

V-Formation!

I. INTRO:

- A. Tem/Mur Rescue Mission: *Yearly Fund Raiser*: Providing meals to the hungry this holiday season
- B. Geese flying in formation rotate their leadership. When one lead goose gets tired, it changes places with one in the wing of the V-formation and another flies point.
 Geese flying in formation as they do, creates an upward air current for one another. Each flap of the wings literally creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a V-formation, the whole flock gets 71% greater flying range than if each goose flew on its own. The geese in the rear of the formation are the ones who do the honking. I suppose it's their way of announcing that they're following and that all is well. For sure, the repeated honks encourage those in front to **stay at it**.
 The natural instinct of geese is to work together. Whether it's **rotating, flapping, helping**, or simply **honking, the flock is in it together**...which enables them to accomplish what they set out to do. [This morning...Leaders & working together!]
- C. One mark of *real leaders* is that they have devoted followers & not just *self-seeking flatterers*.
1. Here we stand on our tip-toes looking back over a long list of 37 Elite Warriors (vs.39) who **stood** with David their leader through thick & thin; **during the difficult years of exile & during his reign**.
 - a) Outline: 3 Chief Men(8-17); 2 out of 3 of a 2nd Rank (18-23); & The 30 (24-39).
 - b) Basically the same story is told in 1 Chron.11. There are 16 more names given.
 - (1) Perhaps replacements or alternates. Maybe this group changed from time to time as men died & were replaced.
- D. Eph.6:13 (Weymouth Translation) **Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and, having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field** [suit up, stand your ground, fight, remain, be victorious/or Charlie Sheen/*Winning!*]
1. Who was David w/o all his elite warriors? Each of them were needed to accomplish all God wanted to accomplish!
 2. The triumph of the church as a whole depends upon the **personal victory** of every Christian! (otherwise, how can we be called the "**body**" of Christ?)
 - a) Your victory, your life, your personal testimony, are important to the cause of God today.
 - (1) What happens on the streets of Cambodia, across the border in Burma, down down in the Amazon jungle of Peru, **is not unrelated** to what happens in your own personal relationship with God & your personal battle against the forces of darkness.
 - b) Victory for the church on the *whole world-front* depends upon victory in your life & in mine; **home & foreign situations** cannot be detached.

- c) **Example:** If you have a long line of soldiers fighting *shoulder-to-shoulder*, **can even one soldier relax & allow the line to be breached by the enemy w/o it effecting the whole?**

II. **THREE CHIEF MEN! (8-17)**

- A. **ADINO, A.K.A. Bruce Lee!** (8)
- B. Remember the *Bruce Lee Martial Art Movies* where there'd be a circle of guys all around him & he, 1 by 1, takes them all on. **Big pile of bodies at the end.**
- C. **1st lesson, from Adino:** *Fight against all odds!*
1. **Doesn't God love those kind of odds 800-1...so He can receive the Glory?**
 2. **Elijah** against 450 prophets of Baal; **Gideon's** 300 vs. Mideon's 120,000; **1 boy's** brown paper bag lunch vs. 5000+ hungry stomachs in Galilee.
- D. **2nd lesson, from Adino:** *When placed in a leadership position, lead well!*
1. **Josheb-Basshebeth** = lit. **One who sits in the seat.**
 2. If God has **given you The Seat** for your family...sit up straight & lead well!
 3. If God has **given you The Seat** as a ministry leader...lead boldly!
 4. If God has **given you The Seat** **don't whine** about needing more \$, more equipment, or more people...**no** the key is in **dedication, commitment & abandonment to God.**
- E. **ELEAZAR, G.I. Joe w/Kung-Fu Grip!** (9,10) [Hasbro, 1974]
- F. **His hand stuck** (lit. was *soldered*) **to the sword.**
- G. **3rd lesson, is from Eleazar:** *Fight till you Cramp!* [have a stubborn grip]
1. Ministering with Jesus is often tiring. **Often others retreat when work needs to be done.** Keep swinging! **Don't grumble about being the only one. Fight till you Cramp!**
- H. Many others were retreating not Eleazar. **But, they did come back for the spoil!**
1. **Of course they did.** But like his leader David, he **wasn't selfish** about sharing *the spoils of battle* because the **victory** had come from **the Lord!**
- I. **SHAMMAH, Defender of the Lentils!** (11,12)
- J. **4th lesson, is from Shammah:** *Stand your ground!*
- K. Standing your ground in a field of Lentils! [**but why** take a stand for a field of Lentils?]
1. **Because you must take a stand** When **the enemy** of our soul comes running in!
 2. **Because you must take a stand** When **everyone else** goes running out!
 3. **Because you must take a stand** When you know...**The Lord Is There!**
 - a) **Ezek.48:35** Jehovah Shammah (The Lord is There!).
 - b) "There"(or Shammah) stands *There*. **He stands his ground** in a field of Lentils.

L. **5th lesson, also from Shammah: Stand in *His* power not yours only!**

1. **Note:** vs.10,11 The great victories achieved are ascribed to the Lord.
 - a) Eleazar (God is Helper) - Shammah (The Lord is There)
 - b) Eph.6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

M. **THE THREE TOGETHER!** (13-17)

- N. It was **Harvest time**, which meant there had been no rain & the cisterns were empty.
1. No water available in the cave, & David thirsted for *the bottled Perrier water* from Bethlehem that he used to drink when he was a boy.
 2. The 3 traveled 12 miles, broke through enemy lines, & came back with the water.

O. **6th lesson, is from The Three: Be in close proximity to your Commander!**

1. Those men were so close to David that his whispered desires became their marching orders!
 - a) Oh that we would be as near Christ! [close enough - brave enough]

P. **David's hands** accomplished many things as he held a sword, a sling, a spear, a scepter, a harp. But, the finest thing he did was while holding a cup of water.

1. Jesus changed water into wine. David changed an ordinary cup of water into a drink offering to the Lord.
 - a) That's how you turn a cave into a temple!
 - b) Offering it to the Lord, like he watched the priests do on occasion.
 - c) Drink offerings always accompanied other offerings (never independent).
 - (1) It was an **act of dedication** that symbolized a person's life poured out in the service of the Lord. The 3 men had given themselves as a sacrifice to the Lord to serve David.
 - (2) So David added his offering to theirs.
2. **Note:** what this reveals was true character.
3. Mother Theresa said, We can do no great things, only small things with great love.

Q. Careful, if you have become bitter and sour, it is because when God gave you a blessing you hoarded it. Yet if you had poured it out to Him, you would have been the sweetest person on earth. (My Utmost for His Highest, 9/3)

III. **2 OF 3, OF A 2ND RANK! (18-23)**

- A. **ABISHI!** (18,19)
- B. A courageous man who took out 300 enemy soldiers.

1. Sometimes he had more **zeal** than **wisdom**: he wanted to kill king Saul; offered to cut off Shimei's head for cursing David.
2. Yet, he was the one that saved David's life from a giant.

C. **7th lesson, from Abishi:** *We are not only to stand, but to **wrestle**!*

1. Eph.6:11-13 NLT Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not **wrestling** against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil.
2. Every **man, woman, & child of God** is engaged somewhere in the depths of his soul in a **spiritual battle**.
 - a) There he has to fight with **everything** that he possesses, **not only** to maintain his **stand** (in the passive sense) **but**, as Paul emphasizes, **to wrestle**.
 - b) This is the language of personal conflict, *toe-to-toe* with the enemy of our souls to resist in the name of the Lord.
 - c) Somehow it is easy for many though to avoid the sense of battle & conflict & to take their **ease**! *Woe to you who are at ease in Zion.* Amos 6:1
 - d) When was the last time you fought **a battle against sin**, alone on your knees?
 - e) **Are you engaged in spiritual warfare?** - In your home life? In your personal walk with God? In your prayer life? In your testimony among your colleagues at the office? In your witness with your family at home? Are you standing your ground today? In the position where God has put you? Are you resisting the enemy, or are you in retreat?

D. **BENAI AH!** [Ben-EYE-ya] (20-23)

- E. He was actually born to serve as a **priest**, but became a **soldier**. (1 Chron.27:5).
1. Met a man named **Sang-wan** my 2nd time in Burma. He who was a **Buddhist Priest** for 20 years & then became a soldier for the **Shan State army**.
 - a) **Why?** "To help protect my people."
 2. In the bible, there are many **priests** who became **prophets**, such as **Jeremiah, Ezekiel, & John the Baptist**; **but Benaiah** is the only **priest** named who became a **soldier**.

F. **8th lesson, from Benaiah:** *Fight through ALL Fears!*

1. Benaiah was another man of dauntless Courage.

2. F.W. Boreham said, Benaiah met the worst of enemies (a lion); in the worst of places (in a pit); under the worst of conditions (on a snowy day)...& he won!¹
3. How do we fight through ALL fears?
 - a) We are told to take up the **whole** armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
 - b) But too often we have our focus on *the armor: the belt, body-armor, shoes, shield, helmet, sword.*
 - c) But it should be on *the character: the truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, word.*
4. How do we fight through ALL fears? By holding onto the vital protection provided in the very **character** of *the Lamb of God!* (His integrity, His righteousness, His peace, His faith, the salvation He provides, His Word that is trustworthy)
 - a) You can't use His Word with power *unless* you have the character of Jesus in your heart!
 - b) He wants to *fit you* with a complete set of armor...of *His holy character!!!*

IV. THE THIRTY! (24-39)

A. THE THIRTY!

B. Note the last name mentioned...Uriah in vs.39.

1. All the more the tragedy of David taking the life, of not just one of his soldiers, but one of his **Top 30** to cover up his sin.

C. All people are **created equal** before God, but all people are **not equal** in gifts & abilities.

1. Some have **greater gifts & opportunities** than others.
2. However, the fact that we can't achieve like "the first three" **shouldn't** keep us from doing less than our best & perhaps establishing a "second three."
 - a) God doesn't measure **us** by what He helped **others** do, but by what He wanted **us** to do with the abilities & opportunities He graciously gave us.²

D. Before the great story of *the walls of Jericho* falling down, Joshua was walking the perimeter & he came across a man w/His sword drawn. Joshua yelled out, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" To which came the response, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face & worshipped & said, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" [a Christophany] (Joshua 5:13-15) {men's ministry going through}

1. Joshua didn't meet S.S. Jesus, or baby Jesus in a manger, but **Sword Drawn Warrior Son of God.**

¹ Famous Sermon by F.W. Boreham.

² Warren Wiersbe, Be Restored, pg.153.

2. See, the situation was under the control of *the Captain of an invisible host*, who could easily defeat the enemy. Joshua gladly handed over the battle to Him.
3. Best question ever asked & one we should ask each day, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” or “What do you want your servant to do?” (NLT)

V. LESSONS!

- A. Look what David’s followers were willing to do for their king! (and they had just met David)
 1. What are you willing to do for your King?
- B. True Leaders are not afraid to surround themselves with people of **ability** & then give them opportunity to **let them shine!**
 1. David obviously didn’t do the job alone; he had help of many devoted followers.
 2. The diversity of these men speaks well of his leadership (some from **Judah**, his tribe; a few from **Benjamin**, Saul’s tribe; & others from **neighboring nations**)
- C. Last week we talked about good leadership tips to follow.
 1. This week, we add to that list...All leaders need to follow David’s example by **letting their followers know** how much they **appreciate** them & the sacrifices they make.
- D. God noted **each man** individually, & had **their names** recorded in His Book/Word.
 1. And God will one day reward each one for the ministry they performed.
 2. **David’s** name is mentioned a 1000 times in Scripture...**most of these men** only once or twice. However, when they meet the Lord, “then each one’s praise will come from God.” (1 Cor.4:5)
- E. Eph.6:10-18 MSG And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we’ll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You’re up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it’s all over but the shouting you’ll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You’ll need them throughout your life. God’s Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.
- F. Prayer: May we be like the geese whose natural instinct is to work together: rotating, flapping, helping, or honking. Help us to fly together...and enable us to accomplish what You have set out for us to do.