

JUDGES 5:19-23
THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 5 as we continue our study through this fascinating and yet, sad book regarding the nation of Israel and their turning from the Lord.

Now, in saying that please keep in mind that these lessons are here for our learning. Let's face it, if all the stories in the Bible were about people who did nothing wrong, who were perfect, that would not be too encouraging to me and I am sure that would apply to you as well.

Why is that? Because we all have struggles in life, we all fall short of what we want to do for the Lord and there are times we may even walk away, backslide.

The wonderful thing is that our Lord never gives up on us. That is what we see here with the children of Israel and we see it over and over again.

You know the pattern that they were in.

They sinned against the Lord, they turned away from the Lord and were following the gods of the pagan nations around them.

Because of their sin God brought them into bondage at the hand of one of their enemies. And this bondage lasted many years. In fact, after the death of the Judge Ehud we are told, "... the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD." Judges 4:1

And the result of their sin, of their turning away from the Lord was this, "So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim." Judges 4:2.

So they are in bondage and you would think that they would cry out to the Lord, they would repent of their sins, but they didn't, at least not right away!

We are told in Judges 4:3, "**And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he harshly oppressed the children of Israel.**"

It took them twenty years of harsh oppression before they were broken and ready to look up and repent before the Lord.

Now before we are too harsh on the children of Israel for taking so long to repent, how long does it take us? You see, God is showing us that we are no different and many times we allow sin to place us in bondage and we refuse to repent and return to the Lord for years, until we hit rock bottom, and then we cry out to the Lord!

Why wait? Why endure all that hardship? That is an important lesson for us to learn.

You see, God is not punishing them to hurt them, or destroy them, but that they would return to Him! And He does the same with us!

After their repentance, we see what happened next, God raised up a Judge to deliver them.

And things go great as long as that Judge is alive, but once he dies, then they fall back into this cyclical pattern of sin, servitude, supplication and salvation!

We are currently in a study here in Judges that is focusing on this song of Deborah and Barak after their victory against Jabin the King of Canaan and the commander of his army, Sisera.

This is a song of praise unto God for the victory that He had given them. And we have looked at several points in this song that are very powerful so far. We have looked at:

WHEN LEADERS LEAD – JUDGES 5:1-2, 9

REMEMBER GOD – JUDGES 5:3-5

LIFE UNDER OPPRESSION – JUDGES 5:6-8

THE STORIES OF GOD’S PEOPLE – JUDGES 5:10-12

“WHO WILL GO FOR ME” – JUDGES 5:13-18

And this morning we are going to be looking at, ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD*** in Judges 5:19-23.

Let me ask you this. Do we really think of God as a warrior or a man of war? I think we have lost that concept today. Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean, and this will lead us into our study this morning.

We are told,

“The LORD is a man of war” (Exodus 15:3). How do you feel about that description of God?

Christians of a former generation felt no embarrassment about it at all. One of the most sung hymns in Sunday school when I was a child began with the words, “Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war.” It went on to speak of “Christ, the royal Master, *going before us* and of the Church of God moving “like a mighty army.” . . .

In these days of violent jihads and religious pluralism we’ve largely given up using militaristic language for God. Talk of God our heavenly Father is still acceptable among all but the most extreme left-wing fringe of Christianity, and so is Jesus the Good Shepherd. But God as warrior has almost entirely disappeared from Christian discourse.

More is involved here, though, than Christian jargon. What is at stake is Biblical truth. We need *everything* the Bible has to teach us about God, not just the things we feel comfortable with.

Why is it important that God is a man of war? It is important because there are some battles that you and I can't win. When we step forward to follow Jesus, we step into a battle zone.

The Christian life has to be lived in a world that is hostile to the gospel and is becoming more hostile every day. And behind the people who oppose us are spiritual powers that are far beyond our capacity to deal with.

We can't overcome them by just trying hard. The enemy is too strong for us. If we are to have the victory, God must win it for us and give it to us.

The good news is that the critical battle has already been won, and the Person who won that battle for us has promised to be with us in all the battles we will have to face as followers this side of heaven (Colossians 2:13, 14; Matthew 28:16-20).

That is how it was for Deborah and Barak. The enemy was too strong. They had no hope against Sisera and his nine hundred iron chariots unless God went before them and fought for them. But he did. That's what they sing about in Judges 5.

- Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth – God in Chaos, pp. 106-107

That is what we will be looking at this morning – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD***. And I have broken down these verses here in Judges chapter 5 like this:

THE ENEMY COMES UP EMPTY – JUDGES 5:19

GOD INTERCEDES – JUDGES 5:20-22

THE CURSE OF NOT OBEYING THE LORD – JUDGES 5:23

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 5, beginning in verse 19 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at this topic - ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

JUDGES 5

VERSE 19

As you read here about this battle in Taanach it would seem that Sisera was reinforced by other Canaanite troops and these did battle against the tribe of Manasseh. Now it would seem that as Barak came down from Mount Tabor, he headed westward across the plain to engage them.

And as I read this, I see that these Canaanites were after the spoils of their enemy, the children of Israel. And they may have gone in thinking this was going to be an easy victory with much spoil gained from their endeavor, but in the end, as we are told, “**. . . They took no spoils of silver.**” Judges 5:19.

In other words, ***THE ENEMY COMES UP EMPTY!***

I wonder today how many Christians feel that they are in a battle? I wonder today how many Christians even realize that we are in a battle?

This is a dangerous place to be – ***COMPLACENCY!***

A definition of this word is as follows: “a feeling of smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one’s achievements.”

In other words, you are satisfied where you are at and you don’t feel a need to do anything more. That is a dangerous place to be.

You see, as we become satisfied where we are at, there is no moving forward. And in the end, as we become more and more complacent, I believe we begin to lose hope for the future, and many times, even for today!

You see, our hope is in the Lord and we were created for His good pleasure. But, if we lose sight of that, if we think we can find our own satisfaction in life, in the end, we will become hopeless.

I know, some of you may be having a hard time with that. But hear me out on this one.

This report is from August 29, 2019 and it is titled, “Why Have Young Brits Lost Hope?” Listen to what they said:

Few things will bring on the goosebumps like listening to Winston Churchill’s 1940 “fight them on the beaches” speech, easily one of the strongest statements of national unity and patriotic defiance in all of human history.

The prime minister spoke for a people who, as he said, would “never surrender,” and he was right. Even with London smoldering from the Blitz and the nation standing virtually alone against Hitler’s war machine, they didn’t break. And their persistence eventually saw the tide turn and Europe liberated.

The secret to their endurance is really not a secret at all. The British in Churchill's day were a people with a purpose. Churchill called what they faced a fight against tyranny, and the nation believed him. As C. S. Lewis observed in his wartime radio addresses, some of which later became part of his book "Mere Christianity," the Nazis really were wrong, and the Allies really were right. Good and evil exist and can be known. That, Lewis observed, was a signpost to the meaning of life.

Britain has undergone quite a transformation since Churchill's speech. Last week, the Sun reported on a new, nationwide survey that plied 1,500 Brits of all ages with a variety of questions about their attitudes and beliefs. Among the results: a stunning 89 percent of those aged 16 to 29 said their lives lack meaning and purpose.

In other words, Nihilism [emptiness] is running rampant among Millennial and Gen-Z Brits. Just half of those aged 60 and over gave similarly hopeless answers, which is still not a great result but certainly better than 89 percent.

The Sun suggests this means people find purpose in life as they age. Or, it could mean that Brits are steadily losing a sense of meaning and purpose with each generation.

Evidence for the latter interpretation comes from the answers participants gave to other questions: 84 percent of young people said they're failing to "live their best life." Nearly 40 percent also said they'd choose to re-do their lives if they could.

And, what would they change if they could hit that "reset" button? Over half of Brits believe they were put on earth to be as happy as possible. Only 37 percent said their purpose is to make other people happy. Less than a third thought they exist to do as much good as possible.

I can't help wondering how different the results would be if this survey had been conducted in the middle of World War II. Would the British have been similarly aimless and preoccupied with personal happiness and fulfillment? Would almost 90 percent of young people, who bore the brunt of the war, say their lives lacked meaning? I doubt it. I don't think a British population that hopeless would have had the resolve to withstand the Nazi assault and help lead the Allies to victory.

What feels shaky in your world? Are you overwhelmed by the problems you're facing or the pain you're feeling? Maybe you feel hurt by the past. Disappointed by the present. Worried about the future.

So, what happened? How did the Brits, who out-last-ed the Blitz, transform into people unsure of life's very purpose? My colleague Shane Morris and I wrestled with this question on last week's "BreakPoint this week" and we offered a number of related answers, all rooted in the power of ideas.

When Churchill made those thundering moral pronouncements on behalf of his nation, he didn't conduct a poll to find out who thought the Nazis were wrong or worth fighting. He didn't ask each citizen to define their "best life." And he certainly didn't elevate individual happiness to the top of his wartime priorities.

But in a world where meaning is up to us, where life supposedly means whatever we say it does, it ultimately comes to mean nothing. A culture that abandons any fixed reference point and instead tells its young people that truth, purpose, meaning, and morality are purely subjective, will only, in the end, rob them of any truth, purpose, meaning, or morality worth fighting for.

Churchill rallied his nation to a “righteous cause.” That sort of call requires vertical thinking, a people who embrace a transcendent sense of meaning. And what the world saw were the storms a people like that could weather. Today, Britain and so much of the Western world is discovering that a people without a transcendent sense of meaning can’t even weather peacetime.

- <http://bit.ly/2Sx84e2>

How can you fight for anything when you have no hope, you find no purpose in life? You can’t and that is the problem.

Solomon put it like this after he spent a lifetime trying to find all the pleasures in life and he found in that it was empty, it was meaningless. He said, “**“Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher, ‘All is vanity.’**” Ecclesiastes 12:8.

And in the end, this is what he found to bring true joy, true happiness, true hope into his life and into our life, “**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.**” Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

Why have people, not only in Britain lost hope, but really all over the world? Because they are not doing what they were created for, to bring glory and honor to God and until people come back to the Lord, they will never find meaning to life and apart from God, there is no hope!

And for Christians, who are now focusing on being as happy as they can possibly be, no wonder they too have lost hope. Solomon tried it, and it didn’t work, why do we think we can find happiness apart from God? We can’t and we won’t!

And because we have lost this hope, we won't take those steps of faith, we won't go into the battles that God has called us to go into. And by not going forward, we are letting the enemy take back the spoils of their victory!

What do I mean by that?

Think about it. Look at the divorce rate. Look at the family unit, we don't even know what that means any longer. Look at how sin is embraced and flaunted. Look at how immorality is growing. Look at how the suicide rate continues to increase. And I can go on and on, but I think you get the idea.

The church has stopped fighting because they are more interested in being happy than being holy and they refuse to stand up for the things of God found in the Word of God.

Yes, we are to blame!

Remember what we are told in II Chronicles 7:14, **“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”**

You see, we must humble ourselves. We must pray. We must seek the Lord. We must turn from our wicked ways. And as we do, God will hear from heaven and forgive our sin and heal our land!

But if we don't, then we will get what we sow. We will not see the victory that God has for us.

Here we see the children of Israel walk by faith and defeat the enemy.

But let me also say this. This victory was not because they were so strong or so powerful. This victory was given to them by God and we need to remember that. It is not our plans or programs; it is the Lord who will fight for us and all we must do is walk by faith!

And that brings us to our next point, ***GOD INTERCEDES!***

VERSES 20-22

I believe these are the verses that speak of this storm coming down and the rain pouring down. You see, here in Judges 5:21 it speaks of the, “**torrent of Kishon.**”

Remember that this was only a very tiny stream, insignificant, until God caused the heavens to open and the rain to fall down upon the land. And as this occurred the chariots were becoming stranded in the mud.

One writer put it like this:

The great victory was due to God’s supernatural intervention for Israel. He increased the effectiveness of the Israelite soldiers. The kings in verse 19 are probably all Canaanite kings, as the NIV translation suggests. Taanach stood near Megiddo, which may have been in ruins at this time.

The stars (v. 20) symbolize the forces of heaven that were more specifically the rains God sent. This personification ridiculed the Canaanites’ belief in astrology. The flood that resulted from the rain made it impossible for the Canaanites to use their horses and chariots effectively (cf. Ex 14:25).

“In all probability we have to think of a terrible storm, with thunder and lightening and hail, or the sudden bursting of a cloud, which is poetically described as though the stars of heaven had left their courses to fight for the Lord and His kingdom upon earth.”

Since Baal was the storm god, Deborah was glorifying Yahweh over Baal in what she said here.

And Josephus gives to us this view of what took place in this battle. He wrote in Antiquities of the Jews:

So the battle began; and when they were come to a close fight, there came down from heaven a great storm, with a vast quantity of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in the face of the Canaanites, and so darkened their eyes, that their arrows and slings were of no advantage to them, nor would the coldness of the air permit the soldiers to make use of their swords; while this storm did not so much incommode the Israelites, because it came in their backs.

They also took such courage, upon the apprehension that God was assisting them, that they fell upon the very midst of their enemies, and slew a great number of them; so that some of them fell by the Israelites, some fell by their own horses, which were put into disorder, and not a few were killed by their own chariots. . . .

- Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, (from Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews)

Now as some read this, they feel that this is just nature and a freak rainstorm that came upon the enemy at just the right time! Or just a good stroke of luck!

Are you kidding me?

What are the odds, what are the chances that this rainstorm would come at just the right moment to incapacitate Sisera and his army so the children of Israel would not be defeated? Not good. But please understand this. This was not a random chance happening. It was an act of God, or as I have said, ***GOD INTERCEDES!***

Not only that, but on the very day that Deborah told Barak to go to battle, these rains came!

Again, this was no accident, it was the hand of God upon the children of Israel to give them this victory, just as God had already promised them!

Now let's make this applicable for us today.

When you look at the things that are happening in this world. When you look at the things that are happening in your own life. As you look at all of these things do you ever think God has lost control?

I will let you in on a little secret. God has not lost control and He will never lose control. I think we understand that reality until everything is falling apart around us and then we wonder, ***“God, where are you? Why is this happening to me? God, are you there?”***

And when we find ourselves in situations like that, where we are wondering what in the world is going on, we need to stop striving and learn to just trust in Him!

Why? How can we do that?

It is the title of our message this morning – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

Here's the thing. Winning these battles that we are facing is not dependent upon us coming up with a plan! It is not because we are so strong or so smart. It is the Lord who will see us through and guide us as He does.

Remember what we are told in Psalm 20:7, **“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”**

Also, in Proverbs 21:31 we are told, **“The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But deliverance is of the Lord.”**

That is the perspective we are to have, to trust in the Lord, to remember that He is in control because our deliverance is not going to come from anyone or anything except the Lord!

Remember the story of King Jehoshaphat, he was the King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and he was a godly King.

During his reign there was a military alliance between Moab and Ammon and others, and they were gathering together to destroy the Southern Kingdom of Judah!

And they were far outnumbered and there was no way they were going to win this battle. It was hopeless. So, what did Jehoshaphat do? He got on his camel and he rode as fast as he could to get out of town before the enemy came? No, he didn't do that.

What he did do was call for the nation to pray and seek direction from God.

Are you kidding me? It is time to prepare for war and you are just praying? Exactly!

And I love what we are told in II Chronicles 20:12, the reality of the situation.

Jehoshaphat prayed these words, **“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.”**

In other words, the King put this problem into the hands of God and waited for God to intercede for them. They were looking to God for direction!

And as they waited, the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel, **“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.”**

Yes, they had to walk by faith, but the battle was not going to be theirs, it was the Lord's and He would give them the victory.

And what is interesting to me is that they put the worship team in front for this battle. And that tells me that they were walking by faith. If they were not trusting in the Lord to give them this victory, they would have put their best soldiers up front. But it was the worship team and they were praising the Lord as they went into this battle and God gave them a great victory!

So we can clearly see in this story – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

In another story we see this same idea played out.

Remember when the children of Israel left Egypt and they were heading towards the Red Sea. As they got to the Red Sea they found this huge body of water in front of them, mountains on either side of them, and then, in the distance, they can see the sand being kicked up by the Egyptian army coming after them to bring them back to Egypt!

Again, this was a hopeless situation. There is no way that these slaves who were now set free were going to be able to defeat the Egyptian army who many were coming on chariots after them. In fact, it was so hopeless that we are told in Exodus 14:11-12, **“Then they said to Moses, ‘Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, “Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians”? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.’”**

First of all, they were not better off in Egypt. They were in bondage and it was getting worse and worse for them. And they cried out to God to deliver them.

Then what is the problem?

They forgot about God!

Yes, the Red Sea was in front of them.

Yes, the Egyptian army was coming fast upon them from the rear.

Yes, there were mountains on either side of them so there was no place to run. They were trapped, you might say.

Not really, they just forgot about God being with them!

And listen to what Moses tells them, “**And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’**” Exodus 14:13-14.

In other words, Moses wants them to focus back on God, the One who delivered them from Egypt will be the One who will deliver them from this present situation that they are in!

It is ***THE SALVATION OF THE LORD – HE WILL ACCOMPLISH IT – THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU!***

And so what did the children of Israel do? Did they just sit around and wait for God to deliver them? Not at all!

Listen to what the Lord said to them. “**And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.’**” Exodus 14:15-18.

In other words, the Lord told them to get moving. Now wait a minute, the Red Sea is in front of them and there is no way you are going to get 2 to 3 million people plus all their belongings and animals across to the other side. What were they going to do, swim? Not at all!

What we see here is the Lord is calling them to walk by faith and not by sight.

And we see Moses stretch out his arms and lift up his rod and the waters of the Red Sea went up into a heap on either side so the children of Israel could cross through it on dry ground! I can't imagine that walk of faith and yet they trusted in the Lord and walked through the Red Sea just as God instructed them to do!

And notice the salvation that God brought to this situation and the children of Israel. We are told, "**And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the Lord looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.'**" Then the Lord said to Moses, "**Stretch out**

your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen.’ And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.” Exodus 14:19-31.

So we can clearly see in this story – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

One more to show you that the battle belongs to the Lord.

Remember after the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan River into the Promise Land, the land of Canaan, that there were enemies that had to be defeated. And the first enemy was that of Jericho.

And Jericho was a walled city, a fortified city that had heard that the children of Israel were coming, and they went into lockdown to protect themselves.

And the Lord told Joshua the battle plan for this battle against Jericho.

Every day, for six days, they were to march around the city of Jericho once, keeping silent the whole way. Then, on the seventh day they were to march around the city of Jericho seven times, the priests were then to blow their trumpets and the people were to shout and the walls were to come tumbling down!

This too was a walk of faith on their part. Can you imagine getting battle plans like that! And yet, by faith they did it for one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, six days and then, on the seventh day, as the rams horns were blown and the people shouted, the walls of Jericho came tumbling down and the enemy was defeated just as God said!

So we can clearly see in this story – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

And what I want you to clearly see is that not only does the battle belong to the Lord, but the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual.

And that means if we want to be victorious in these battles, we must listen to the Lord and obey His instructions to us. It all boils down to this, it is a matter of trust. Do we trust the Lord enough to not just listen to Him but to obey Him as well!

Today, as we look at what is going on in our nation and the world, we tend to approach it the wrong way. Yes, we see the rise of immorality, wickedness and a host of many other things that are not of God and we try to stop them by passing laws, by protesting, by electing this person or that person, by doing this and doing that.

And I guess there is nothing wrong in doing that but for the most part, you can pass all the laws you want, and people will still break them because it is a heart issue!

But we tend to leave prayer out of these things because, frankly, they are just too big, and **WE** have to approach them on the physical level if we want to get anything done. Or so we think!

A. W. Tozer wrote, *“Sometimes when we get overwhelmed, we forget how big God is!”* Absolutely. Do we really think that the issues we are facing in life are too big for God to handle? They are not! Or maybe we think that God just doesn’t care about the things that are happening in our life or in our country! Make no mistake about it, He does care, He loves us more than we will ever know!

Let me share a few verses with you to show you that – ***THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!***

Remember David’s battle against Goliath. Make no mistake about it, this was a big dude!

Goliath stood some 9 feet 6 inches tall weighing over 500 pounds most likely. His coat of armor weighed between 150 to 200 pounds and his spear weighed 20-25 pounds.

And here is David, just a little guy and yet, for David, he knew the battle belonged to the Lord and thus, he was not going up against this giant on his own, but God was with him and there was no way he was going to lose this battle!

We are told in I Samuel 17: 45-47, **“Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give you into our hands.’”**

There is the key in all the battles we face, **“the battle is the Lord’s.”**

And listen to what Paul had to say regarding our warfare. He wrote in II Corinthians 10:3-6, **“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”**

Make no mistake about it, we all walk in the flesh, we have physical bodies.

And because of that, because Paul is flesh and blood, he struggles with the same things that the Corinthian Christians struggled with and with what we struggle with as well!

But Paul wants them to understand that **“we do not war according to the flesh.”**

In other words, Paul was not going to get into a verbal battle with these false teachers and their false doctrine. He was going to use the spiritual weapons that God had given to him.

What are these weapons? Well, the two offensive weapons are the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, and prayer for our offensive weapons.

Our defensive weapons are the belt of truth which holds us up and keeps us from tripping over ourselves.

The breastplate of righteousness which protects our hearts.

Our feet are firmly planted upon the Gospel of peace.

Our shield of faith can quench the fiery darts that Satan will fire at us.

And the helmet of salvation will protect our mind from the evil one.

We need to understand that these battles are spiritual, and Satan and his forces use people to carry out their work. Don't let Satan draw you into the wrong battle!

Listen again to what Paul says about these battles we are fighting.

He wrote, “**. . . for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**” II Corinthians 10:4-5.

Paul is saying that we are fighting against ideologies or beliefs that people have that are not of God. And “**even every high thing [every proud, arrogant, lofty ideology] that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.**”

Think about that. It includes all the false religions of the world. It includes all the cults, atheism, communism, Marxism, secular humanism, and naturalism. They all try to exalt itself above God or in place of God, the God of the Bible!

And please understand that this spiritual warfare that we are fighting is primarily against the brainwashing of the Devil who has pumped into the minds of the people his false doctrines that will keep them away from the saving faith that is found in Christ.

And look at the garbage we are seeing promoted today. Right is wrong and wrong is right in their minds and they see no problem with that.

Make no mistake about it, Satan does not oppose religion, he will use religion for his purposes, but again, it keeps people from saving faith!

Now some laugh at this and think it is foolish. It is not. Maybe that is why the church today is so ineffective, because we are not using the spiritual weapons that God has given us!

What words can we say that will defeat the enemy? There are none that we can say!

But the Word of God defeats them, and prayer defeats them, and they will not get at us if we put on our spiritual armor!

Does that really work?

You bet it does!

Clarke tells us, “In like manner the doctrines of the *reformation*, mighty through God, pulled down – demolished and brought into captivity, the whole papal system; and instead of obedience to the pope, the pretended vicar of God upon the earth, obedience to Christ, as the sole almighty Head of the Church, was established, particularly in Great Britain, where it continues to prevail. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!”

Tragically, Europe has now turned away from God and we are seeing the results and it is not pretty! And it is happening in America as well. We did not learn the lesson from Europe!

Thus, may we bring our thoughts to the obedience of Christ and pull down the strongholds of the enemy in our families, neighborhoods, workplaces, cities and-so-on!

Years ago, the Christian music group, Petra, had a song called, “*The Battle Belongs to the Lord*” and the lyrics are perfect for what we are looking at today. They go like this:

*In heavenly armour we'll enter the land
The battle belongs to the Lord
No weapon that's fashioned against us shall stand
The battle belongs to the Lord*

*We sing glory and honor
Power and strength to the Lord*

*The power of darkness comes in like a flood
The battle belongs to the Lord
He's raised up a standard, the power of His blood
The battle belongs to the Lord*

*When your enemy presses in hard do not fear
The battle belongs to the Lord
Take courage my friend, your redemption is near
The battle belongs to the Lord*

- Petra

That is exactly what we are talking about this morning. Yes, the battle belongs to the Lord and He has called us to move out, to get up, to get moving and see the salvation He will bring to the situations we are facing.

I can spend a long time this morning sharing with you how the Lord delivered me from all kinds of situations I have been in. And they were not easy, but as I look back, I see what God was doing and the victory He was giving to me.

And I truly believe if you looked back at your Christian walk, you would be able to do the same thing as well.

Let me share this with you and then we will finish up looking at our last point. We are told,

It's helpful in our battles to remember God's track record. He has proven himself in each of our lives. I need to remember what he did in my life because that's the life I'm living. And while I can learn from the stories of others, it's important to look back and see his faithfulness to me.

David went against Goliath, not because he was feeling particularly giant-strong one day, but he remembered God was with him - the very same God who gave him strength when he stood eye to eye with a bear - the same God who showed up when a lion crossed his path.

David's trust needed to be in the right place, in God. Once that was established he stepped out.

And when Saul tried arming David with something that might have worked for Saul, David dismissed it. Not merely because of the obvious, the poor fit, but because God was the one who would do the fighting and he fights armor-free. . . .

Challenges teach us two things; something about God, and something about us. If we choose to believe that God will give us the victory, we will see ringside just how powerful God is. If, instead, we choose to trust in our own strength or intelligence, we will quickly see how inadequate we are. We need to truly believe John 15:5, which says that we can do nothing apart from him.

- <http://bit.ly/37zENDR>

That truly is the key. Who are we going to trust? Who are we going to believe? Just look at God's faithfulness to us and we can trust in Him that what He has promised us, He is more than able to bring to pass.

When ***GOD INTERCEDES***, He does so in amazing ways and brings about great victories in our lives just as we see here with the children of Israel!

VERSE 23

In this verse we see ***THE CURSE OF NOT OBEYING THE LORD!***

Specifically, here we see God curse Meroz, which was a town in Naphtali, but why?

He cursed them because they did nothing, they did not assist their brethren!

You see, sin is not only in our actions, but also when we ***DON'T*** do something when we should.

God asked them for help, and they refused.

We as Christians, by not coming to the battle, we are forsaking the work of the Lord.

No, we won't be cursed, but we certainly won't be blessed by doing nothing.

Folk's, there are many blessings in serving the Lord.

Why didn't they come to help?

Maybe it was fear of the enemy?

Maybe they just didn't have the time to get involved?

Maybe Jupiter was not aligned with Mars or whatever the excuse may be!

And God held them accountable.

What about us? What is keeping us from fighting for the faith that has been entrusted to us?

What is keeping us from sharing our faith? What is keeping us from taking down the strongholds of the enemy?

You see, the problem is not God, He is more than able. The problem is with us and we can let something that seems so big to us, stop us in our tracks. But in the eyes of God, it is nothing for Him to bring about the victory.

Let me show you what I mean.

You see, we can make a mountain out of a molehill.

Did you know that it takes approximately sixty trillion droplets of fog to cover seven city blocks!

And think about what that fog of sixty trillion droplets can do.

It can shut down airports, cause accidents, it can make all kinds of trouble.

We see it as a huge problem but let me give you this perspective to you. I think this is the way that God sees it.

If you were to condense those sixty trillion fog droplets do you know how much fluid you would have?

This is shocking but you would only come up with a half a glass of water! Isn't that amazing that a half a glass of water can shut down a city! But it can. It can stop thousands of people in their tracks!

And here's the thing. You can let that half a glass of water put you in a fog, "*What am I going to do?*" "*How is this going to work out?*"

You get the idea!

How often we become grounded in our walk with the Lord because we can't see straight, we are all fogged in you might say!

Solomon puts us back into the place we need to be when he wrote in Proverbs 3:5-7, "**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.**"

Trust in the Lord; don't try to figure it out on your own but walk by faith and He will direct you!

I pray that you have been encouraged this morning and see that *THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD* and all He wants us to do is walk by faith!

And I will close with this from Psalm 121 starting in verse 1 and we are going to read the whole Psalm. We are told, **“I will lift up my eyes to the hills - From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.”** Psalm 121:1-8.

May we not lose sight of that fact, that our help comes from the Lord and we can trust in Him. Or as the prophet Jahaziel 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.’”** II Chronicles 20:15.

THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD!