

“Lessons from Men in the Bible”

By Brother Parrish Lee

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Anybody loving God this morning? Anybody know, know for a fact, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that He is a mighty, good God? Anybody can say, “You know, things might happen, but God has been doing things in my life?” Anybody can feel the cleansing power of the Lord whenever you turn to Him, and you know that this great God that we’ve talked about for thousands of years is so real and true in your life today?

It is really—sometimes you really get excited and everything, and I’ve just got to say this, you get excited, because we serve a God who goes beyond the scriptures so many times. And yet, you come into His presence and, oh Lord, it’s just, it’s better than yellow cake with chocolate frosting. It’s better than ice cream. It’s better than the sun shining on a clear day, 72°, with no precipitation. It’s better than everything; it’s better than your team winning the Superbowl. It is better than anything I can think of in this pulpit right now. The goodness, and the awesomeness, and the beauty of the holiness of our wonderful Lord and Savior.

Giving honor to that same God who is so rich in mercy and full of grace, who is so wonderful to us on an everlasting scale. Giving honor to Him who is giving and loving; who is quick to hear, and quick to correct, and quick to be in our lives—giving honor to Him. Giving honor to all those who have gone on before us: Our founding pastor, he and his family, our pastor, he and his family, and those who have come in and stood in the gap to make up the hedge. Giving honor to them, and giving honor to all of y’all, who gather together and present yourselves before that merciful, and omnipotent, and omniscient, that wonderful God, and say, “Lord, feed me this day.”

What a wonderful time of praise and worship today.

Last month, we had lessons from women in the Bible, and we pray that that was really nutritious for us, that we could always learn lessons from women who have gone on in faith, and some, not so much in the faith. They’re both—they’re lessons of good, and lessons of bad, that we could benefit thereby. This month, of course—I did neglect to do something last month. We talked about who can find that virtuous woman; we talked about, in the Book of Revelation, how God made a virtuous woman, and it’s called the Bride of Christ. Amazing, amazing, amazing prophecy fulfilled. Well, this month, we are going to be talking about lessons from men in the Bible. Our verse for the month is:

2 Timothy 3:17 *That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

So, we pray that this month—everything that’s going on—we may be able to benefit, learn, and grow spiritually from the lessons of some of the men who we’ll be talking about from their lessons from the Bible.

Exodus 24:13 *And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.*

If we could bow our heads, just for a moment. Lord, we come before You, and we thank You. We thank You for everything. We thank You for waking us up this morning, and setting us on our way, because there are those who did not wake up today. We thank you for putting our feet on the floor, because some were not able to put their feet on the floor and walk across it. We thank You for food on our table, and a roof over our head, for there are some who, even now, are saying, “I don’t know where it’s going to come from.” God, we thank You for Your good and perfect gifts. We thank You for brothers and sisters who

love You in the Lord, God. Lord, we thank You for our praise and worship time, because, You said in Your word that You would inhabit the praises of Your people. And, Lord, we thank You for now; we thank You for now, that we can worship You without fear of someone coming in, disrupting the worship of You; without a threat on our lives, without—to be able to understand Your Word as we go over it, and we pray, God, we pray, as Your Scripture says, that Your Word would accomplish that to which You have sent it and not return unto You void. God, we submit and claim all this in Jesus' name, and everyone said, amen. Amen.

So, this month is—I'm kind of excited about this—this month is the month that we learn from men in the Bible. Christian men; men that loved God, and maybe some that didn't love God so much. I'm excited. Anybody get excited and go over things in God's Word and it comes alive to you? You can see it, and it opens up, and, "Wow! I can even see it! I can see it happen, and, wow, that direct relates to some things that I am going through myself. Well, the title of the message today is, simply, lessons from men in the Bible Part I.

Part 1: Process for Promotion

As we read from the Book of Exodus chapter twenty-four, verse thirteen, "And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God." Now, Moses we know: the man of God, the intercessor, the one who led them out of Egypt, split open the Red Sea, through the unktion of God, of course. He took them over into this other land where they were delivered. Moses, this great guy. Moses, this guy, he had a helper or more accurately, the Bible says, a minister. He had somebody that ministered to him. Now that shouldn't be foreign. That shouldn't be foreign, because, nowadays, when somebody's really doing something, people tend to come along beside them. But the Bible says that Joshua was his minister. Hundreds of thousands of people in this nation, there were priests, there were Levites, there were the twelve tribes! There were people who had unktions, and there were teachers, but there was one—one!—who ministered to Moses. There was one who made it his business to see that the things of Moses were attended to. Out of the whole land; out of the whole land. Now, when it says minister here—nowadays when somebody says minister, you tend to think of one those people with those collars, you know, that have the little white piece in the middle, and they have the black clothes, and they speak a certain way—but when it says 'minister' here actually means contributor, because minister actually means helper. So, here it means contributor, one who contributed to him, or actually, one who worshipped him. Or even one who was a direct servant.

So, we see that Joshua served Moses. Joshua served Moses; how that must've been. Long before we had fancy windows, electricity, automobiles; long before they had electricity and refrigerators and nice stoves, where the gas comes up and burns; long before all of that, there was this time when the needs of somebody who wanted to carry the people through—he would have many needs, and one person would take it upon himself to make sure that the needs of the man of God were met. He would take upon himself to do that. And, because he took it upon himself to do that, there came things before him. Now, Moses would just say, "Hey, Joshua, we've got to go ahead and fight these people, and wipe those people out." And Joshua would say, "Okay, boss," and he would gather the people together, and they would go out to war. "Joshua, we need to spy out the land." "Okay, boss. We will get a person from every tribe, and we will go spy out the land." "Joshua, you know what we need to do this time? I need to go up and get the Ten Commandments from the Lord; I need to have a conversation with Him. I need to climb this mountain." "Okay, boss, I'm going with you as far as I can go as far as you will let me, because I know there's some places in you and God that you and God only will be." So, we see that Joshua attended to the needs of Moses. Now, there was many in that land—this is a real point—there's many in that land, but one person took it as a burden to minister to Moses. And, there's something real specific that happens

because of this. Because he humbled himself, and served Moses, and all the auspices of it, God would speak of Joshua later. Now, when he first started off, Joshua didn't know that it was going to be him who was going to receive the mantle, and, frankly, Joshua didn't care. He just knew that Moses was the man of God, and, "That's where I belong. I can't worry about everybody else. I can't worry about what everybody else is doing. I can't worry about what everybody else is into. I can't worry about excuses. I can't worry about if they're strong or if they're weak. I can't worry about all that. I can't worry about if they're tall or small, rich or poor. I can't worry about all that. What I need to worry about, really, is to make sure that that man of God succeeds." And, because of this, because of this:

Numbers 27:18-20 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.*

So, this thing started off, it started off shortly after they came across the Red Sea, there was this minister to Moses. And, because of their disbelief, because of them making excuses when God told them to go out and do it, because of all that, they didn't go directly into the Promised Land; because of that. Because of that, they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Forty years of wandering—important point—forty years! Forty years they wandered in the wilderness with no place to call home. They didn't reach their place of promise. Forty years. And that whole forty year period, Joshua ministered to Moses. What would it be like to be a voluntary servant to somebody for forty years? "I voluntarily give my heart, for forty years, to see that you, the man of God, succeed. Yes, thirty-nine years and counting. We're not ending this thing. Thirty-nine years and we're going strong." Forty years, and, after forty years, because of his humility, because of his faithfulness, we see that there was opportunity, and Joshua became the person to take them into the Promised Land. Because that honor that as upon Moses, God said, "Give it to that one who faithfully followed you without excuse, without wavering for forty years." So Joshua showed us that there is a process for promotion. A process for promotion.

We want to talk about somebody else here. Another person. We did one example, we're going to do another example.

2 Samuel 15:1-7 *And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.*

To give a little background on this story, it says in verse one, "And it came to pass after this..." — after this—"...that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him." Absalom prepared fifty men before him. So, we see that David—well, we don't see it here, but David was a man who was anointed king, if we get a little background. David being anointed king we know was small there at first. He wasn't even called up for the prophet to see, and yet, he was the one that God had chosen. We also see that things didn't start off with a whiz-bang for David, that he was considered, you know, the

ruddy one. Then we see that David, of course, went on to take care of Goliath; his big triumph. Taking care of Goliath, and that set a path of things, and we see that even the one who was the king didn't like him, so the king tried to kill him. So, we see through that whole process, David became king. So David became king, and wars came by the eches, and he took care of them, but this part of the story takes place long after that. After he had to fight Goliath; after he had to fight war with the people of other lands. After he had tried to fix things in Israel. This takes place after all of that. And David was a king, yes, God had called him, but he was king that people liked, they loved David. And David also was a man who made mistakes. One of the terrible mistakes, terrible mistakes that David had made was that he had committed adultery. A real famous story, whenever I find myself taking about David with anybody—especially outside of the church—they quickly bring up, “David and Bathsheba.” Of all the stories they remember, “David and Bathsheba.” Yeah. Well, I have something to say about that, but not in this sermon. So, anyway, he committed a terrible mistake by committing adultery, and then had the man killed, who was he husband of Bathsheba. But, God judged him on that; God answered him according to that folly. And then, well—that is not the purpose of this message.

God judged him on that, and David had several kids, several sons, one of whom was Absalom. Absalom was the son of David. Now Absalom, Absalom was kind of special. I'm not going to ask anybody to raise their hands, but, sometimes when fathers and mothers have kids, they love all their kids the same—they'll always tell you that, but the kids will say, “Oh, no, no. Mom and dad love you more than they love me.” So, they feel like there's one special kid, maybe two special kids, or maybe one kid that's NOT a special kid. Maybe they don't play sports or whatever. But, Absalom was very fair. In fact, the Bible says that from the sole of his foot, to the top of his crown, he didn't have a blemish. In fact, it says that Absalom was so fair, he was more beautiful than anybody—anybody!—anybody in all of Israel. It didn't just say the most beautiful man, it said the most beautiful in all Israel. He didn't have a blemish on him. It even says that he would weigh his hair. Once a year, go into the city and weigh his hair. Yeah. Now, this son of David who was beautiful and gorgeous. He was raised and educated in the king's place, so he would've known how to talk, and how to walk. And he was raised around King David, so he would have known about war and strategy. And, David was a king; so he would have known how to rule and govern and be over people. This guy as beautiful and gorgeous and knew how to rule and govern people, and knew about strategy, this guy was this same Absalom, who sat outside the gate. Now, the gate is where the people would come, if they were going to go to the Temple, if they were going to the palace, if they were going to get their matters taken care of. This gorgeous, well-talking, knowing how to walk man, this man who was educated and knew how to work people—let's just say it like that—work people. This man would stand outside the gate, and, as some people would come, to have their matters tended to, this man would say, “Oh, I can help you out. I'll give you a hug; I'll give you a kiss. Ohh, if I were the judge, if I were the one leading you, let me tell you what I would do. I would help you out, man. I would make sure all your matters were tended to.” And this is what Absalom did for forty years. For forty years, he minded the gate, and he would, the Bible says, steal the hearts of the people. Steal them away from what? Steal their hearts away from what? If they were going to the Temple, he would steal them away from that. If they were going to the palace, he would steal them away from that. He was the special one—forty years of that. We're not ignorant of this nowadays. Nowadays, we've got a name for this; we call this a hostile take-over. Some of the places they say, “I call it stabbing them in the back.” Undermining the leadership; there's names for this, and we have recognized these things today. We see them when they come. Absalom, his lesson has taught very well.

We see this type of thing today. We see it on jobs. I work at a place where they have an entire engineering staff, and the engineers had stopped talking to each other because, if someone had done some research, or come up with a right idea, and they would have conversation with several other people about it, somebody else would take that idea, hurry up and work on it, and take it to the boss, and it would be *their* idea, so they would get the promotion. This is the process for promotion that Absalom taught.

We also see this in families, where one kid will say, “I’m going to run and tell dad,” “I’m going to run and tell mom,” in such a way that one will be looked at a little less, and one will be looked at a little greater. You’ll see it. Sometimes you will even see it in in-laws—oh, I better leave that alone, but sometimes you will even see an undermining going on there. You’ll also see it, not just in jobs, or in families—we’ve seen it before—you’ll see this in relationships. “I thought he was my friend. Smiled in my face all the time, and wanted to take my place.” Yeah, you’ll see this kind of—you’ll call it an attitude, but the Word calls it a spirit. You will see this spirit undermining civilization, society today. And, unfortunately, you’ll also see this in ministries. You’ll also see this in churches. Maybe the leadership says a certain thing, and there’s an undermining. Somebody says, “Well, I don’t think they really know what they’re talking about. I think that I could do a better job than them.” Yes, it is a spirit that attacks, that really attacks the foundation, but, in all these places that we just named, whether families, relationships, whether jobs, even ministries, this is not where it started. It first started before the world was, when one rose up and said, “I will be like the most High.” It started long before this came along, so this is just recipients of what that spirit first started to do in implementation of down here. It first started with, the Bible says, Lucifer, son of the morning.

But, the point is, on the one hand, you have Joshua, who for forty years, showed us a process of promotion that led the people into the Promised Land. And, on the other hand, we have Absalom, who, for forty years, stole the hearts of the people, and led the nation into civil war. A civil war.

Part 2: A Greater Purpose

One more lesson from some people that knew King David.

1 Chronicles 11:9-10 *So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts was with him. These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, and with all Israel, to make him king, according to the Word of the LORD concerning Israel.*

This point is a point to always remember. It talks about them being mighty men, but it says, the only big thing that it says that they did was they strengthened themselves with David to make him king according—not just to make him king—but, according to the Word of the Lord.

1 Chronicles 11:11-13 *And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain by him at one time. And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighties. He was with David at Pas-dammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines.*

Okay, I need some help, here. Joe, come on up here and stand. You don’t need your Bible, just come up here and stand. So, we need you to be Jashobeam. And you mentioned Eleazar; we need an Eleazar. Daniel, come on up. I know your name is Daniel, but, Eleazar, come on up. We need some mighty men; we need some mighty men. I know, we could have chosen anybody. Jashobeam, Eleazar, okay.

1 Chronicles 11:14-20 *And they set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great deliverance. Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison was then at Beth-lehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, that is at*

the gate! And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD, And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest. And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew them, and had a name among the three.

Henry, can I use you, Brother Henry? Henry? Yeah, you. Can you come on up? I need an Abishai. So, we got Jashobeam, we got Eleazar, we need an Abishai. We need some mighty men; that's what this is, the mighty men. The point is, you know, through life, once you reach a certain maturity, after you get to a certain age, you think about certain things. You think about whether there is a God, or whether there isn't a God. You think about, "How am I going to support myself? What kind of career or what kind of attributes am I going to have?" You think about what's going to happen with your life. You think about what's going to be relevant for you. "How am I going to be identified? How am I going to have purpose?" and you think about, "What is going to define me?" And, once you think about what is relevant to you, what defines you, generally, generally, people go one of two ways. We will either say, "I will let this part of society define me; I will get my college degree. I will be able to run faster. I will be smarter; I will be craftier," whatever. "By being successful in those things, that will help to define me." Or, you might say, "I'm going to have a big family; by having a big family, that will define me." Or, you might say, "I'm going to have a bigger house; I'm going to have a bigger car. I'm going to be a politician, and that's going to define me. Once my name is spread, because everyone will know my name on this earth. I want people to know me, I want make a mark, I want to make a difference in all of life, in all of life.

Or, the other side, you will say, "I really don't care about other people or what they think about me; I really want to make my own definition for myself, so, what am I going to say that is relevant to me? What is going to be relevant to me, that is what I am going to esteem to me. No different, it hasn't been any different for hundreds, for thousands of years; it hasn't been any different.

So these three were subject to the same thing, these mighty men. So, Jashobeam, it says he took a spear, and he wiped out three hundred. Three hundred men, all by himself. Eleazar, it says there was a parcel of food—it wasn't like it is now. Nowadays, you go down to, well, Giant's is in Baltimore, Jewel's or Wal-Mart or Marciano's or whatever they're called, you go to a market, and there's plenty of food to choose from. It was not that way at this time. In those days, if you could get a parcel of food, you could feed a good chunk of your society, or your civilization. Well, the Philistines knew that that food would do them good, too. So, the Philistines said, "We're going to go down, and we're going to take that parcel of food." Well, Eleazar, and a few others, stood in the middle of the parcel, and slew them. You were greatly outnumbered; you slew them. Eleazar. Abishai, it says he also lifted up his spear and wiped out three hundred. I don't know how long that would take, but, man, he must've had some shoulders to keep that up. So, these three, they are called mighty men. And, to them, they weren't mighty men before this whole thing started. They were obedient.

Now we need a David. Andy, can we use you to be David? We have to prove this point, here. The mighty men. So, David, he's the man that God has called. You are the man that God has called. You were a little kid, and Samuel came over and cracked open the oil, and, "Waah! You're going to be king, one day. I'm anointing you, because God's going to be all over you." And you've got some battles going on, but people know that you are the one who got anointed by Samuel. When Samuel does something, when the prophet does something, people notice. So, you now have become king. And, now that you are king, these good men, Abishai, Eleazar and Jashobeam, you guys are good! You're good all by yourselves. Do you think, "Do you really need to yoke yourselves with David?" That's what you would think. The Bible says that these good men—well, it says these men, they strengthened themselves with

David, to make him king, according to the Word of the Lord, and then they became mighty. Because you followed the will of God, you went from good to mighty. Because, when you follow, when you follow God's will, they prove, they prove that God brings opportunity. God brings opportunity when we follow God's order. Any one of you. And I'm sure other people could have said, "Abishai, you are one big dude, man! You don't have to be following David; do your own thing." "Eleazar, everybody knows, everybody knows about you, man. Tell you what, we don't need this whole thing. We'll just be in allegiance with you. How's that?" "And, Jashobeam, you know what? You're kind of like me, you know? What say we make our own league?" And, when these men turn around and say, "Uh-uh. We have strengthened ourselves with the king, in accordance to the Word of the Lord." I'm sure other people would have thought, "You know what? Just a bunch of yes-men. You don't do your own thing! You're pitiful! All you do is what somebody else does! I don't understand it!" And the three mighties would say, "Of course you don't understand it. You know why you don't understand it? You don't have the same purpose. You're not seeking the same things. We got here because of the Word of the Lord! We were all right before, but since we gave ourselves to the work of the Lord, now you know us as mighty! And you don't understand. Connect the dots." And David never took advantage. So David says, "You know what? I would really love a drink of that water that comes from Bethlehem." They didn't have this bottled water thing going on back then. If you wanted some good, fresh water, good luck. But David said, "Oh, I would love to have a drink of water from that brook that was in Bethlehem. Oh, that water was good to me." These guys heard about it, and said, "Not a problem. We don't care if that's our enemy's land." It said that they broke through the host, got the water, "Here, King, for you." And David did not take their walks with God lightly. "You did it out of service to me and to God. I know that you did it with peril of your own *life* to get me water; I pour it out as an offering to Almighty God, because he is the true king." Thank you, brothers.

Now, it was wrong—it would have been wrong for Jashobeam, or Eleazar, or Abishai to say, "Well, you know, I need to do things—I know I'm going to be a giant, but I need to do things like Eleazar. I know I took out three hundred men, but this guy took care of a whole garrison of Philistines." And it would have been wrong for Jashobeam to say, "I know I wiped out three-hundred, but they were three-hundred Ammonites. That guy took care of three-hundred Moabites. You know, I need to be more like Abishai." The point here is, when God calls you, whatever He calls you to do, you don't get into comparing yourselves. God calls teachers, and He calls apostles, He calls leaders, He calls evangelists; God calls so many people in His life. It is impossible for any two to be the same. So, if we were to confine our mind to say, "Well, I'm supposed to be a teacher or an evangelist, and the only way to do it is to do it like this!" Open our minds to what God has called us to do. It will be so special, because He's already prepared that. The Bible says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into our hearts what He has prepared (1 Corinthians 2:9). He's already prepared it. He's already prepared it! With all these scenarios, God had already set them up, He was just waiting for people to dedicate, and make themselves available.

And, to some this would have looked strange, and, that's the same way it looks now. Did you know that Christians, if you have God in your life, you're looked at as strange? Yeah, absolutely, you are, and you're supposed to be! If you're looked at as you're the same as everybody else, there's a problem. You're supposed to be stranger than other people. You know why? Because we don't seek the same things. Christians don't seek the same things. Christians don't have the same purpose as the world. Which brings us to a Scripture we've heard, we heard it shared in men's fellowship; we've heard it shared so much, one of the brothers told me, "I keep hearing that Scripture shared so much; I keep hearing it over, and over, and over, and over, and over, and over, and over!"

Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

It tells us that we need to seek first—as the mighty men sought David first, we need to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. And His righteousness, and then, Saints, all these things shall be added unto us. All these things shall be added unto us.

Part 3: Follow the Right One

As David's mighty men followed David, we're not called to follow David. And Joshua, with that awesome walk of God, forty years, going strong, followed Moses, and then was given to take the people into the Promised Land. What an awesome testimony, and yet, we're not called to follow Moses. We follow the one to whom all of them pointed to. We follow the one that, the Bible says, they could see afar off.

Mark 10:28-30 *Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. [speaking to the Lord Jesus] And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

The one thing that God did that nobody else can touch: He gave us eternal life. So, what do we get, what do we get for following the Lord? Everything. We get everything. Amen. Give the Lord a praise.

