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:: 1 chronicles 14.8-17 ::

We're taking a look at some of the specific battle records given to us in the Bible so that we can learn from them and apply them to our day to day walk with Christ here on the earth.

We know that spiritual warfare, struggle and trials are coming our way, so we want to see how the Lord directed His people, how the people responded and what the result was. We want to be victorious and battle ready.

Last week we studied the Battle at Rephidim and found that the key to victory there was **endurance**.

Today we'll see the Battles in the Valley of Rephaim and learn that another key to spiritual victory is **boldness**.

You can't have a series on the battles of the Old Testament without including King David. Through and through David was a warrior. In fact, when he starts planning to construct the temple of the Lord, the Lord has to stop him because he was a man of blood. All of his life David was fighting, from the early days in the fields shepherding to the end of his life when he was forced to retire from combat, David knew battle and he was used to win some decisive victories over the enemies of God.

The battles we want to see this morning are in 1 Chronicles chapter 14, verses 8 through 17. This account is paralleled in 2 Samuel chapter 5, they're very similar, you can read that section later today as homework, but this morning we'll be in the 1 Chronicles account, seeing David's Biblical boldness.

Boldness is important in the Christian life. In the epistles especially we are commended to be bold in Christ, bold in our witness, bold in our speech, bold to follow after God.

So what is boldness? We define *bold* this way: *not hesitating or fearful in the face of actual or possible danger or rebuff; courageous and daring.*

I think that's a pretty good definition, but I must say that I do think we've changed the way we understand this word these days. I think we've misunderstood and adopted a very different attitude toward this attribute. We think of boldness more as being blatantly outspoken, or 'telling it like it is', or just being brash and reckless. That isn't what Biblical boldness is. Acting or talking without tact isn't boldness. It's just being a jerk.

David shows us what Biblical boldness is in this passage. We begin in 1 Chronicles 14.8, where we read:

1 Chronicles 14.8a - When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David.

Ah the Philistines. Our old friends. They caused a lot of problems for Israel here in the early kingdom years. But what is interesting to me is David's relationship with the Philistines during the course of his life.

Obviously we remember when David, as a young man, slew the Philistine champion Goliath. He then went on to kill thousands and thousands of them.

But not long after that David is fleeing from Saul, he's not really trusting in the Lord, and he decides to go down to Gath, the great Philistine city. He hangs out there for a while, becomes one of them, at one point even is ready to go into battle *against* the Israelites with the Philistine army. But, eventually he snaps out of it, and at this point he's finally been fully crowned as king of Israel, he's captured Jerusalem and is setting up shop there.

And now the Philistines hear about it and they come looking for David. They are there for a little payback. In fact, in verse 9 we read this:

1 Chronicles 14.9 - Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the Valley of Rephaim.

This little valley is near Jerusalem, to the West, but it's named after the old tribe of giants that used to live there, the Rephaim.

So these enemies hear that David is crowned king, and they say, "Oh really? Well, guess what Dave, remember us? Remember how you killed our champion giant? Remember how you used to be one of us but all the while you were raiding our cities? Well, we're here for some payback."

We have old friends that sometimes come back to haunt us, don't we? Old vices, old sins, old decisions, old attitudes, old hatred, old desires, things that show up from our pre-Christ days to hurt us and to drag us back down to the level of sin.

This sort of attack often happens when we've started a new ministry or have rededicated our lives to the Lord or been given a new area of service. These old friends, who have always been enemies, show up and say, "Oh really? Well, guess what, we're here to take you down."

Now, we need to remember something:

When we're talking about 'enemies' there are literal, human enemies and there are spiritual enemies. Our literal enemies, speaking of people, other human beings...those enemies we are to love. We're to pray for them. We're to reach out to them. But they aren't who we're talking about in this series.

What we're talking about is our spiritual enemies. And *those* enemies, must be destroyed. We must crucify the flesh, we must sweep our houses of sin, we must separate from the world, we must crush those enemies when they show up to battle against us.

David understood this and we see his amazing response in the second half of verse 8:

1 Chronicles 14.8b - But David heard [that they had come down to Rephaim] and went out against them.

Love it.

David was a bold man. He was not fearful, he did not hesitate, he lived with courage. Why? Because he understood 2 things:

First, he understood that God had a plan for his life and that the Lord had made promises to him, and he was confident in those promises. Those promises removed his fear.

Second, he understood that the enemies of God must be eliminated. He confronted this danger head on because he knew how important it was to fight against those who were enemies of Jehovah.

That was where his boldness came from.

The armies of the Philistines were coming over to fight him, and he said, "Alright, let's do this!" Boldness is an important key to our victory in Christ. We can't be afraid to fight against sin. We can't be afraid to combat those old 'friends' of ours that held us captive in sin. We can't be slow to react when temptation or tribulation or spiritual warfare presents itself to us. We need to be bold. We need to go down and engage with those things in order to protect the people around us and our own walks with the Lord.

1 Chronicles 14.10-11 - And David inquired of God, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?" And the Lord said to him, "Go up, and I will give them into your hand." And he went up to Baal-perazim, and David struck them down there. And David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand, like a bursting flood." Therefore the name of that place is called Baal-perazim.

And here is where we see what boldness means in the Biblical sense. Because boldness doesn't mean reckless. Boldness doesn't mean brash. It doesn't mean reaction without consideration. Because David saw this threat and he **immediately** responded with boldness, but before he engaged the enemy, he sought the Lord.

Despite the fact that he was an expert warrior, despite the fact that he had incredible military resources around him, despite the fact that he, no doubt, had a very keen and personal understanding of Philistine tactics and strategy, despite all of that, he went before the Lord and said, "What do you want me to do?"

God had supplied the promises and the strength and the calling on David's life, so David wasn't about to go into this fight without getting the Lord's direction.

Biblical boldness is about walking confidently *in the Lord*, not in ourselves. It is about living fearlessly *in the promises God has made*, not in our own pride or our own success or our own intelligence. Real boldness is having courage in the power of Jesus Christ, courage in His victory over sin. Real boldness is being reliant on God's grace and His calling in your life. Strong as we may be, we cannot defeat an army on our own. We cannot defeat a trial on our own. We cannot overcome the Devil on our own. But, in the service of God, clad in His armor, filled by His Spirit, walking in His call on our lives, we must be bold against every enemy, be it a simple temptation or a host of trials besetting us.

That is boldness. We are not reckless, we are bold. We are not arrogant, we are confident in that which God has told us and in that which He has made us to be.

David understood this and, having inquired of the Lord, God gave this battle into his hand.

Very interesting verse comes next:

1 Chronicles 14.12 - *And they left their gods there, and David gave command, and they were burned.*

What I want us to see here is that on a spiritual level our enemies will never give up. Now, the Philistines had brought their gods in hopes to overcome the Israelites, but looking at this metaphorically, even after we've overcome a sin or a temptation, we still need to watch out for what is left behind.

David did the right thing and said, "Hey we need to burn those things right now."

What did Rachel do in Genesis 31? She took her family's household idols and brought them into her own house.

What did Achan do? He brought the accursed things from Jericho into his tent. And these things affected these people and they affected their families.

Though the Philistine soldiers had been defeated, these idols might still have influenced the nation of Israel. David knew that these things needed to be totally destroyed because he didn't want to make the same mistake that Rachel and Achan and Saul did in bringing in something from the enemy camp into your home. It may seem like it won't influence you, but it always does in a terrible way.

A stunning victory, but the fight wasn't over! Our verses continue:

1 Chronicles 14.13 - *And the Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley.*

This is our life. Serving God and contending with the flesh, with the sin nature. As soon as they were defeated, the Philistines were back again for another battle.

This is why boldness is important. The Christian life is not for the faint of heart. Good news is that a Christian living the Christian life will not have a faint heart, he will have a strong heart, a bold heart, ready to contend with spiritual enemies.

1 Chronicles 14.14-17 - *And when David again inquired of God, God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; go around and come against them opposite the balsam trees. And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines." And David did as God commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army from Gibeon to Gezer. And the fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.*

What we find is that, while we're living in boldness we do not become reckless. Because God has a plan. He has the strategy for us. And if we're not considering Him in our zeal and in our boldness, then we're going to get in trouble. Because even though the enemy was the same and the battlefield was the same, the plan of attack was much different. God had a different strategy this go around.

Zeal is important. Boldness is important. But remember, *Biblical* boldness is anchored in the equipping and positioning of the Lord. Biblical boldness is not hesitating to receive orders from God, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Captain of our victory.

Here, David again sought the Lord for His battle plan and found a **new** tactic to defeat his enemies. That information came from God and was necessary for the people of God to win this second victory.

With that strength and equipping and battle plan David drove back the Philistines to their own country, having risen to their challenge of his kingdom.

Your old friends are coming for you. Don't invite them in. Don't cozy up to them. Don't accept their Trojan Horses into your homes. Be bold against them!

The temptations and sin nature that we face must be defeated decisively and swiftly if we desire to serve the Lord. They are not going to give up, but we can find ourselves victorious if we remember the promises God has made us, if we rely on the Spirit that indwells us and if we respond to the orders that He has sent us.

We are men who must be bold. Bold in the things of our God. Bold men are the men God uses and boldness is simple when we understand who we are in Christ and what we can do through His power and in His calling.