



Studies in the Life of David

Text

Second Samuel 5:17-25

Topic

Not once but twice David kills many Philistines
who come against Israel

Title

"Kill Phils, Volume 2"

Introduction

In the world of sports we look forward to match-ups that pit a top offensive player against his counterpart on defense.

Back in the day when "Bo knew best," Bo Jackson was a rookie offensive phenom for the Oakland Raiders. His rookie counterpart was Brian 'the Boz' Bosworth, linebacker for the Seattle Seahawks. He was the winner of the first two Butkus Awards as the nation's top college linebacker. He remains the only player ever to have won the honor more than once.

The Raiders and the Seahawks squared-off on Monday Night Football on November 30, 1987. In the third quarter, on his way to scoring three touchdowns and running for 221 yards, Bo Jackson literally ran over Brian Bosworth. The play became one of the most memorable plays in Monday Night Football history.

I guess you'd say "the best defense is a good offense." **Unless you're Tom Brady and the current New England Patriots.** All season long the Patriots offense showed the ability to put at least 30 points up on the board against some of the best defenses in the NFL. That all came to an end

when the New York Jets held them to a relatively meager 21 points to advance in this year's playoffs. In that game, "the best offense was a good defense."

So which is best - offense or defense? Moving from the world of sports to that of the military, I ran across something called 'active defense.' By definition active defense means *the employment of limited offensive action and counterattacks to deny a contested area or position to the enemy.*

King David understood active defense. In our text he first fortified his defensive position, which was the stronghold of Jerusalem. But he didn't simply hole-up there when attacked by the Philistines. He left his fortifications, not once but twice, and took the fight to them, defeating them both times.

These things we read about in the Old Testament are written for our learning. Like David, we must employ active defense against spiritual enemies who would seek to defeat us, to destroy us. We must both *fortify* and *fight*.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 The Active Defense Of Your Christian Life Involves Fortifying Your Defenses, and #2 The Active Defense Of Your Christian Life Involves Fighting In Offensives.

#1 The Active Defense Of Your Christian Life
Involves Fortifying Your Defenses
(v9)

Israel had been divided and involved in civil war for around seven years. David had been ruling the tribe of Judah in the south. One of Saul's sons, Ishbosheth, had been the ruler of the northern tribes.

During the civil war it seems the Philistines, Israel's perpetual enemy, pulled up a chair and watched. Why fight your enemy when they are fighting amongst themselves?

As believers in Jesus Christ, we ought not to fight amongst ourselves. In his New Testament book, James even called these quarrels "wars" (4:1).

In-fighting gives our enemies an easy victory. Before we talk about anything else, be sure there are no civil wars raging in your life.

David united Israel. He conquered Jerusalem, something that had eluded the Jews for centuries. He was starting to establish himself in treaties with other kings and rulers.

His success stirred the Philistines to action.

Quit in-fighting and start reaching out and guess what? You will face opposition.

Before we look at the opposition of the Philistines, I want to glean some insight from verse nine about fortification.

2 Samuel 5:9 Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward.

Jerusalem was considered a “stronghold.” David had been able to identify its military weakness. There was a water shaft that could give an army access to the city. I’m sure he fortified the weakness that had allowed him to conquer the city.

We’re told “David built all around from the Millo inward.” No one is certain what “the Millo” is but it seems to have had some military significance. Later in Israel’s history “the Millo” appears in a list of repairs to military fortifications ordered by King Hezekiah (Second Chronicles 32:5).

We have good evidence, then, to conclude that David fortified his already fortified position.

As a believer you have a fortified position in Christ. Your enemies have been defeated at the Cross. You’ve been adopted into the family of God. You are promised a heavenly mansion and both a reward when Jesus returns and an inheritance in Heaven that is being kept for you.

You are secure. Ephesians 1:4-5 says, “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame

before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will..."

You are granted strength. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

In Romans 8:37 you read, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

We could go on-and-on listing the perks of your fortified spiritual position in Christ. At the same time you are told that you are involved in a spiritual warfare against deadly enemies.

- Paul the apostle described sinister supernatural entities then strongly suggested you take up spiritual armor to withstand their onslaught.
- James, in his letter, suggested that you can be drawn away by the lusts of your flesh back into sins that once held sway over you.
- The writers of the New Testament warn you about the influence of the world around you as you seek to walk with Jesus.

You must therefore fortify your fortified position.

It's not a matter of maintaining salvation. You're secure in Christ. It's a matter of working-out your salvation, of your daily sanctification as you are growing in Christ.

The techniques to fortify your life are no secret. They are the common Christian behaviors, or disciplines if you prefer that term. They involve reading the Word, praying, fellowshiping with other believers, and sharing your relationship with Jesus with others. You're called upon to serve, to give, to fast.

The point that we are making is this: You are to always be busy fortifying your life. The attacks are coming and they will do a lot more damage to you and those you love if you've been lax in preparation.

The Old Testament hero, Nehemiah, is a great illustration for us. Tasked with rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, tasked with fortifying the city, he had his men held a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. Fortify **and** fight.

Where is the weakness in your fortifications today? Take inventory of your spiritual behaviors, of your Christian disciplines, and begin to fortify those things that have been ignored or abandoned.

#2 The Active Defense Of Your Christian Life
Involves Fighting In Offensives
(v17-25)

David had taken the stronghold of Jerusalem. He had fortified it against enemy attack. You might think that his best strategy when attacked by the Philistines would be to remain on defense - to hole-up in the city and trust in its fortifications.

Yet not once but twice God instructs him instead to leave his fortified position and go on the offensive against the Philistines.

We cannot just fortify. We must take the fight to our enemies.

It's an important consideration. You see, it is all too common for us as believers to become ingrown. God might be calling us into a battle, to establish a beachhead somewhere, but we only hang around believers all the time. The only 'ministries' we are interested in are those that build us up rather than reach out to the lost. It's a recipe for civil war and, worse, for our own lives to become vulnerable to attack.

David took the fight to the Philistines.

2 Samuel 5:17 Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold.

2 Samuel 5:18 The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

David went to his “stronghold.” The Philistines lined-up in the valley. You’d think the best offense was a good defense in which the city withstood a long siege.

The trouble with siege warfare is that, while you are relatively safe, it still costs you dearly.

- Everything outside the walls is overcome and destroyed.
- You wind up on minimum rations.
- Your movements are restricted since you cannot leave the safety of the city.

Sometimes it’s better to have a fortified position but to take the fight out to your enemy and meet him head on.

Truth is, you face your enemies everyday. Our lives, both individually and corporately, are like a fortified city in the midst of a hostile world. We don’t need to go looking for a fight because our enemies are all around us. The importance of this text, this morning, is to remind us to get to fighting.

2 Samuel 5:19 So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?" And the Lord said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

2 Samuel 5:20 So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.

The Lord broke upon the Philistines like a tsunami. David’s army had no trouble defeating them. It was active defense at its best.

2 Samuel 5:21 And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

In ancient times the armies would carry with them “images” of their gods. We would call them idols. In a parallel passage you read that David had the idols burned (First Chronicles 14:12).

It serves to remind us that we should follow through in our battles. We can't afford to let some idol linger around. No, we must get rid of it while we can or else it will return in greater strength to trouble us.

One thing I'll say about the Philistines. They were persistent. It wasn't long before they again marched against David.

2 Samuel 5:22 Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

David might have gone out without consulting the Lord. After all, hadn't he just defeated the Philistines in just this same valley?

The Philistines were no dummies. You can bet they had a new strategy for overcoming David.

Your enemies are smart. They are always developing new strategies for defeating you. You need to keep ahead of them by seeking the Lord.

2 Samuel 5:23 Therefore David inquired of the Lord, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees.

2 Samuel 5:24 And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines."

2 Samuel 5:25 And David did so, as the Lord commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

Instead of a direct assault, this time David would attack from behind. Instead of a wave David saw it as a mighty wind.

There's a great devotional study here. Water and wind remind us of the Holy Spirit. David was a man led by the Holy Spirit, a man who simply followed the Lord into every spiritual battle.

Something else we note is that active defense requires a spiritual quality that is implied by this second strategy. It is **humility**.

Here's what I mean. David was a tremendous military hero. He's the guy who as a very young man defeated Goliath, the Philistine giant. A little later

he went out and collected two hundred Philistine foreskins as a dowry to earn his wife. Fast-forward and he's the guy whose strategy had led to victory at Jerusalem over the Jebusites. He had just broken upon the Philistines like a tsunami.

Now he was being asked to come from behind and mount a sneak attack! To hide in the trees until God gave the sign of the rustling of the leaves. It was humbling.

I think sometimes we miss the Lord's leading not because we fail to seek it but we fail to seek it with humility. It would have been easy for David to offer up a token prayer to God regarding this latest Philistine attack then go out against them as he had before.

We are creatures of habit. We like to figure things out, have everything in order. But when we try to do that in our relationship with God, we can put Him in a box and start living in the past, on tradition, rather than really following His lead. We can already have our own understanding of how God is going to lead us before we listen to His leading.

Quite honestly, we don't like to humble ourselves and we aren't naturally drawn to strategies that speak of humility.

Jesus was the master of humility, starting with His choice in eternity past to come into the world as a man.

Philippians 2:7 [Jesus] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Think of the humility of Jesus' birth in a feeding trough, of His obscure life as a carpenter in Nazareth. In His relatively short three-and-one-half year ministry He was mocked and ridiculed. Those in power considered Him, and called Him, the illegitimate son of Joseph and Mary. He said of Himself that He had nothing - not even a place to lie His head. His disciples never really understood Him, and one of them betrayed Him while almost all the

others scattered. His arrest and trials were humiliating, to say the least, culminating in His shameful death as a criminal on the Cross.

Philippians 2:9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
Philippians 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,
Philippians 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus' humility won Him a pretty big victory!

We need to go on active defense. If we only, always, fortify our fortified position we will set ourselves up for defeat. Either we will suffer the debilitating effects of a long siege or we will give the enemy an opportunity to discover and exploit weaknesses.

Active defense is discovered by humility. Humble yourself and seek the Lord for His strategies. You are facing Philistines in your personal life... At home, in your family... At work... At school... Maybe even in church.

But in every situation the Lord is a wave or a wind you can follow to victory.