

This is How I Fight my Battles

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Message 13

Exodus Series

Exodus 17:8–16 (CSB)

⁸ At Rephidim, Amalek^c came and fought against Israel. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Select some men for us and go fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the hilltop with God's staff in my hand."

¹⁰ Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought against Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ While Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, but whenever he put his hand down, Amalek prevailed. ¹² When Moses's hands grew heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat down on it. Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until the sun went down. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his army with the sword.

¹⁴ The Lord then said to Moses, "Write this down on a scroll as a reminder and recite it to Joshua: I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven."

¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and named it, "The Lord Is My Banner." ¹⁶ He said, "Indeed, my hand is lifted up toward the Lord's throne. The Lord will be at war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Deuteronomy 25:17–19 (CSB)

¹⁷ "Remember what the Amalekites did to you on the journey after you left Egypt. ¹⁸ They met you along the way and attacked all your stragglers from behind when you were tired and weary. They did not fear God. ¹⁹ When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven. Do not forget.

Introduction to Text: Trouble brings trouble.

- A. At Rephidim, the Israelites are tired and thirsty.
 - 1. They test and rebel against God.
 - 2. Even in their sin, they experience God's amazing grace and mercy through the miracle of the water from the rock.
- B. Have you ever noticed that rarely do difficulties come alone.
 - 1. Difficulties and circumstances usually come in twos or threes.
 - 2. In Exodus 17, Israel struggles with water and then surprise attacks by the Amalekites.
- C. If you have ever felt ganged up on in life, you are not alone.
 - 1. The enemy of our soul knows how to maximize situations.
 - 2. Even though it was God who led Israel to Rephidim to demonstrate His power and faithfulness.
 - 3. The enemy saw an opportunity to attack, and pile on to the situation.
- D. That brings us to the first battle Israel fought as a nation, found in Ex. 17.
 - 1. All during the events in Egypt, Israel never had to fight.
 - 2. Now God will use the arms and swords and spears of Israel to defeat the Amalekites.

1. Amalek attacked Israel from a proud and haughty position.

- A. At first, it seems the people of Amalek feel threatened.
 - 1. This large mass of blessed people are heading through their territory.
 - 2. So they decide to attack.
- B. Deuteronomy adds more details.

1. Deuteronomy says that Amalek attacked Israel when she was weary and tired.

2. Amalek targeted the stragglers and those who had fallen behind.

- a. They aimed for the weak, the tired, the elderly, and the prideful.

- b. These people did not have the covering and accountability of the group, so they experienced the attacks first.

C. Amalek obviously did not fear God.

1. What made them think that they could defeat the God who had just defeated Pharaoh?

2. What made them think that the God who was feeding and providing for His people would all of a sudden be powerless to protect now?

3. From a position of pride, Amalek did what they could to stop the blessing and the journey of God's people.

2. The Staff/Rod of God was the difference.

A. At this point, Joshua leads the men young enough to fight.

1. This is the first mention of Joshua, the man who would replace Moses in 40 years.

2. While Joshua and the soldiers go out, Moses and two of his elders go up the mountain.

3. From there, they will intercede for Israel in prayer.

- a. I think it's important for us to understand what is happening.

- b. Moses is not only raising his arms, but he is praying and interceding in the process.

c. Moses might have been too old to swing a sword, but he knew how to talk to God.

B. When Moses' arms grew tired, and the arms drooped, the enemy begins to gain.

1. As Moses pushes the staff back into the air, Joshua gains the upper hand.
2. What is this symbolizing?

C. It symbolizes that victory is only possible with God's help.

1. Moses couldn't win this on his own.
2. Joshua couldn't win this on his own.
3. Moses partnered with what God was doing in that moment, and God provided the victory.

D. God preserves the right to bring victory through whatever means he chooses.

1. God used Moses and the Rod to turn the Nile into Blood.
2. God used Moses and the Rod to part the Red Sea.
3. God used Moses and the Rod to strike the Rock for water to flow.
4. Again, Moses finds God's favor in lifting the staff overhead, in a symbol of prayer and faith.

D. Some of you have been praying for God to bring a victory.

1. You have dreamed of what that victory will look and feel like.
2. Just a little warning: God often moves in unexpected ways.
3. The same God that buried the Egyptians in the waters required Israel to fight the next battle.
4. You cannot out imagine and out plan God!
5. Part of our responsibility is to discover what God is blessing and do that!

Let's talk about the timing of the enemy's attacks.

3. When does the enemy attack?

In this text, there seem to be three instances when the enemy attacks God's people.

#1. The enemy attacks when you are tired and weary.

- a. Deuteronomy tells us the enemy attacked when Israel was tired and weary.
- b. We are not at our best when we are overly tired.
 1. God understood this by implementing a WEEKLY Sabbath.
 2. The best version of yourself is one that has regular rhythms of rest.
- c. When we are tired, we give in to the flesh easier.
 1. It requires energy and determination to "Put on the Armor of God".
 2. When we are tired, we are more likely to be "in the flesh" than in the spirit.
 3. We object to that, but we are the same people that can't wait to put on comfy pants when we get home so most of us aren't putting on the Armor of God when we are tired.
- d. We mindful and careful when you are overly tired.
 1. **Don't buy things you can't afford.**
 2. Don't risk relationships you don't want to lose.
 3. Don't let your temper or anger cause you regret later on.
- e. If you find yourself worn-out:
 1. Prepare yourself for attack.

2. Set a plan in place to create the margin you need to rest.

- a. Rest looks different for everybody.
- b. So find what refuels and refreshes you.
- c. Remember, even Jesus took naps!

#2. The enemy attacks when you are without covering.

a. Stragglers make the easiest targets.

- 1. Our enemy is an enemy of opportunity.
- 2. When we separate ourselves from our covering, we become vulnerable to attack.

b. Notice that Amalek did not aim for the main body of troops.

- 1. They focused on the stragglers.
- 2. When you allow yourself to become isolated from the coverings that proper authority provides, you become the first target of the enemy.

a. People who isolate are the first to experience the enemy's attacks.

b. When we choose to live life alone instead of in a community or family, we will find ourselves under attack more often.

c. We were designed to worship God, seek God, and experience God in a fellowship of other believers.

c. One of the big lessons from Exodus and Numbers is the danger of being "out of authority".

1. All throughout the journey, various people rebel against Moses and God and the authority that God had established.

2. When you live outside of God's authority, you invite attacks from the enemy.

- a. A NT example is found in 1 Corinthians 5.
- b. In the church was a man having sexual relationships with his stepmother.
- c. He had rejected God's authority and the authority of Paul's leadership.
- d. So Paul tells the church to "hand this man over to Satan."
- e. What this means was he was to be removed from the fellowship and the covering of the church.

3. In the Apostle Paul's world, removal from the fellowship of the Church was one of the worst punishments.

- a. We no longer have that perspective in the church.
- b. There are certainly valid reasons to change churches.
- c. There are also times when God wants to use the pastor or spiritual authorities to deal with rough edges in your life.
- d. **Rejection of spiritual authority breeds rebellion.**
 1. This is a common theme throughout Israel's history.
 2. Israel rejected Moses, the Prophets, and then Jesus.

#3. The Enemy attacks right before we enter God's presence.

- a. Israel is preparing to meet God at Mt. Sinai.
 1. Their experience there will be the culmination of all of their experiences thus far.
 2. As great as the burning bush was.
 3. As amazing as the Pillar of cloud and fire.

4. As incredible as the miracles involving the Red Sea and the Rock giving water...

5. The giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai is THE BIGGEST EVENT in Israel's story.

b. But before they get there, the enemy attacks.

1. Sometimes the enemy is attacking you because you're tired and sometimes the enemy attacks because you are in pride.

2. Then **there are times the enemy attacks because he can sense that you are getting close to a breakthrough.**

3. Satan is not all knowing or all-powerful.

4. But he has been doing this long enough to be able sense when you are close to a breakthrough.

c. Often the worst attacks will come right before the dawn.

1. Be careful not to quit on the eve of victory.

2. **Right before the breakthrough, you may find yourself fighting for your life.**

3. But don't give up, because you don't know what awaits you after this battle.

4. What to do when facing a battle?

A. **#1. If you are the one fighting, ensure you have people praying for and with you.**

1. In this narrative, it is Joshua and the soldiers on the ground doing the fighting.

2. But they have a covering:

a. They had Moses, Aaron, and Hur interceding for them.

b. Whether they looked up or not, there were men interceding for them on their behalf.

3. When you are fighting for your life, you need to make sure you have a covering.

- a. "Well, I have Jesus and that's enough."
- b. That statement sounds good but it is Scripturally ignorant and based in pride.
- c. The Apostle Paul had prayer partners and co-laborers everywhere he went.
- d. How much more do we need the ministry of fellow saints?

B. **#2. If you are the one leading through a battle, surround yourself with people who won't let you quit.**

1. Moses' perspective was different.
 - a. Joshua was boots on the ground.
 - b. But Moses had a pastoral and prophetic role to play in this fight too.
 - c. Joshua could not have won without Moses' spiritual leadership.
2. Moses could not have continued without the support of Aaron and Hur.
 - a. When it is our turn and responsibility to lead and to provide the covering, we need people who will not let us quit when we get tired.
 - b. Spiritual leadership is exhausting.
 1. This is something hard to explain, but my fellow and former pastors here can attest that there is an unusual exhaustion that happens after ministering and leading spiritually.
 2. However, you do not need to be a pastor to experience spiritual leadership fatigue.

3. There will be times as you parent, lead at work, or lead yourself that an exhaustion will come upon you that is different than what occurs after physical labor.

- a. Elijah felt it, and almost quit.
- b. Jesus felt it, and it drove Him to prayer.
- c. Moses felt it too.

3. That's why we need people who can cheer us on and provide help.

- a. My deacons do this for me often.
- b. I have several pastor friends who have permission to speak into my life and do.
- c. Pastor Harvey has a special gift of knowing what to encourage in my life, and what to "discourage" or lead me away from.

4. When facing a battle, and it's your turn to lead, you need someone who won't let you quit.

C. #3. If it's your turn to serve, commit to the health and support of the ones fighting and leading.

- 1. Aaron and Hur had important roles to play, even though they were not the main characters.
- 2. Refusal to serve when needed results in victory breaking down.
- 3. It's not always your turn to fight and it's not always your time to lead. Sometimes it is your time to serve.

Close: We all have a part in this fight.

- A. Some swing the sword.
 - 1. Some raise the staff of God.
 - 2. Some support the hands.

3. If one person in the chain doesn't follow through, defeat becomes possible.

B. This morning, everyone here has a role to play.

1. Some of you are in a major struggle.

a. Home. (This is what is sticking out to me for this group)

b. Work.

c. Internally, you are dealing with a major struggle.

2. Maybe you are leading through some struggles.

a. When you are leading through struggles, your responsibility and perspective is different.

b. Some of you are leading your family and workplace through some battles. ("BH", this is where you are at).

3. Others of you are serving those who are going through battles.

C. I want to pray this way:

1. For everyone who is FIGHTING a battle, would you be willing to come forward in a moment.

2. Then, would some of you pray and be led to support others hands as they fight this battle?

I am going to pray, and then if the Lord is speaking to you and you are in a major battle, would you come at the end of the prayer to allow me and this congregation to pray with and for you!