’m gonna just rattle on. I have a couple of questions along the way. But please feel free to interrupt and jump in as you like.

 I’m going to put two passages on the board. I’m not going to name them, but you’re probably going to know who they are immediately. I want you to look at the passages and compare them. And I want you to ask yourself: Who in the world would I point to as the model man?

 First of all, you have here on the left side a handsome young man. *“There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.”* That’s one man.

 And then on the other side you find that he is a man of valor, a man of war, *“prudent in speech and of good presence, and the LORD is with him.”* Which man would you pick to be on your side?

 **Gary Dunbar:** The one on the right.

 **Jeff:** No, the one on the left. *(Laughter)* Yeah, the one on the right; it’s certain that it is that man. As you may have guessed, the inside is the most crucial thing.

 And when you look at that list, the one is telling you about the externals, right? He’s a handsome man; he’s a tall man; he’s broad in shoulder. But when you look at it, the other man is telling you things that are certainly external. But they are external things that come from the internal.

 So for instance, he’s prudent in speech. Speech is a discernible thing with the ears; it’s an external thing. But the fact that he’s prudent in speech comes from the inside.

 Or *“a man of good presence.”* That doesn’t necessarily mean that he’s tall or broad-shouldered. But think about it. Whenever you are around somebody who is godly, it doesn’t matter whether they’re tall or short; it doesn’t matter what their externals look like. If they’re godly, you know you’ve been in the presence of a godly man. And so it’s not necessarily the externals that matter; it’s the internals that matter, right? And so crucial to being a mighty man is the inside; that’s what’s crucial.

 Think about David. I want to come back to this example a couple of times in our time together. I mean, here is Goliath. And Goliath is a champion, right? He’s an enormous man, and he’s a man among men. Everybody cowers in his presence, except David.

 David says, “Who is this? Who is this guy talking against the armies of Israel?” And yet think about it. When you think about him in the midst of the world, David is this small shepherd boy; who’s going to pay any attention to him? And Goliath is the real man.

 Now I want you to think about this with me for just a minute. I don’t know if you’ve been in a situation where you’ve experienced this like maybe I have or others have. But I’ve been in the presence of men—tall, muscular, big men. They attract people immediately just by their presence. People like tall, statured men. I mean, I don’t know what else to say. Taller, bigger, statured men have a way of drawing people to themselves.

 But I’ll tell you what: those men who are attractive only stay for so long, because once they realize that the big strong man is not on the inside what he’s like on the outside, they have a tendency to fall away from him. And I think that’s right, I think that’s only right.

 And so here’s David and here’s Goliath, and we need to keep this story in mind. David is this small shepherd boy who is really insulted for God, and he wins the day. You know the story, so I’m not going to spend a lot of time thinking about that.

 But I want you to look at 1 Samuel 13:14. What was it about David inwardly that made him a man that we could look up to, a hero? And this is a very straightforward text. In 13:14 it says: *“But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over His own people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”*

 So here is the Lord speaking through Samuel, talking to Saul. And He’s speaking to Saul about David. David is a man after God’s own heart.

 Now what does that mean? What does it mean to be a man after God’s own heart? I just want to ask you that. Do we have a sense of what that means from what it says: being a man after God’s own heart?

 **Gary:** Willing to do God’s will.

 **Jeff:** That’s exactly what I was thinking. Let me put it this way: This is a man who knows the heart of God and seeks to live according to it. So a man after God’s own heart is a man who knows the heart of God, who knows the will of God and seeks to live according to it. That’s what it is to be a man of God.

 Now we know that’s not going to happen perfectly. And I don’t want to continue to follow this whole talk with that, but you need to understand that. This means that somebody’s life will be flawed. And yet he can still be a man after God’s own heart; we already know about David himself.

 So I want you to think about that. What we have here is that we have a man after God’s own heart. Now the question I want to ask you is: What sort of man are you? When you think about the kind of man who is the model man, what’s the model man? The model man—the hero, at least from our perspective—has the inside right for God has made the inside right. And then that inside orders his external life, okay? That’s the beginning of a man of God—a hero, a mighty man.

 So when we think about the word *andridzomai*—be a man,--I would say to you that from our perspective, from the Christian perspective, being a man means being a man after God’s own heart. So that’s the first point: the model man.

 I do want you to think about this—not necessarily out loud!—but I want you to ask yourself: What sort of man are you?, because there is going to be a follow-up question to this, and it’s going to be a really important one. And I want you to answer this question—again, not out loud!—but I want you to answer into yourself. Right now I want you, in your own mind or on your paper, to write down: This is the sort of man I am, for good or ill. Okay, I want you to keep that in mind.

 All right, the main attraction. I want you to think about how, when we look at the Scriptures, not all men are mighty men. Where we’re going right now is to what is called “the cave of Adullam.” The cave of Adullam is one of those places that is not a high point in the history of David’s life.

 David departs; he’s on the run from Saul. This is where David flees down to Gath, down to Philistia. He’s down in the cave of Adullam, and notice what it says; this is really something. Verse 2: *“And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul gathered to him. And he became commander over them, and there were with him about four hundred men.”*

 Now those are not mighty men. But I want to tell you something. Before we begin to think about them in too negative of a way, notice that they gather around David, who is a mighty man. And I want you to just think about this a second. For wherever this goes, I want you to think about Don Quixote.

 I want you to think about that story. And that story is one of the most famous stories I’ve ever read, and I’ve only read the abridged version. But in that story there are lessons to be had. And one of those lessons is when Don Quixote comes upon a couple of tramps, a couple of ladies of the night.

 And remember, he thinks he is a knight errant, a wondering knight. And so as he encounters these women of the night, he doesn’t treat them like prostitutes; he treats them like fair maidens. Remember, a windmill is a giant opponent for him. So here are these ladies in front of him. They are not ladies of the night in his eyes; they are fair maidens. And he treats them like that.

 And lo and behold, do you know what happens to them? They begin to act better than they are. They begin not to act like tramps, but they actually begin to act like ladies. And I thought to myself as I read that: This is a lesson for life. In other words, you can bring people with you. We don’t have to leave them down in the mud.

 I want to tell you something. I thought to myself: This is a lesson I learned from hockey. Anybody who gets to play with Crosby is fine. Well, maybe not now! *(Laughter)* Anybody who got on Crosby’s line became a better player.

 Do you remember that shorter guy? I think his name was Matt, and he got traded at some point to the Lightning. Do you remember this? Do you know who I’m talking about? Jordan, I’m talking to you! *(Laughter)* Do you remember this?

 **Jordan Obaker:** He used to play with a lot of players back then. *(Laughter)*

 **Jeff:** He did play with a lot of players back then. This guy was actually in a race for a scoring record. I can’t think of his name, but this is my point. He got traded to the Lightning and he was forgotten. I don’t even know where he went after the Lightning. He played for a season or two and then he was forgotten.

 But my point is that when he was playing with Crosby, he was in the race for the scoring record. And he was in the race for the scoring record because Crosby was elevating him just by being with him.

 And this becomes the question for us, right? What do you think about him? David gathered around every person in Israel! Yes, he did. But what did he do for them as he gathered them around him? Or what happened to them as they gathered around him? And the question that I have for you is: What happens to people who gather around you?

 You know, there are people who are forced to be gathered around you; they’re called children. *(Laughter)* And the question becomes: What happens to them as a result of having to be around you? That’s a serious question that we have to ask ourselves. And I think it’s one that as you look at the life of David—and I’m going to point it out in a little bit!—as you look at the life of David, you see that David does something to these people; he does something to them.

 All right. Now the simple principle is that mighty men draw mighty men. I want you to think about this. Think about this in a one-dimensional sense. Think about little, short David who kills big Goliath. And he kills big Goliath not because he puffs out his arms and pretends that he’s been doing lap work all day long. But he says, “Who is that guy to talk about God like that?” Yeah, that’s what I’m talking about!

 And so he is a mighty man. He’s a mighty man not because he bench presses 4-1/2, but because he’s insulted for God, because he has a heart after God’s own.

 Now mighty men come to him. Here’s another list of them. Don, read—No, I’m just kidding. *(Laughter)* But I want you to catch this. If you go to 1 Chronicles, go to 1 Chronicles 12:1-6. What I want you to notice is this: I want you to notice that *“Now these were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he could not move about freely because of Saul the son of Kish. And they were among the mighty men who helped him in war. They were bowmen who could shoot arrows and sling stones with either the right or the left hand. They were Benjamites, Saul’s kinsmen.*

 *“The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, then sons of Shemaah of Gibeah, then also Jeziel and Pelet the sons of Azmaveth; and Berachah and Jehu of Anathoth, and Ishmaiah of Gibeon, a mighty man among the thirty and a leader over the thirty; Jeremiah and Jahaziel, Johanan and Jozabad of Gedera, and Eluzai and Jerimoth, and Bealiah and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haru-“* something or other. *(Laughter)*

 *No.* “The Haruphite; Elkanah and Jisshiah, and Azarel and Joezer, Jashobeam, the Korahites.”

But what I want you to notice is this. Notice the ethnicities that are listed there. There’s Zeleth the Ammonite; there’s Ithnah the Moabite; there’s Uriah the Hittite in these lists. There are different nationalities in these lists. In other words, there are people from all over who are coming to David. Why? Because like David, like his men. In other words, he’s reproducing. People are drawn to him. Why? Because he has a heart after God’s own.

 They may have been drawn initially to him because they were unhappy with Israel. They were in debt and their lives were a mess, and they wanted to secede away from the existing government. Maybe they needed to get away from the existing government because the government put them into debt, and so on; who knows? But my point is that, whatever the reason, they go to David. David elevates them; David makes them better men, okay?

 So for instance, you get these examples. Josheb kills eight hundred men at one time. Eleazar clung to his sword. It’s funny when you think about lentils. This is food of sustenance. Who is going to defend a field of lentils, unless that’s the only thing that you have to eat? But here’s a man who takes his last stand in a field of lentils to defend it, because it’s all there is.

 And these are the kinds of men that David produces. And when you look at their feats they look like David’s feat, defeating Goliath. These men are like him; they are willing to do things like David because they want to be like David. Like begets like. And the question is: Who are you begetting? What sort of person are you and who are you begetting? These are the questions.

 Now I want to go to the third point. And I think this is in some sense the most crucial point. The other two points set us up for what’s to come. What sort of person are you? What sort of man are you? And who are you begetting? Because you’re begetting somebody, and they’re in your likeness. And so what sort of man are you, and who are you begetting?

 *Know who you are and who you are not.* Now at some point David forgot his identity. There are two stories that I want you to notice. The first story is at the cave of Adullam. David gathers all these worthless men around him, but they become mighty men.

 Now I want you to notice that there’s a story that scholars think happens about this time, and it’s the story that starts in verse 13. They are around the Philistines.

 Verse 14: *“David was defending the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. And David said longingly, ‘Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem,’ (that is, by the gate.)”*

 **Transcriber’s Note:** ESV.

 **Jeff:** And his fighting men say, “David wants water from the well in Bethlehem that’s occupied.” And they love him so much, and they want to be like him so much, and they want to please him so much that they gather around themselves and they say, “Did you hear what David said? He wants a drink out of the well of Bethlehem.”

 And they don’t say, “How dumb is that!” And they don’t say, “Well, one day hopefully he’ll get to drink from that water.” They say, “Let’s go and get him a drink.”

 Think about that. Do you have people in your life who love you that much? And if you’ve been begetting people after the sort of person you are, and that sort of person is a godly person—a man after God’s own heart—then you probably have men like this or people like this in your life.

 And so they say, “Let’s give him a drink of water.” They go and get him a drink, and they bring it back to him. And he says, “I’m not drinking that.”

 Now why is he not drinking that? You look at that and it looks like he’s dishonoring these men who have gone to this well, risking their own lives to give him a drink of water! And he pours it out on the ground! Why? It’s not because he’s dishonoring them. It’s because—and this is the kind of man he is!—he says: “I’m going to be drinking this water, and I’m not worthy of that. This is a treasure.”

 And so what does he do? He’s a man after God’s own heart. He pours it out in dedication to God. It becomes a drink offering—not to himself, but to his God.

 Can you imagine? Think about that! To have a leader who says, “I’m not worthy to drink this, guys. I’m going to dedicate this to God.”

 All right; that’s one story. Another story is later in David’s life. While his men are out to battle, in 2 Samuel chapter 11 his men are out to battle and he sees Bathsheba from the rooftop. And somebody says in answer to his question, “Isn’t that Bathsheba?” And it does matter to him.

 Now you have to say to yourself: Who is Bathsheba? Bathsheba is Eliam’s daughter. You say, “Who is that?” Well, if you were paying attention to the list of mighty men, Eliam was one of the mighty men of David. And she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, the very last of the mighty men to be listed in 2 Samuel 23.

 And here David not only sleeps with Bathsheba, gets her pregnant and invites Uriah back—his own mighty man! But when he would not go and sleep with his wife to cover up David’s sin, he has him killed. And all of a sudden you think to yourself: Now wait a minute. You wouldn’t drink this water because it would be like drinking their blood. These men were precious to you, and this could only be given to God. And now all of a sudden, to cover up your own sin you’re willing to spill the blood on the ground?

 And you have to say to yourself at that point: What happened to this man, that these men that he had begotten had become so worthless to him? Don?

 **Don:** What happened first? Did this incident with the water at Bethlehem happen first, or—

 **Jeff:** Scholars believe this happened first.

 **Don:** Oh, really? It’s in the opposite order in our Bibles.

 **Jeff:** Yes. That story is a reminiscence. All of these stories about these mighty men,--

 **Don:** Yes.

 **Jeff:** This is a reminiscence of those feats of those mighty men.

 **Don:** Okay.

 **Jeff:** Now in these last moments I want us to pause because this is super important. At this point we could say to ourselves that David is a scum bag, okay? And we could leave it there. But I want you to look with me at 2 Samuel chapter 15. This is the long retreat of David as he leaves Jerusalem because Absalom has declared himself king, and he is coming for David. And as he’s coming for David, David gathers all the people with him and they all leave; they file out of Jerusalem.

 And it’s really an interesting thing because they move from Jerusalem to the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. They actually ascend a crest and then descend. And then they end up in Jordan. And there are people that he meets along the way.

 One of the people that exits Jerusalem with him is Benaiah, and Benaiah is one of those mighty men. And my point to you is this: that by the time you get to this time in David’s life, you find a David who is repentant. You find a David who has made himself prostrate before the Lord in his sorrow and in sackcloth. And where do you see this? You see this in Psalm 51 and Psalm 32. David is a man who has acknowledged his sin and has done what is possible to make things right.

 And here’s my point. My point is that Benaiah goes with him and others go with him from that list. And here’s the point: They could have said, “There is no way I’m risking my life for David and with David. He hung Uriah out to dry and killed him to cover up his own sin.”

 And yet David had repented in such a way. Yes, his sin was always with him and the curse was upon him; this was part of the curse. The curse was coming upon him fourfold. And yet his repentance was so genuine that his mighty men recognized it and followed him.

 I want you to know that sin is not becoming of a hero. But if you are a genuine hero and a man after God’s own heart, sin will never ultimately define you. Being a man after God’s own heart is what defines you, and people recognize that.

 There will be some people all of your life who will remember the sin. But they’re probably not the people who genuinely knows the sort of man you are. They are probably not the people who have ever been close enough for you to experience what you beget in other men, and so you just have to live with that. But there will be those who are close enough to you to know that you are a man defined by your heart after God’s own. And that’s the important thing.

 It’s not that you won’t fall because you will fall, and you will have your failures. The question is: What will you do in the midst of your failures? And I want to tell you something. David bungled pretty badly. But he repented pretty beautifully. And all you have to do to see that is to read Psalm 51 or Psalm 32, and you will see how beautiful his repentance was. And you see in the lives of his men how genuine they thought it was; that’s crucial.

 So what sort of man are you? How are you begetting? And my last one is a statement, and that is *Don’t forget yourself, but more importantly don’t forget the God who keeps you.*

 **Brave Man:** Amen.

 **Jeff:** Gracious God, thank You for this day and for the blessing of life in Christ. We ask that You would continue to bless us. Make us men after Your own heart. And Father, we pray that You would do this for Your glory and for the good of Your kingdom. We pray it in Jesus’ name. Amen. *(Applause)*