

“Be of Good Courage”  
2 Samuel 10:12  
(Preached at Trinity, June 9, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 10** opens with news that the king of Ammon had died leaving the throne to his son, Hanun.  
David sent several of his diplomats to convey his condolences to Hanun. It was a gracious act of diplomacy. A token of David's wise leadership. The word used in **Verse 2** is נְסָמָנָה. Once again, David is showing the kindness that flows forth from a gracious heart.
2. David gives the reason for this act of kindness:  
"just as his father showed kindness to me."
  - A. In other words, David was demonstrating the grace of paying respect towards one who had been kind to him. We don't have the record of any act of kindness showed by Nahash. We do have the record of his barbarism.  
This is the Nahash that we read about in **1 Samuel 11**. He demanded that the people of Jabesh allow him to gouge out their right eye as a condition of entering into covenant with him.
  - B. Since Nahash was the enemy of Saul, it is not difficult to imagine Nahash sending some form of aid to David while David was fleeing from Saul.
3. What we find is beyond belief. The son of Nahash repays David's gesture of kindness by humiliating David's ambassadors. As I pointed out last time, Hanun displayed the suspicious, judgmental, censorious heart that we must all guard against. Such a heart will blind us from reason and bring upon us great loss.
4. Hanun's actions thrust him into war with Israel. He called to his side a great army, largely comprised of mercenaries that he hired.  
**2 Samuel 10:6 NAU** - "Now when the sons of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men."
5. David was forced into war. Calvin reminds us that there are only two reasons a war may be called a just war.
  - (1) The good and common safety of the people – the civil authorities justly bear the sword.
  - (2) The honor of God. Most nations never consider this aspect.  
Both are included here—the protection of God's cities while trusting entirely to God's authority.
6. It was a great force that threatened David's army under the leadership of his generals, Joab and his brother, Abishai. Joab was not a Godly man. This is the first we have heard from him since the tensions with David over the murder of Abner.

Joab's words to Abishai and his armies, however, are full of meaning. They were likely words far greater than he understood. They are words that should be upon our heart as we fight our spiritual wars. Our battles make every earthly battle pale in significance and demand hearts of steel and unshakable faith in our great God.

**2 Samuel 10:12 NAU** - "Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight."

I. "Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous"

A. The Christian soldier goes to battle with boldness and confidence.

1. The Christian, of all people, needs to be strong and courageous. He needs to be a valiant warrior.
2. Matthew Henry – "Religion tends to make men, not cowardly, but truly valiant. The righteous is bold as a lion. The true Christian is the true hero."<sup>1</sup> This is true of both men and women.
3. Thomas Watson wrote: "The Christian is resolved that, come what will, he will have heaven. Where there is this resolution, danger must be despised, difficulties trampled upon, and terrors condemned. I will have heaven whatever it costs me, and this resolution must be in the strength of Christ."<sup>2</sup>
3. The Bible gives us many examples of men and women who stood upon the mighty power of God:
  - Noah boldly built the ark for 120 years while he was mocked daily
  - Abraham boldly left his homeland trusting the promises of God. At one point he took a mere 300 men and conquered four kings and their armies
  - Joshua fought valiantly, Caleb fought with courage.

God's charge to Joshua:

**Joshua 1:9 NAU** - "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

- Esther risked her life to defend her people

**Esther 4:16 NAU** - "And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

- David stood boldly before his enemies
- Jeremiah stood firm upon God's Word at great personal loss.

The list goes on and on

4. Israel is standing before a superior army. Joab boldly presses them, "Be strong and courageous."

B. The Christian soldier must manifest strength and courage

1. This has always been expected of God's people

**Psalm 31:24 NAU** - "Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD."

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 38.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Watson, *Taking Heaven by Storm*, (Orlando: The Northhampton Press, 2007), 9.

2. Christianity is not for the faint of heart – We are commanded to count the cost. The Christian life is difficult!
  - a. This was the teaching of Jesus  
**Luke 14:27-33 NAU** - "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. <sup>28</sup> "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."
  - b. Paul's words to Timothy -  
**2 Timothy 2:3** – “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
3. Our generation is marked by weakness, softness –  
 The opposite of “Be strong and courageous”
  - a. You can hear it when difficulty comes – complaints and whining.  
 Everyone today expects life to be free from difficulty. Most expect the government to provide.
  - b. 150 years ago they had no electricity, no AC, no TV  
 Limited pain relievers, no antibiotics, no cars or airplanes, no telephones, no supermarkets – lots of hard work.  
 Most worked 6 days a week resting on the Sabbath.  
 No one expected an easy life
4. Unfortunately, many Christians today have been influenced by our hedonistic society. We lust for pleasure – the good life. They see the church more as a playground than a place to equip for hard labor.  
 What used to be a delight on the Lord’s Day is now seen as a drudgery.  
 Most are now discontinuing the evening service.  
 Thomas Watson: “We must dedicate the whole day to God. Under the law a single sacrifice was appointed for other days of the week, but two lambs were to be offered upon the Sabbath. . . . Good reason we should consecrate the whole Sabbath to God and give Him double devotion is that God doubles His blessings upon us this day.”<sup>3</sup>
5. Christianity has never been characterized by ease.  
 Throughout history men and women have suffered greatly for their faith. Thousands and thousands of Christians have died simply because of their faith in Christ. They’ve endured every hardship in their service to Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Watson, *Taking Heaven by Storm*, (Orlando: The Northhampton Press, 2007), Page 45.

- C. Discipleship demands that we behave like men – with courage and boldness  
(This applies also to ladies as it applies to the Christian life)
  - 1. **1 Corinthians 16:13 NAU** - "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."
  - 2. William Barclay – "As a sentinel, be ever on the alert. When under attack, stand fast in the faith, and yield not an inch. In time of battle, play a hero's part. Like a well-equipped and well-trained soldier, be strong to fight for your King."<sup>4</sup>
  - 3. We must stand our ground. We must overcome temptation. We must stand in opposition to all that would bring dishonor to our Lord. We must be resolved maintaining our integrity.  
We must do what we know to be right to the honor of our God.
  - 4. We must be willing to step outside our comfort zone

- II. What is the source of the Christian soldier's strength and confidence?  
"and may the LORD do what is good in His sight."
    - A. Our strength is not our own. We must give ourselves. We must labor, strive, fight – but it is not mere human strength.
      - 1. Joab encouraged his armies to be strong and courageous. But then he added, "And may the LORD do what is good in His sight."
      - 2. Christian strength and courage does not come naturally
      - 3. Paul never pretended that his strength was his own  
He knew his weakness  
**1 Corinthians 2:3 NAU** - "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,"
      - 4. The man who marches forth in his own strength doesn't realize his own helplessness – he will be smitten with fear and then failure. The battle fought alone is the battle lost.
    - James 4:6 NAU** - "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
    - 5. The Christian, of all people, needs to be strong and courageous. He needs to be a valiant warrior. But he must never fail to recognize the source of his strength. Our confidence is in Christ.
    - Philippians 4:13 NAU** - "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
  - B. First, we have to understand that this strength is one of the Christian graces. In other words, it is something God grants to His people as a token of His goodness.
- 2 Timothy 2:1 NAU** - "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
- Isaiah 54:17 NAU** - "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD.
- "Heritage" – possession or inheritance

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<sup>4</sup> William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible, The Letters to the Corinthians*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), Page 185.

**Ephesians 6:10 NAU** - "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might."

1. This strength isn't some abstract principle but something God has demonstrated over and over. He works mightily with infinite power on behalf of His people. He calls upon us to remember.
2. God imparts His strength to His people and then commands us to be bold and courageous.
3. We must strive with all our might. We must fight the good fight of faith. We must press on. We must be sober, vigilant. We must do all that we can do to stand firm.

But our strength is not our own. God gives us the strength when we need it

**2 Corinthians 10:3-4 NAU** - "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."

- C. All of our spiritual strength comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ
    1. Every grace of God is through the Lord Jesus Christ
    2. This spiritual strength is not a natural human inner strength. It is not self-sufficiency or personal will-power. It comes only through the grace that is in Christ Jesus
 

We are made complete in Him – we are nothing without Him

**John 15:5 NAU** - "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."
    3. Paul continually affirmed that he was strong only through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Corinthians 12:10 NAU** - "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

**Conclusion:**

1. The Christian soldier must be bold and courageous – We go forth with the infinite power of God. He will strengthen us to do His will. Our duty is to determine in our heart that we will do His will. That we will stand firm in the face of opposition. That we will honor our great King at any cost.
2. But the Christian soldier must maintain a constant state of preparedness. Richard Phillips reminds us: “Christians who are not vigilant in their manner of living and who do not strengthen themselves through biblical mind renewal, Scripture study and memorizing, and regular prayer will lack the readiness and spiritual strength needed to protect their marriages, families, and churches against the assaults that our spiritual enemies may launch with little or no warning.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Philips, Richard. *2 Samuel, Reformed Expository Commentary*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2018, Page 197.