

THE MIGHTY MEN

The Life of David—June 23, 1996

2 Samuel 23:13–17

We're looking at the life of David in these summer months, and every week we're looking at another incident in the life of David. This is one of the passages that will someday be made into a summer blockbuster movie. This is from 2 Samuel 23:13–17.

¹³ During harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴ At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. ¹⁵ David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!"

¹⁶ So the three mighty men 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. ¹⁷ "Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.

This is God's Word

We're looking at the life of David, the anointed prince, the anointed deliverer. Every week we're going to look at every incident with this principle in mind. Let me just remind you of it tonight, because tonight is such a pristine example of it, and I'll refer to it again. When you read these passages from the Old Testament, famous ones and ones that aren't famous ... There's David and Goliath, Abraham and Isaac, Jonah and the fish or the whale or whatever it was, Daniel and the lions and so on.

There's a tendency for people (naturally, we tend to do this) to read these as stories like Aesop's fables, a story with a moral, examples. Most of us, when we read it we say, "We're supposed to read this, and we're supposed to be like David or be like Abraham or, in some cases, not be like David or not be like Abraham, as the case may be." We have a tendency to read them as examples, moral stories.

However, when Jesus came back from the dead, Luke tells us when he met his disciples on the road to Emmaus and when he met his disciples in the upper room (you can read about this in Luke 24), he says, "It's interesting you've read the Bible for years and years and years and years and you've read it over and over and over again, yet you're confounded, you're amazed, the anointed Deliverer of Israel, me, would die and be raised from the dead."

In other words, they had read the Bible and read the Bible, and they were totally astounded. They had no idea the anointed Deliverer was supposed to rise from the dead. The reason they were amazed and confounded and confused and upset at that moment in history, Jesus says, was

because, “Though you read the Bible, you don’t understand the Bible. You don’t know what the Bible really teaches.” In Luke 24 it says, “Beginning with the law of Moses and all the Prophets and the Psalms, Jesus showed them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning him.”

Jesus said, “The reason you can’t handle life, the reason you don’t understand how God works, is because you’ve read the Bible for years only at the moralistic level. You don’t realize every prophet in the Bible is pointing to me, the true Prophet. Every priest is pointing to the true Priest. Every king is pointing to the true King. Every servant is pointing to the true Servant. Every wrestler is pointing to the true Wrestler. Every hero is pointing to the true Hero. Every liberator is pointing to the true Liberator, and so on.”

In other words, you can either read the Bible as mainly about us, that every one of these stories is mainly about us, and it’s an example for us. If that’s how you read the Bible, when you’ve read it or when you’ve heard it taught, you’ll leave here feeling crushed. The Bible, for you, will be like a great big finger wagging at you all the time.

In fact, a lot of you have grown up thinking you’ve heard the Bible, thinking you’ve understood religion, thinking you’ve had it, thinking you’ve been exposed to church and religion, and all it does is make people feel bad. It’s just a big finger wagging. It could be you’re just like those disciples. You can either read it moralistically or you can read it redemptively. You can either read it as mainly about us or mainly about him, mainly about what we’re supposed to do or mainly about what he has done for us in history to save us, to redeem us.

Unless you understand every one of these Old Testament passages about Abraham and Isaac and Jonah and the prophets and David and Moses, unless you see it as primarily about Jesus, you will not really find your life changed. You have to see not only what it tells us about what we’re supposed to do but also about what he has done.

Only when you see both of those things, not only what we’re supposed to do and how we’re supposed to live but also what he has done for us, does the life-changing impact of the Bible really, really make a difference in your life. Let me show you how that works tonight. We’ve been actually doing it every night, but let me show you. I thought every so often I ought to recount that. Let me show you how that works.

Let’s take a look at the story first and then we will read to see what it teaches us. First, we have to understand it. The story is a little bit difficult to understand unless you do some reflection. What is this? Who are the mighty men? What is the situation? Well, it goes like this. As we have seen here in previous nights, when King Saul became aware David had been anointed by God to be the next king, his rage and his jealousy got the better of him and he began to openly try to kill David, and David had to flee into the wilderness.

When he was out there, a number of men gathered around him, 400 at one point, or even more, some texts seem to indicate, and these men he whipped into quite a band, quite a group of soldiers. As we know, of course, Saul never succeeded. These men became David’s guardians. They became David’s companions. They became very, very skillful men of war, and eventually they did save David’s life. Eventually, of course, Saul dies and David becomes king.

After he became king, these men rose up and became David’s military elite. They became his military leaders. Think about the incredible training they had. They had become a team. They had become a family. They knew each other. Not only that, they were battle-hardened, and they were skilled through actual combat situations. They rose up, and many of them (not all of them) became leaders in David’s army.

They were called *his mighty men*. It was a military elite. They were called *the mighty men*. This incident, though, is not happening when David is on the lam from Saul. Rather, this happens

early on in David's career as king. Just within a few months after he was crowned king, the Philistines, the archrivals of the Israelites, decided they would invade Israel and try to knock this new king down.

They thought perhaps they could capture him or at least weaken him terribly and nip his new kingdom in the bud. They were afraid of this new kingdom getting strong, so they invaded. What do we know about this? This was a very, very, very dark time. It says here, "During harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem."

Here's what we can learn. Actually, you learn quite a bit from this. First of all, the Philistines were encamped in the Valley of Rephaim just a few miles southwest of Jerusalem. They had taken over Bethlehem itself. That was their headquarters. Bethlehem, of course, was David's hometown, but they had gone all the way to the heart of Israel. They were just a few miles from Jerusalem.

We're told David, as a result, had to flee, and he had set up in the stronghold his headquarters in a cave. This shows how weak Israel was. This shows the Philistines had essentially run David out into the wilderness again. We see, also, they were there during harvest time. They were on the verge of a disaster, because if the Philistines came in and either destroyed or plundered the harvest, it would mean that part of Israel would be out their annual food supply, so things were in terrible shape.

David had really been run out of his capitol. David was out in the wilderness as a king. The Philistines were in the heart of Israel. They were essentially about to overthrow him. Now you have to understand that if you're going to understand what he says in verse 15. "David longed for water and said, 'Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!'"

The first thing you have to understand is David wasn't thirsty. Someone says, "What do you mean he wasn't thirsty? He's longing for water." The fact is we know he wasn't thirsty, because there was no way you could have headquarters, and no way you could have your own camp unless there was a spring there, and there was a spring there. David was not thirsty. He couldn't have been thirsty.

What in the world is he doing then? David is not longing for water exactly; he's longing for something more. That's the only possible explanation for what the mighty men did. Here's what David is doing. He's wrestling, not physically with physical thirst. He's wrestling spiritually with the promise of God.

God promised he would be with David. God promised him he would be the deliverer and the ruler of Israel. God promised him he would rule. God promised him he would set David up and his line would be a very important line of descendants, that his line and his people in Israel would fulfill some tremendous destiny in the world history.

All these promises were there. God said, "I'll be with you. I'll do all that." Now here's David, and he is so weak he can't get a drink of water from his hometown. He is an utter weakling. It looks like his defeat is absolutely inevitable. He's really saying, "Will I ever be able to drink from that well again? Will I really ever be king? Will I ever be able to defeat the Philistines? Is God really with me?"

He's wrestling with the promise of God. He's saying, "How do I know God is with me? How do I know God is behind all this? Why am I suffering like this? What of God's promises? How

do I know?" You see, it's not a command. This is a sigh. This is a cry, and probably it wasn't so much heard as it was overheard.

The sweet water ... We know the water from the gate of Bethlehem was very sweet and to David it represented the favor of God. It represented the grace of God. It represented the promise of God. "Oh, that I might have the sweet water from Bethlehem's gate." What we find out happened is of the 30 chief men there were three who were the mightiest of the 30. If you're interested, you can read the passage immediately before this in 2 Samuel 23, and you will read there the three guys' names were Josheb, Eleazar, and Shammah.

They're all mentioned in the passage before. They all were men of valor. They had all accomplished certain great, heroic military feats. This is what happens. They hear their king's longing, and they realize, as I'm going to show you here in a second, the significance. David is not doing a dare.

Women know there is a streak of this in us guys, and when we're little boys do stupid, dangerous things because of it. David is not saying, "Which of you is man enough to get me a drink from the center of the Philistine's camp?" and all three guys say, "Yeah, I'll do it." No. None of that. That's not it. They know what he's after. They realize he is saying, "Will I ever be able to drink from Bethlehem? Will I be able to defeat the Philistines? Will I ever see my home again?"

Look at verse 16. We're told, "So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David." This is so frustratingly minimalistic. This narrative gets so undetailed. Don't you want to hear more? "So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David."

Just a footnote. It is astonishing in the Bible how some of these great heroic deeds are spoken of so briefly and so matter-of-factly. The Bible understands the shallowness and the temporariness of human glory. It just does not puff. It does not hype. If you just watch an NFL film of any of the Super Bowls, they have this incredible music, and there are drums, and there are horns, and the camera angles make every touchdown pass seem like this feat of heroic glory. We love to puff and hype any of our accomplishments.

The Bible doesn't do it. The Bible knows all human heroes point to the real Hero, so it doesn't romanticize. The Bible never romanticizes military actions. It never romanticizes blood and guts. You never see it. Not at all like the Greek myths. Not at all like the other ancient myths. It's revelation. This is not the aspiration of the human heart. This isn't just human poetry. This isn't just human art. This is revelation from God.

What actually happened here in verse 16? Here are some of the things we know would have happened. First of all, if you read back in 1 Samuel, you'll know before there was a Philistine camp there was always a garrison. They had garrisons. You can read 1 Samuel 14. It tells you how Jonathan and his armor bearer did the same kind of thing, and there were garrisons around the camp. It was sort of an early warning system, and every garrison had 20 soldiers.

First of all, we know these three guys would have had to cut their way through a garrison of 20 men. Finally, they get to Bethlehem, and Bethlehem was the headquarters. They broke through the lines. Bethlehem's gate was up a hill, so they fought uphill, broke through the lines, and got to the well.

Then two guys would have to fight off the rest while one guy was filling the waterskin. Then can you imagine the Philistines' faces as they fight their way out with the waterskin? Three guys!

“What are they doing? Why are they here? Where’s the rest of the army? What are they after? Gold? Hostages?” Water.

Of course, everybody knows (they knew) there was plenty of water out there. They knew there were other wells. They knew there were other springs. Then we’re told they brought it back to David, and he was thunderstruck, and he was astounded, and he was filled with joy. We see what he did.

“But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord. ‘Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this!’ he said. ‘Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?’ And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.” Look at what happens. They risk their lives. It’s incredible. They went out there and they risked their lives. They stared their own death in the face in order to bring back this water.

They hand the water to the king. The king looks at it and pours the water out they had almost died for onto the ground. It formed a little puddle. Then it sank in without a trace. Would you think they were angry? Would you say, “I don’t believe he did that; we risked our lives and he didn’t even drink it”? No. Absolutely not. They would have bowed their heads. They would have been just as amazed and just as honored, because we’re told he didn’t just pour it out.

What does it say? “... he poured it out before the Lord.” He turned this into a drink offering. He turned this into a thank offering. He turned it into an act of worship. What he was saying was, “I realize, because of the sacrifice of these men and through the sacrifice of these men and through the risk of their lives, now I know God is with me.”

Actually, God had spoken a word of grace to David. David knew if these three guys could break through the Philistine lines he could defeat them. Not only did David know, but the three mighty men knew. Not only did the three mighty men know, but the whole army knew. For all we know, this was the turning point. This could be the reason why the story has come down to us.

Can you imagine how demoralized the other army would have been and how incredibly excited and filled with confidence the Israelite army would have been? The three mighty men were not just daredevils. They weren’t idiots. They weren’t macho daredevils. They knew what they were doing. They knew they had to do something to turn the war around. They knew what their master was after and what he was longing for, assurance that God was with them, and they said, “We’re going to show that he is.”

They bet their lives on the promise of God, and they showed total devotion to their master, and when David came back, David said, “Because this is the blood of these men, this is a life poured out, and it has proven to me God is with me and that God will save us.” Thus, such were the exploits of the three mighty men.

What does it mean? It’s a great story, isn’t it? It’s a great story, but what does it mean? Let’s remember what we said before. First, you have to look at it at one level, what it means about what we are supposed to be doing, how it is an example for us. I mean, it is. It will tell us some ways we should be living, but then we have to look above that and say, “What does it tell us about what God has done for us? Not just how we should live, but what God has done?”

First of all, let me show you several lessons for a moment that tell us about how we should live. There are a lot of them, but let me just mention four fairly briefly.

1. Anything you think you earned is really a gift of God

Anything you think you've won and anything you think you've earned is a gift from God. What he was doing with that water when he poured it out before the Lord was he was saying, "This is not your trophy; this is a gift of God." He says, "You haven't really won this. It was only by God's grace you broke through the lines."

Don't trust your prowess. Don't look at your strength. Don't look at your skill. Don't say, "We did that." Pour it out before the Lord. It's an absolute gift. I've been reading an article in the *Washington Monthly*. The *Washington Monthly* is a kind of neo-liberal monthly magazine. It's a very good magazine.

It had an article entitled "Where Have You Gone, Andrew Carnegie?" It's an article about something very interesting, that the super rich of former generations gave away a far greater percentage of their income than the super rich today. I won't name any names. It's in the May '96 issue, so you might want to take a look at it.

He names a number of people who are worth billions of dollars, and he points out the super rich today only give away chump change compared to the super rich years ago. It doesn't mean he's saying the super rich years ago were necessarily more virtuous people or nicer people and so on. It's just they had a sense of duty that people today don't.

The implications in the article were we live in a meritocracy now. In order to get in the best school, in order to get in the best job, and in order to make the money, you just about kill yourself. If you actually do make your billions of dollars, you feel, "Hey! I earned it! If I want to spend it on myself I can."

These guys killed themselves almost. They'd liked to kill themselves. They were mighty men. They had just done something that surely took skill, surely took prowess. David poured it out. What is he saying? He says, "Did you earn your skill set? Did you earn the fact you're six foot five and 250 pounds? Did you earn that? Did you earn your brain? Did you earn your talent? It was a gift."

I'll tell you what. I don't care how skillful you are. If you get in and get out of an armed camp ... All it takes is a straight arrow. All it takes is one pebble you slip on and fall down and you're dead. I don't care how great you are. What is he trying to say? David is saying, "Whatever you've earned in life, whatever you think you've earned, it's not a trophy; it's a gift. Pour it out before the Lord."

If you get wealthy, if you get a little wealthy, or if you get very, very wealthy you have to be humble and sharing with it, not proud and selfish. Anything you think you've earned, pour it out before God and say, "This is a gift from you." You can't miss these things. These aren't the main points of the story, but boy, they're important.

2. Christian leaders have to point their people to God and not exploit them for their own profit

What am I talking about? As the most visible Christian leader in this room right now, the only one in the spotlight, I suppose I'd better be careful I don't get struck with lightning as I say this, but this is actually a lesson for all of you.

When these men brought this water to David, they showed their absolute devotion to their leader. David pours it out. What does he say? He says, "I'm not worthy of this." He pours it out before the Lord. This is really a lesson for all of us. It's not just a lesson for people in the Christian church; it's also a lesson for the leaders in the Christian church. Both the people and the leaders. This is it.

First of all, what is he saying to them? He is saying, "It's right for you to serve me, but you're serving me for God's sake, not mine. You're serving me because you're here to serve God's kingdom, and I happen to be the one God has chosen for now to be a leader in it. You're not serving me for my sake; you're serving me for God's sake, and don't you forget that. Look beyond me. Look behind me."

That's very important. You may have a Christian friend who has led you to Christ or a Christian friend who you look up to and you admire. You may have Christian leaders you admire. You may have a pastor or a preacher you admire, but you have to look behind. You have to look beyond them. You must get beyond their approval. You must even get beyond their example. You have to see it's the truth they have. It's the message they have. It's the gospel. It's the gifts. It's God.

Otherwise, you're going to be so disillusioned. Your faith is going to be so hurt. You have to look beyond. I'll say this really briefly, because this will be boring since most of you aren't in this position, but a lot of ministers get the tapes of these sermons, I've noticed lately. Here's what it's saying. David is giving us all an example, all of us who are Christian pastors or leaders. David is saying, "When your people bring their devotion to you, pour it out before God right away. Don't drink it."

What does it mean? It means whenever somebody gives you some kind of adoration or some kind of compliment or anything like that, what we have to do is say, "Lord, the reason they like what I'm saying is because you put the love of your truth in their heart, and you gave me the gift to communicate that. Therefore, it's all from you. Don't let this go to my head. Here it is." You have to pour it out.

Some of you certainly can apply that across the board in other ways, but let's move on. The second point is Christian leaders and Christian people have to be very careful. People, don't let leaders exploit you. Leaders don't exploit.

3. Their king's wish was their command

This is really the chief lesson at the living level. They were so totally devoted to their king there was no difference between a command, a suggestion, or just a sigh. David's sigh was their command. What does that mean? This tells you the big difference between an ethical, religious person and a Christian.

Christians respond to the Lord the way these men responded to David, who of course is a picture, a type, of the Messiah all through the Bible. These people responded to David the way we're supposed to respond to the Lord. How do Christians respond to the Lord? There's a big difference between being a Christian and being a religious person.

A religious person basically says, "What does God require of me? I need help. I need power. I need strength. I need wisdom. I need forgiveness. I need things. What do I have to do to get it?" They concentrate on the rules, but a Christian is somebody who concentrates on God's heart. A religious person says, "What are the rules? What do you want me to do?" but a Christian looks at the heart of the Lord and says, "What do you love? What do you rejoice in? What do you glory in? What gives you pleasure?"

The goal of the religious person is to do what God wants in order to get some kind of reward, but for a Christian the reward is the joy and the pleasure of God. His delight is your reward. It's not a means to an end; it's the end. Religious people use God to get something. Christians know, "What I really need is the love and joy of God himself."

His delight is your delight. His joy is your joy, and if you want to see that absolutely, perfectly illustrated, you have this little word that has been really working on my heart for a couple of days. In verse 15 it says, “‘Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!’ So ...”

The word *so* ... Do you know why it's been working on me? They didn't have a discussion. They didn't sit down and say, “What do you want to do about that?” They didn't say, “Oh, my gosh! I guess it's up to us. We're the three. There's the 30, but we're the three. Oh, my word!” Absolutely not. Their devotion was spontaneous. Their devotion was automatic. Why?

There was dynamite in their hearts. There was a dynamic. There was such a love for their master that they looked for it. They were excited. He sighs, so they went. Occasionally I've used this illustration. When you're working for a boss, you find out what the rules are and you relate to the rules, but when you're in love you do research to find out anything that will make that person happy.

You're a detective. You look for hints. You look for sighs. You overhear things, and when you get something, you say, “Oh, I know how to make that person smile. I know how to give that person joy.” You're active. You're not passive. You don't wait for the rule. You go look for it. And you're not just after rules; you're after the heart. You're after attitudes. You're after the spirit.

Therefore, there is such a love for your Master that so energizes you that the minute you get even a whiff of something that will please him and bring pleasure to him. You say, “I have it! The opportunity ...” There's no difference for a Christian between a command, a suggestion, and just a sigh.

You want to find out what his heart beats for. That's what you're doing. The relationship between a Christian and God is so radically personal. The relationship between a religious person and God is very impersonal. That's the reason why Jack Miller, my old friend, used to say, “The way I can tell if a person is a Christian or religious is I'll listen to them pray.” Oh, I don't mean he listens for eloquence. He listens for intimacy. He listens for the personal touch. Is it there? Is there a connection?

Spontaneous, total devotion, that's how we're supposed to live. If we stop there, if we end there, don't you see what has happened? If we just look at this like a moral, if we just look and say, “This is how you're supposed to live, courageous and bold, serving God, always acting like everything you have is a gift, spontaneous joy, abandon, courage. Live like this.”

It's just a big finger wagging. Everybody goes out saying, “Yeah!” You sing that last hymn and you go out saying, “Yeah!” No, you don't. You go out saying, “Oh, my gosh! I don't think I can handle this Christianity.” It's not good enough, and you don't have to go out that way. Do you remember what we said? We said if you read stories simply as about us you'll be crushed, but if you remember every hero is really pointing not to you first, but to the great Hero, as Hebrews 12 says, the arch hero, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, Jesus Christ.

Here's what we have. This is what it tells us about God. When David saw the mighty men had broken through, he had assurance through their sacrifice God was with him. He had absolute assurance because they risked their lives. Through their sacrifice, he had assurance God was with him.

The Bible tells us there is somebody who has overheard your sigh. There is somebody who has overheard your heart sighing for the Water of Life. There is somebody who has overheard your sigh for home, just like David. He sighed for home. He sighed for water. Someone has overheard your heart.

Your heart wants home. You don't even know what that means. You just know you're not built for what you have here. There is a restlessness in our hearts. There is a desire for something called *home*. There is a desire for some kind of water. We experience a thirst. There is a restlessness. There is somebody who overheard your sigh and your cry for the Water of Life, and that somebody spontaneously girded himself and went toward the Enemy for you.

Here's the difference. He broke through the lines, but he didn't break through the lines of the Enemy at the risk of his life; he broke through the lines at the cost of his life, at the price of his life. Now his life poured out gives us far more assurance that God is with us than David had. We should be every bit as thunderstruck. We should be every bit as astounded. We should be every bit as joyful. We should be every bit as absolutely confident.

Far more, because David just had this temporary sacrifice. Three men at the risk of their lives proved God loved him and proved God was with him, but we have the Son of God himself. He set his face like a flint, overheard our hearts, broke through Enemy lines, and died. He knew the only way he could possibly triumph was to die. The only way we could possibly ever have the Water of Life is if he paid the penalty for our sins and died, so he went in there knowing his triumph would be his defeat, and his defeat would be his triumph, but he went anyway.

Don't you see? Only if you see he has done that for you ... He's the mighty man. He's the hero. He's the One who girded himself, and he went out, and he died to show you now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. What made the mighty men so absolutely devoted to David?

Probably because all those guys had probably risked their lives and died for each other in a sense. They had given their lives for each other, and then of course, God was willing to give them back. Many times they risked their lives. They put their lives on the line for each other. That's the reason they were mighty for each other.

If you see the mightiness of Jesus, if your heart is just always bubbling with the memory of it, the remembrance of it, the sweetness of it, if you're always thinking about it, if you're continually filling your mind with it the way we are right now, you'll break through any lines. You'll take on any task. You'll pay any price, because it's small compared to what he did.

There will be a joyousness about you. There will be a heroic spirit about you. Really. Honest. I know it's true. Don't you see how these all go together? Only if you see what he's done for you, only if you see him as the great and mighty man will you be able to pour out everything at the Lord's feet. Generous instead of selfish. Only then will you be bold. Only then will you be joyous. Only if you see his mightiness for you will you be mighty men and women of your own. You'll all be Joan of Arc, ladies. You'll all be Bravehearts. You'll all be noble. You'll all be mighty.

4. David was in a cave when this word of grace came to him

Do you know what that means? It means even though God did follow his promises and even though God did do everything he said he would do, he didn't do it the way David thought. David didn't think this invasion by the Philistines was part of the plan. David didn't think being on the run from Saul all of his life was part of the plan.

Again and again David found himself in caves instead of on the throne. God was constantly saying, "I will make you king. I will set you up. I will make you this great man. I will make you this great ruler." David was always running away, always in a state of weakness, always in a state of suffering. He's saying, "How could this be?"

If you have given your life to Jesus Christ, if he is your Lord and Savior ... In other words, if you see the Water of Life comes to you because he broke through the lines and brought it to you, not because of your good deeds, if you're a Christian then he's with you. There is no condemnation for you.

If you're suffering, if you're in caves, if there are problems in your life right now, you will see just like David saw these are ways in which God actually answers your prayers. These are ways in which God actually makes good his promises. These are the ways in which God actually made him that great king he promised to make him.

And he will with you. In other words, look at Jesus' life poured out and just say this to yourself and say this to God, "If Jesus has done this, I have nothing to fear. If Jesus has done this for me, then why would God let me down now? If Jesus has done this for me, he will be with me." This is the word of grace. " 'Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this!' he said. 'Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?' " Let's pray.

Thank you, Father, for showing us that all heroes are about the great Hero and all warriors are about the great Warrior. Some of us are in caves right now. We pray you would help us look at the poured-out blood of Jesus Christ as proof that you'll be with us. If we have you, we have nothing to fear.

We will serve you, and we will serve you diligently. Give us lives of total devotion. Joyous, spontaneous devotion, loving devotion that arises from a grasp and a realization and an enjoyment and an appropriation of what Jesus Christ has done for us. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.