

"HOLD ON TO THE SWORD!"

TEXT: 2 Samuel 23:8-10

THESIS: To teach the biblical principle of not quitting when things are tough.

INTRO.: A. According to v.1 of this chapter these are **"the last words of David..."** It is significant that as he passes off the scene he decides to honor the 3 men in our text. They were "the names of the mighty men..." among David's friends in the hour of his greatest need. David was not only a great King, and a great man of God, but also a mighty warrior and leader of men. Today I want to single out one of these 3 mighty men and the quality that separates him from all others in David's army. It says that this man, Eleazar, *though weary in battle*, nevertheless decided to **"HOLD ON TO THE SWORD!"** until the victory was won. The text says **"and his hand clave to the sword!"** It says that because of his refusal to let go of the sword, that **"...the Lord wrought a great victory that day."** This man exhibited the characteristics of diligence and persistence in times of trial which is an example to us today.

B. But though the Bible states that **"...his hand clave to the sword"** it also says that **"...his hand was weary."** It is what we do in weakness, that will make or break us, not what we do in times of strength. The "real man" does not stand on the Mt. top when God's power is on him, but in the valley when he is at his lowest ebb.

C. Many make the **wrong move** in times of physical weakness, or the **wrong decision** in times of emotional weakness, or the **wrong choice** in times of moral or spiritual weakness. But we are just as accountable for moves, decisions and choices in times of weakness as we are in times of strength!

ILLUS.: It only takes one mistake sometimes to ruin and wreck your potential for life. It only takes one drop of poison to poison the whole cup!

A man ends up in a wheelchair because of 10 minutes of pleasure. A preacher in a good church resigned in a fit of temper when his pianist didn't show up and he regretted it the rest of his life. Hundreds of Moodys, Spurgeons, Billy Sundays, Fanny Crosbys and Suzanna Wesleys are never heard of because of one night of sin!

I. WHEN WEAK, DON'T TRUST YOUR OWN JUDGMENT: "...hold on to the sword!"

NOTE: It is more than just "interesting" that the Bible is referred to as "the SWORD of the Spirit!"

A. Beware Making A Move When Physically Weak:

ILLUS.: **NOAH** built an Ark on dry land when he had never seen rain in time of great strength of faith, but in a time of physical weakness he got drunk and involved his son in grievous sin!

ELIJAH displayed great faith on Mt. Carmel and shut the heavens with his prayers in times of great strength, but in time of physical weakness he fled from a woman named Jezebel & even prayed to die!

B. Beware Making A Decision When Spiritually Weak:

ILLUS.: **ABRAHAM** displayed great faith in leaving his homeland, family and friends, and later offered his only miracle son Isaac in obedience to God's command in times of great strength, but in a time of spiritual weakness, he lied about his wife.

MOSES LED THE PEOPLE OF Israel out of Egypt standing strong against the mighty Pharaoh, parting the Red Sea, praying and trusting God daily for provision for 2 million people daily for 40 years, but in a time of spiritual and emotional weakness, smote the Rock twice and prayed to die.

SAMSON the great judge & leader of Israel was mighty in physical strength against Israel's enemies in times of power, but in a moment of spiritual weakness he succumbed to the wiles of a wicked woman.

DAVID slew a lion an bear and even a giant in time of strength, but in a time of spiritual weakness sinned terribly in killing Bathsheba's husband and committing adultery with her.

II. WHEN WEARY, DON'T MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS: "...hold on to the sword"

A. Beware Changes In Your Life When You Are Angry Or Upset:

ILLUS.: In v.10 the record says that it was when Eleazar became "weary" that his "hand clave to the sword" and it was then that the Lord "wrought a great victory that day." He didn't drop the sword when he was weary, angry or upset. He held on for dear life itself!

KING SAUL, the strong, tall, handsome King of Israel "killed his thousands" in times of great strength, but he became jealous and angry because of David's rising popularity and in a moment of weakness made a decision to kill David, which became an obsession which eventually ruined him, lost his crown & killed him.

PETER vowed to stand by the Savior, saw thousands saved thru his preaching, healed the sick and even walked on water in times of spiritual victory and strength, but when he became upset and angry ended up denying the Savior & even cursing, in a moment of moral weakness.

B. Beware Vows When You Are Backslidden, Tested or Discouraged:

ILLUS.: A teen gets discouraged and leaves home. He made the decision when his "move-maker" was broken, when his "decision-maker" was out-of-order! Will probably end up regretting that decision the rest of his life.

A Christian teen girl, lay in a bloody pool of her own blood in a motel bathroom. She had scrawled on the bathroom mirror in her lipstick: "Welcome to the world of AIDS!"

1. When backslidden, don't make a move!
2. When tested or tempted, don't make a commitment!
3. When discouraged, stay – don't go!

ILLUS.: **JAMES AND JOHN** left all to follow Jesus and were closest to Him in great victories in times of strength, but in a moment of weakness when they got temporarily backslidden argued over who would sit at His right hand in His Kingdom!

Often the difference between mediocrity and greatness is that the great simply "stick it out" when things aren't going well. Greatness is often summed up in one 4 letter word: STAY! or in two 4 letter words: DON'T MOVE! Jack Hyles STAYED when the church split. Bob Gray STAYED when faced with financial bankruptcy.

III. WHEN WAVERING, STICK IT OUT!

A. When Led By God, Wait For New Direction: **"...hold on to the sword!"**

1. When God leads you in, He must lead you out.
2. God doesn't have to lead you to stay, He must lead you to go.

ILLUS.: I have pastored here over 10,000 days! That means I have made a decision to stay over 10,000 days! Many days in weakness I wanted to leave. But I stayed! I have had offers to go elsewhere to Calif, and Bermuda; and those palm trees and sunshine looked good, but I stayed! I will be leaving soon, but my decision was not made in a time of weakness or trouble, but after much prayer and leadership by the Lord.

B. When In Doubt, Don't:

ILLUS.: There are very few reasons for a church member to move their membership from a fundamental church where God led them: doctrinal deviation, unresolved moral issues, a dearth of spiritual food, or a move to another area. If God led you to join a church, He must be the One Who leads you to change!

PAUL the Apostle followed the Lord's leading to the ends of the earth preaching the Gospel & turned an entire continent to Christ in times of strength, but in a time of weakness insisted on going to Jerusalem in spite of specific and strong warnings by the Lord to the contrary.

C. When You Start, Finish:

1. When you start something with God's leadership, finish it: "...hold on to the sword"
2. God is not just a starter, He is the Finisher. "...the Author & Finisher of our faith."
3. When God lays a ministry on your heart, stick with it!
4. When you do something in faith, don't undo it in a moment of doubt!
5. Don't undo something in weakness, that you did in strength!
6. Don't undo in the valley, what you tied on the mountain top!

ILLUS.: The devil will always plant doubts to oppose the will of God. Two days after you make a commitment to the Lord, you will doubt you did the right thing. Ex.: My call here from Glen Burnie.

CONCL.: The difference between those we consider "good" and those we consider "bad" is what they did in a moment of weakness. Five minutes often makes the difference between greatness and mediocrity. **Get your hand on the sword and don't let go**, even if you are weary, discouraged, troubled, tested, or tempted! Then you and the Lord will win a great victory that day. **"HOLD ON TO THE SWORD!"**

Unsaved, you can make a move today in a moment of spiritual strength that will move your headquarters from earth to heaven. The next 5 minutes may make the difference between heaven and hell for you. Don't make the wrong move in this moment of strength. Accept Christ **NOW** while the Holy Spirit is moving in your heart, before the devil steals away the Seed of God's Word.