

I need a hero!

- Show "Incredibles" clip - [if it works!](#) - or describe
 - comment on our love of the idea of a hero...
 - problem is that they don't really exist!
- But God does exist:
 - and this morning we'll see how God stands with his people in their time of need
 - protecting them in the face of danger and saving them from destruction
 - leaving us able to our confidence and trust in him

Introduction

- This series on Elisha has sought to sketch out some characteristics of God:
 - [powerful provider](#) (week David Gilchrist was here, we didn't touch on this, covered in Bodybuilders)
 - [powerful life-giver](#) - giving the Shunammite woman her son back from the dead
 - [power healer](#) - healing Namaan
- This morning's passage reveals that God is also a [powerful warrior](#)
 - perhaps an image we are less comfortable with?

Image of Brutality and Force?

- Is that our starting point?
 - fuelled by images of the brutality of warfare over the centuries - films, book...
 - perhaps even impressions of the OT battles, God sending his people off, even destroying and slaughtering enemies...
- While there are incidents where God's people certainly exerted force, even slaughtered enemies, the overall intention was always that God's people would be a [light to the nations](#)
 - in other words, world domination, conquest, oppression was not the plan!
 - there may have been times when a particular battle was necessary...
 - perhaps to save the nation, or to respond to a particular evil, or to demonstrate God's holiness...
 - but overall the plan was that God's people should be a holy example to the nations, drawing them to God...
- So we have last week's story - Namaan not killed, but healed, treated with compassion, drawn to God
 - and today we have God's people forbidden from killing the captives
 - God's power is being demonstrated, not human power, not oppression
 - awe and wonder, even worship were the goals, not oppression and conquest!
- Israel's warrior king is not a God of brutality, but of truth, revealing himself, giving life, patient with his people and indeed his enemies...

Image of Bravery and Courage

- Other image of warrior is brave, true, positive
 - those who lay down their lives for others, for a noble cause...
 - fight injustice
- This is very much the kind of warrior that God is
 - God hates evil - we cannot over-estimate how much!
 - in the daily realities of life - even the snatching of Maddie, the evil of someone who would do such a thing
 - God hates, and fights against, and will bring to justice all who do such things - it

is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God

- Jesus ministry was in part a battle with the principalities and powers
 - he conquered on the Cross and in the Resurrection
 - the final mopping up is all that is left, the decisive victory has been won
- And there is power, an army, able to strengthen us - we are not alone in this battle
- In heavenly armour we'll enter the land - the battle belongs to the Lord