

Be Brave, Be Strong

I. Slide1 Intro:

A. As we study these 7 kings...let's remember, *We can't always control the exterior waves of life, but we can't control what's inside us.*

1. Slide2,3 I like 1 Cor.16:13, Paul's final exhortation to the Corinthians, *Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done w/love.*

B. 5 Imperatives:

C. Sounds like **military orders** from a **Commander** to his *Subordinates*. [Watch, Stand Fast, Be Brave, Be Strong, & Love]

1. **Watch** – Be ever on alert. Keep staying awake.

a) Be on alert for our **enemy**. Be on alert for **sin**.

2. **Stand Fast in the faith** – When under attack *stand fast* in the faith & yield not an inch. [See that your belief is **sound**, also see that your belief is **applied** in yur life]

a) If you don't **stand** for something, you'll **fall** for everything.

b) Eph.6:13,14a *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand**. **Stand** therefore,...*

3. **Be Brave** – (lit. act like men, grow up) **In time of battle, play a hero's part.**

a) **No wimps** – David often spoke of his *mighty men*, even those made from his band that were in *distress, in debt, & discontented*.

b) *David never spoke of them as his mighty losers.*

4. **Be Strong** - Be strong to fight for your King. [*Be strong* comes up **33 times** in scripture]

a) He's not looking for the **Brave Heart** way, **but** the tough **inner man**. **One who can handle criticism & temptation.**

b) Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians, *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with might through His Spirit** in the inner man.*

c) There is **no short cut** to **Holy living**.

5. **Love** - Love always brings us back in that **perfect balance**...**Lest** we become Zealots, **or** repeat the Crusades.
6. This command adds **depth** to all the others.
 - a) W/o Love you won't be **Watching** w/alertness, **you'll be Examining w/suspicion**
 - b) Without Love you won't be **Standing Fast**, **you'll be Running Fast**.
 - c) Without Love you won't be **Brave**, **you'll be a coward**.
 - d) Without Love you won't be **Strong**, **you'll be Weak w/tenderness**.
7. Which of those 5 did **you** need to be reminded of this evening?

II. Slide4 **2 JUDAH KINGS (1-24)** *Abijam & Asa*

- A. Slide5 **ABIJAM** (1-8)
- B. God allowed Abijam to succeed and build up the kingdom *because of* the merit of David.
 1. And look *how long* after **David's sun had set** did the light of his life still glimmer over his house.
 2. **But this isn't fair!** *Abijam walked in the sins of his fathers. And his heart was not loyal to God.*
 3. **So** God blessed **Judah** (& its king) just for David's sake...oh wait, **just as** He blesses **us** for the sake of **His** beloved Son.
 - a) Eph.1:3 *Blessed be the **God** and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*
- C. (5b) **Except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite** - and what a costly exception that was.
 1. What a *pathetic sigh of regret* in just the mention of Uriah's name :(
 - a) *One moment of indulged passion can cast a shadow over long years.*
 - b) Let's remember, *God forgives sin, yet it grieves Him to the heart.*
 - (1) **But** even a person who sinned greatly can be **restored and** become a **blessing** to others.
- D. Slide6 (6) This was *a prolonged struggle* fought along the border of north & south in the territory of Benjamin.

1. Whoever owned this had the best access into the hill country of Israel & Judah from both the West (from the Med Sea) & the East (to the Jordan Valley).
[Jerusalem the capitol of Judah & Bethel important southern religious site of Northern Israel]
2. If you *controlled these routes* you could restrict the *economic & political* expansion of the other.

E. *Slide7a* ASA (9-24)

F. *Asa is the 1st of the 8 good kings in Judah.* And not only *good* but *long*.

1. **Note:** Asa's reign saw *6 or 7 different monarchs* in the northern kingdom.
2. **Unlike** his father & grandfather, Asa made a *conscious effort* to follow God's ways. **A bad father may have a good son.**
 - a) *Let no one feel that a noble life is impossible because of the difficulties of his birth or home surroundings.*
 - b) *Slide7b Start a Legacy!* [Steve Farrar, *Men's Retreat. His Father. Not your story? Start I*]
 - (1) *Slide7c Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy is etched into the minds of others & the stories they share about you.* Shannon L. Alder
 - c) He had a *wonderful beginning* to his reign (1 of the 1st of 8 kings to attempt to *reform* the *religious practices* of his people), **but** a disappointing ending.

G. *Slide7d* He was *courageous* enough to cleanse the Temple of *religious prostitutes* and purge the land of *idols*. He 1st struck at *immorality & then idolatry*. *Slide7e* He even *dethroned his own grandmother*.

1. **But** instead of trusting the Lord for victory he robbed the temple **and** bribed a pagan king to assist him in a war.
2. By *forging an alliance* w/Ben-hadad, King of Syria (who was Israel's neighbor to the north) this forced Israel to flight on *2 fronts* at opposite ends of their kingdom.
 - a) In 2 Chronicles 16:7-10, **Asa** was criticized by the prophet **Hanai** for relying on Syria, *rather than* on **God**.

III. *Slide8* **5 ISRAEL KINGS (15:25-16)** *Nadab & Baasha & Elah & Zimri & Omri*

- A. Slide9a NADAB & BAASHA (15:25-16:7)
- B. (15:27) Assassination.
- C. Baasha was a *soldier, strong, active, daring*. He waded to his throne through blood. (27,29)
- D. God promised *the house of Jeroboam* would be destroyed, and Baasha was the instrument of that judgment.
1. But Baasha repeated the sins of Jeroboam. Did he think that he would escape punishment?
 - a) Slide9b Friedrich von Logau *“Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.”*
- E. (16:4) The prophets formulaic pronouncement reflects the curse of Deuteronomy.
1. To not be buried in the family grave in the land of one’s inheritance was the ultimate curse for an ancient Israelite.
 2. Since Baasha had imitated Jeroboam’s sins, so he would suffer Jeroboam’s judgment. *God used Zimri to fulfill His word against Baasha.*
- F. Slide10 (16:7) Whenever the Kings or priests led the people into sin, God sent faithful prophets to warn them and call them back to the true worship of Jehovah.
1. Jehu was such a prophet (we know little of him). He continued as a prophet for 30 yrs. And shone as a star amid the darkness of the times.
 - a) No age has been without its prophets. No life, however abandoned, w/o some protesting voice. No soul, goes over the waterfall without a warning cry.
 - b) This reveals a merciful, pitying love of the father, not willing that any should perish.
 2. Jehu was not afraid to give God’s message of judgment to evil king Baasha.
 3. Are we today willing to take our stand against evil, or do we just drift with the crowd?
- G. Slide11,12 Heb.4:1 *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.* 2 nautical terms here:
- H. Give the more earnest (w/extreme care) heed (bringing a ship to land).¹
1. Ps.107:30 He brought them safely into harbor. msg

¹ Linguistic Key to the Greek NT, Heb.2:1, pg.666

- I. **Slide13 Drift away** = *it was used for*: something slipping from one's memory; **or** of a ring slipping from one's finger; **or** of a ship drifting away.
- J. **Lest we drift away – 6 Things we should know about drifting:**
1. **Drifting requires no effort**
 - a) People seldom lose their religion by a **blowout** ...it is usually a **slow leak**.
 2. **It's an unconscious effort** (you might not even know you are drifting/**eg.** surfing)
 - a) Drifting is not intentional. It usually comes from **inattention & carelessness**.
 - (1) It happens quietly, *no friction, no dramatic sense of departure*.
 - (2) *Winds of trouble blow into your life, the things of Christ are left behind... then pretty soon...they are out of sight.*
 3. **We never drift upstream or against the tide**
 4. **The speed downstream increases** (when you hear the noise of the waterfall... **it's too late**)
 5. **It is dangerous to others** (it's a hazard to all other vessels at sea)
 6. **It ends in shipwreck** (it will crash on the rocks, **or** go over the falls)
- K. **Slide14 How are your moorings in Christ?** (cables/ropes, **or** frayed strings/tiny threads)
1. Some people who never consider walking in **darkness** **sure enjoy** a little stroll in the **shade**.
 2. **Samson was asleep** when he lost his strength.
 3. **Still water and still religion freeze the quickest**.
 4. It's also scary to realize that most of the people who failed in Scriptures failed in the **2nd-half** of their lives.
 5. How many people have you met that left Christianity because they **logically reasoned it through** & found it **full of holes & faulty**. **Most** simply drifted away.
- L. **So what causes drifting?** Not giving careful attention to the Word of God.
1. **Robertson McQuilkin** in his book **Let Me Get Home Before Dark** prays for himself, *I fear the Dark Specter may come too soon – or do I mean, too late? That I should end before I finish or finish, but not well. That I should stain your honor, shame your name, grieve your loving heart. Few, they tell me, finish well...Lord, let me get home before dark.*

2. Have you drifted away from your early faith? Or from your fidelity to God? From consistent reading? From serious & passionate prayer times? From regular Church attendance? Giving? Fellowship? Communion? Witnessing?

M. **Slide15 ELAH** (8-14)

N. **We learn more about his death in his life.** His extermination was so complete not 1 family member was left (11,12).

O. **Slide16 ZIMRI** (15-20)

P. **Zimri trod in his master's footsteps, & was unwarned by his master's end.**

Q. Zimri's reign was brief, only **7 days**.

1. In his brief reign of **7 days** Zimri had found time to walk in the way of Jeroboam, **and in his sin.** I guess **7 days are long enough to test a man.**
 - a) **Think about it,** in that 1 week he made manifest so great of a **stubbornness and sin** as to make longer probation **needless, and** all thought of reformation **hopeless.**
2. Rather than fall into the hands of Omri & his following, **Zimri committed suicide.**

R. **Slide17 OMRI** (21-28)

S. For the 1st four years of his reign his throne was shared by **Tibni.**

1. He built Samaria as the metropolis of his kingdom.

T. **Slide18 Omri** is one of few individuals from the Bible whose name has been preserved in another source.

1. **An inscription on the Mesha Stele** (a pillar or obelisk that dates to about 830 bc) mentions the Israelite kings **Omri and Ahab** by name (see note on 2Kng3:1-27). The archaeological site associated with Samaria, Omri's capital, attests to the grandeur and prosperity of the **Omride dynasty.**