

Knowing God and Doing Exploits

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[0:00] Let's take our Bibles and turn this time to 2 Samuel 23.! We'll read verses 8-23 where we find a remarkable account of David's mighty men.

! These are the names of David's mighty men. Josheb, Boshabeth, a Tachamanite, was chief of the three. He raised his spear against 800 men whom he killed in one encounter.

Next to him was Eleazar, son of Dodai the Eohite. As one of the three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines, gathered at Pas-Damen for battle.

Then the men of Israel retreated, but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day.

The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead. Next to him was Shammah, son of Agi the Hererite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them, but Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field.

[1:06] He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory. During harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, where a band of Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

At that time, David was in the stronghold and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. David longed for water and said, Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem.

So three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem, and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it.

Instead, he poured it out before the Lord. Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this, he said. Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?

And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men. Abishai, the brother of Joab, son of Zeruiah, was chief of the three. He raised his spirit against three hundred men whom he killed, and so he became as famous as the three.

[2:15] Was he not held in greater honor than the three? He became their commander even though he was not included among them. Benaniah, son of Jehoiada, was a valiant fighter from Kabziel, who performed great exploits.

He struck down two of Moab's best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. He struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaniah went against him with a club.

He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. Such were the exploits of Benaniah, son of Jehoiada. He, too, was as famous as the three mighty men.

He was held in greater honor than any of the thirty, but he was not included among the three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard. Would you turn with me to Daniel chapter 19 this morning?

Did I say 19? Daniel chapter 11. There are only 12 chapters in Daniel. David had some mighty men who served him well.

[3:22] We've just read of them. Men who did exploits for their king. Killing great numbers of the enemy.

Killing a huge Egyptian with his own spear. Going down into a pit on a snowy day to kill a lion. Standing their ground. When everyone else around them was retreating and running.

And so experiencing a great victory that the Lord gave them. Exploits. Courageous, heroic deeds that separated them from the rest of the pack.

These were David's mighty men. Did you know that God today has some mighty men and women and boys and girls?

People who, when the enemy comes in like a flood, are taking their stand and holding their ground. Standing firm against compromise and all the anti-God forces in the world and in their own heart. [4:30] Killing sin. Winning great victories. Courageous and strong. People taking action. Doing exploits.

Daniel chapter 11 and verse 32. B. Says that the people who know their God will be strong and do exploits.

Now, we've come to the end of our study on knowing God. And we're just making the observation that people who know God live differently. That according to the Bible, it's impossible for someone who really knows God to remain the same.

It is a life changing reality. Nothing is the same with God in the picture. With a relationship with the living God. And whenever I say that, and I'm talking this morning about knowing God, I know that you realize that we're talking about God, the Father, God, the Son.

And God, the Holy Spirit. We're talking about a relationship with Jesus Christ. And people who know him live differently. Last week, we saw that people who know their God will trust in him.

[5:42] Psalm 9 and verse 10. Those who know your name will trust in you. For you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

People who know their God will trust in him. And this week, we're seeing that people who know their God will be strong and do exploits. That's the King James Version.

Our version says they will firmly resist him. The NAS has they will display strength and take action. The RSV says they will stand firm and take action.

And all of these give us a sense of these words that are used. People that know God are not just found locked up in some lofty room studying about God.

They're men of action. They're women of action. They're young people of action. Of heroic deeds. Of courageous standing firm. Now, our text is found in this fascinating book of Daniel.

[6:46] A book full of visions and dreams that we scratch our heads and wonder, what is he saying? But in this book, God tells Daniel ahead of time what was going to happen.

It shows us that God is indeed in control of history. And that what he says will happen is exactly what happens. And so here's Daniel living over 500 years before Christ was born.

And he's told what's going to happen some 400 years later. Much of his focus is during that time frame of the intertestament period.

Between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Daniel is told what's going to happen during that time. Because the light of prophecy went out. And we hear nothing during that about 400 year period.

And so God is telling Daniel ahead of time what will happen. And history has proven Daniel's visions and dreams to be true. What we hold in our hands is the inerrant word of God.

[7:48] And you can read in history that what Daniel said is what happened. Indeed, the Babylonian Empire was replaced by the Medes and the Persians.

And they were replaced by the Greeks and later by the Romans. But between the Greeks and the Romans. And then the Lord Jesus came during the time of the Roman rule.

But between the Greek and Roman Empire. The Greek kingdom would be divided up. And some would gain strength over other kingdoms. But eventually it would fall out into two strong kingdoms. The northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. The king of the north and the king of the south. And for a long time the northern kingdom prevailed. Especially one named Antiochus Epiphanes. He is the king of the north that is being spoken of here in Daniel chapter 11. And Daniel 11 tells of successful campaigns against the south. That none could stand against this king.

[8:52] We pick up our reading in verse 29. At the appointed time he will invade the south again. But this time the outcome will be different from what it was before.

For ships of the western coastlands will oppose him. And he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant.

He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress. And will abolish the daily sacrifice.

Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant. But the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

Now this all happened in the second century. There was a fleet of Roman ships that blocked Epiphanes path. And so he lost heart and turned toward Palestine to vent his wrath upon the

chosen people of God.

[9:59] And he showed favor to the apostate Jews. Those who had forsaken God in the true religion. And here in the promised land he tried to blot out every trace of the one true religion.

Desecrating the temple. He removed the altar for daily sacrifice. And he set up his own pagan altar in its place. This abomination that caused desolation. And it speaks of this anti-God king that would be so powerful and deceitful that he would corrupt many.

Who would be willing to break covenant with God. Who would turn their back on God. And follow after him. Being carried away by his flattery to join forces with him.

But at the same time. And under the same pressures to compromise. There will be a remnant. As there always has been since the beginning of time.

And always will be. A group of people who will firmly resist this anti-God pressure. And instead of caving in. They will be strong.

[11:05] And will take action. They will act with courageous heroic deeds. Verse 33 says. They will instruct many even under great persecution and martyrdom.

These are the ones who really know God. They are mentioned in our text in contrast to the apostates. Those who claim to know God and then abandon him.

Verse 32. With flattery. This king of the north will corrupt those who have violated the covenant. God's covenant. But the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

They will be strong and do exploits. Now this stands as a challenge. Do we modern Christians know God well enough. To resist anti-God forces in our day.

Or will we be caving in to pressure. Corrupted by their deceit and flattery. And go along with them. You see the rest of chapter 11 goes on.

[12:09] To speak of a man who will come at the very end of the age. And here Daniel is reaching way into the future. At the very end of the age. About a man who would come. Who would be like Antiochus Epiphanes.

But only worse. He's the one the New Testament authors speak of. As the man of sin. The man of lawlessness. The Antichrist. And evil men will grow worse and worse.

We're told in 2nd Timothy 3. But this powerful ruler will be worse than all of them. And he will persecute the people of God. And for a people he will even be.

For a period he will be. Even be defeating them. Until the ancient of days comes. For the lawless one will be revealed.

2nd Thessalonians 2.8 Whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow. With the breath of his mouth. And destroy by the splendor of his coming.

[13:09] There are awful days ahead. For the church of Jesus Christ. Sifting days. And it is to be feared. That the shallow Christianity of our day.

Is not preparing the saints. To stand against the pressures. Of Antichrist. And all his forerunners. It will only be those who really know God. Who will firmly resist him. Who will stand firm. And be bold.

And strong. And do exploits. So that's the timeless principle. Tucked away here in this book. This nugget of truth. The timeless principle is.

That the people who know their God. Will be strong. And do exploits. And that's true in Daniel's time. It's true in Epiphany's time. It's true in our time.

[14:05] It will be true in Antichrist's time. The people who know their God. Will firmly resist. The evil one. They will stand firm.

And do exploits. Now J.I. Packer in his book. Knowing God. Gives two pages to this verse. He says. That the people who know God. Have great energy for God. While their God is being defied.

Or disregarded. They cannot rest. They feel they must do something. The dishonor done to God's name. Goads them. Into action. Well we do live.

Don't we. In a day when God is being defied. Disregarded. And dishonored. We no longer live in a Christian nation.

We live in a nation that is everyday becoming more anti-Christ. Christ. And so the book of Daniel was a help to us.

[15:04] Because Daniel wasn't living in a Christian nation either. He was living in Babylon. A godless. Idolatrous nation. A nation that did not know the true God of Israel.

They defied. Disregarded. And dishonored him. And here in the book of Daniel. We meet with examples of those who knew God in this place. They knew God in a God-defying place. We meet people who were strong and did exploits. Young men. Taking courageous action. Even in the face of the anti-God powers that were working against them.

And so this book serves us well. Daniel. And his three friends. Taken away into captivity in Babylon. When they were young teenagers. Stuart Elliott in his commentary on Daniel says Daniel was probably 14 years old. Far from home. Far from the eyes of their parents.

[16:05] Living in a wicked city. With every sin at their fingertips. But they knew God. They knew the true God. You read through the book of Daniel. And read the prayers of Daniel.

Read the theological statements about God that come from this man. And you realize he knows God. He knows him to be the sovereign Lord. The most high. Who rules over all the kingdoms of this earth.

And even when he's not seen. He is active. And he's doing his will. He's bringing down one kingdom. And he's building up another. Tearing that one down. Bringing up another. This king. That king. And he's moving it all ahead. To bringing his king from heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ. The one who is king of kings. And lord of lords.

Daniel knew his God. And so when in the training program under King Nebuchadnezzar. They were required to eat food. That was offered in worship to idols.

[17:01] Daniel saw the defiance in that against the living God. He knew God to be the one who sent the rain on the fields. And caused food to grow. And caused food to come to his table.

God is to be praised for this gift. Not some idol. And so when he was tempted to defile himself with the king's food. Daniel resolved not to defile himself.

He took his stand. He planted his feet. He was gracious about it. You remember. But his feet were planted.

And God honored him. Didn't he? After the trial. Time of testing. Of just eating vegetables. And drinking water. They came out looking healthier than the rest of the bunch.

And after the whole program. They were ten times wiser than all the wisest men in Babylon. God smiled upon them. For taking courageous action.

[18:05] For his name. Now you've read that in Daniel chapter 1. But I wonder if you've ever read it in the light of chapter 11 and verse 32. That these were young men who knew their God.

And it was because they knew God. That they took their stand and resisted evil. It was because they knew God so well. That they did something so courageous as they did.

They firmly resisted the temptation to compromise. And to become like the rest of idolaters all around them. And I wonder where are the young people in churches today.

Who know their God so well. That they refuse to defile themselves. With the prevailing idols of this culture. To bow before sexual immorality.

And alcohol abuse. And drugs. And materialism. Because the people that know their God. Resist.

[19:06] And take their stand. And do exploits. You see it again in chapter 3. Don't you? Where all the anti-God powers of Babylon. Are putting their pressure upon these three Hebrew children.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Are their Babylonian names. And the pressure is to bow down and worship this great golden statue. That King Nebuchadnezzar had set up in the plain of Dura.

And at the sound of the music as instructed. Everyone bow down. Except for these three Israelites. What pressure? You talk about peer pressure.

Think of the pressure from the crowd that day. And it wasn't just from the crowd. There was pressure from the king. Because the king had decreed that whoever does not fall down in worship. Will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

And yet they stand. They took their stand. Because they knew their God. And so they have a blazing furnace. And a king furious with rage. That they're not bowing.

[20:05] And yet he's willing to give them one more chance. Before throwing them into the blazing furnace. And then what God will be able to rescue you from my hand. That was a slap of defiance.

On the God of Israel. What God will be able to rescue you from my hands. And they took their stand. They were goaded into taking action.

There was something in their blood that boiled to see their God dishonored. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace. The God we serve is able to save us.

They knew God. They knew that though they were in a foreign land. God was not in a foreign land. God was with them. He was able to save them right there in Babylon. He had power to deliver them out of a fiery furnace.

That never happened before. But they knew God. He is able to save us from it. And he will rescue us from your hand, O king. One way or another.

[21:06] But even if he does not. We want you to know, O king. That we will not serve your gods. Or worship the image of gold you have set up. What is it that gives them that kind of backbone and courage?

They knew God. And they knew him not only to be a God who deserved everything that they were in serving him.

They knew him not only to be a God worth living for. They knew him to be such a God that he is worth dying for. And so they are ready and willing to die. They would rather die than bow down and sin against this God.

They knew God. And their eyes were upon him. They weren't looking around. You know, I doubt that these three were the only Hebrew children taken into Babylon.

There were other Hebrews there that day. What were they doing? I don't think they were looking around to see what they were doing. They knew God. And their eyes were on God. And they said, we will not sin against him.

[22:09] It was bold obedience. Live or die, we obey him. Bold obedience to that commandment. Not to bow down to an idol.

To obey every command. Even the commands that run exactly opposite to the prevailing culture. The culture was bow down. And they stood for the command of God that challenged the godless, anti-God forces.

Glorious exploits. Uncompromising obedience to God. And how God honored them for such. Didn't he? How he caused them not to be harmed by the flames.

Not even a scent. The smell of flames was on their clothing. And the Lord Jesus came. And showed his presence in the furnace with them.

Where are the young people today who would rather die than to bow down to the gods of this anti-God culture? Of appearance. And power. And popularity.

[23:15] And pleasure. And ease. Could it be the reason there are no more exploits being done today? Because our knowledge of God is so shallow and superficial.

We barely know this God. And a God that we don't know well. It's not a God we will do exploits for. It's not a God we will die for. We must know him to be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus.

Who died for us. If we would be willing to die for him. Where are the exploits that show that we know God to be a God of the impossible?

A God who reigns over all. A God who is absolutely sovereign over everything. As Daniel says, he holds in his hand your life and all your ways. All your ways.

That's what they knew about God. And so they committed all their ways unto him and did what he called them to do. A God who moves mountains.

[24:17] A God who's able to save and sustain his people. A God worth living and dying for. It's an increasingly anti-God atmosphere we live in today.

If ever we need to know God to resist the pressure and stand, it's today. It's the people who know their God who will be strong and do exploits.

Now the strength that we're talking about is not the physical strength of a Samson to do exploit.

The kind of exploits we're talking about are speaking of moral strength. Moral courage.

Determination. It doesn't take a whole lot of strength to not bow down.

You just remain standing. Not a whole lot of physical strength being expended. Oh, but there was the strength of an atlas needed. Of moral strength.

[25:19] Of courage. Of determination. To remain standing when everyone else was bowing. The strength that was needed is not that much.

It's just to shut your mouth and not to eat the king's food. It's to turn your eyes away from lustful views.

It's to turn the neck. Not a lot of physical. But there is moral strength and courage needed. To open the mouth and speak a word for your Savior.

It doesn't take a lot of physical strength. But it will take more moral courage than you and I have to bring to the table. To stand and to tell others.

At every opportunity we have. About our Savior. Who saved us from our sins. Through his blood.

Yes, this is the strength that we're talking about when we read.

[26 : 14] That those who know God will be strong and do exploits. Now it's not just a challenge for young people alone. Because in chapter 6, Daniel's an old man.

He's an old man now. He's lived through the Babylonian kings. And now he's living under the Medes and now the Persian kings. And it's an old man that hears the decree.

That anyone who prays to any God or any man for the next 30 days. Will, except for the king, shall be thrown into the lion's den. And when Daniel heard it, he didn't say, Good, I was looking for an excuse not to pray today.

He didn't say, Yeah, I believe in prayer. But it's not that important. No, when Daniel heard it, he went home to his upstairs room. Where the windows opened towards Jerusalem.

And three times a day, he got down on his knees and prayed. Giving thanks to God. Just as he had done before. And so he was found praying and asking God for help.

[27 : 16] He's completely unmoved by the anti-God forces. His feet are firmly planted. He doesn't change his regimen because of some king that says, You shouldn't pray to anyone but me.

He knows his God. He knows that only God is able to help him. And so he's found calling on God for help. He knows God's worthy of praise. And so he's found thanking and praising his God.

The people who know their God will be strong and do exploits. And the exploit was just to go on praying as usual. And God was pleased and sent his angels.

Didn't keep him from the lion's den. But he kept him through it. Isn't that the way of our God? Hasn't kept every believer from martyrdom.

But he's kept them through it. And even in martyrdom. They've gone to be with him. Who loved them first.

[28 : 22] Well, God muzzled the lions. Exploits. So you may be older this morning. You're not able to do some of those exploits of earlier days. But there are still exploits to be done on your knees.

Exploits to be done on your knees. The people who know their God are preeminently people of prayer. They know how to lay hold of God and to pray for his kingdom's increase.

Andy Hamilton, one of the speakers at the conference this week in Owensboro, told me years ago, John, intercessory prayer may prove to be your most enduring work.

Pray. Pray. Don't look around and see what others are doing. Others are sleeping in. Others are hustling here and hither and yon. You pray. You lay hold upon God and pray.

No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you. Isaiah 64, 7. Will you be one who does? And what will move you to pray?

[29 : 30] A sight of God. How big is the God of your prayer life? No prayers will rise higher than your view of God.

Is he big? Read the prayers of Daniel. He's got a God who's the most high, who rules over all.

And he asked things of this God that only he could do. Do you ask? What are you asking God for?

Are you asking him for things that only he can do? Things that are impossible to man.

Are you expecting to see him do them? Your prayers rest upon a big God. And it's the people who know their God who will be strong in their prayer life and do exploits, even as Daniel.

Well, when we think of exploits, we think of the heroic deeds of David and his mighty men, don't we? We have the reading of his mighty men, but they're really just a chip off of the mighty man David himself, in a sense.

[30 : 41] David did some exploits, didn't he? When we first meet David as a teenager, leaving the care of his father's sheep to visit his brothers on the field of battle, it's not the first time we meet David, but as we first find him coming on the field of battle to bring food and supplies and take battle news back to his father, we find that this is a young man who knows his God very well.

He arrives on the scene of battle already knowing God. If you wait till you're on the scene of battle to get to know God, it's too late. David, as he arrives on the scene of battle, already knows God and he knows him very well.

The kind of relationship that can only come by spending much time together. He's been meditating in the scriptures. He's been fellowshiping with his God in prayer.

He's not been frittering away his youth with toys and games and fools. He's been working for his father and tending his sheep. And in the meanwhile, he's been getting to know his God. Where are the young people who are spending their time in whatever they're doing, in their studies, their work, their recreation? But the main thing about them is they're getting to know God.

[32:03] So when they come upon a scene of battle and conflict where God is being dissed, they can stand and take action with courage for him. That was David.

He had been drinking deeply of the streams that bring him to get to know God better. And so we can just see him as a young teen out on the hills of Bethlehem, taking care of his father's sheep, singing the songs of Judah, singing about his great God, pouring out his heart and praise to him. He's my, the Lord is my shepherd. Oh, how he knows his God. And now here he comes to the battlefield. And he hears an uncircumcised Philistine giant defying the armies of the living God of Israel, treating God as if he were a nobody.

And David, who knows something of the holiness, the majesty, the wonder and glory of God, is goaded into action. The people that know their God will be strong and take action and do exploits. They must do something for the honor of this God. That's what knowing God does to a teenager in a world that disregards his God. It gives him courage.

[33:31] It gives him energy to do something for the glory of his name. So David knows God well enough to know that he delights to take the weak things of this world in order to confound the wise.

And so he's willing to go and fight the giant. I'll fight him. Now, there were a lot of Israelites on the field that day who did not know God. King Saul was one of them.

You can't fight him. You're only a boy. Whereas he's been a fighting man from his youth. You see, everyone else was measuring David against Goliath. You can't fight him.

David was measuring Goliath against his God. Why can't I? Why can't I? David knew God. And nothing looks the same with God in the picture.

And God had enabled him on the hills of Bethlehem to kill a lion and a bear who had taken one of his sheep from the flock. And in those trials and tests, working out there for his father, he was getting to know God.

[34:36] This is a God who gives strength to the one whose heart is completely his. Who acts on behalf of those who seek him.

And so now he says to King Saul, Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them. Because he has defied the armies of the living God.

The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the paw or the hand of this Philistine. He knows God.

And so he goes out to meet Goliath. And when he sees David was a mere boy, he despised him. And he cursed him by his gods. And he boasted that he'd make him feed for the birds and the beasts of the field.

And David says, and listen in David's response. When I tell you this is a teenager who knows God, see if he doesn't know God. You come against me. He's looking at a giant twice his size.

[35:34] You come against me with sword and spear and javelin. But I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied.

This day the Lord will hand you over to me and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth. And the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. They must know it's not right that they don't know. It's not right that he be dishonored.

For the battle is the Lord's and he will give all of you into our hands. And one stone later it was all over. He knew God. He was strong and did exploits.

God was goaded into action by the dishonor done to God. Where are the teenagers who would rather die than to see the name of God defied by the world without doing something?

[36:38] Without lifting up a banner in his name? Without standing and saying something for his honor and praise? How well do we know his worth?

How well do we know what a great God he is? Worth living and dying for. Those who know their God will show it.

Nations are refusing to honor God. They're refusing to worship God. Will anybody go and tell them about the worth of this God? And he deserves all men's praises. Oh, we read then of not only

David, his exploits as we've spoken of them, but we read of his mighty men. And of all the mighty exploits, I think the one that I gravitate to more than any others is when David, up in the cave of Adullam, is pining for a drink of water from his hometown, Bethlehem. That well at Bethlehem. And he can still taste how good the water from that well was as a boy. And he said, oh, oh, that I had a drink from the well of Bethlehem.

[37:50] That someone would get me a drink of water. But you see, the Philistine garrison was there. No matter. The three great mighty men of David broke through the lines of the Philistines.

What are they going after? Some treasure? They filled their little canteen with water from the well, headed right back to David. Here's a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, Lord.

And he refused to drink it. Oh, it struck him. To think that these men would risk their lives just for one of my pleasures. We have a greater king than David.

We have one who has shed his blood and died for us. Should we not be willing to do exploits just for the pleasure of our king?

Just for his pleasure? Does it please him? Is it like a sweet-smelling aroma when we speak of Christ to people who don't know him?

[39:02] Then just for the pleasure of our king, let's tell people about Jesus. Do we do exploits for the pleasure of our king?

Just because he delights. You know where he writes a transcription of his delights, his pleasures? Right here. Every command of God is telling us what pleases him. Find out what pleases him.

And so obedience is doing exploits for the king's pleasure. That he might take pleasure. I count it a great privilege to belong to a band of soldiers at Christ in this place who know him and who do exploits for his pleasure.

And I am challenged by your example. As far as I am concerned, we have some of the mighty men and women of God.

There are many who want to please their king, and so they are taking up sword and fighting against sin. There are some here who are putting the sword to the sin of pornography to please their master.

[40:18] There are others who are taking the sword and penetrating their bitter spirit and unforgiving heart. They're doing exploits for the king.

There are some young people who are refusing to compromise their standards to a world trying to squeeze them into its mold. They're standing tall when everyone else around is bowing down to the gods of this age.

There are some married couples who are not selling out to the American dream of spending as much of their time and money as possible in recreation, ease, and comfort, and luxury.

But rather devoting their lives and resources to the kingdom of God. Living God-centered, kingdom-oriented lives. They're doing exploits against all the pressures of our materialistic age.

To the contrary. The God that they know is worthy. They're not their own. They've been bought at a price. They know that. And so they're offering themselves up in service to him.

[41:27] And they're doing exploits for the pleasure of the king. Every second Wednesday night of the month. We just had one this past Wednesday. We pray for people in this congregation.

And people that we know that are going through peculiar trials. Special, ongoing, long challenges. That God has poured into their cup to drink.

I'm not talking about the sporadic trials that we all face. But those that wake up every morning to their trial. And go to bed every night to their trial.

And it doesn't go away. And they don't expect it to anytime soon, if ever. And we pray for them. And again, I count them some of the mighty men and women who are doing exploits.

Parents raising children with special needs. Widows glorifying God without their beloved.

[42:33] Some raising children alone. Families caring for elderly parents. Husband caring for needy wife. Some suffering through difficult marriages.

They're doing exploits for the king. The books are being written in heaven. Someday we'll read about it. Not all of it's known, you know.

But there'll be a day of uncovering. Day after day, faithfully giving themselves up unto the Lord to do their duty.

When all the pressure is to quit. And just to check out of their duties. People are doing it all the time. Checking out of marriage.

Checking out of fatherhood. Checking out of motherhood. But not them. They're doing exploits. And I say glory to God. It's refreshing to live in the midst of a people who are doing exploits.

[43 : 35] For the pleasure of the king. And mothers and fathers bringing up children in the teaching and training of the Lord. Men serving God at their calling when all the pressure at work is to do otherwise.

But brothers and sisters, are there not bigger, greater exploits to be done for our king? Those who know him best will find the most strength and will take the most courageous action.

Whether it be in prayer. Or in other ways to advance his glory. Let this be a test of how well we know God.

The people that know their God. Are strong and take action. We can't speak of these things without speaking of the exploits of our great savior Jesus Christ.

There are no exploits like his. He's the greater son of David who has taken on the greater Goliath of Satan. And all the hellish crew. And he's triumphed.

[44 : 43] He firmly resisted. Against every temptation to defile himself. He laid down his life for us. There we were.

He's the greater shepherd, you see. And when we were being drug away into hell. He stepped in between. And laid down his life for us. He suffered. The wrath of God.

That we might be forgiven and go free. He rescued us. Set us free. He marched right into the jaws of hell itself. Right into death. Death. As we heard read from Acts chapter 13.

And he rose again. Triumphant over sin and death and hell. And the grave. This is our savior.

These are heroic deeds.

These are exploits. This is the gracious master that we know and love and serve. The tomb is empty. He's alive. He's coming again. He's reigning over all.

[45 : 42] It's our privilege to be soldiers. Under such a gracious captain. Let's stay close to this Christ. Let us strive to know him better. That's why we gather to worship.

Oh, to see our captain again. To see our God exalted. To have our view of God expanded. To squeeze out of our. Any space in our mind and heart and life.

Small thoughts about God. That we might then go out into the world. And this afternoon and tomorrow morning. And all week long. Plant our feet like Shama. In that field of lentils.

When everyone else is retreating. To take our stand. Therefore. My dear brothers and sisters.

Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord. Because you know. That your labor in the Lord.

[46 : 40] Is not in vain. Let's pray. Oh, Father. We. Who know you. Thank you for the knowledge of you. That we had. That we have.

We would not know you. If you had not revealed yourself to us. Graciously. In your son. But Lord. We confess. When we see. Statements in your word.

About those that know you. It shows us just how shallow. Our knowledge of you is. It shows us just how superficial. We often are with you. Forgive us.

Oh, there are such. Such depths in you. That yet remain to be known. Help us. To know you better. Show yourself to us.

Show us your glory. Give strength to those who are. Weary. And heartbroken.

[47 : 39] And see no change in the near future. In their situation in life. Open their eyes. And give them to see into heaven. This morning.

To see the son of God. Having died. Risen. Living. Reigning over. Everything in their life. For them. Strengthen their faith. Enable them to take their stand. Not to give up. Not to forsake duty. But to do it for the pleasure of their king.

Oh, what strength. We need just to. Keep going, Lord. Keep them going. Keep going. Lord, it's our. Burden this morning as well.

That there are some that don't know you at all. Just know a lot about you. That have no relationship with you. Come. Bring them.

[48 : 37] To faith. And repentance. To see what fools they are. To. To seek other idols. And other gods. Even themselves. And to so defy.

And dishonor. And disregard. The living God. Thank you, Jesus. For seeking us out. For knowing us. For claiming us.

Making us your own. We now long to do something for you. Give us strength. To do exploits.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.