

People God Can Use - Part 1

by Brother Andrew

God speaks to us through prayer, circumstances, and His Word, and we must be prepared to take action when He speaks to us.

Duration: 37:07

Topics: "Consecration"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing the enemy and understanding their purpose. He uses the story of David and Goliath to illustrate how one person can make a difference when they know that God has spoken to them. The speaker also shares a personal experience of how God spoke to him through circumstances, specifically the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. He explains that God speaks through his word by recognizing the time and situation in scripture and seeing how God calls individuals to bring about change.

Transcript

It was in one of those churches in Russia where for years they had prayed that one day God would do a miracle and send somebody with a Bible. Someone from Youth of the Mission or Open Doors or whoever, as long as God would answer their prayers. And I know of many churches today that still pray every day that God will one day send someone with a Bible.

Even today in thousands of house churches in China they have sung a hymn, an official church hymn, Lord send us someone with a Bible. And God who loves to answer prayer did answer that particular prayer and one day indeed a Bible arrived in that church. And great was the joy that Sunday morning and the Bible got up into the pulpit and showed this congregation the first Bible they had ever seen.

Can you imagine the joy? No, you can't because you've never been in it. But try to anyway. And that pastor after preaching from the Word, more reading from it than preaching because he was so excited and he figured he couldn't improve on what he read anyway, a lesson which I hope every preacher would learn in time.

Then he did something very unique, something very unusual, something which I'm afraid I would not have done. He began to tear the Bible to pieces, tear the pages out and he began to give to everyone in the congregation one or two pages of the Bible. And I have thought, would I have done that if I had been the pastor of a church and if I and the congregation with me had prayed for a long time to give us a Bible and

if the Bible came would I have just torn the pages out and given them to my people? I'm not sure at all, but I am sure glad that this pastor was a good Christian because he did that.

He just tore the pages out and gave them to the people. A few days later he was walking in the town and he met a brother there and he looked so happy that man. So they got together and the pastor said, well, you must have received quite an encouraging page that you look so happy.

He said, yes, pastor, I sure did. So what page did you get? Oh, I got a page from Jeremiah. Hmm.

Pastor said, Jeremiah, not too cheerful a book, prophet of doom, always announcing judgment, always getting in trouble for pronouncing the word of God, always being persecuted, arrested, interrogated, tortured, thrown in a dungeon and ultimately killed while in exile. Hmm. Listen, brother, I happen to have a page of Matthew that I can spare.

If you give me your Jeremiah page back, you get Matthew. And the brother said, oh, no, no, pastor, no way, no way. Listen, listen, listen, listen, pastor.

And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah and pastor, if the word of God can come to Jeremiah, it can come to me too. This is my page. This is God speaking to me.

And I tell you, if you know that God has spoken to you, nothing can move you and no one can persuade you to do anything else. The secret is, do I know that God has spoken and how does God speak? How does God speak? Well, He speaks through circumstances, I would say. I remember, I remember very well, I remember the date in August and the year in 68.

And I was working in my office, in my house, the loft, and it was very unusual that I'm home in August because it's a time when we travel to mix with the tourists. But I was home that day, God must have had a plan in it and He did, and I was in my office and suddenly the children called out, said, daddy, television is on. It was noon.

Well, we never have television at noon in Holland, it starts at seven in the evening. We don't have television during the daytime, isn't that great? I hope we never get it, too. But now, why was the television at noon? So I ran down the stairs and there I saw something that I'd never seen before.

I saw Russian tanks roll into Czechoslovakia, I saw Russian planes land at the airport. There was a live television from the Russian invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies in August 68. And when I saw that, God spoke to me.

For years, I had been traveling to Eastern Europe and several trips to Russia, taking thousands of Bibles, and now I saw the Russians coming to meet me halfway. It was pretty clear to me I had to go the other way, fast. He was a nation that had enjoyed liberty for only nine months in 68, and all of a sudden liberty was crushed, taken away from them.

They needed my Ministry of Encouragement. And there are situations where you don't need a long prayer meeting. You know it, you know what you've got to do, you better get on with it.

And don't substitute ever for obedience, don't substitute prayer for obedience. Get on with the job once you know the will of God. So I quickly loaded my large station wagon, by that time not a little Volkswagen anymore, praise God, and I loaded it with Russian Bibles.

And in less than a day, I drove to the Czechoslovakian border after I phoned a number of our other teams and associated missions to do the same, to go to Czechoslovakia with scriptures, because this was the last time the border would be open. And this was the greatest moment to witness openly in that country. And when I came, after driving through Germany without any speed limits, I would not have observed them anyway, but there were none, so when I got to that border, it was a very strange sight.

There was a lot of military and helicopters, but no civilians and no traffic. I was the only car, but on the other side, I could see a line at least a mile long and thousands of anxious, fearful Czechs trying to get out of the country, run away from the Russian occupation army, scared stiff, running for their lives. And I was the only guy going in.

You should have seen their eyes. The custom officials, border guards didn't even bother to look at my luggage. I had not hidden any of my buyers, just piled them up, boxes full.

I didn't even have a visa, but he didn't bother. He thought, let this fellow get in. He will be back in a few minutes anyway.

Let's help to get the people out. Never mind the fool who gets in. I still remember his sad face when he leaned over into my car.

I said, sir, do you know what's happening in my country? I said, yes, I know all about it. And you still want to go in? I said, this is the reason I want to go in. He shook his head in disbelief and waved me through.

Exactly six miles further, I was stopped by the Russian army. On the left and the right in the fields were tents and trucks and big army camps. And on the road were two huge tanks with big guns pointing toward my very tiny little station wagon.

I felt like sitting in a dinky toy with a wheel smaller than this mic. When you look into two huge guns pointing directly at your car, makes you feel very small and very dependent on the Lord, which is fun anyway. And the Russian soldier came to my car.

I rolled down the window and showed him my passport. Poor fellow couldn't read because he kept it upside down all the time. But I just prayed my little smuggler's prayer.

Like, you know, Lord, you've made so many blind eyes to see while you're on earth. No problem to you to make seeing eyes blind, but you better do it now. Because I don't want to lose my blindness.

I want them in the hands of the right people, through you people. Well, he didn't see anything because God hears and answers prayer. He loves it.

So I went on and a little further. I came to a large city of Pilsen, where they make the beer. I used to.

And there I got into a real nasty mess. I got caught up in the actual occupation army, in between the tanks. And that was a very embarrassing experience because on the streets were thousands of people and the square was filled with people and everybody with a fist raised and looking at the Russians and cursing them.

And then they suddenly spotted the Dutch station wagon. And they raised their hands and they began to shout. And it was so embarrassing.

I thought, please cool it. Think of the fellow five yards behind me and the tank three yards in front of me. If they get cross with me, they just move up a little and there goes my station wagon and me.

I didn't want that to happen there. Anyhow, I managed to overtake as many as I could and get out of those Russians. And eventually I reached the city of Prague.

And I want to cut the long story short. That first Sunday morning I preached in the same church. But I preached since October 1955.

Same people, same interpreter. And I saw all those fearful people and I admired them. Outside you could hear the tanks rumble through the streets and the windows were rattling because of the shooting.

But in spite of all the danger, they had come to the church knowing that only God could give them an answer to that question that was burning in their minds and hearts. Why? God, why is our liberty taken away? We only had nine months of liberty. Where is it? Why did we lose it? And then God gave me a word.

As I preached to them and God gave the anointing, I suddenly said, if we do not go to the heathen with the gospel, they will come to us as occupation armies. And then they sat straight realizing that Andrew was talking about the Russians. I sure was.

Because they had nine months of liberty, only nine months. And they never even thought of going east to the Soviet Union with the message of the love of God. They could have.

No, they all went west to buy tape recorders, transistor radios, bicycles, cars if they could afford, new suits, toys. Everything that the west had to offer, they wanted badly. They only had nine months to get it, so they went for it.

And they never got a burden. They never even prayed about the threats to their east borders. They never thought of sharing the love of God with those who denied the very existence of God.

Then suddenly the curtain fell. The Warsaw Pact armies marched in overnight almost, and one day occupied most of the country. It was the day when I was there.

And then after the service, I was shaking hands with the people at the door. And I tell you, they almost broke my fingers. Their handshakes were so powerful.

They felt so encouraged and challenged. They said, oh, Andrew, if only we had known that the Russians would come. But we are not prepared.

We don't even have one page of the word of God in Russian. If we had known, we would have prepared. We would be ready.

We would be able to go out and give the word of God to the Russian army. I said, why do you think I came? Their eyes lit up. Can it be? And then I pulled a blanket off a table on which I had piled all my Russian Bibles.

And they saw those Bibles. And like a stampede, they ran to it, grabbed one, two, three, six copies, and walked into the streets. And in five minutes, all my Russian Bibles were gone.

And then they walked into the town. That, too, was a revelation. And I have been there.

I've been in all that burning and shooting and killing. And I saw those Russian soldiers scared stiff sitting on top of the tanks. They had been told by their government they would come as liberators.

And now the whole population hated them, threw rocks at them, tried to set their tanks aflame. And in many cases, they managed. Russians lost an awful lot of vehicles in the first week.

And many killed. They only met with hatred. And they couldn't understand that they couldn't even get anything to eat or drink.

Those poor guys were starving. And now all of a sudden, on Sunday morning, smiling, people came and said, Ivan, God loves you. Here's a book that tells you about the love of God for you.

Please take it. It's yours. And they saw a Bible which they'd never seen, a Bible which in their country they could only buy at a very high price on the black market.

And they got it from those Czechoslovakians. They couldn't understand it. They were completely demoralized by that strange behavior.

On one side, the hatred. And the other side, the only love they got from people that talked about Jesus and gave them a Bible. The situation was so strange as a matter of fact that within 10 days, the Russian government had to recall and replace the entire Russian occupation army in August 1968 in the Czechoslovakia.

That impact had it on the lives of those soldiers. Lately, we got letters from their parents, some of them in Russia, thanking us that we'd given their son a Bible while he was in Czechoslovakia. That's one way how God speaks.

Through circumstances. To prepare us for the days to come. So that when they happen, we know that this is the will of God.

You don't have to pray about it. You do it because you have been prepared and you're ready. You have the instruments to do it.

But then God also speaks through His Word. Now how does God speak through the Word? Apart from the fact that God speaks through His Spirit and through dreams and visions and prophecies. God speaks through His Word.

And I want to give you a formula tonight by which you can find out how God speaks through His Word. Namely, when in reading the Word, you recognize the time in which you live in that particular setting in Scripture that you are studying. You recognize the time and you recognize the situation which is so similar to my situation today.

And then you see how God calls a person to change around that situation. And when you recognize that yourself in that person or the potential of your life in that particular person that God is using in that particular situation, then God speaks to you about involvement and the solution to that particular problem. I hope you could follow me.

It was a bit complicated. But the main point is if you recognize in Scripture the situation in which you find yourself, then God is at the point of speaking to you. And I have a passage here that is very much in my heart tonight to share with you.

And when I read it, I very clearly recognize the situation in which we live today in this particular passage. I see the problem of today in that particular passage. I see God move people.

He didn't even speak to people. But behind the scenes, He had prepared people to be His answer, His challenge, His solution in a particular problem. And I'm going to not study, but at least glance at that passage tonight, so that you too will understand and recognize the situation this year, this time, in this passage, so that God can speak to all of you and then use you when that time comes without any further preparation, without any long prayer meeting seeking God's guidance.

You are just there to do the will of God. That's the exciting thing about a prepared Christian life. Now the passage I want to read to you is 1 Samuel chapter 17.

Please look it up. 1 Samuel 17. It is the story, of course, of David and Goliath.

And you will find some unusual lessons in it tonight that you've never seen before. Why? Because God is going to speak to you tonight. God's going to prepare you for that day of crisis, when He's going to pick you out to do something and change the situation around to His glory and to the salvation and redemption of many.

Now, the Philistines, so this chapter begins, gathered their armies for battle and they were gathered at Soko, which belongs to Judah. Now, I have to stop here already, because there's something wrong. There's something wrong when God gives a country to a people and the enemy comes in as invaders, making an illegal move to go in and challenge or to conquer, to occupy and ultimately to destroy whatever God has given to His people.

Because this town of Soko, which is mentioned, is only nine miles west of Jerusalem, deep inside Judah, which God had given to His people Israel. What are those Philistines doing there? And here is already the key to the whole story. What is the devil doing in our society? What is the devil doing in our family? What is the devil doing in our country? What is the devil doing in our family? What is the devil doing in our church? The enemy has made raids into God's own territory.

into your own mind, maybe, into your heart and soul, into your body, to which you had no right whatsoever, because that was given by God, it was God's territory. The problem was, there was no one to oppose Him, here in Israel. They had a weak king, and weak leadership makes weak followers.

They were not militant, they could not fight, they were not brave, they were not courageous, there were no outstanding people in their midst, and the enemy then makes use of it, and by stealth, there's something like a revolution by stealth, too. Sneaks in, at first unnoticed, but when he becomes noticed, then it's too late to do much about it, he's in. The enemy is in, and that's the main problem that we face today in the world.

The enemy has taken nations and showed his power in taking away freedom from God's people, in threatening their very lives and their way of worship. And to make matters worse, they seem to have a champion, giant, his name is Goliath, and as they meet and they arrange their army on one side on a hill, there's a valley, and on the other side is the army of Israel. Well, army, take that with a grain of salt,

because it says in chapter 13, verse 15, that there was no blacksmith in all of Israel, because the Philistines wouldn't let them have a blacksmith.

They said, lest the Israelites make swords and spears for themselves, and so the Israelites had to go all the way to the Philistines to have their agricultural tools sharpened. What a shame and disgrace. And they just took it because, well, you know, that fatalistic attitude that so many Christians have anyway.

God is God, God is sovereign, and if we have liberty, so be it. If others don't, well, so be it too. Why worry? What can you do about it? Who am I? Little small me.

What can I change about the situation? And they just let the world go to hell without raising a finger. And so, in Israel, there is no weapon except with Saul and Jonathan, his son. So, when I say the army of Israel is camped on the other side of the hill, it's not really an army, it's just a group of disoriented, discouraged, demoralized people that have to come up for the show, because the show must go on anyway.

And somewhere in one of those tents is Saul and is some Jonathan hiding there, and the only two had weapons. And every morning that comes out of the army of the enemy, a big fellow, huge, giant, and he strides down into the valley until all of Israel can hear him, and he then opens his big, godless mouth, and he begins to defy the ranks of Israel, giving the most negative message they can hear, saying, you cannot do it, you cannot fight with me. Choose you a man, but there is no man among you.

Bunch of cowards you are. Nothing you can do to fight us Philistines. You're only servants of Saul, and look at Saul, he's hiding in a tent.

Coward, you're only servants of a coward. What are you? You mean nothing. And every morning he comes, and every evening he comes, and the moment when he appears, the Israelites are shaking with fear, and they run away, but they cannot run away far enough.

They have to hear his voice as he defies the ranks of Israel, and Israel says, you cannot do it, you cannot, you cannot. And I hear that voice today, and we call it today brainwashing system. Remember 40 days the giant came down, every morning, every evening, that means 80 times the same message, just thrown over the people.

You cannot fight, you cannot win, but I am sick and tired today of all those voices that tell us that we cannot win the world for Christ. All that discouragement, all that negative talking, it only can come from an enemy, it can never come from God. All that talk that you'll always be a sinner, you'll never get healed, you'll never have victory, you'll never make it, you'll never be strong, you'll never be full time working for God, you'll never have an anointing of God in your life, you'll never master the Bible, you'll never go out, you'll never win, you cannot do it, the world will be worse and worse and worse all the time.

It is a system of brainwashing, and too many people, unarmed as they are, are drinking in the message from the enemy, and all the time, every time they hear the message, they get smaller and smaller, and more and more depressed, until they believe we cannot do it. We'll always be sinners, I'll always be sick, I'll always be weak, because I've heard it so often. What a problem! Do you recognize it already? Isn't that our time in which you live? The enemy has come into our camp to tell us we cannot do it.

And the enemy here is saying you cannot have tools or weapons. And what a crazy situation, we accept the fact today that in more than half of the world, a Godless government tells them if they can have Bibles or not, and if so, how many, or how few? The enemy says how many swords we can make. Ridiculous! Is

the enemy going to say how many weapons the army of God can have? Is the enemy going to dictate how many people can serve Jesus Christ and go out for His name? Is the enemy going to tell us whether or not we can function in the worship of God Almighty? Is the enemy going to tell us whether or not I can have a Bible or an open church or teach my own children about Jesus? But this is the sad fact of life today.

More than half of the world, in all the communist countries, in all the Muslim countries, do not have the liberty to worship Jesus because the enemy won't let them. And we just sit back because the enemy tells us there's nothing you can do about it. You might as well sit there and wait until we occupy your country.

We are already about six or seven miles away from Jerusalem anyway. It's only one day's march and we have your capital. Nothing you can do.

Nothing you can do. But then, as it happens, a little boy by the name of David, just happens, you know how things happen, just happens to come by. Sent on an urn by his old father to see how his three brothers were doing.

Taking with him some foodstuffs. And he comes there and again that day, I don't know whether it was morning or evening, that giant comes out of the crowd of the Philistines and the people around David say, Have you seen that man? Recognize it? They are too scared even to name the enemy by his name. Now that is what I call the situation in which we live today.

We are surrounded by enemies, all different types of liberal theologies and liberation theology and theology of prosperity that says that we shall be known by our Cadillacs and all the other philosophies, the eastern occult philosophies and all those theories and all those things. And because the show must go on and because we must keep up our diplomatic relations with all the countries where they have a dictatorship and where the persecuted church, we dare not talk about communism and about godless atheism, we just be nice and even if possible be nice to the devil lest he hurts us. Have you seen this man? They don't even dare to call the enemy by his proper name.

And David stands there and I just love what he says. He says, Who is this uncircumcised Philistine? Now that is language after my heart. He is in effect saying this is a spiritual problem, it's a theological issue.

That man has no part in the kingdom of God. He is not a believer, he's an atheist, he's only here to destroy us. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine? He is not afraid to call him by his proper name.

And friends, unless we learn to not only recognize the enemy but have the guts to call him by his proper name we'll never be able to recruit anybody to fight against the enemy. We've got to know where the enemy is, what his name is, what he's doing, what his purpose is. But what change, what difference can one man make? You know, haven't you often thought that about yourself? What can you do? Just little Joe, little Mary, what can you do? Anyhow, when all the news is bad, good news travels fast and King Saul, way out in his little tent there, sipping his coffee he hears about the young man who's stirring quite some unrest there because he is saying something that no one has said.

And then you will be heard. So they reported to Saul and Saul said, let him come to me. And little Saul comes there.

Now here's the fascinating part that I really want you to listen to carefully because here is what I know God has a message for you tonight. David says to Saul in verse 34, Your servant used to keep sheep for his father and when there came a lion or a bear and took a lamb from the flock I went after him and smote him

and delivered it out of his mouth and if he arose against me I caught him by his beard. Gosh, I wish those video cameras had been there and made a film for me.

Wouldn't you love to see that? Can you imagine? No, you can't. I don't think anyone outside of David ever got hold of a lion by his beard and killed him. But he did, praise God.

And he said he smote him and he killed him and your servant has killed both lions, plural, and bears, plural. Boy, that's an exciting life, isn't it? Be a shepherd. And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.

Now that is terrific language. See, man sees what the Israelites said. Have you seen these men? But David says these uncircumcised Philistines are, what did he say, are defying the armies of the living God.

Boy, you need a lot of fantasy to see army of the living God and that scared bunch of Israelites. But who says that this here tonight is not an army of the living God? It all depends with whose eyes I look at you. And I want to look at you with the eyes of faith.

I want to see the potential that God sees in you. Now what is David saying here? He's saying, listen, king, I was responsible for the sheep of my father, not my own sheep. I don't have anything.

But I was a steward, I was a shepherd, I was responsible. And then a lion and another day a bear came and snatched away one of my sheep. Now that sheep was not one that had gone astray, no.

The enemy had come into my camp, my territory that I was responsible for. He's not talking about the lost sheep. The enemy has invaded my territory and he stole a sheep, tried to get away with it.

But there's something which I call holy indignation where you begin to act on a principle where your physical and spiritual and mental powers far exceed that which people see in you. Because no one would ever have thought that he could win from a lion or a bear. Nor did that, as a matter of fact, ever occur to David that he could win.

Because it was not his purpose to win, he was acting on a principle. That bear, that lion had no right to come into my father's flock. And since this is such an illegal act of aggression, the thought that I might not win, I probably will not win if I fight with the lion or the bear, never enters his thought.

He goes after that creature because he is personally responsible for every one of those sheep. The problem in our society, we have been taught to count the cost. Dreadful thing.

We would figure, now wait a minute, David, let's be sensible. What is worth more, the life of a sheep or your life? What do you think? As long as you think along that line, God can never call you because it is not the question. It is a question of allegiance to a principle.

That lion, that bear has no right to come and steal a sheep that I am responsible for. And therefore I am going after that lion, after the bear, simply on the basis of a principle. I do not count my life dear unto myself, Acts 20, 24.

My life has no value, only inasmuch as I can imply or apply, prove a principle in which I believe. They have no right to steal. I am responsible and my life has no value whatsoever.

This body, soul and spirit has no value. Only inasmuch as I can apply it to that principle. Then we get a step further.

Then we come to that point. Too many young people stay home. Counting the cost, which in this connection the Bible or Jesus has never told us to do.

It is an unscriptural concept to count the cost. And if any third party there in the fields would have seen David run after...

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