

David's Secret, part 1

Steve Watson, March 17, 2019

The story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) shows David to be courageous even at a very young age... a trait that would follow him all the days of his life.

The secret to David's courage is found in Psalm 27:14:

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord.

The middle portion of this scripture is very similar to Joshua 1:6, a primary text for Alan Smith's March 3 sermon, which launched this series.

"Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance." CSB

The command, "Be strong and courageous," is found in several key passages in the Old Testament (in addition to numerous times in the book of Joshua- 1:6,7,9,18; 10:25).

- It's found first in Deuteronomy 31:6, where Moses tells the people of Israel to "be strong and courageous" because God will be with them as they take the promised land.
- Moses then summons Joshua and commands him "in the sight of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land... and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who goes before you.'" (Deuteronomy 31:7-8)
- When David was handing the task of building the temple over to his son Solomon he said to him, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you." (1 Chronicles 28:20)
- When a massive Assyrian army was coming against Jerusalem, Hezekiah declared to the people, "Be strong and courageous! Don't be afraid or discouraged before the king of Assyria or before the large army that is with him, for there are more with us than with him. He has only human strength, but we have the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." (2 Chronicles 32:7-8)

Note a common theme in each case: God is with you!

The Hebrew reads "Chazak! Amaats!." Just two words, which might best be translated, "Be strong! Be courageous!"

"Chazak! Amaats!" on one level is a battle cry to encourage the soul in the same way "Remember the Alamo!" was used to encourage the hearts of soldiers during the Texas Revolution against Mexico in the 1830s.

On another level, there is something powerfully spiritual about it when it is spoken into a person's heart by God, or by the authority of God. There is an impartation of supernatural courage.

At first glance, the imperatives of Joshua 1:6 and Psalm 27:14 appear to be the same.

- The first part in each is indeed the same Hebrew word *chazak*, which as mentioned before might best be translated "Be strong!"

- The second part of the imperatives come from the same Hebrew word family, but there is an important difference.
- Joshua 1:6, and the other passages mentioned above, are best rendered *be courageous*.
- Psalm 27:14 is best translated *take courage*.
- The Hebrew phrase in Psalm 27:14 is waya'ameets libekaa- *take courage in heart*.

It is important to emphasize the idea of taking, or receiving, courage, which is why many translations render the phrase *let your heart take courage*.

How this is to happen is made clear by repetition.... "Wait for the Lord.... Wait for the Lord."

There is a Hebrew word (*chakah*) that, to quote Hebrew scholar Chaim Bentorah, "refers to what we generally think of in regard to the word wait." But that is not the word used in Psalm 27:14.

The word used in Psalm 27:14 is *qavah*, which literally means "to bind together like a cord."

- Envision someone twisting three strands of twine together to form a rope.

Figuratively *qavah* means to expect or look for with anticipation, which is why most English versions of the Bible translate it *wait*.

The Passion Translation captures both the literal and the figurative meaning of *qavah*, which is helpful in capturing what David is saying.

Don't give up; don't be impatient; be entwined as one with the Lord.

Review the literal and figurative meanings of *qavah* again, then consider the following translation:

Remain consciously and expectantly entwined with the Lord.

I believe this phrase more adequately captures the full force of David's intended meaning. It also puts me in mind of Jesus words in John 15:4:

"Abide in Me, and I will abide in your." VOICE

"So you must remain in life-union with me, for I remain in life-union with you." TPT

Consider that David and Jesus are communicating the same truth, which could be rendered this way:

Remain consciously and expectantly entwined with the Lord. Be strong! Take courage in heart! Remain consciously and expectantly entwined with the Lord.

Here's another way of communicating the same concept:

Arrange your life to be strong. Arrange your life to be courageous. Remain consciously and expectantly entwined with the Lord.

With that in mind, read Psalm 27:1-6.

Consider that these verses reflect the actual experience of one who makes Psalm 27:14 a lifestyle; then reread the story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) with this in mind.