

JUDGES 5:13-18
“WHO WILL GO FOR ME?”

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 5 as we continue our study through the book of Judges.

As we have seen over the last several weeks, we have been going through this song of Deborah and Barak that deals with the victory that God gave them over Jabin the King of Canaan and his commander, Sisera.

We have looked at the following as we have been going through this song.

WHEN LEADERS LEAD!

REMEMBER GOD!

LIFE UNDER OPPRESSION!

THE STORIES OF GOD’S PEOPLE!

Now you may be thinking, “What in the world is a song doing here in this dark book of the Bible? I mean all we see is the children of Israel turning from the Lord and then, after time, sometimes many long years, they repent, and God hears their cry and delivers them by the hand of a Judge that He has raised up. And, after all that, by the time the Judge dies, the children of Israel are back in sin and back in bondage because of it. So why this song?”

That is the struggle that one writer had about this song. Listen to what he wrote,

Judges is a rather grim book, to put it mildly. There are a lot of dark and depressing things in it. It’s a difficult read. Things go from bad to worse.

You keep hoping they'll get better, but they never do – at least not for long. Israel was in deep trouble in the days of the judges, partly because of their own wrongdoing and partly because of what others did to them.

Judges is a collection of unhappy stories, and when you're unhappy you're not much inclined to sing. Judges is a book that quenches singing rather than evoking it.

So why a song here in chapter 5 – and not just a song, a whole 31 verses of exuberant praise and celebration? It's one of the most surprising things in the whole book.

- Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth – God in Chaos, p. 103

One of the reasons for this song is the victory that God had given them over this enemy that was much stronger than they were. In fact, they were in captivity for twenty years and we are told that Jabin “**harshly oppressed the children of Israel.**” Judges 4:3.

So it is out of this victory that praise and honor are sung forth unto God who gave them this great victory.

The other thing we need to remember as we go through the good, the bad and the ugly of the Bible is that these things are here so we can learn from them. So we can grow in the faith. And in this song, we see lessons that God is showing us, how we are to deal with the battles we face.

It is as Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, “**For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**”

You see, as we go through tough times, maybe even times of bondage because of the sin we are in, as we face the battles that come against us each and every day, God is teaching us as we read His Word and look at the lives of His people, these lessons.

And as we submit to Him, we are learning patience, we can allow the Scriptures to give us comfort, and in the end, God gives to us hope in our deliverance from what we are facing.

And the idea here is that as we look at what God has done in the past, He is more than able to deliver us from the present situations that we are facing, we just need to trust in Him!

In the verses we will be looking at this morning we are going to focus on this, “**Who Will Go for Me?**” And, as you will see, it is really a call to battle, a call to service.

And we will look at the tribes that went into this battle and those that did not. And they had many excuses why they couldn't go into battle, many reasons, but in the end, these excuses were just that, excuses and not real reasons not to get involved.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

My great-great uncle lived to the ripe old age of 106. He was healthy and spry and took joy in chauffeuring his less able-bodied senior friends around town.

On his 100th birthday, his driver's license came up for renewal. When he went to the licensing bureau, the skeptical clerk said, “You're 100 years old! What do you need a driver's license for?”

My uncle, completely nonplussed [baffled, confused], replied, “Somebody has to drive the old folks around!”

He continued to have a legal driver's license for the next five years.

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Now he could have come up with a lot of reasons why he should not get involved, but instead, he came up with a reason to get involved, ***“Somebody has to drive the old folks around!”***

In our study this morning, I have broken these verses down as follows:

THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD – JUDGES 5:13

THE CALL OF GOD ACTED UPON – JUDGES 5:14-15a

THE CALL OF GOD IGNORED – JUDGES 5:15b-17

PARALYSIS OF ANALYSIS – REUBEN - JUDGES 5:15b-16

NOT OUR PROBLEM – GILEAD - JUDGES 5:17a

TIME FOR LEISURE – DAN & ASHER – JUDGES 5:17b-c

WHAT FAITH LOOKS LIKE – ZEBULUN & NAPHTALI - JUDGES 5:18

So with that as our outline, let’s begin reading in Judges chapter 5, beginning in verse 13 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word and look at this topic,

“Who Will Go for Me?”

JUDGES 5

VERSE 13

This is key in all the battles that we face – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

And that is what we see here. We see that Deborah praises the Lord for His help in this battle against Jabin and the Canaanites and the defeat of his commander, Sisera. She said, **“The LORD came down for me against the mighty.”** Judges 5:13.

Yes, the enemy was bigger, stronger, their weapons were far better than what Israel had, they had 900 iron chariots, and yet, when you factor God into the equation, the victory is assured. It really doesn't matter how big the enemy is when the Lord is fighting for you!

We see this played out for us in the story of Jehoshaphat. He was the King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and he was a good King. He loved the Lord and his leadership was needed in Judah.

In fact, of Jehoshaphat, we are told in II Chronicles 17:3-6, **“Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel. Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah.”**

Now Jehoshaphat was not perfect, but he did love the Lord and in all that he did, he tried to honor the Lord.

Today, as some read this story, they may come to the conclusion that everything was great in the kingdom, there was no trouble, every day was a perfect day.

Not exactly and that is not reality. We live in a world of sin and God will use things that come into our lives to test our faith, to help us to grow, and I think that is exactly what we see here with Jehoshaphat.

And in II Chronicles chapter 19 we see Jehoshaphat organize the kingdom, setting judges throughout the land and he admonished them to fear the Lord; to seek their guidance, their direction from the Lord. He closed out II Chronicles chapter 19 with these words to the leaders in Judah, “**... Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good.**” II Chronicles 19:11.

The Living Bible puts it like this, “**... ‘Be fearless in your stand for truth and honesty. And may God use you to defend the innocent,’ was his final word to them.**”

May we stand up for truth, may we stand up for what is right, what is good, and the Lord will be with us as we do!

Now, as we read this, we are ready to shout for joy as we see Jehoshaphat’s love for the Lord and his instructions to the leaders to follow the Lord.

And then, as II Chronicles chapter 20 opens up with these words, “**It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others came with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.**” II Chronicles 20:1.

You have to be kidding me. Right after he did that with his leaders, now these enemies of Judah are preparing to attack them and not just with a few people, but multiple nations are joining together to fight against them!

But isn’t that how it goes! Something great happens in our lives, we are getting things in order, we are going to Bible Studies, we are involved in ministry and then, “**It happened after this ...**”

Now we see that as a negative, that this is bad, that this is trouble, but let me tell you, it is not!

You see, first of all when you are serving the Lord, when you are drawing close to Him, the enemy is going to try and discourage you, take you out, cause you to drop out or stop what you are doing.

And we look at this opposition as being bad, but it is not. You see, if you were doing nothing, the enemy could care less about you. But if you are serving the Lord, He is going to try and stop that.

I think there are some great lessons here with Jehoshaphat that God has for us.

Here we see that these three nations gathered together at Hazazon Tamar, which was located around the western shores of the Dead Sea, not far from Qumran.

How is King Jehoshaphat going to respond to this situation that is before him?

Well, we don't have to guess because we are told in II Chronicles 20:3, "**And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout Judah.**"

Now we read this, and we see that Jehoshaphat was fearful, and we think that is bad. Let me say this, not all fear is bad!

Yes, we can become fearful, and that fear can cause us to be incapacitated, we can let this fear paralyze us and keep us away from the Lord, away from the work that He wants to do.

But fear can also cause us to do something that is very beneficial, it is very helpful. You see, we can let fear cause us to seek the Lord, to bring our fears to Him and cast them at His feet and that is what we see Jehoshaphat do here!

Remember what the Lord said in Isaiah 41:10, "**Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.**"

You see, fear is not wrong; it is how we respond to that fear. To me, this is a good fear.

We all need to experience this for it truly gets us to re-focus our lives back on the Lord. Jehoshaphat set his face to seek the Lord and called for a national fast so that they can receive direction from the Lord as this enemy was preparing to destroy them!

Remember, Jehoshaphat told the leaders in Judah that they need to seek the Lord, and now he was going to have to apply what he preached to them not only to his own life, but to the nation as well! He had to live what he said he believed, and so must we!

Look at II Chronicles 20:5-12 and see how Jehoshaphat handled this situation. We are told, **“Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said: ‘O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, “If disaster comes upon us - sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine - we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.” And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir - whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them - here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”**”

He starts out by remembering that God is God, He is in control of everything. And when things seem out of control, it is a good thing to remember that God is in control of everything in our lives!

And then he remembers the past, how God brought them into this land and drove out the enemy. If God could do that, then He could surely deliver them now.

And if trouble comes because they have sinned, then they will repent and return to the Lord and He will deliver them!

Also, he remembers that God has given them this land forever, so whatever plans this enemy has to drive them out, God won't let that happen.

And then II Chronicles 20:12 sums it up for us, **“O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”**

Again, a proper perspective of the situation - we have no strength, we can't do it on our own, and so our eyes are upon you Lord! It speaks of a total dependence upon God.

It is as Psalm 46:1-2 says, **“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”**

It is when we lose the consciousness of God in our life that things get out of focus and we become anxious and terrified.

Remember what David said in Psalm 31:24, **“Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD.”**

I like the way that Spurgeon saw this situation that they were in and where their eyes were focused. He wrote, “They said, ‘Our eyes are upon thee.’ What did they mean by that? They meant, ‘Lord, if help does come, it must come from thee. We are looking to thee for it. It cannot come from anywhere else, so we look to thee. But we believe it will come, men will not look for that which they know will not come. We feel sure it will come, but we do not know how, so we are looking; we do not know when, but we are looking. We do not know what thou wouldst have us to do, but as the servant looks to her mistress, so are we looking to thee, Lord. Lord, we are looking.’”

May we have that perspective in life, no matter what we are going through!

And truly think about this for a minute. If you place your eyes upon people, guess what, you will be disappointed!

If you place your eyes upon the situation you are facing, the circumstances you find yourself in, you, like Peter you will begin to sink!

Folk’s, we need to place our eyes upon God and when we do, we will be stable, He will see us through all that life has thrown our way!

It is as Jehoshaphat said, “**. . . For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.**”

Selman had this to say regarding what Jehoshaphat said, “The final phrase, *We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you*, is one of the most touching expressions of trust in God to be found anywhere in the Bible.”

Again, I agree with what he has said. May our eyes be upon the Lord and as they are, we can rest in Him instead of being fearful of what is happening around us!

And now they wait for the Lord to tell them what to do. They don't go out on their own. They don't come up with their own plans, they are waiting upon God!

And then God speaks to them through the prophet. We are told, **“Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. And he said, ‘Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: “Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!” Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you.”** II Chronicles 20:13-17.

These were not empty words by the Lord for tomorrow God was going to give them victory over their enemies! Now what did the Southern Kingdom of Judah have to do to obtain this victory? God did not want them just sitting at home doing nothing, but they were to go into this battle, they were to participate, and as they walked in faith, they would see the salvation that the Lord would bring them!

How often the Lord tells us that He will give us a victory and then He tells us to go into the battle, take that step of faith and that is where we miss it many times. We refuse to walk. May we learn the lesson and learn to walk by faith!

And you can read on and you will see in this story that as they came upon the enemy with praise, God put the enemy into confusion and they killed each other, none were left.

Why is that? No, it was not because their singing was so bad!

It was because the enemy hates praise because it throws them into confusion. They can't understand how we can praise the Lord in the midst of difficulty.

And yet, how often, instead of praise we complain and that is just where the enemy wants us. He wants us weak and defeated because we have taken our eyes off the Lord, we are missing the salvation that He wants to bring to a situation and then we wonder why we are not seeing the victories in our life.

It is because we are not putting our faith in the Lord and we are complaining instead of praising and worshiping of the Lord! God does not inhabit the complaints of His people, but the praises of His people!

Now, here in Judges, yes, Deborah remembered God's help, but this time God was going to use the help that came from the tribes of Israel. God was going to work through them to give them this victory!

And as we read on here in Judges, we will see ***THE CALL OF GOD ACTED UPON*** or those nations that joined in the battle.

And then we will look at ***THE CALL OF GOD IGNORED***, because there were some tribes who did not answer the call of God and had all kinds of excuses why they could not go into battle!

VERSES 14-15a

Here we see that Deborah acknowledges those tribes that came in and assisted in the work of this battle; Ephraim, Benjamin, West Manasseh as Machir was the eldest son of Manasseh, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali.

Now you may be thinking that Naphtali is not mentioned in these verses as assisting in this battle, and that is true.

But as you read on, as you look at Judges 5:18 you see that Naphtali is mentioned, as we are told, “**... Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.**”

Remember what I have called this study, “**Who Will Go for Me?**” and as we see here, these tribes answered the call of God for their lives, they were willing to go into battle!

Now this battle was not easy. There was no guarantee if you would make it out alive or if you would be injured or not. This was war. Yes, the Lord promised them victory, but in that victory, it can be costly as well.

And yet these men, from these tribes were willing to take those steps of faith and go into this battle.

I want to look at that a couple of ways.

First of all, how wonderful it is that as you are going through a difficult time, some major battle in your life, that others rise up and come to your aid to help you in this battle.

Is it easy to take the time to do that? No, everyone is busy, and, as we will see in our next point as we read on, there are many who have all kinds of excuses why they can't help.

But I am so thankful that here at Calvary we have so many people helping others in so many ways as they face different battles in their lives.

Also, we see many battles that we face in this world. Many who are trying to come against us and stop the work of God. And yes, we don't have any strength to win these battles, but we have the Lord and the battle does belong to the Lord!

Can we stand up against abortion, against the LGBTQ agenda, drug abuse and all the evils that are out there?

I hope we can because we are called to be salt and light in this dark world!

In Matthew 9:35-37 we are told, **“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”**

In this portion of Scripture, as Jesus saw the crowds of people coming to Him it says that **“He was moved with compassion for them.”**

Barclay points out that “The word which is used for *moved with compassion* (splagchnistheis) is the strongest word for pity in the Greek language . . . it describes the compassion which moves a man to the deepest depths of his being.”

In a sense, it speaks of crawling into the skin of another to feel what he is feeling. That is our Lord for us. He crawled into the skin of man you might say and knows exactly what we feel, the pain we have and thus, He can come to our aide because He understands us!

Can we look at people that cross our path like that? Are we moved with compassion for them or have we labeled them and isolated ourselves from them? Jesus did not do that, and neither should we!

And when you look at this world, Jesus saw them as sheep without a shepherd, just roaming around with no direction. Being weary and scattered because the religious leaders are not bringing the rest of God to them but the traditions of men!

And then the challenge as Jesus closes this out by speaking of the harvest being great and the laborers few and He prays for more laborers.

Keep in mind to bring in the harvest you had to go out into the fields, it wasn't done from a Lazy-Boy chair or within the walls of a church.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20, the Great Commission, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”**

May we go, may we be like Isaiah who said, **“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’”**
Isaiah 6:8.

May we echo the words of Isaiah, **“Here am I Lord! Send me!”**

That is what we see here with these tribes who rose up and came to the battle to defeat the enemy!

And, like I have said, when you do battle it is never easy, but it is needed. Are we willing to get involved and take a stand for the Lord? I hope so!

Let me share this with you. We are told,

On the eve of the Spanish-American War, a Nashville paper says that the mustering in of a military company in that city on the call for volunteers to go to Cuba was marked by an incident worthy of the noblest age of patriotism.

At the last moment one man was lacking, and the sergeants were out scouring the camp for someone to take the place, so that the entire regiment could be sworn in.

Learning the need, Captain Beyland, who brought down an extra company which had to be distributed among the other companies, retired to his tent without a word to the other officers, who were standing before the men anxiously waiting for one more man to be found.

Hope was almost gone, when an erect figure came striding toward the line. When he came in full view, someone said: "It's Captain Beyland."

The young man marched up to the line of privates and silently but determinedly took his place in the ranks. He had cut off his shoulder-straps and he took the oath as a private.

This noble act thrilled the men, though there was no demonstration of approval from these military men.

The colonel of the regiment said: "It is just what we might have looked for in a man like Beyland."

We need men like that in every department of duty as citizens - not men only who are willing to wear shoulder-straps, but men with public spirit enough to do ordinary duty in the ranks on common, prosaic [mundane] days.

- Practical Bible Illustrations from Yesterday and Today

Are we willing to go out into the highways and byways and compel men to come to Christ?

Are we willing to go and help someone in need?

Are we willing to go into battle like we see here with these tribes in Israel?

We need to because we are in a battle – ***THE CALL OF GOD ACTED UPON!***

Now, as we read on we are going to look at ***THE CALL OF GOD IGNORED*** and there are three main points that emerge out of this, three reasons why they could not rise up and go to battle like these other tribes did. And, as you will see, these are just excuses, and we might have even used them, but that is the problem, they are just excuses!

VERSES 15b-16

Here we see Rueben and he had a ***PARALYSIS OF ANALYSIS*** or he examined the situation and he was fearful and thus, he played it safe and stood apart from this battle!

How often that happens today as God calls us to do something and we look at the situation and we become fearful and paralyzed and we can't move, we can't get involved, we stay out of the battle.

And there are many different battles that we face. One of them is witnessing. God says, ***"I want you to go and share the Gospel with that person. Go and talk to them."***

And we know what God has said, and then we look at the person, we analyze the situation, and then we think, ***"Hey, that is a biker dude. He is about 300 pounds, 6'4", and I am not! That must not be of God, He would never call me to do something like that!"***

And then we don't!

Or maybe we are in a situation with some friends and they want us to do something that we are not comfortable in doing, something we know God would not approve of. There is the battle. Do I not go along with them and then face the consequences, or do I just go along with them?

Do you see the battle? And once you start to give in, once you start analyzing the situation and allow that to determine what you do instead of God, you are going to be on a slippery slope away from God!

And this fear can cause us to do nothing for the Lord. Let's face it, the battle is huge, the enemy is strong, and we look at ourselves and we feel we can't do it. And the reality is, we can't on our own.

But just like Jehoshaphat, we need to come to the end of ourselves and seek the Lord to deliver us.

Remember what Jehoshaphat said, “**... For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.**”

And if we let fear paralyze us, we can be like this man in the following story. We are told,

A man who hid for 32 years fearing punishment of pro-Nazi wartime activity says he used to cry when he heard happy voices outside but dared not show himself even at his mother's funeral.

Janez Rus was a young shoemaker when he went into hiding at his sister's farmhouse in June 1945.

He was found years later after he bought a large supply of bread in the nearby village of Zalna.

“If I had not been discovered, I would have remained in hiding. So I am happy that this happened,”

Rus told a reporter. Throughout those years he did nothing. He never left the house and could only look down at the village in the valley.

- Today in the Word, October 17, 1993

What a sad story, allowing fear to keep him in hiding all those years and yet, look how many Christians who have been paralyzed by fear, looking at the situations before them, and have them sitting on the sidelines doing nothing.

We need to do as these tribes did; Ephraim, Benjamin, West Manasseh, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali, and get back into the battle for the Lord knowing that He is with us all the way!

PARALYSIS OF ANALYSIS – RUBEN

VERSES 17a

Here we see the idea of – ***NOT OUR PROBLEM!***

What I mean by that is that the tribe of Gilead, who lived on the east side of the Jordan River, outside the Promise Land, did not see this as their problem!

“Hey, why is that our problem. We are on the other side of the Jordan River! This is your problem and not ours. Sorry, we are not going to get involved!”

How does that apply to us?

Think about it. There is a problem, there is a need in some ministry, something needs to get done, and we come back and say, ***“I am sorry. That is not my area of expertise!” “I can’t do that! I am too busy!” “I am not comfortable doing that!”*** And the list of excuses can go on and on!

And as we make those excuses we miss out on the battle! And you may not see that as a big deal, but keep in mind that the victory is going to be God working through the tribes of Israel, not apart from them.

Not only do you miss out on the battle, but you miss out on the victory, the blessings that come with it!

Let me give you an example of showing how awful it is to feel that the problem is not yours and you do nothing.

In Isaiah chapter 38 we see that the Lord told Hezekiah that he needs to get his house in order because he was going to die.

Instead of doing that, he cried out to God and the Lord told Isaiah to go back to the King and tell him that He will grant him fifteen more years of life.

During that time Hezekiah had a son by the name of Manasseh, who was a wicked King and because of his wickedness, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was going to go into captivity!

Not only that, but Hezekiah showed the representatives of Babylon all the wealth of the kingdom.

And we are told in Isaiah 39:5-7, **“Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: “Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,” says the Lord. “And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.””**

The consequences of his actions are given to us through Isaiah. The wealth of the kingdom will be carried away to Babylon and this was fulfilled in II Kings 24:10-13 and II Kings 25:11-17, under the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar.

Now it would be more than a hundred years before Babylon carried away the royal treasures of Judah, but they did come, just as Isaiah prophesied.

Not only will the wealth of the kingdom be carried away to Babylon but so will some of the sons who will come from Hezekiah. Leaders, princes, eunuchs will be carried away and we see this played out for us in Daniel chapter 1. Daniel and his friends were taken during that first invasion in 606 B. C. Daniel was one of the King's descendants taken into the palace of the King of Babylon (Daniel 1:1-4). And then, in the third and final invasion of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, and the rest of the people were taken captive and that took place in 586 B. C.

But here is the problem, if that was not bad enough. It is what Hezekiah says next that troubles me. We are told in Isaiah 39:8, **“So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good!’ For he said, ‘At least there will be peace and truth in my days.’”**

Hezekiah is told that this will not take place in his days and his response is, ***“Praise the Lord for that!”***

Doesn't that seem self-centered, it does to me, it seems very selfish.

Earlier, when he thought he was going to die, he was up all night praying to the Lord to be delivered, and that God would be merciful to him.

Now that this won't affect him personally, he shows no concern, no need to pray, no need to bring it before God because it is not going to affect him!

Remember what Paul told us in Philippians 2:1-4, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”**

Paul is saying that we need to be others-centered and the only way that is going to happen is when you put on the mind of Christ, you focus on Him and allow His Spirit to guide you in all that you do!

Also, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 10:24, **“Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.”**

Yes, we are to be concerned for others and be in prayer for them. Too many times we are seeking to be on the top of the pile when in reality we should be helping others to the top.

Again, Paul tells us in Hebrews 10:24-25, **“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”**

We are to encourage others and not discourage them in the work of the Lord. Stir up in others love and good works and you will be blessed by it. Be others-centered and not self-centered!

As Christians may we not develop that kind of an attitude, only caring about ourselves. The mentality that says, *“At least I’m saved and whatever happens to the next generation, happens!”* May we care enough to bring it all before the Lord!

In other words, Hezekiah was saying just what the tribe of Gilead was saying, ***NOT OUR PROBLEM!*** Another excuse not to go into battle, or to pray or to do anything and that is not good. But we are not done. We have one more reason why we do not want to get involved, why we won't go into battle.

VERSES 5:17b-c

Here is another excuse why people don't get involved in the battle, it is ***TIME FOR LEISURE!***

Look at the excuses for these two tribes.

First of all, for Dan, we are told, "**And why did Dan remain on ships?**" Instead of getting involved in this battle, Dan went sailing!

Then we have Asher, and we are told, "**Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.**" In other words, Asher went to the beach and thus, he could not go into battle!

Now please hear me out on this. I am not saying we can't go to the beach; we can't go sailing; we can't go on vacation. Not at all!

But if these activities are taking you away from serving the Lord, from being involved in the battle, then you need to re-evaluate what you are doing!

Many years ago this was brought to my attention in my own life by the Lord. I was an active runner and I loved to compete in races, mostly 6.2-mile races and I ran the Chicago Marathon twice.

There is nothing wrong with exercising or running, but what happened to me is that some of the races were on Sunday, so I would not go to church. Plus, I was spending a lot of time running, preparing for the marathon's, and I was not at home with my family.

And then the Lord spoke to me and He drove home the point that I was more interested, more excited about running and racing than I was about worshiping Him! I, by my actions, was saying that running is more important than coming together and worshiping God!

Now when the Lord shows you something like that it is shocking, at least it was to me. I couldn't believe how easy it was to let an activity overtake my walk with the Lord.

And I stopped running, which is, I guess, the other extreme.

Over the last few years I have started running and racing again, but I am careful not to let running and racing control my life, I want the Lord to. You see, He is more important than anything to me.

I would rather be here with you, the body of Christ to worship the Lord than do anything else because I love Him so much.

Now some of you may be thinking that I have to be here, I am the pastor.

That is not true. I don't have to be here, I get to be here and worship the Lord, hear from Him, fellowship with you!

If you are allowing activities to control your life instead of the Lord, if you are letting these things keep you from the battle that the Lord has called us to be in, you too need to re-evaluate where you are at and fall in love with Jesus all over again!

For Dan and Asher, it was ***TIME FOR LEISURE***, and they did not get involved in this battle with their brethren!

And this would be a bad place to end, and we are not going to end here. We have one more point to look at and it is a good one. We are going to take a look at ***WHAT FAITH LOOKS LIKE!***

VERSE 18

Look at the faith of Zebulun and Naphtali. They risked their lives in this battle.

They were not like Rueben who felt that battle was too intense for them – ***PARALYSIS OF ANALYSIS.***

They were not like Gilead who felt that this battle was - ***NOT OUR PROBLEM!***

They were not like Dan and Asher who felt it is not time to do battle, but it is – ***TIME FOR LEISURE!***

These two tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali heard the call of God to go to battle and they went!

And we see this even today as some are ready to be used by God and go, while others are comfortable to stay at home because of fear, because of not caring, because they are taking a cruise or just hanging out on the beach. They are not involved.

True faith is active not passive. We come to church to worship God, to hear from God, to be encouraged in the work that God has called us to do.

And then we leave church and we enter the battlefield you might say!

True faith does not look at the situation, that may seem hopeless, but to God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Paul, in Hebrews 11:1 said this about faith, “**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].**”

Faith, in a sense, gives us evidence of the invisible, of those things we can't see and yet with the same confidence to what we can see with our physical eyes, in fact it should be even stronger than what we can see with our physical eyes.

Think about it for a minute. Our senses can lie to us and we can be deceived. Have you ever seen something that looked so good to eat and once you ate it, took a bite of it, you found it to be the exact opposite? I bet you have and thus, your senses deceived you!

And what Paul is saying here is that faith is the "**substance**" which is the Greek word HUPOSTASIS, (hoop-os'-tas-is) and it speaks of a reality instead of just the appearance. It is an assurance or evidence. In fact, this word literally means to "stand under." Think of it like the solid ground that is under the foundation. That is the idea here with this word.

It also carries with it the idea of "assurance" and this word was also used in reference to signed papers to prove ownership of a property. In other words, it is like a legal title deed that gave the person assurance and proof of ownership.

So this faith gives us the assurance, it is supported and solid so that what we hope for will come to pass. Now when we think of "**hope**" we think of wishful thinking again, maybe it will come to pass and maybe it won't. That is not the idea here. It is a word that speaks of trust, it will come to pass.

So I think this idea of "**substance**" that is being spoken of is related to Jesus. He is the solid ground in which we build our faith upon and His promises to us we know will come to pass, not might!

Then Paul speaks of the “**evidence**” and this word speaks of being confident of what God has said even though we have not seen it yet and thus, we know it will come to pass.

You see, this is not a blind faith but a faith that places its trust in what God has said, that He Word is true. Thus, as we know the promises of God, as we believe the promises of God then we need to live accordingly as these promises of God are manifested in our life, the things we do. It is trusting in God and living accordingly!

And faith is manifested as we go forward and do those things that God has called us to do. But again, we can let the situations scare us and stop us from going forward, cloud the picture you might say.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

According to the Bureau of Standards in Washington, a dense fog covering seven city blocks to a depth of 100 feet is composed of less than one glass of water. That amount of water is divided into about 60 billion tiny droplets. Yet when those minute particles settle over a city or the countryside, they can almost blot out everything from your sight.

Many Christians today live their lives in a fog. They allow a cupful of troubles to cloud their vision and dampen their spirit. Anxiety, turmoil and defeat strangle their thoughts. Their lives are being “choked by the cares of this world” (Luke 8:14). But “God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline” (II Tim. 1:7). Let’s not let the fog get us down! Let’s live in the Sunshine!

- The Paper Pulpit

Remember – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

And thus, we must ***ACT UPON THE CALL OF GOD!***

But we can let things stop us or ***THE CALL OF GOD IGNORED!***

We can let fear stop us – ***PARALYSIS OF ANALYSIS!***

We can just not care – ***NOT OUR PROBLEM!***

We can become so busy and focus everything on our ***TIME FOR LEISURE!***

Or, we can walk by faith and let people see ***WHAT FAITH LOOKS LIKE!***

The Lord is calling – ***WHO WILL GO FOR ME?***

And may we respond – ***HERE I AM! SEND ME!***