

When Even Heroes Faint

Opening Text: 2 Samuel 21:15-17, 22

Introduction: The history of the people of Israel is made up of the tension between the promises of God and the reality of constant warfare waged against them.

In many ways, we also live in that same tension: on one hand there is a loving God disposed to favour us and Who has given us exceedingly great and precious promises, on the other hand there is an invisible enemy seeking whom he may devour (according to John 10:10).

In verse 16, we read that the giant “*thought he could kill David*”. There is only one thing in the mind of satan: to kill, steal and destroy.

a) Here we see how this giant, a son of infamous Goliath, was now out to kill David.

David probably thought, *I killed Goliath, how many more Goliaths do I need to face in life? How many battles do I still need to fight?*

In fact, if you keep on reading, you will see that David went on to fight Goliath’s brother and 4 of Goliath’s sons. That is a lot of giants!

V.22 - *These four were born to the giant in Gath and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.*

b) However, **verse 15** says that **David grew faint**.

1. Even great heroes of the faith sometimes faint

It happened to **Moses** when he fought the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-13), it happened to **Elijah** (1 Kings 19), it happened to **Gideon**:

Judges 8:4 (Message translation) - *Gideon and his three hundred arrived at the Jordan and crossed over. They were bone-tired but still pressing the pursuit.*

It happened to most of those in Hebrews 11. Even great heroes of the faith had moments when they felt depleted, tired, and worn out.

2. Even great heroes of the faith had to be assisted

V.17 - *17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, “You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel.”*

That is the beauty of being a community of believers: no one needs to become a casualty and fight alone, because we can fight together.

Colossians 4:12-13^a (Message Translation) - *Epaphras, who is one of you, says hello. What a trooper he has been! He's been tireless in his prayers for you, praying that you'll stand firm, mature and confident in everything God wants you to do...*

When **Moses'** outstretched hands toward heaven became heavy in the battle against the Amalekites, Aaron and Hur helped him. When one triumphs, everybody triumphs!

We need to assist one another as we run our race. Even heroes like David had to be helped. There will be times when someone around us may be facing something greater than their strength and we need to respond by coming alongside them to lift them up.

Hebrews 12:15^a (AMPC Amplified Bible Translation) - *Exercise foresight and be on the watch to look [after one another], to see that no one falls back from and fails to secure God's grace (His unmerited favour and spiritual blessing) ...*

3. We should leave no man behind

That is the beauty of being part of a local church (a community of believers in Christ): we don't need to fight giants on our own. We can cover one another.

V.22 - *22 These four were born to the giant in Gath and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.*

It is all about teamwork!

We can be on the watch to look after one another, to see that no one falls back. We have to make sure that we as we run our race, we leave no man behind!

4. An example worth following

1 Corinthians 16:13-18 - *13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done with love. 15 I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints— 16 that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us. 17 I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men.*

Here's a New Testament example, worth following: Stephanas and his family. They devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints. They also refreshed Paul's spirit. That is an example worth following.

V.15 (in the King James Version): *I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have **addicted** themselves to the ministry of the saints,)*

Addicted – Dictionary: “given up to a practice or a habit”

When you are addicted, you are driven by a desire that is extreme and uncontrollable.

The house of Stephanas was addicted to loving the saints, they were addicted to being a blessing to the saints. They had a compulsive, uncontrollable, unstoppable craving to minister to others. They got a 'kick' out of looking after the other believers.

Galatians 6:10 - *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

The house of Stephanas was the 'first fruits of Achaia' – the first believers in this Greek province. In 2 Corinthians Paul refers again to the church in Achaia:

2 Corinthians 9:1-2 - *Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; ²for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.*

I find it interesting that the church of Achaia ended up absorbing the same culture of their founding members, the house of Stephanas. They were commended for their willingness and zeal to minister to the saints. They were addicted to serving others, they were willing, and they had zeal! *"Your zeal has stirred up the majority"*

Zeal (dictionary): *great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective. Eagerness and fervent interest in pursuit of something.*

- Zeal is an inspiring way to live
- Zeal is an impactful force
- Zeal is a powerful, positive, contagious force! – it *stirred up the majority*. What a great church to be a part of, when the majority is not passive, lukewarm, or indifferent but zealous, fervent and addicted to assisting the saints and serving the house of God!

Conclusion

Even heroes faint. We need one another.

Let us have a contagious, passionate zeal to serve one another. Let us be addicted to ministering to the needs of the saints. Let's have that as the dominant culture of this house: we serve our local church and this community of believers in practical ways and in prayer. Let's look out for one another. Let's be 'our brother's keeper'. Let us not allow anyone on our watch to fall back, backslide or to come short of all that God has for them.

Let us be to others what Abishai was to David. David grew faint but Abishai killed the giant!