

Earthy Spirituality Part 2

Jesus is Lord of Our Battles

1 Chronicles 11:10-25

April 22 2007

Theme:

Thesis:

Objective:

Main Points:

1. Cinderella Man – “What are you fighting for?” Milk.
2. First nine chapters are what seems to be the most boring part of the entire Bible – nine chapters of names, a dry, ancient genealogy. But last week we said that the author of this ancient book was writing to a discouraged, demoralized community that was experiencing a group identity crisis and the author was saying, “Remember who you are. There’s royalty in your blood. There’s nobility in your heritage. You are important people and you matter to God and to this world. So hold your head up and live for God.” Now he’s going to tell them not to just live with nobility and with dignity; he’s going to remind them to live dangerously – because you serve a mighty king, because you are of royal descent; you are not just ordinary people with an ordinary calling – you are called to greatness and dignity. You have a destiny. You are called to be mighty warriors for your king.
3. More on the condition: they were permeated with a selfish individualism that hindered the efforts to rebuild their community. Notice Haggai 1:4-6 → comfort and getting my way became the most important value in their community. And their worship was marked by a “Yea, whatever” attitude of just don’t bother me (see 1:12-14).
4. Chapter 10 ends in the last verse 14 with the words “turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.” For the Jews of that time David was the greatest king ever. He as the face of God’s covenant promise (see 2 Samuel 7:12-16 – “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.” David became king 600 years earlier but he still inspired confidence and boldness and daring faith. The people could still rally around David. He’s the center. The people of God crystallize around him and his presence.
5. But David was imperfect. First of all, he was very dead – and died 600 years earlier and he never rose from the dead. Second, although he was a brave, passionate, courageous, wise, strong, fearless leader of people and lover of God, he was also a sinner. He committed adultery and then covered his tracks. He could be ruthless and cruel and vengeful. But he was God’s man, God’s greatest king ever ...
6. But all throughout the Old Testament God had promised a greater than David king – which of course was hard to fathom – but the promises kept pointing towards a greater than David – descended from David but more David than David, the true David, the true Adam, the real Messiah (see Isaiah 11:1-5 and 10). Jesse was the father of David so this would be a descendent of David’s line. Then we read in the very first verse of the New Testament – “... a descendent of

- David.” Jesus is the greater than David. So keep that in mind as we explore this story – the story of David’s mighty men because there are clearly implications for us as followers of the true David, the final David, the pure David, Jesus our true king.
7. He inspires us to deeds of true greatness. He brings out the best in us. We want to give our lives to something greater than just ourselves or even our causes. (See Eldredge’s letter from the soldier).
 8. For the next 20 chapters Chronicles will focus on David. For now notice that this section of David’s mighty men begins and ends by focusing on honoring David as king. It begins in 11:1 – “All Israel came to together to David at Hebron and said, ‘You are our flesh and blood’ ... and they anointed David king over Israel (see verse 3). And then this section ends in 122:38 – “.... They came to Hebron fully determined to make David king over Israel.” Those two bookends give us the theme for this section: they are wholehearted in making David king. I said last week that “all Israel” is one of the author’s favorite phrases. That’s what unifies them. That’s the glue that holds them all together.
 9. In the midst of this crisis and low morale and discouragement and selfishness and “I want my way” he appeals to David – he draws them together around David. Look, David is your ordinary king. David is a guy who spent half of his life on the run, hiding out in strongholds in the wilderness, risking his life, doing battle against forces trying to destroy him. And yet, fiercely loyal. God committed to him in covenant love – brave, courageous. We appeal to King Jesus (see Philippians 2:1-11). This is the study of Jesus – keep your eyes on him (see also Hebrews 12:1-3).
 10. The author gives us the example of the “mighty men.” “These were the chiefs of David’s mighty men – they, together with all Israel, gave his kingship strong support to extend it over the whole land ... this is the list of David’s mighty men ... “ They were David’s secret service and special forces at the same time. They were professional soldiers who lived by a code of honor and calling. Who were they? It begins with “the Three” of verse 11 – Jashobeam, Eleazer, and Shammah.
 11. First, they all had one focus – David. The focus is on David – not the mighty men. David gets the glory as king by having such incredible people surrounding him. These were people of incredible skill and heroism. King David and his reign are the “lamp of Israel” – the source of life and good news so they make sure that that light keeps burning bright (2 Samuel 21:17).
 12. Second, they were incredibly diverse. They came from different tribal backgrounds. They had different specialties or gifts as we would say. As you read through the list you’ll find some groups that were specialists in hand-to-hand combat and others that specialized as archers. The only thing that unites them is their focus and love and willingness to fight for David. It’s their loyalty to him.
 13. People of God, that’s our calling as well. We are very different – look around. We don’t come from the same backgrounds or the same parts of the world. We’re not all Americans. We don’t all vote for one political party. We don’t all like the same music or books or movies. We’re not just one race or ethnic group. We represent four generations – something that has never happened in the history of

the world. We don't have the same type of personalities - some are extroverts or introverts, organized and creative, ... We all care passionately about the life of Jesus - we all agree that he is risen and he is the way, the truth and the life but we have different ways of expressing and displaying the life of Christ in our world. We fight for and care passionately about different issues and causes and priorities: i.e. the issue of abortion - destroys life, issue of big issues like poverty and hunger and the child sex trade - degrades vulnerable lives, divorce and marriage - splits lives, child abuse - shatters life, world missions - spreads life of Jesus, worship - lifts us into the presence of life, biblical teaching - grounds is in the life of God's truth, others. Really we should all care about all of these issues because behind the issues there are people for whom King Jesus died, but again, we have different ways of focusing our time and our energy. But here's the point: in spite of our differences, we are called to love and unity (see Ephesians 4:1-3 or 2:11-18). It's not an option. It's not as if we can say, "I do love Jesus but I just can't stand that brother or sister in Christ because he or she or they did ____." You don't have that option.

14. Pick up the newspaper - Se-port Deli buying a cup of mushroom and barley soup spotted this copy of the Wall Street Journal. Two articles caught my attention: (1) gun laws ... I realize it's in the United States Constitution that we have a right to bear arms - I'm not sure if our founders envisioned the day when a psychotic college kid with a green card could plop down \$500 bucks for a few 9mm pistols and start on a rampage. Is that what we mean by freedom? What does a Christian think about this? Do we just join the NRA and our protect our right to bear arms? This is a little more complicated than that. We're fighting for peace, fighting not just to protect ourselves and our family, but fighting to protect all of our kids. (2) article about female abortions in India - ultrasounds are everywhere and you can get one for \$8. Why would someone in rural India, in a village without running water or electricity, want an ultrasound? Because if it's a girl, you can choose to abort her; and if it's a boy you can choose to keep her. What does it mean to be a mighty warrior in this situation? What does it mean to protect life? The Bible has much to say about the shedding of innocent blood - and nothing to say about gun control, by the way. What does it mean to prevent the shedding of innocent blood. Does it mean writing General Electric? Not buying their toaster ovens?
15. Third, they are people of incredible skill and heroism and courage - David draws it out of them. SO they do great things in and through David. These are the stories of their encounter with David. Because of David, because they loved David, this is what happened. Notice two of my favorite stories: (1) The story of the "three" - notice 11: 13-14. (2) See the story of Benaiah - see 11:22-24. (3) The story of Gadites - see 12:8 and 14-15. They don't play is safe with their lives. They serve a great king so it's worth it to do something great for him.
16. Of course one of the best stories is found in 15-19. Simply unforgettable. David had been anointed the next king but he wasn't installed as the king yet. Actually, this was one of the lowest times in his life. The "king" was actually hiding in a cave of Adullam. Everyone was against him - the powerful and deadly Philistine army and the elite forces of King Saul's army. Everyone wants David dead. David is dying of thirst and he cries out - probably just in frustration - "Oh that

- someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem.” He had probably drank from this well before and he was longing to be free enough to move around the country – no longer as a fugitive, a marked man, a dead man – and drink the sweet taste of this well. But “the Three” take him literally so they risk their lives break through the Philistine lines and get David a drink from his favorite well. They bring it back to David and he refuses to drink it. Instead, he takes it and pours it on the ground. “Should I drink the blood of these men who went at risk of their lives?” David is impressed. He’s shocked and honored and blessed. The immense admiration he has for them.
17. Did you ever think that Jesus is looking for real teammates, partners, co-workers, soldiers in his war? Notice David’s ability to inspire extraordinary deeds of valor and courage. (My friend at Starbucks – works for Starbucks – asking me questions, what do you think? Interested – fascinated with Starbucks. I found out he plants churches – I mean, Starbucks stores – all over long Island and upstate New York. Friendly – passionate about Starbucks. He’s a mighty warrior for Starbucks. My wife said, “Wow, that guy really likes Starbucks.” I said, “I think – at least the past few days anyway – he has more passion for Starbucks than I do for Jesus.” He is doing great things for Starbucks. He’s giving his life for Starbucks – we can’t even staff our nursery.
 18. Who is Jesus? Is he really my Lord? “In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). Do I really believe that? Some of you have been coming to church, raised in a Christian home, parents believe it, some of us are full-time pastors – but this doesn’t make a dent in our lives. Repent and return to your first love (see Revelation 2:1-4 – “I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance ... Yet I hold this against you: you have forsaken your first love.”
 19. They are unified around David – that’s what holds us together. Judgment pulls us apart. We can be right on an issue but wrong in our judgmental attitudes. How often does that happen? If you’ve never spotted it in yourself, I would never trust you to lead a ministry around here.
 20. Most of them are not famous – they are listed in 11:26ff. Who are they? We don’t know but God knows them. They matter to God.
 21. Two threads run through this chapter: help. Notice how many times it mentions that they helped David (see 12:12:1, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22). And then some of the names have to do with help. See verse 9 – David’s prime supporter from the Gadites was Ezer which means help. 12:3 – Ahiezer, chief of the Benjamites, means helper. 12:6 – Joezer. 11:28 – Aliezer. Then in the New Testament we find not a mighty warrior but a gentle woman named Phoebe whom Paul describes as a “helper of many and of myself also” (Romans 16: 1, 2). They show up and say, “Hey, David, we’re here. We’re just here to help.” O, how that pleases the heart of the greatest David, King Jesus. To just show up every day and say, “Okay, Lord, I’m alive and well, how do you want to use me today? Who can I touch today? Where do I get to serve today? I’m reporting to duty – at church, at school, at home, in my marriage, at my job, in my neighborhood – just show me where to help.” And then we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us and lead us (Romans 8:14).

22. Help illustration – me at Park Avenue UMC delivering turkey. Driving to Suffolk County Courthouse to pray for thirty seconds. Got lost, arrived late, bumped me down the schedule, had all these great and marvelous prayer in mind ... prayed for wisdom ... Vivian Fischer sent me a note, “we needed wisdom. Voting on a loitering bill.” We need to show up and be available and say, “God, just use me here in this place. Let me shine the light of Christ – without my agenda and without my rage and pushiness and self-righteousness.”
23. The other key word is wholeheartedness. See chapter 12:33 the men of Zeulun who were “prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided loyalty.” And then there’s 12:38 – “they came to Hebron fully determined (wholeheartedly) to make David king over all of Israel.
24. Third, prepared for battle – battle-ready (see 12: 25, 33, 35 and 36).
25. I love Amasai in verse 12:18. Amasai blesses David – a picture of worship – “the spirit came upon Amasai” – or literally “The Spirit of God clothed himself with Amasai.” It’s a beautiful picture of what happens when the Spirit of God comes upon us – we get clothed with the Holy Spirit. Notice, first of all, he declares his loyalty: “We are yours, o David! We are with you, O Son of Jesse!” That’s worship: we belong to you. We owe you our lives. Secondly, he declares and longs for and predicts and prays for peace. Success is a bad translation because the word is shalom or the Hebrew word for peace. “Peace, peace to you, and peace to those who help you for your God will help you.” It’s a prediction of peace. Jesus’ long-range goal is not destruction; it’s peace. Jesus is called the prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6). Every true warrior doesn’t just want to win – even if the cause is 100% right; every warrior wants peace. This is especially true in the body of Christ. We can be warriors for our cause for justice or the right color of the carpet or worship styles or whatever but we lose the war because we’ve sounded our brothers and sisters in Christ – and there is no peace.
26. the end result of serving Christ as one body is found at the tail end of this passage in 12:40 – “for there was joy in all Israel>” That’s another sign: there’s joy in your heart. Joy is the mark of the Christian – not intensity or passion or purity – but joy.
27. “eventually a man (or a woman) must come to realize that there are certain things in life worth fighting for. Perhaps, when we appreciate this truth we can better understand the heart of God (see God as a Warrior – see Exodus 15:3 and Isaiah 42:13). “there are certain things worth fighting for (and then he lists these certain things: a marriage, the institution of marriage, friendships, churches, the earth itself, unborn babies, poor people, lost people who don’t know Christ) ... Take anything good, true, or beautiful upon this earth and ask yourself, ‘Can this be protected without a fight,’”

Warrior makes us nervous – such a violent culture. Young man walked into a gun store paid \$--- and walked out and killed 32 people. Seen terrorists. The military is an honorable profession and we need to support our troops

Illustrations:

1. Cinderella Man – fighting for milk
2. Unbreakable
3. The Kingdom of Heaven movie