

Shoulder to Shoulder

27 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians
Church on the Park | Sunday, 6 August 2017

Texts: Philippians 2:19-30; Eph. 6:13-20 (NIV); 1 Chron 11:1ff

Theme: We stand strong and recapture strongholds as we stand shoulder to shoulder.

Intro: Over the last few weeks, we've looked at the example of great men of God who stood in the battle—men like Paul, Timothy and David. We've learned that they stood firm because they were madly in love with God. They strengthened themselves by leaning on their Beloved. We've also discovered that they stood firm because they were equipped with God's armour. They saw this life as a battle and they stood on the truth of the Word, rather than the appearances of the world. Today, you'll see that in order to stand, we need to stand together. The Lord has put you in his army, and in this army, the King's mission and your fellow-soldiers are more important than you.

1) Assist your brothers and sisters so that they can stand strong (Phil. 2:19-30; Eph. 6:18-20).

- The first week we focused on the 's' in stand—**strengthen yourself**. The second week the 't'—**take up** the full armour. And this week is the 'a'—**assist**.
- It's easy to fall into the trap that the Christian life is just about '**me and Jesus**.' It's actually about **Jesus and his will**. In other words, **him and his Kingdom**.
 - If you don't have that **fundamental shift** in your life, you'll completely miss **God's purpose** for yourself.
 - And it's his **will** that you **work together, serving one another**, in order to **serve** the **King's mission**.
 - God has not created you for **independence**. You were designed to **depend** on him first and then **assist one another**.
- This is something **Timothy** and **Epaphroditus** knew very well.
 - They understood that to **serve** the person God sent them, **Paul**, was to **serve God**.
 - Look at **Timothy**:
 - 1) **Genuine concern** - In other word, he had **God's heart** for the **people**, just like Paul had (**kindred spirit**).
 - 2) **Served with Paul** - He served with Paul to **further** the **Gospel**. He served like a **child with his father**.
 - **Serving** is the **best way** to **learn** and **grow strong**. But you learn by **example**. You'll even learn by your leader's **mistakes**.
 - Look at **Epaphroditus**:
 - 1) Paul described him as "**my brother** and **fellow worker** and **fellow soldier**."
 - Think about those words because they describe what a **true Christian** and **disciple is**: a brother, a fellow worker and fellow soldier.
 - He's **not** a **fellow complainer, gossip** and **good-for-nothing**.
 - He's not one of those people who **always disappears** and has an **excuse for everything**.
 - 2) Paul also calls him "**your apostle** and **minister to my need**."
 - The **reason why** you are **reading** the book of **Philippians** this morning **is because Paul had a Timothy and Epaphroditus** in his life.
 - **Without these men** and others like them, you wouldn't **have much** of the **New Testament**.
 - The same thing goes for today, **the church cannot grow** and the Kingdom will not **expand**, without men who **serve their God-sent leaders** and **brothers**.
 - 3) Moreover, **Epaphroditus risked** "**his life** to complete what was deficient" in the Philippians service of Paul.
 - This to me is a **real servant of God**, a man who risks his life to **serve** and **minister**.

- **Ephesians 6:18-20** teaches us that to **pray** is one of the **chief ways** we **assist** and **support** one another.
- That's how we stand **shoulder to shoulder** in battle, as well as helping each other with natural needs.
 - Listen to **Zephaniah 3:9**: "For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord, to serve him **shoulder to shoulder**." [Lit. 'with one shoulder']
 - The **Roman army** was known to make a **shell like formation**, their **shields** all next to one another, side by side, all around, and even on top. Together, the arrows could hardly pierce them. (Called the **Tortoise Formation/Testudo Formation**)

2) Stand shoulder to shoulder with 'Davids' (1 Chron. 11:1-9).

- 1 Chron. 11:1-9
- **Gather** and **stand** with '**Davids**' rather than '**Sauls**'.
 - While '**Sauls**' look the **part**, '**Davids**' carry God's **heart**.
 - It was a great day when Israel **awakened** to their anointed leader, **David**. This was the day they **saw** and **embraced God's Word** rather than what they at first **wanted**—"a king like the other nations," rather than a "**shepherd after God's own heart**."
 - First, I **apologise** if your name is Saul. Saul is a great biblical name. But for my illustration Saul did not stand the test, but David did.
- *How David captured the stronghold of Zion?*
 - Last week we saw that he stood on the truth while he was fleeing from Saul in the wilderness for many years.
 - Today, I want to show you that **he took the stronghold** because of the **strength of his brothers**, his **fellow warriors**. His brothers brought him **strength** and they **accomplished God's** will together.
 - This **will of God** to take Jerusalem back was **dormant** for generations.
 - But it was **awakened** through coming into **alignment** with **God** and **his people**.
 - The **purposes** of God are **awakened** when you **align yourself** to God and his people.
 - Notice the **place** where Israel gathered to David. It's called **Hebron**.
 - I believe in this short passage is a **pattern** for **capturing strongholds**, if you have eyes to see.
 - *Do you know what Hebron means?* It means **alliance, fellowship, company or unity**.
 - **First**, God brings you to **Hebron**; then, he enables you to capture strongholds in towns, cities and nations.
 - **Unity is the key to victory in God's Kingdom**. It's through **unity** that we **stand**.
 - Remember what Jesus said, "A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand" (see Mark 3:24).

3) The fabric of God's people is woven through Jonathan and David relationships (1 Sam. 18:1-5).

- Be a **Jonathan** that **empowers** a **David**. This is what true **brotherhood** is about.
- Jonathan **helped** David stand in his **wilderness** experience.
 - In Jonathan we see what a **true spiritual friend** is.
- **Jonathan recognised** David when most people **forgot** about him, when he was Saul's Most Wanted.
- **Learn from Jonathan**
 - 1) Jonathan **loved** David (1 Sam. 18:1-5)
 - He saw the potential in David. He gave David his armour so that he could be a proper warrior. These were costly items, these were Jonathan's own items that he gave. It's that giving spirit that makes warriors.
 - True support and assistance comes from love
 - 2) Jonathan was **committed** to David (1 Sam. 18:3)
 - These friendships in God make a strong **net**. Our commitment to one another are like the knots that bind the net together, giving it strength.
 - 3) Jonathan **gave** to David (what was rightful Jonathan) (1 Sam. 18:4)
 - 4) Jonathan **protected** David (1 Sam. 19:1-4)

- 5) Jonathan **listened** to David (1 Sam. 20:1)
 - When people speak badly about a brother behind their back, do you defend your brother or just let the person speak? Jonathan defended David when Saul was speaking bad of David.
- 6) Jonathan **served** David (1 Sam. 20:4)
- 7) Jonathan **encouraged** David (1 Sam. 23:16)
 - When you look at the geography, you see that Jonathan really went out of his way to encourage David—he went into the wilderness and he risked his life.
 - This is the example of a true friend.
 - My **prayer** is that **first** you would **be a Jonathan**, one God has given as a **gift** to another. My **next prayer**, only after the first, is that you would **have a Jonathan** in your life, assisting and supporting you.
 - Rather than say, “I wish I had a Jonathan in my life,” Seek to be a Jonathan to someone who has a David-like heart. And maintain a heart for God yourself.

Conclusion: Jonathan and David’s relationship is an example of what it means to stand shoulder to shoulder. As we build these kinds of friendships, we will be able to capture the strongholds of the enemy.

END NOTES

2275 חֶבְרוֹן, חֶבְרוֹן, חֶבְרוֹן [Chebrown /kheb·rone/] n pr loc m. From 2267; TWOT 598i; GK 2496 and 2497 and 6306; 71 occurrences; AV translates as “Hebron” 71 times. 1 a city in south Judah approx 20 south of Jerusalem and approx 20 miles (30 km) north of Beersheba and near where Abraham built an altar. 2 the 3rd son of Kohath and grandson of Levi. 3 a descendant of Caleb. Additional Information: Hebron = “**association**”.

2266 חָבַר, חָבַר, חֲתָחָרוֹת [chabar /khaw·bar/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 598; GK 2248 and 2488 and 2489; 29 occurrences; AV translates as “**couple**” eight times, “**join**” eight times, “couple together” four times, “join together” three times, “**compact**” once, “charmer + 2267” once, “charming + 2267” once, “have **fellowship**” once, “**league**” once, and “heap up” once. 1 to **unite, join, bind together, be joined, be coupled, be in league, heap up, have fellowship with, be compact, be a charmer**. 1a (Qal). 1a1 to unite, be joined. 1a2 to tie magic charms, charm. 1b (Piel). 1b1 to unite with, make an ally of. 1b2 to unite, join, ally. 1c (Pual). 1c1 to be allied with, be united. 1c2 to be joined together. 1d (Hiphil) to join together, pile up (words). 1e (Hithpaël) to join oneself to, make an **alliance**, league together.

2267 חֶבֶר [cheber /kheh·ber/] n m. From 2266; TWOT 598a; GK 2490; Seven occurrences; AV translates as “wide” twice, “enchantment” twice, “company” once, “charmer + 2266” once, and “charming + 2266” once. 1 association, company, band. 2 shared, association, society. 3 a magician, charmer, spell.

598 חָבַר (hābar) be joined, coupled, league, heap up, have fellowship with, be compact; be a charmer. BDB adds “to unite, tie a magic knot,” (RSV has “joined forces,” ASV “joined together” and other such variations).

Derivatives

- 598a חֶבֶר (heber) company, association, spell.
- 598b חֶבְרָה (hebrâ) association, company.
- 598c חָבַר (hābēr) united, associate, companion.
- 598d חֲבֵרֶת (hāberet) consort, i.e. wife, only in Mal 2:14.
- 598e חֲבֵרֶת (hōberet) a thing that joins or is joined, only of the curtain pieces of the tabernacle, as joined together (Ex 26:10; 36:17).
- 598f חָבַר (habbār) associate, partner in a trade or calling, only in Job 40:30.
- 598g חֲבֹרָה (habbûrâ), חֲבִירָה (habbūrâ), חֲבֵרָה (habrâ) stripe, blow.
- 598h חֲבִירָה (hābarbūrâ) stripe, mark, only in Jer 13:23.
- 598i חֶבְרוֹן (hebrôn) Hebron.
- 598j מַחְבֵּרֶת (mahberet) thing joined, place of joining.
- 598k מַחְבֵּרָה (mēhabbērâ) binder, clamp, joint.

In Ugaritic the term appears as a name for a town, meaning “**community**,” and it is thought to be related to the common Semitic root meaning “**to be joined**” (UT 19: no. 924) and translated as “bind” in Assyrian.

The main idea of hābar in the ot is “to join or unite” two or more things. However, the root idea of the term “to bind” also appears, especially in the concept “charm.” Only in Deut 18:11 does this term appear in a verbal form to express the idea of charming, i.e. casting a spell or tying up a person by magic. The act of charming is set forth as an idolatrous act and diametrically opposed to receiving revelation from God through his appointed prophets (Deut 18:15).

The verb hābar in the sense of “join” is used with four specific references. 1) Objects were joined together, e.g. curtains in tabernacle construction to make one complete side (Ex 26:3), shoulder pieces in coupling together the parts of the priests’ holy garments (Ex 28:7), wings of the living creatures touching one another (Ezk 1:9). 2) Men were joined together in political and military activities. Five nations of the Sodom-Gomorrah confederacy united for military purposes against invaders from the east (Gen 14:3) but their union led to a common defeat. Jehoshaphat made a political union with wicked Ahaziah of Israel for commercial purposes but it was denounced by God’s prophet (II Chr 20:35–37). Daniel saw kings joining themselves together in a league

(Hithpael) (RSV “make alliance”) which was doomed to failure (Dan 11:6, 28). 3) Men are joined in a general manner as belonging to the race of the living (Eccl 9:4) and in a specific way as a group of people who are formed into a strong unified city (Ps 122:3). 4) Men of Judah wrongly joining with faithless Israel in military and political ventures (II Chr 20:35) displeased God; men joining themselves to idols and idol worshipers did so much more (Ps 94:20). God’s heartrending complaint against Ephraim is that he is joined to idols (Hos 4:17). To be joined to idols means to have forsaken God.

חֶבֶר (ḥēber). Company, association, spell, enchantment, companion; grandson. a variant of ḥābēr, ḥēber reflects the sense of “bind, cast a spell,” except in a few places (Prov 21:9). The usual translation is “enchantments” referring to the means the charmers employed to influence people or the result of their charming efforts (Deut 18:11). All aspects were divinely forbidden to covenant people.

The meaning “companion” is found three times in Jud 4. The meaning “grandson” (perhaps from the close connection between son and grandson genetically) occurs in Gen 46:17; Num 26:4; I Chr 4:18; 7:31; 8:17.

חֶבֶר (ḥābēr). Companion, associate, knit together (RSV “associated with” him; ASV “companion” for fellows).

This word is used as an adjective and noun to refer to the very close bond that can exist between persons (cf. UT 19: no. 834). In Aramaic the term indicates the close relationship between Daniel and his three friends because of their common faith and loyalty to God (Dan 2:13–18). The Psalmist expressly states that the fear of God is the common bond between “companions” (Ps 119:63).

The term ḥābēr is also used to express the very close relationship that exists between people in various walks of life. Israelites were “united as one man” (RSV) in their war against the Benjamites because of their outrageous crime (Jud 20:11). Men can be very closely joined together as thieves (Isa 1:23), as destroyers (Prov 28:24), and as corrupt priests likened to ambushing robbers (Hos 6:9).

חֶבֶרֶת (ḥāberet). Consort, wife, companion. This feminine noun, synonym of wife (Mal 2:14), indicates the type of a close relationship which the root ḥābar expresses.

חֶבֶרֶת (ḥōberet). Coupling. A feminine noun, it refers to the actual joint of, or joining piece between, two parts of the tabernacle (Ex 26:10) and temple (II Chr 34:11).

חֶבְרוֹן (ḥēbrôn). Hebron. This proper name is said to be related to the verb ḥābar and thus its meaning could be considered as “confederacy, association, league” or possibly as “charmer” or “enchanting.” Certain scholars have endeavored to link the name Hebron to certain organized or united military activities. But even though it is true that Abraham, the father of the Israelites, lived in its area (Gen 23), and that David lived there, united the people of Israel, and reigned there for seven and a half years (II Sam 5), and also that Absalom tried to unite the people in a revolt there against David, these episodes do not indicate necessarily that the place was named Hebron because of these various activities. [Glen’s Note: Yet, definitely shows prophetic significance.]

Hebron was perhaps the highest town in Palestine (elevation 3,040 feet). Abraham built his third altar in its vicinity (Gen 13:18), lived and buried his dear one there (Gen 23). It was given to Caleb as part of his inheritance (Josh 14:13–14). It continued to have religious significance in Israel because it became a city of refuge (Josh 1:13), and it was the scene of the establishment of the Davidic theocratic monarchy (II Sam 2:4; 5:3). It remained a worship center (II Sam 15:7, 8) even after David transferred his capital to Jerusalem. It may be noted that in those years the tabernacle at Shiloh was destroyed and the temple of Solomon not yet built. There were then different acknowledged places of God-honoring worship of which Hebron was one, Gibeon another and there were others.

Testudo Formation

Plutarch describes this formation as used by Mark Antony during his invasion of Parthia in 36 BC:

"Then the shield-bearers wheeled round and enclosed the light-armed troops within their ranks, dropped down to one knee, and held their shields out as a defensive barrier. The men behind them held their shields over the heads of the first rank, while the third rank did the same for the second rank. The resulting shape, which is a remarkable sight, looks very like a roof, and is the surest protection against arrows, which just glance off it." (Plutarch: Antony, c. 45, quoted in Plutarch, Roman Lives, ed. Robin Waterfield ISBN 978-0-19-282502-5)

Cassius Dio writes about the testudo when describing the campaign of Mark Antony in 36 BC: "This testudo and the way in which it is formed are as follows. The Baggage animals, the light-armed troops, and the cavalry are placed in the center of the army. The heavy-armed troops who use the oblong, curved, and cylindrical shields are drawn up around the outside, making a rectangular figure, and, facing outward and holding their arms at the ready, they enclose the rest. The others who have flat shields, form a compact body in the center and raise their shields over the heads of all the others, so that nothing but shields can be seen in every part of the phalanx alike and all the men by the density of the formation are under shelter from missiles. Indeed, it is so marvelously strong that men can walk upon it and whenever they come to a narrow ravine, even horses and vehicles can be driven over it." (Dio Cassius, Roman History Book 49, 30, ed. Loeb Classical Library ISBN 0-674-99091-9)

[Excerpted from Wikipedia - Testudo Formation]

The Gates of a Modern City - 1) Government 2) Schools 3) Businesses 4) Transport [airports & roads] 5) Entertainment [TV, Movies, Music] 6) Internet 7) Community Groups & Non-Profits 8) Medical Community (Hospitals & doctors) 9) Religion

The church is above these. The church is the gate of heaven on earth. We are meant to bring God into these sectors