



David's Mighty Men

Kicking It Off:

If you had to describe your personal definition of strength in just three words, what would they be and why did you choose those words?

Read:

2 Samuel
23:8-17

Summary

True strength and might are often misunderstood in our society. Rather than being rooted in physical prowess, wealth, or status, genuine power stems from faithfulness to God and others. This faithfulness is exemplified by unwavering loyalty, consistent commitment, and a willingness to serve selflessly. Individual faithfulness forms the foundation of this strength, manifesting in daily choices and actions that align with one's values and beliefs. This personal commitment, when combined with others, creates a unified community that draws power from its diversity. Like a body with many parts, a community thrives when each member's unique gifts and roles are valued and utilized for the common good.

Leadership within this framework takes on a sacrificial nature, modeled after Christ's example. True leaders use their position not for personal gain, but to elevate and serve others. This approach requires humility, vulnerability, and a willingness to put others' needs before one's own. This understanding of might through faithfulness applies to various life roles - in marriages, parenting, careers, and personal pursuits. It challenges individuals to view their responsibilities as opportunities for faithful service rather than platforms for self-advancement.

While this perspective often contradicts societal norms, it offers a path to deeper fulfillment and lasting impact. It creates ripple effects, inspiring others and fostering communities built on mutual support and shared

purpose. This concept of strength recognizes that true power comes not from individual capabilities, but from alignment with God's purposes. It's a call to consistent, faithful living that, while challenging, leads to transformative change in individuals, relationships, and communities. This approach to might doesn't promise ease or immediate recognition, but it does offer the satisfaction of living in harmony with one's deepest values and contributing to something greater than oneself.

Discussion Questions

1. In our daily lives, we often encounter situations where we're tempted to prioritize our own interests over our commitments to others or to God. These moments can be small, like choosing to sleep in rather than helping a friend move, or large, like making career decisions that impact our families. **How do you navigate the tension between personal desires and faithfulness to your commitments?**
2. Our society often celebrates individual achievement and personal success. This can make it challenging to appreciate the value of less visible roles or contributions, both in our workplaces and in our communities. **In what ways can we better recognize and honor the diverse contributions of all members in our communities?**
3. Leadership is often associated with power, authority, and decision-making. However, there's a growing recognition of the importance of servant leadership, where leaders prioritize the needs of those they lead. **What characteristics do you believe are essential for a leader who wants to serve others effectively?**
4. In our diverse society, we frequently encounter people with different beliefs, values, and ways of life. This diversity can be both enriching and challenging, particularly when it comes to working together toward common goals. **How can we maintain unity of purpose while respecting and valuing our differences?**
5. Living a life of faithfulness and sacrificial service often goes against the grain of our culture. It can lead to misunderstanding, criticism, or even personal loss. Yet, many people find deep fulfillment in this way of life. **What motivates you to pursue a life of faithfulness and service, even when it's difficult or goes unrecognized?**

Sermon Notes

2 Samuel 23:8-17

⁸ *These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite; he was chief of the three. He wielded his spear against eight hundred whom he killed at one time.*

⁹ *And next to him among the three mighty men was Eleazar the son of Dodo, son of Ahohi. He was with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel withdrew. ¹⁰ He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword. And the LORD brought about a great victory that day, and the men returned after him only to strip the slain.*

¹¹ *And next to him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines gathered together at Lehi, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the men fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines, and the LORD worked a great victory.*

¹³ *And three of the thirty chief men went down and came about harvest time to David at the cave of Adullam, when a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴ David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. ¹⁵ And David said longingly, "Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!" ¹⁶ Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate and carried and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it. He poured it out to the LORD ¹⁷ and said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.*

Outline

1. The Power of Individual Faithfulness
 - a. The story of David's mighty men
 - i. Their unwavering loyalty to David
 - ii. Faithfulness in both good times and bad
 - b. Defining true faithfulness
 - i. Not blind obedience, but deep commitment
 - ii. Consistency in everyday choices
 - c. C. The example of fetching water for David
 - i. Going beyond explicit commands
 - ii. Understanding and acting on the king's heart
 - d. Application to personal life
 - i. Examining our own faithfulness
 - ii. Challenging self-reliance vs. faithfulness to God
 - e. E. Faithfulness available to all, regardless of status or abilities
2. The Strength of Unified Community
 - a. Unity in diversity within the body of Christ
 - i. Different gifts and roles, unified purpose
 - ii. Reference to 1 Corinthians 12
 - b. Valuing all parts of the body
 - i. Recognizing the importance of less visible roles
 - ii. Strength through collective faithfulness
 - c. Challenges of diversity in community
 - i. Overcoming preference for similar gifts
 - ii. Learning to appreciate different perspectives
 - d. Application to church life
 - i. Encouraging diverse participation
 - ii. Building a community of mutual support
 - e. Faithfulness in different life roles
 - i. Marriage: mutual submission and sacrificial love
 - ii. Parenting: stewarding children for God's purposes
 - iii. Work: seeing jobs as opportunities for faithful service
 - iv. Personal pursuits: using talents to serve others and glorify God
3. The Beauty of Sacrificial Leadership
 - a. David's response to the water from Bethlehem
 - i. Pouring it out as an offering to God

- ii. Recognizing the sacrifice of his men
- b. Defining sacrificial leadership
 - i. Contrast with worldly leadership models
 - ii. Following Christ's example of servant leadership
- c. Characteristics of sacrificial leadership
 - i. Humility and vulnerability
 - ii. Putting others first
 - iii. Using position for the good of others, not personal gain
- d. The challenge of sacrificial leadership
 - i. Going against cultural norms
 - ii. Courage to be misunderstood or seen as weak
- e. The impact of sacrificial leadership
 - i. Transforming relationships and communities
 - ii. Providing a powerful witness to the world

Notes

As I consider the concept of strength and what it means to be "mighty," I'm struck by how often we misunderstand true power. In our culture, we tend to equate might with physical prowess, wealth, or social status. But I've come to believe that real strength lies in something far deeper and more profound: faithfulness. The idea of faithfulness as the core of true might is exemplified in the story of David and his mighty men. These weren't just skilled warriors; they were men of unwavering loyalty and commitment. Their strength wasn't primarily in their ability to wield a sword, but in their willingness to stand by their king through thick and thin. Whether David was on the throne or fleeing for his life, these men remained steadfast. This kind of faithfulness isn't about blind obedience or subservience. It's about a deep, abiding trust and commitment to something greater than oneself. For David's mighty men, that was their king and, by extension, the God who had appointed him. For us today, I believe this principle still holds true. Our might, our true strength, comes from our faithfulness to God and to the people and principles He's called us to serve.

But what does this faithfulness look like in practice? It's not always about grand gestures or heroic deeds. Often, it's in the small, everyday

choices we make. It's about showing up consistently, even when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable. It's about keeping our word, even when circumstances change. It's about standing firm in our convictions, even when the world around us is shifting. I'm particularly struck by the story of David's mighty men risking their lives to fetch water for him from a well in enemy territory. David hadn't commanded this; he had merely expressed a longing for water from his hometown. But these men, in their faithfulness, took it upon themselves to fulfill this unspoken desire. Their action wasn't about slavish obedience, but about a deep understanding of and commitment to their king's heart. This story also illuminates another crucial aspect of true might: humility. When presented with this water, David doesn't drink it. Instead, he pours it out as an offering to God. He recognizes that the true value lies not in satisfying his thirst, but in honoring the faithfulness and sacrifice of his men, and ultimately, in acknowledging God as the source of all good things.

This humility is a key component of true strength. It's the understanding that our power, our abilities, our successes - they're not ultimately about us. They're gifts to be used in service of something greater. This is a radical departure from how the world often views strength and leadership. Instead of using power to elevate ourselves, true might involves using our strengths to lift others up and to glorify God. As I reflect on this, I'm challenged to examine my own life. How often do I mistake self-reliance for strength? How often do I use my abilities to serve my own interests rather than to faithfully serve God and others? It's a humbling realization, but also an inspiring one. It means that true might is available to all of us, regardless of our physical strength, social status, or natural talents. It's about the choices we make and the commitments we keep. This concept of might through faithfulness also sheds new light on the idea of unity within diversity. In the body of Christ, we're not all called to be the same or to serve in the same ways. Just as a physical body needs different organs and limbs to function, the church needs people with different gifts, personalities, and roles. Our strength as a community comes not from uniformity, but from our unified commitment to Christ and His mission.

This diversity is beautiful and necessary, but it can also be challenging. It's easy to value only the gifts that are most visible or that align with our own. But true might recognizes the value in every part of the body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you," nor can the head say to the feet, "I don't need you." In the same way, we need to value and honor every member of our

community, recognizing that true strength comes from our collective faithfulness, not from any individual's abilities. This perspective also challenges our understanding of leadership. Often, we think of leaders as those who are in charge, who give orders and expect obedience. But the model of leadership we see in Christ, and in David at his best, is one of servant leadership. It's about using one's position not for personal gain or glory, but for the good of those being led. It's about recognizing that leadership is a responsibility, not a privilege.

This kind of leadership requires a different kind of strength. It's not about asserting dominance or maintaining control. It's about having the courage to be vulnerable, to admit mistakes, to put others first. It's about having the strength to lay down one's life - literally or figuratively - for those we're called to lead. This is the kind of might that changes the world, not through force or coercion, but through love and sacrifice. As I consider these ideas, I'm also struck by how they apply to different roles and relationships in our lives. In marriage, for example, the call to faithfulness and sacrificial love applies to both husband and wife. It's not about one person dominating or the other submitting in a way that diminishes their personhood. It's about both partners committing to serve each other and to serve God together. The husband's call to lead is a call to sacrificial love, to laying down his life for his wife as Christ did for the church. The wife's call to submit is not about inferiority, but about a willing choice to support and respect her husband's leadership, even as she exercises her own gifts and strengths within the relationship.

In parenting, too, this concept of might through faithfulness challenges us. It's easy to fall into the trap of seeing our children as extensions of ourselves, of trying to shape them according to our own desires and ambitions. But true parental strength comes from recognizing that our children are gifts from God, entrusted to our care for a time. Our job is not to build our own little kingdoms, but to faithfully guide our children towards God's purposes for their lives. This requires humility, patience, and a willingness to lay down our own desires for the good of our children.

In our work lives, this perspective on might can radically change how we approach our jobs and careers. Instead of seeing our work primarily as a means of personal advancement or wealth accumulation, we can view it as an opportunity for faithful service. Whether we're CEOs or entry-level employees, our true strength lies not in our position or paycheck, but in how faithfully we steward the responsibilities we've been given. This might mean making

ethical choices that cost us financially, or putting in extra effort not for recognition, but because it serves others and honors God.

Even in our personal pursuits and hobbies, this concept of might through faithfulness can transform our approach. Instead of using our talents solely for personal enjoyment or recognition, we can ask how we might use them to serve others and glorify God. This doesn't mean we can't enjoy our pursuits, but it adds a deeper dimension of purpose and fulfillment to them.

I'm also aware of how countercultural they are. In a world that often equates might with dominance, wealth, or fame, choosing to define strength in terms of faithfulness and sacrificial love can seem naive or foolish. But I'm convinced that this is the kind of strength that truly changes the world. It's the strength we see in people like Mother Teresa, who moved mountains through her faithful service to the poorest of the poor. It's the strength we see in countless unsung heroes who faithfully serve their families, communities, and God day after day, with no expectation of recognition or reward. This kind of might is available to all of us, regardless of our circumstances. We don't need to be in positions of power or have exceptional talents to exercise this strength. We simply need to be faithful where we are, with what we have. It's about consistently choosing to serve others, to honor God, to do what's right even when it's hard. It's about getting up each day and recommitting ourselves to this path of faithfulness, even when we don't see immediate results or recognition.

Of course, living this way isn't easy. It requires courage, perseverance, and a willingness to go against the grain of our culture. It means being willing to be misunderstood, to be seen as weak or foolish by those who don't share our perspective. It means being willing to sacrifice our own comfort, desires, and sometimes even our rights for the sake of others and for the sake of our commitment to God.

But the beauty of this path is that it leads to a different kind of fulfillment and joy than what the world offers. There's a deep satisfaction in knowing that we're living in alignment with our true purpose, that we're part of something bigger than ourselves. There's a freedom that comes from not being driven by the need for recognition or worldly success, but by a commitment to faithfulness and love.

This kind of might has a ripple effect. When we choose to live this way, it inspires and empowers others to do the same. It creates communities of faith where people support and encourage each other in living out this countercultural strength. It provides a powerful witness to a world that's often

cynical about power and leadership. I'm both challenged and inspired. Challenged because I see how often I fall short of this ideal, how easily I can slip into worldly definitions of strength and success. But I'm also inspired because I see the potential for transformation - in my own life, in my relationships, in my community, and in the world at large.

I'm reminded that this journey of developing might through faithfulness is not one we undertake alone. We have the example of Christ, who embodied this strength perfectly. We have the stories of faithful men and women throughout history who have walked this path. And we have the promise of God's Spirit working within us, empowering us to live in ways that are beyond our own natural abilities.

In the end, I believe that true might is not about what we can accomplish on our own, but about what God can accomplish through us when we faithfully submit ourselves to His purposes. It's about recognizing that our strength comes not from ourselves, but from our connection to the source of all strength. And it's about consistently choosing to align ourselves with that strength, day by day, moment by moment, in all the various aspects of our lives. This is the kind of might that can truly change the world - not through force or domination, but through faithful, sacrificial love. It's a high calling, a challenging path, but one that leads to true fulfillment and lasting impact. As we embrace this understanding of might, may we find the courage and grace to live it out, trusting that as we do, we'll see God's power at work in and through us in ways we never imagined possible.

Blog

STRENGTH IN LOYALTY

Have you ever wondered what it takes to be considered "mighty" in God's eyes? When we think of mighty people, our minds might jump to superheroes or famous athletes (I love watching the Olympics). But in the Bible, we find a different kind of might – one that's rooted in loyalty, courage, and sacrificial love. This week's passage is 2 Samuel 23:8-17. It's a story about King David and his mighty men, but it's so much more than a tale of warriors. It's a lesson about relationships, leadership, and what it truly means to be strong in God's kingdom.

2 Samuel 23 opens with David's last words. He's looking back on his life, reflecting on God's faithfulness and the legacy he's leaving behind. It's in this

context that we're introduced to David's mighty men. Imagine David, the once-shepherd boy turned king, now in his elderly years. He's seen it all – victories and defeats, moments of faithfulness and devastating failures. And as he reflects, he doesn't focus solely on his own achievements. Instead, he turns our attention to the brave men who stood by his side through thick and thin.

The passage we are focusing on this week highlights three of David's most mighty warriors: Josheb-Basshebeth, Eleazar, and Shammah. Each of these men performed incredible feats of bravery:

1. Josheb-Basshebeth killed eight hundred men in one encounter.
2. Eleazar fought so long and hard that his hand froze to his sword.
3. Shammah single-handedly defended a field of lentils against a troop of Philistines.

Now, I know what you might be thinking – "That's great, but I'm not a warrior. How does this apply to me?" Here's the thing: these men weren't born heroes. They were ordinary people who displayed extraordinary courage when it mattered most.

The story takes an interesting turn in verses 13-17. Three of David's mighty men (unnamed this time) hear him express a longing for water from a well in Bethlehem. The problem? Bethlehem was occupied by the Philistines. And without hesitation, these three warriors break through enemy lines, draw water from the well, and bring it back to David. It's an incredible act of bravery and devotion. But David's response is even more remarkable – he pours the water out as an offering to the Lord.

1. **Sacrificial Love:** These men were willing to risk their lives not for a strategic military advantage, but simply to bring comfort to their leader. It's a beautiful picture of Christ-like love that puts others before self.
2. **The Value of Loyalty:** In a world where loyalty often seems in short supply, these mighty men show us what unwavering commitment looks like.
3. **Humility in Leadership:** David's response demonstrates true humility. He recognizes the incredible sacrifice made on his behalf and refuses to casually benefit from it.

How can we show this kind of sacrificial love in our everyday lives? It might not involve breaking through enemy lines, but it could mean sacrificing our time, comfort, or resources for others. It's crucial to understand that these men weren't mighty just because of their physical strength or fighting skills. What made them truly mighty was their character – their loyalty, courage, and willingness to sacrifice.

In our modern context, being "mighty" for God might look like:

- Standing firm in your faith even when it's unpopular
- Showing kindness to someone who has hurt you
- Sacrificing your own comfort to help someone in need
- Being a voice for the voiceless in your community

Throughout these stories, there's a common refrain: "the Lord brought about a great victory" (v. 10, 12). It's a reminder that even the mightiest among us find their strength in God. These mighty men weren't relying on their own abilities. They were vessels through which God displayed His power. The same is true for us today. When we face challenges that seem too big for us, we can take comfort in knowing that our strength comes from the Lord.

So, what can we learn from David's mighty men? Here are a few key takeaways:

1. **Community Matters:** David didn't achieve greatness alone. He was surrounded by loyal, courageous friends. Who are the "mighty men and women" in your life? And to whom are you being a mighty friend?
2. **Courage is Crucial:** Following God often requires courage. Whether it's sharing your faith at work or making a tough ethical decision, we're called to be brave.
3. **Leadership Involves Sacrifice:** True leaders, like David, recognize and honor the sacrifices of others. They don't take advantage of their position but use it to serve.
4. **Our Actions Inspire Others:** The mighty men's bravery wasn't just good for David – it inspired generations to come. Your faithfulness might be the spark that ignites someone else's faith journey.
5. **God Uses Ordinary People:** None of these mighty men started out as heroes. They were regular people who said "yes" to God's call. The same invitation is open to each of us.

I want to challenge each of us: How can we be "mighty" for God this week? It doesn't have to involve dramatic acts of heroism. Maybe it's showing patience with a difficult coworker, or going out of your way to encourage a friend who's struggling. Remember, true might in God's kingdom isn't about physical strength or impressive achievements. It's about loyalty, courage, sacrifice, and above all, a willingness to let God work through us.

1. Who in your life displays the qualities of David's mighty men? How can you learn from their example?
2. What's one specific way you can show "mighty" love to someone this week?
3. In what area of your life do you need to rely more on God's strength rather than your own?