

Mighty Warriors - 2 Sam 23:8-10.

Introduction: One day Tonto and the Lone Ranger were riding through a canyon together when all of a sudden both sides were filled with Indian warriors on horses, dressed for battle. The Lone Ranger turned to Tonto and asked, “*What are we going to do?*” Tonto replied, “*What you mean ‘we,’ Whiteman?*” Sadly, that sometimes seems like the behavior we see and experience in the church. When the heat is on and there’s a battle to be fought, we are forced to take it on alone.

There is an inspiring story tucked away here in these couple of verses. It’s the story of Eleazar; one of King David’s “*mighty men.*” There were actually a number of mighty warriors in David’s army who had distinguished themselves in combat, but above all the others, however, three were particularly honored: Josheb, Shammah, and Eleazar.

Eleazar is particularly remembered for his heroics in a battle with the Philistines. In 1 Chronicles we are told a little more about this particular battle. “*12 Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men. 13 He was with David at Pas Dammim when the Philistines gathered there for battle. At a place where there was a field full of barley, the troops fled from the Philistines. 14 But they took their stand in the middle of the field. They defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.*” (1 Chronicles 11:12-14 (NIV)). This particular battle took place at a place called “*Pasdammim.*” It is the same place where David had defeated Goliath years earlier. Evidently, this was one of the Philistines favorite haunting grounds in their seemingly never-ending feud with the Israelites.

There’s a lesson to be learned here - the enemy will often take us back to old battlegrounds; places where he’s held us up in the past! If you stop and think about it, probably some of your greatest battles have been fought over the same things time and time again- some of them are things you’d thought you’d already dealt with. So be on your guard!

Here at Pasdammim again then, the Philistines came against David’s army. Evidently, on this occasion, the Philistines had proved to be quite a fighting machine because the Bible says that “*all the men of Israel had withdrawn.*” They fled in fear! But David and Eleazar took on the Philistines by themselves. And they whipped them so soundly that when the rest of the army returned, all that was left to do was the looting! What a man Eleazar was!

We can learn a lot from Eleazar about fighting the battles we face in life – particularly the battle against evil. This morning, I want to point out three things about Eleazar from our text that will help us in our battles. Notice first, he had:

1. A Sufficient Weapon. (Read vs. 10)

Eleazar brought down the entire Philistine army with just one weapon in his hand - his trusty sword. It was a weapon he had confidence in.

No doubt, he’d fought many battles with it before. It had been a reliable sword to him - he’d taken care of it

himself, sharpening and oiling it continually, so that he knew it would not fail him in the heat of battle.

They tell me that one a soldier's first issues is his rifle. Each soldier is taught to know everything about his weapon - before long he can dismantle and reassemble it blindfolded in seconds. He's the only one allowed to clean it, and if he misplaces it he's severely disciplined. He does all this so that when he goes into battle the soldier is not concerned about whether or not his weapon will fail him - he trusts it because he knows it inside out and has proven it in many repeated drills.

Eleazar wielded his sword with confidence - it had proven reliable to him time and time again.

But it was also a weapon with which he was quite familiar. Eleazar had mastered that sword. Before he'd ever taken it to battle, he'd practiced with it for hours. He was familiar with its feel and its weight; he knew what it could cut through, and how much force he needed to swing it with. He knew how to use it both defensively and offensively - he was totally at home using this sword. He was so familiar with it, in fact, that it became just like an extension of his own arm.

Eleazar's sword is symbolic of the type of weapon God has placed in our hands as Christians. In Eph. 6:17 we are told to take up "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*" Our weapon, our sword is our Bible - the Word of God!

The question is - do we know our weapon? Do we know it well enough that we have unwavering confidence in it? This book is the Word of God, and God doesn't lie, so you can be assured of every word written here. Jesus said in Luke 16:17, "*It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the law to fail.*" God's Word is absolutely reliable! You can take Him at His Word today and every day!

But in order for you to be absolutely convinced of this, you've got to experience it for yourself! Preacher after preacher can assure you that God's Word is unfailing, but it will all be just words until you begin to live out God's Word in your own life and see for yourself that He never fails to keep a promise - that He is always faithful to His Word. Then you will know - Then you will have an unwavering confidence in the weapon in your hands! So, if you haven't already, start taking Him at His Word, and see His faithfulness proved out in your life.

Are you familiar enough with your weapon? Do you look to it for your answers? It is proving to be sufficient for the battles you're facing?

Eleazar's sword was sufficient for the battle - but for him to be effective with it, he needed to have confidence in it and to be familiar with it. God's Word is sufficient for every battle we face - how well do we know our weapon? Secondly, Eleazar had:

2. A Stubborn Grip. (10)

"*He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword.*" (NASB) Vs. 9 says, "*the men of Israel retreated.*" You'd think Eleazar would have done the same wouldn't you. I mean, who'd be stubborn enough to think they could take on an entire army of Philistines alone? After all, "*He who*

turns and runs away lives to fight another day!" - Right?

No - it says, ". . . *his hand was weary and clung to the sword,*" He wouldn't let go of his sword even though he was exhausted and the situation seemed helpless. All his human strength was drained - but did he give up? No - ". . . *his hand...clung to the sword.*"

Note the word "*clung.*" The Hebrew word is *dabaq* and it has two meanings, both are significant:

The first meaning is "*to catch by pursuit,*" or "*follow close and overtake*" If we take this meaning, Eleazar "*caught and held onto his sword for dear life*" It almost became a sword with a life of its own.

Have you ever been in a situation where you've had to cling to something for dear life? I have! I've told you about the time when my boys and I got caught in the rapids while we were tubing down a river. Our tubes busted, and we desperately caught onto a tree branch in the water to keep from being swept away from each other.

Sometimes in life, you're going to face a situation where there's been nothing left to do but cling to God's Word and, when you have found His promise, you've got to hold on to it for dear life, because it will save your life!

The second meaning of *dabaq* is "*to cling or adhere or stick to.*" The sword was "*adhered or stuck to*" to Eleazar's hand! In the heat of the battle, Eleazar and his sword became one instrument and inseparable!

If we're going to win the battles, we're going to have to adhere to or stick with the Word of God - to become at one with it. When you spend time soaking in the Word of God there comes a point where you become saturated with it. You begin to see new revelations of God. You begin to realize His ways and His promises. When you speak, you speak the truth of God, because it's living inside of you. All your thinking becomes renewed by the Word. That's what it means to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

We all need to pursue and catch God's Word and then stick to it for dear life. Eleazar had a stubborn grip. Finally, we see where God helped Eleazar with:

3. A Secure Victory.

Vs. 10 (NIV) says, "*The Lord brought about a great victory that day.*" Here is the strength in Eleazar's sword! It's the Lord Himself! God took this one warrior and used him to defeat an entire army, but it was God who secured that victory.

Eleazar trained himself with his sword, he learned to wield it expertly, and he clung to it through the battle, but it was God's power that enabled him to defeat the Philistines.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV) says, "*The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.*"

The name "*Eleazar*" means "*God (is my) helper.*" How appropriate! Without God's help, he would have never been able to overthrow the enemies of Israel. God secured Eleazar's victory.

Conclusion: God's weapon in the hand of God's man is a formidable thing! With the right weapons; by

wearing God's spiritual armor, and by using them in God's power, we find that God's Word is sufficient for every situation we'll ever face. But we need to know it. We need to have confidence in it and be familiar with it.

We need to be people of His Word - to cling to it as our resource. And we can be confident that, if we will honor His Word, God will be able to secure the victory for us, no matter what the odds. The victory is ours when the battle is the Lord's.