

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: WEEK 2

I WISH I WAS THERE
AROUND THE CAMPFIRE WITH DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN
2 SAMUEL 23:1-39
04/23/2017



MAIN POINT

David's mighty men are a model of faith and an astounding ability to stand for what is right against immense odds.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Imagine you knew you were in the last hour of your life. What is one conversation you would know you want to have?

How do you think you would approach your words differently during that time than you might right now?

Second Samuel 23:1-7 is identified as David's "last words." This term does not mean they were his last spoken words in life. They are more likely either his will or his last public speech. Regardless, David knew he his life was drawing to a close. What we have here are a reflection of someone who had made the most of his life on earth. When we spend our lives making the most of the opportunities we've been given for God's glory, we will have no regrets when we come to the end of it.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 SAMUEL 23:1-7.

How did David view his life and his work (v. 1)? What phrases from these verses stand out to you? What is their general theme?

Why do you think David chose these as his last words?

David viewed his life in its totality as blessed and guided by God. God still guides people's lives today. He is working in all of our lives. Identify key aspects or occasions of your life in which you recognize the guidance and blessings of God. Think about the occasions through which God has worked to bless others. Consider ways you might point other people, both believers and non-believers, to God's work in your life.

What blessings did you receive when you had an opportunity to make a spiritual difference in someone's life?

Verses 1-7 have the same spiritual themes as David's song from chapter 22—God's blessing, His providence and provision, and His continued faithfulness. But whereas 2 Samuel 22 was David's song of praise about all God had done in his life and through his leadership, chapter 23 looks ahead to the fulfillment of the covenant God made with David: "He will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:13, HCSB). Verses 1-7 pertain to both David's dynasty and the future Messiah.

In verse 3, David prophesied about the Messiah. What would characterize the Messiah's rule? Read Isaiah 9:1-7 for a similar prophecy. What additional characteristics are included in these verses?

The Messiah's rule would be characterized by justice, righteousness, freedom, peace, might, and prosperity. Matthew 4:14-17 tells us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies.

What do you take away from the two images in verse 4—the rising sun and the growing grass?

How would you describe a healthy fear of God? Read Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10.

What did David believe would be the fulfillment of his covenant with God (v. 5)?

In concluding this proclamation (vv. 5-7), David confidently pointed to promises God had given him. These promises are found in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 and relate to God's making a house for David by establishing a permanent dynasty through him. God had made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai during the exodus from Egypt. David's covenant was separate. David's primary understanding of covenant and salvation was a continuation of his royal dynasty and deliverance from enemies. As a result of these promises David declared that his salvation rested securely in God.

How has God's salvation given you security and stability? How have you clung to this truth during the past week?

The New Testament shows God's ultimate fulfillment of the covenant and salvation centers in Jesus Christ. God provides forgiveness of sins to all who put their faith in Jesus (Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:15,28).

HAVE ANOTHER VOLUNTEER READ 2 SAMUEL 23:8-12.

Second Samuel 23:8-39 seem to stand in stark contrast to David's last words, but they continue the theme of God's blessing that began in 2 Samuel 21. Like the verses on the Philistines from last week (21:15-22), these verses give a testimony of God's blessing on Israel's army. Included in these verses are the names and accounts of some of David's warriors—his most valiant soldiers. The list includes the three famous heroes who turned the tide of events in single combat and the thirty warriors who served in a special detachment.

What do you imagine these men looked like? What might their personalities have been like?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 SAMUEL 23:13-39.

What characteristics do these men and the three mentioned in verses 8-12 have in common?

Does our society value things like sacrifice, loyalty, honor, and courage as much as these men did? Why do you think we've lost those values?

Three of the warriors under David's command took their leader's wish as a challenge and made the 25-mile round-trip journey at the risk of their lives to secure water from Bethlehem. David's response revealed the depth to which he was

moved by his men's loyalty and bravery. The water from Bethlehem's well was a very precious gift because of the sacrifice the men made to get it. Consequently, it was a fitting sacrifice to David's God.

What place do qualities like sacrifice, loyalty, honor, and courage have in our relationship with God? Are they characteristics that define your relationship with Him?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is one question you would like to have been able to ask David's mighty men?

Why do you think God values risk? What do we communicate to God when we take risks to make His name known and be obedient to Him?

Do you consider yourself a risk-taker? What's the most risky thing you've ever done for God? How would you describe your relationship with Him at that time?

PRAY

Pray and ask the Lord to help you and your group embrace the shortness of life to the end that you might make the most of the opportunities to glorify God put before you.

COMMENTARY

2 Samuel 23:1-39

23:1 The heading for this chapter, These are the last words of David, is not intended chronologically; other words of David appear after this section and even in 1 Kings (1Ki 1:28-35; 2:1-9). Perhaps the section contains David's last recorded public statement or testimony to God's work through his life. Anointed (Hb *mashiach*) emphasizes David's dedication to God's service. God of Jacob ties David to the history of the patriarchs; God's work in David was the continuation of a work that began with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).

23:2 David's words should be understood not as boastful, but as portraying a sense of wonder that God would use him to convey His words.

23:3 Fear of God denotes a healthy reverence for His power and majesty; the book of Proverbs associates such an attitude with wisdom and knowledge (Pr 1:7; 9:10).

23:5 My house denotes David's family. God's everlasting covenant with David's house was ordered and secured in every detail. David was confident the Lord would bring its every aspect to fruition.

23:6-7 David's experience had taught him that the wicked had no future in God's plan. Since they were neither useful nor usable, the day of their judgment would surely come.

23:8 These are the names and accounts of some of David's warriors—his most valiant soldiers. God blessed David with exceptional military men. The list includes the three famous heroes who turned the tide of events in single combat and the thirty warriors who served in a special detachment. There were men from many different tribes of Israel and even a few foreigners among the men who rallied to David.

23:9 Defied is the same word used of Goliath's words against Israel (1Sam 17:10,26,36).

23:10 Eleazar displayed tenacity as he attacked the Philistines, yet the Lord brought the victory. The troops returned later to plunder the dead, a means of securing "extra payment" for their military service.

23:11 Lentils were a common food source.

23:12 The Philistines and other enemies often came up Judah's valleys to raid food supplies.

23:13 The cave of Adullam was in the Valley of Elah (1Sam 17:2) below Bethlehem. The Valley of Rephaim lay southwest of Jerusalem.

23:14 The stronghold probably designates the cave in which David was stationed. A Philistine garrison occupied Bethlehem—perhaps a move designed to draw David out of hiding.

23:15 Probably David's vocalized wish came not only from his thirst, but from his desire that his hometown would once again know the peace that allowed people to drink from the well at the city gate freely.

23:16-17 Three of the warriors under David's command took their leader's wish as a challenge and made the 25-mile round-trip journey at the risk of their lives to secure water from...Bethlehem. David's response revealed the depth to which he was moved by his men's loyalty and bravery. The water from Bethlehem's well was a very precious gift because of the sacrifice the men made to get it. Consequently, it was a fitting sacrifice to David's God.

23:18 Abishai, Joab's brother, played a leading role in David's rise to power and kingship (v. 18; 10:10; 18:2-3).

23:20 Benaiah was a well-known warrior (8:18; 20:23). Despite his position in a pit and severe weather that hampered both his dexterity and his mobility, he killed a lion.

23:24 Asahel was a soldier who was killed by Abner during Israel's civil war following Saul's death (2:18-23).

23:25 Harodite may designate a person from the Harod Valley that leads from the Jezreel Valley down to Beth-shan (1Sam 31:10) in the Jordan Valley.

23:26 A Tekoite was a person from Tekoa, seven miles south of Jerusalem (Am 1:1).

23:27 Anathoth, located in Benjamin, was later the prophet Jeremiah's hometown (Jer 1:1).

23:29 Gibeah of the Benjaminites was Saul's hometown and capital, a fact that shows David had some following even there.

23:34 According to 11:3, Eliam was Bathsheba's father. If this is the same Eliam, then Ahithophel, counselor to David and Absalom (15:31; 16:20-23; 17:1-3,23), would be Bathsheba's grandfather.

23:36 Zobah may have been the Aramean city-state that David conquered (8:3-6). Gadite probably designates someone from Gad's territory east of the Jordan River.

23:37 David subdued Ammon on his eastern border; at some point Zelek, another foreigner, joined David's forces.

23:39 The text intentionally ends with the mention of Uriah the Hittite. Uriah was another foreigner among David's mighty men. He gave his life for David under the most evil of circumstances (11:14-17). The fact that there were 37 members of the Thirty may be explained in one of two ways: either Thirty was a title rather than a specific figure, or the extra men were brought in to replace those who fell in battle.