

An Old Testament Revival - Part 2

by David Ravenhill

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and resisting the enemy in our lives, and provides practical advice on how to do so through spiritual warfare.

Duration: 1:02:19

Scripture: Deuteronomy 20:4, 2 Chronicles 31:20, Isaiah 37:36, Romans 15:4, Ephesians 6:17, James 5:16

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

This sermon focuses on the story of Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles, highlighting the challenges he faced and how he overcame them through faith, prayer, and taking action. Hezekiah's life exemplifies the importance of trusting in God's deliverance, standing firm in the face of the enemy's threats, and seeking help from others in times of need. The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to be vigilant, to use the Word of God as a weapon, and to rely on God's strength to overcome any battle they may face.

Transcript

With you, it's been a little bit of a falling away, but that's a sign of the times, I guess. Good to have you back here tonight. Turn with me again to 2 Chronicles.

I want to continue on in the life of Hezekiah. A different situation that we find him in. Hezekiah is one of these Bible characters that, no Bible character was perfect, but he was a man of God and his life is summarized for us at the end of chapter 31.

So if you have your Bible, 2 Chronicles chapter 31 and verse 20. It says, And thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah. He did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God.

Every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in war and in commandments, seeking his God, he did with all of his heart, and he prospered. I think that's a pretty good summary of somebody's life. I have told my wife on more than one occasion, if I go first and there's enough money left in the kitty to afford a tombstone, I would like those two verses up.

Now obviously it would have to be modified a little bit. It would read like this, And thus David did throughout all of America. He did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God.

Every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in war and in commandments, seeking his God, he did with all of his heart, and he prospered. I think you would agree that that is quite a summary of

somebody's life. Everything this man did, God put his blessing behind.

One of my pet peeves as a Bible teacher are chapter divisions. As you know, they were not in the original. So let me just keep reading.

I'll go back to verse 21. Every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in war and in commandments, seeking his God, he did with all of his heart, and he prospered. And after these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib, who is the enemy, the king of Assyria, came, invaded Judah, besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself.

Notice, after these acts of faithfulness, the enemy comes. Not after these acts of rebellion, not after these acts of perversion, not after these acts of disobedience, but after these acts of faithfulness. A good sign that you are prospering spiritually is that you are under the attack of the enemy.

Let me say that again. A good sign that you are prospering spiritually is that you are under the attack of the enemy. In fact, if the enemy is not attacking you, you should be asking the question, why? Why am I no longer a threat to the enemy? My father went to Bible school for one year, to which he credits his success, I think.

He didn't have to unburden a lot of things. But he went to an old Methodist school run by a godly man by the name of Samuel Chatwick in England. And Chatwick was a real revivalist, a real man of prayer.

And on the weekends, they would be sent out on preaching assignments. It was an all-male school, but no distractions. But they were given a preaching assignment to go to some little Methodist church and sort of flap their wings a little bit and get some experience.

And Chatwick would give them a word of exhortation. He would get them into the chapel, give them a word of exhortation, and then my father said he would pray. And at the enemy's prayer, he would pause.

And after the benediction, he would pause again and he would say, go and may the devil go with you. Then he would pause again and say, because if the devil doesn't go with you, you're not worth sending. And that was good Methodist.

In other words, your job as a believer is to give the devil a headache, to ransack the enemy's camp, so to speak, to go in and plunder his kingdom. Whether it's going and testifying to somebody or whether it's on your knees in the closet or whatever. And if the enemy doesn't fight back, you know that you're not too much of a threat.

Isn't that right? We are not very much concerned about Tahiti being a major threat to America because it's a little tiny island down there in the South Pacific. They don't have any, you know, weapons of war or anything. We are more concerned about Russia.

We're more concerned about China because they are a major force. And when we become a major force, spiritually speaking, then the enemy gets upset. And here is a man that is doing everything that is right and true in the sight of God.

And as a result, it says that after these acts of faithfulness, if you like, after these successful acts, the enemy comes. We're going to look tonight at how to resist or how to overcome the enemy. Last night we talked about revival.

It's one thing to experience revival. It's a personal revival. But it's another thing to maintain that because invariably when we begin to move in the spiritual realm and make advances, the enemy will counteract.

He will try and distract us, bring down fear and other things into our life to try and get us off track. And so we're going to look at how Hezekiah, how he resisted the enemy. Now, before we do that, I want to take you to two verses, so keep your finger there.

But if you go back to Exodus chapter 13, Exodus 13 and verse 17. Now, it came about when Pharaoh had let the people go, the people being the children of Israel. But God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was closer and nearer.

For God said, let the people change their minds when they see war. And they returned to Egypt. Now, God, as you well know, delivered the children of Israel out of the bondage of the Egyptians, out of the house of bondage.

And His purpose was to take them through wilderness and eventually into the promised land. And the straightest distance between two points, obviously, is a straight line, or the shortest distance, I should say, is a straight line. And as God looked at that straight line, it went right through the land of the Philistines.

And then He looked at the spiritual condition of these children. Let's face it, they, in typology, they were just redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. They were babes in Christ.

They didn't really know this God very much. Moses was one that was setting an example. They'd seen the power of God.

But they really didn't know this God very much. And so they were little babes in Christ. And God looked at their condition and said, if I take them the shortest route, going right through the Philistines, there's going to be warfare.

And they are children. They don't know how to overcome the enemy. And so God bypassed the problem.

He went the long way around so they didn't have to face the problem. And we do that as parents. Those of you who've got children, especially little children, grandchildren, maybe a one-year-old or a two-year-old that's just barely walking.

You know, you don't go down to the major intersection here in Finland where there's all those traffic lights and back trucks and so on. And send that little toddler across the street by himself. Well, maybe you can't, but, you know, let's say Chicago.

Instead, you cradle that little one in your arms and you walk them across that treacherous crossing and put them down on the other side. As a parent, you recognize, for a grandparent, my one-year-old or two-year-old is not mature enough to go across that major intersection with buses and trucks and everything else. God does the same thing.

He says, my children are not ready to fight, and so I will bypass the conflict. Now, turn with me to the book of Judges for a moment. Judges chapter 3. I'm reading from verse 1. Now, these are the nations which the Lord left.

Let me say that again. Now, these are the nations which the Lord left to test Israel violently. That is, all who had not experienced the wars of Canaan.

In order that the generation of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formally. These nations are, and notice number one, the Philistines. In other words, there is a time when God will bypass the Philistines.

There is another time when God will place a Philistine directly in your path because he wants you to learn how to fight. There's been times, I'm no longer pastoring, but I pastored for many, many years, and I knew my congregation pretty well, and so somebody would make an appointment to see me, and I knew what they were wanting. They were wanting some sort of quick answer for me to lay hands on them and impart something or epart something, whatever the case may be, and ten minutes later they walked out and their problem was solved.

And I would look at them from time to time if I knew them well enough, and I'd say, listen, I'm not going to pray for you because I believe God has left you with a Philistine, and you are wanting me to kill your Philistine. And God is wanting you to grow up and learn how to kill the Philistine yourself. And so you need to go learn to fast and pray and use your concordance or whatever it is, and get on your face before God and cry out for help and so on, because if I keep killing your Philistines for you, you will never mature.

As I write, our oldest daughter is a missionary in China. She's been there now for 20, 25 years, something like that, and her first year of school was in New Guinea. We were missionaries there in the early 70s, and I remember her coming home with her first assignment from school.

It was a sheet of problems, math problems, 2 plus 2 equals 3 plus 1 equals 4 minus 1 equals, and so on. And she came to me saying, Daddy, I need help with my homework for this assignment. And I could have sat down and literally in 30 seconds done all of those problems, handed her the sheet of paper, and said, Lisa, here, you can go play.

But I realized she was in a new phase of her life. She was no longer at home playing with her dolls and so on. She was now in school getting an education.

And so I said to her, Lisa, you need to work these problems out. What is 3 plus 2? I don't know, Daddy. I don't know.

I don't want to go play anymore. And I made her face her Philistine, if you like, and about five minutes later, she killed it. 3 plus 2 is 5. Well done.

OK. What's 7 minus 2 and so on? She has a degree today. I don't.

But imagine if when she got to college, she was sending me letters every week. Dear Dad, here's your next assignment. It needs to be in by the end of the month.

And by the way, there's a major project due at the end of the semester, and I want to give you plenty of time. So in my next correspondence, I'll be laying out all the details so that you've got plenty of time to work on it. And we laugh at such a thing.

And if that's what we employ, we'd like these two on the front row to do. To do your assignment. And as a result, we never really mature.

We never really grow. And yet, my Bible tells me that God is looking for overcomes. Isn't that right? The whole book of Revelation is about at least the first part of it.

To him that overcomes, to him that overcomes, even as I overcame, Jesus said. It may interest you to know that when the bride comes down in the form of a city, in the book of Revelation, it says that the way into that city is through one of the twelve gates. And those twelve gates are made of what? Ladies? Men? Pearls.

Thank you. They're not made of bronze or brass or aluminum or steel. They're made of pearl.

What is a pearl? A pearl is a problem that's being overcome. Isn't that right? In other words, at the center of every genuine pearl, there is a problem. I think God in his infinite wisdom knew he could have made those gates out of anything.

But he was looking for a company of overcomers. Those that are going to make up the bride of Christ have got to be an overcoming people. Overcome sin, overcome doubt, overcome fear, overcome whatever it is.

To him that overcomes. You know, I will grant this and I will grant that. And so we're looking now for you back here in 2 Chronicles.

We're looking at the way in which Hezekiah overcame the enemy. So let's go back again. And we'll pick it up in verse 2. When Hezekiah saw that the enemy, Sennacherib, had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem.

The first thing that Hezekiah does, he recognizes that he has a problem. He has an adversary. You and I need to be aware of the fact that we have an adversary.

The Bible says you're adversary. The devil. You're adversary.

Not the person on the left of you, the person on the right of you, not the person behind you, in front of you. But you're adversary. Goes around seeking to destroy.

Seeking to undermine the work of grace in your life. Seeking to bring down fear and insecurity. Seeking to lure you back into sin and carnality and all of those things.

And so the first thing we have to do is recognize that we have an adversary. The second thing is, it says in verse 1 that he intended to break into the city of Jerusalem for himself. There are two people that want your life.

God and Satan. And they both want you for their purposes. God wants you for his purpose.

He wants you for himself. The enemy wants you for himself. And again, we've got to choose.

Choose you to stay, who you're going to serve. But the third thing that Hezekiah does, he decides to do something about it. Notice in verse 3, he decided with his officers and his warriors.

In other words, he recognizes the enemy is coming and he doesn't sort of sit back, get back in his hammock or whatever and say, Well, qeyser asra, whatever it will be, will be. He makes plans. I cannot allow the enemy to come into my city.

You'll notice that the enemy has already besieged certain cities that were in Judah. Verse 1 again. After these acts of fatalness, Nechtrut became the king of Assyria and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified

cities.

So he's already taken over, seemingly, some territory. Even though these cities are somewhat fortified, he's gone in and he's besieged the fortified cities. He's now heading towards the big city, Jerusalem, where Hezekiah obviously was dwelling because he was the king.

And so Hezekiah decides to do something. Again, he makes up his mind with his officers and his warriors. And the first thing they do, they cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city.

And they helped him. And many people assembled. And they stopped at all the springs and the stream which flowed through the region, saying, Why should the king of Assyria come and find an abundance of water? Now, one of the strategies of war, obviously, in the Old Testament and possibly still in some parts of the world is to cut off the water supply.

If you can cut off the water supply, then that person will not be able to exist in that territory because they can only exist for maybe one day or two days or whatever. But then they're going to have to go and find a fresh water supply while they're away, of course, you can take over. And what they did to Abraham, they filled in the wells of Abraham.

That was part of a strategy to get Abraham to leave where he was in order to take over his land, his territory. And so Hezekiah says, listen, if the enemy comes, there is an abundance of water. Around the city, we have numerous springs, not just puddles because of the latest rain, but springs.

There's light there, there's water coming up out of the ground. Not only that, but there is a river that flows through the region. And if the enemy comes, there will be an abundance of water.

If there's an abundance of water, we'll never get rid of it because he can camp indefinitely around the city. And no matter how well we are fortified, as long as the enemy can remain there, we are under siege. And eventually we will need to go out of the gates to get our crops and so on.

We can only exist for so long. And so if the enemy comes, we've got to cut off that which will supply life to the enemy. What we call again in the New Testament repentance.

Cutting off that which supplies life to the enemy. In other words, if I have a problem with pornography, I need to get rid of my playboard magazines. Because that is supplying life to the enemy.

If I'm on the internet, I need to get a filter and so on. In other words, anything that flows out of me that can feed the enemy and sustain the life of the enemy has to be cut off. I tell people I am more of a teacher than an evangelist, so I'll tell you the truth.

I say that jokingly, but you know evangelists come along and they put a nice spin on everything. And you can't help but resist coming forward and getting saved. And us teachers sit there thinking, boy, they don't know what we're in for.

By the time they get saved, God's going to slap them down on that wheel as a master potter. Spin them until they don't know which way is up. Apply pressure on the inside of all of them and conform them to the image of Christ and so on.

But if we told you that from the get-go, you'd never get saved. So the evangelist comes along with a sort of rosy picture of how great it's going to be. But listen, this is not an easy thing is what I'm saying.

It is not easy to cut off a supply port. There is a river, it says, or a stream that flows through the region. Have you ever tried to divert a stream? Come out here maybe to some little brook somewhere, take the kids when they're small, you know, try to make a little wading pool and you take the rocks and, you know, it's almost impossible.

But water just seems to flow through and so on. Here they were so determined to block up every single supply of water. This takes tremendous determination, tremendous effort.

And spiritually, when it comes to fighting the enemy, we've got to give him that sort of, you know, determination. That's why the Bible says we wrestled, you know. We wrestled, you know, this sort of name and acclaim sort of thing.

Sometimes there's an almighty battle going on where it's my will and the will of God coming against the powers of darkness and so on. But anyway, he cuts off that which supplies life to the enemy. We have got to do the same thing.

As long as there is something in my life or your life that is out of sync, if you like, with the word of God, that thing has to be dealt with. I'm sure that some of you here, some of the older folk anyway, like myself, you know, on a cold winter's morning, you've gone outside, maybe opened the door to do something and there is a little kit, a little bundle of fur that's got, you know, lost. And you take pity on it because, you know, it's one of those beautiful balmy 40 degree below days here in North Dakota.

And you decide that you'll go to the refrigerator and pour a little bowl of milk and you put it down there. And that poor little thing, you know, laps it up and looks at you like, thank you so much. The problem is every time you open the door from then on, you have a problem sitting right there.

That bundle of fur, you fed it to try and get rid of it. And the same thing is true spiritually speaking. When you feed the enemy, you will never ever get rid of it.

You've got to take drastic measures. I've got to cut off that which supplies life to the enemy. The next thing that he does, verse 5, he says he took courage and he rebuilt the wall that had been broken down.

Now both of these things, and all of these things for that matter, require honesty. In other words, Hezekiah got to thank him. Listen, my city is surrounded with a water supply.

And when the enemy comes, he's going to be able to camp indefinitely if there's a source of life there. And so I've got to cut off the spot. Then he had to inspect the walls.

If the enemy comes, there's a hold spot right there. Here's another area where all the rocks are loose. Here's another area where there's a big gaping hole.

Here's another area. In other words, like Nehemiah, I don't think it was quite as bad as Nehemiah's day, but he has to go around and determine, listen, these are areas where we are vulnerable. These are areas of weakness in the wall that unless we strengthen those areas of vulnerability, those areas of weakness, the enemy is going to come in and destroy them.

And so he had to set time aside, along with his workers obviously, to rebuild the wall that had broken down. Now the Book of Proverbs tells us something interesting. Proverbs 28, I think, there's a 25, 28, somewhere thereabouts.

It says, like a city that is broken into without walls is a man or a woman who has no control over her own spirit. In other words, the Bible likens us to cities with walls or without walls. You can tell by my accent that I wasn't born in Texas.

I grew up in England, and there is a city there called the City of York. And it is one of the old cities, and it still has part of the original wall around it. Of course, you go back hundreds of years.

Germany's got numerous ones. I've seen them, these old cities with these beautiful old walls around them. That was their protection.

And as long as that wall was intact, you could go to bed at night and put your head on a pillow and sleep soundly knowing that you were protected in your city because of that wall. But if the wall was full of holes and low spots, then obviously the enemy could come in through those areas of weakness and vulnerability and take control of that city. And instead of you being in control of the city, you will be in control.

And Proverbs says, like a man or a woman who has no control over her own spirit is a person, again, like a city with a broken-down wall. And I remember when I passed it again, the Bible says, know the condition of your heart. I can sort of know my congregation with walls, without walls, with walls, without walls, with walls.

You get to know this person is under the control of alcohol, or this person's under the control of anger, or this person's under the control of this, this person's in control. You get to know people after a while, and you know what controls them, what habits control them, and so on. And we've got to learn to rebuild the walls in our life.

Now, how do we do that? Let me jump over to the New Testament for a moment. If you, again, are following me, turn with me to the book of Ephesians, Ephesians chapter 4. And we'll pick it up in verse 27. And do not give the devil an opportunity.

In other words, don't give the devil, my margin says literally, don't give the devil a place. In other words, don't provide the enemy with any cramps and axes into your life. Verse 28, let him that steals, steal no longer.

Now, here is a person, obviously, who's vulnerable in the area of theft. And Paul says, listen, stop stealing. You don't need to steal, stop stealing.

But when you stop stealing, that doesn't mean build a wall, that just identifies what the problem is. Instead, he says, but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good. In other words, this person was not just somebody that was stealing for the sake of showing off, you know, maybe some teenagers hanging around on a street corner on a Friday night.

They had nothing else to do. And another teenager says, I bet you can't go into the store then, you know, swipe some cigarettes or something. And the guy, you know, thinks, I'm going to show him I can do that.

And, you know, five minutes later, he comes out and flashes the cigarettes. You know, obviously, that's wrong. But this person was stealing rather than working.

In other words, if he needed something, he waited until his neighbor went off to work and broke into the house and took whatever he wanted. That was his lifestyle. Paul says, stop doing it, get yourself a job.

And then he says, performing with your own hands what is good, in order that, notice that little phrase, in order that he may have something to share with the one who has a need. In other words, learn to give. You've spent your life ripping people off, basically.

Now learn to start giving back. You can imagine the devastation that happens when somebody is stealing. My wife and I began our ministry in a tea challenge in New York City.

Right in the early days of David Wilkerson. And I had one night, one day a week, another friend and I, we had a prison ministry. We'd go to a place called Rikers Island.

There were about 6,000 inmates. And 90% of them were in there for a heroin addiction, drug addiction. And they estimated, this was back in the early 60s, they estimated that the average addict would steal between \$100 and \$200 a day of material in order to support his habit.

Now, if you steal something and only get \$200 for it, it means you have to steal something worth at least, you know, \$300 or \$400 or \$500. So they would break into a church, for instance, and steal a drum set. Maybe that drum set, you know, costs you \$600, but on the street it's only worth \$200.

And here were 6,000 addicts, which was just the tip of the iceberg. I mean, there were literally tens of thousands of addicts in New York City. Imagine the devastation in just one day from all of those addicts.

I mean, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, millions of dollars a year stolen. And so what Paul is saying here, listen, you've been ripping people off, basically, taking things from them. Now that you've got a job, start giving back.

That's how you rebuild. You do the opposite spurt from what you're doing. Instead of hurting people, now you're blessing people.

The next problem is there in verse 29. We're still in Ephesians. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth.

This person isn't a thief. This person is just a person in the congregation that loves to, you know, be the gossiper and tell everybody what's going on. But it says here, let no unwholesome word, my imagination says literally it's the word rotten.

Let no rotten word proceed out of your mouth. But only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment that it may give grace to those that hear. In other words, instead of running everybody down, instead of ruining everybody's reputation, start building people up.

Start, you know, calling your neighbor and saying, isn't so-and-so wonderful? And if there is a crisis of some sort, listen, we need to pray for so-and-so. You don't need to go into details and say, you know, my daughter's pregnant and this is the second one, blah, blah, blah. Isn't that terrible? And the news starts going around town.

It's all enough. You know, you get on the phone and say, listen, so-and-so is going through a very difficult time. Let's pray for her right now.

Let's uphold her in prayer. Let's uphold the family, whatever it is. You know, don't tear down, but rather build up.

And then in verse 30, do not grieve the Holy Spirit. How do we grieve the Holy Spirit? Verse 31, by allowing bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and all of these things to come out of our mouth. And it says, put those things away along with all malice and be kind one towards another, tender-hearted, forgiving.

In other words, instead of all that bitterness and resentment and vengeance and trying to repay and get even with a person, forgive. Be tender-hearted, forgiving. That's the way you rebuild a wall.

You do the very opposite of what you've been doing. If you've been stealing, start giving. If you've been ghosting, start blessing.

You know, if you've been cruel and harsh with people, start forgiving them, and so on. And so we go back now to Hezekiah, and it says he took courage and he rebuilt the wall that had been broken down. You see, the enemy knows your area of vulnerability.

He knows your wall. He knows the condition of your wall. And the way he knows that is he is not omniscient, like God is, that knows everything, but he knows everything there is to know about you.

And the way he finds out is the enemy is a fisherman. How many fishermen here? We won't have an all-day call. I like to fish, too, when I get a chance.

But, you know, you go to the lake, and you've got your tackle box, and in that tackle box you've got a variety of lures. And you put a lure on the end of that line, and you cast it into the lake, and you, you know, throw it through, and do that three, four, five, maybe six or ten times, and there's nothing happening. You think, well, you know, they don't seem to be attracted to this particular lure.

I'll try another one. And you put that lure on, and, you know, first cast, wow, you got, you know, maybe two or three casts more than you think they caught. They are going for this particular lure.

The enemy long ago figured out what lures attract you. He's cast things into your mind, and he's watched your reaction. And he writes down in his little palm pad or iPad or whatever, you know, so-and-so, lust, this person, anger, this person, pride, this person, bitterness, this person, jealousy, this person, whatever.

And that's why he constantly fishes with the same lure in your lake or in your mind. You think, why does the enemy always torment me with this particular problem? Why is it that it's always this one thing? Because the enemy has figured out long ago you'll be setting sin. And until you learn to master that thing, until you overcome that thing, until the day you die, he'll fish with that lure because he knows that's where he's going to get you.

I mean, why waste time fishing with something that's not going to, you're not going to go after? Isn't that right? In other words, the enemy's intelligent, and he's got his wiles that we need to be aware of, and he knows what he's doing, and he's a master of what he does. And he knows exactly how to bring you down, how to defeat you. And it's only when we rise up and say, you know, I'm sick and tired of this thing being a problem in our life, by the grace of God, I'm going to start resisting the enemy on this particular point.

Let's go back to verse 5. He took courage and he rebuilt the wall that had been broken down, and he erected towers on it. Now, I don't know if Hezekiah was the first one. I need to do a little bit of research as to who was the originator of the towers.

It could be that Hezekiah was the first one to build towers on walls of Jerusalem. But the towers were where the watchmen stood. I understand.

I'm not that familiar with this neck of the woods that you live in. But I understand that, you know, 20 or 30 years ago, this area, again, had major satellite dishes that were constantly scanning the heavens in case Russia launched an attack on America. And there was an early warning system all across, sort of, North America, these huge satellite dishes and watching for that missile and, you know, being able then to hopefully counteract.

The attack blasted out of the air somewhere, and that's all. Now, obviously, when we go back into the Old Testament, they didn't have that sort of sophisticated electronic system. But instead, they had watchmen.

And the watchman's job was to be there in the watchtower. And he had a certain area that he had to constantly keep under surveillance. And if there was a cloud of dust on the horizon, then he had to determine, is this the weather changing, the wind blowing, the dust coming, or is this a bunch of merchants coming to sell their wares at the local marketplace, or is this an advancing army? Once he determined that this is an advancing army, then he would pick up his trumpet or his ram's horn or whatever, and he would blast away.

And if it was daylight, of course, people would be out in the fields, and they would hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm, and they would make their way back into the city, close the gates and so on, and there would be safety. Why? Because the watchman was doing his job. If the watchman fell asleep, then obviously the enemy could creep right up and besiege the city.

And the Bible says, of course, when it comes to you and I, that we are to watch and pray. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, goes about his boring life.

In other words, we should be vigilant spiritually. America, prior to the year 2001, was basically sleeping on the job. We were invincible, we're the greatest nation on earth, we've got the greatest weaponry, the greatest air force, and so on and so forth, and yet all of a sudden we're attacked.

Twin Tariffs come down and so on, and the whole nation now has changed as a result. I do a lot of flying, and I have to face the fact that this is all a result, and I've got to take my belt off and my shoes off and so on. Most of the time I can take a shortcut and not have to do that anymore, but most of the time you've got to go through that screening process.

Why? Because we are now vigilant. We are aware that we could be under attack again. And spiritually we need to do the same thing.

We need to be vigilant, we need to constantly be alert to the devices of the enemy, the ways of the enemy. We're not to be ignorant, the Bible says, of the ways in which the enemy works. And so we need to erect some towers, if you like, spiritually speaking.

Again, we're back in verse 5. The next thing that we find Hezekiah doing, it says there at the end of verse 5, and he made weapons and shields in great number. Hezekiah now, prior to this, has been defending himself. He's been in a defensive mood, now he's going on the offensive, now he's prepared to fight.

And he makes weapons and shields. In other words, he is ready now to engage the enemy. And we need to do the same.

I was in Malaysia doing some meetings many, many years ago. My wife was with me and our youngest daughter at the time. We were living in New Zealand, we'd been invited up to Malaysia to do a little bit of teaching.

We were staying with a Chinese doctor, a very beautiful home, and one afternoon we were sort of sitting there twiddling our thumbs, and I didn't have much to do, and he said, would you like to watch a VCR, long before the days of DVDs? And I said, sure. Not knowing what he was going to put in, whether he was going to put in some lesson or something, I had no idea, but he put in a VCR of a lady by the name of Suzette Hattie. And Suzette is a lady that worked with Reinhard Bonnke for many, many years, did all of his advanced work, and she's a great intercessor.

She's got a series of tapes on intercession. She now has her own ministry very closely linked still, I think, friendship-wise with Reinhard, which is a very powerful woman, had some amazing healings and so on. And this particular video was the first I ever heard her name mentioned, and the video was recorded in a large church in London, by the name of Kensington Temple.

And on the video, she's talking about putting on the full armor of God, and I will never forget what she said. She had brought along a sort of little toy armor outfit, and she solicited the help of one of the staff, and I don't know if it was a youth pastor or whatever, but she had it come up, and she put on the helmet, a plastic helmet, talked about the helmet of salvation, put on a breastplate, a plastic breastplate, and so on, talked about the breastplate of righteousness and so on, and she totally outfitted him with the armor. And the last thing that she gave him was the shield, and then she gave him a sword.

And she said, now, there is a reason why we are to dress with the full armor of God. And she said, the reason we have to put on the full armor of God is that we have necklaces. And she said, you're the Christian, here you are, all dressed up with all the right equipment, and she said, I'm going to play the role of the devil.

And she reached over, and on top of the keyboard, she picked up a dagger of some sort, and she said, okay, we're going to fight. And she began stabbing away with her dagger, and this man kept moving his shield, and every time she stabbed, he moved his shield, and it went on for maybe 10, 15 seconds or so, and she said, okay, stop, stop. And she turned to the congregation, and she said, see, he never used his sword much.

And that was worth my entire trip to Malaysia. Most of us, all we ever do is plead the blood. Most of us, all we ever do is use the shield.

Now, there's nothing wrong with that, it's part of our equipment, but we never really go on the offensive. When Jesus was confronted by the enemy, he didn't just hide behind the shield, he used the word of God to do it. It is written, it is written, it is written.

And he came against the enemy. In other words, we have weapons, and the Bible says the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, so we're pulling down on strongholds. The shield protects us, and rightly so, but it doesn't do anything to the enemy.

If we are going to bring down the enemy, the only thing that we can use effectively is the sword. The shield, I guess you could beat him over the head with it, I don't know, but it's for our benefit. But the sword is the thing that we need to use, and use it effectively against the enemy.

But most of us, again, all we do is sort of plead the blood, or the name of Jesus, or whatever, and again, nothing wrong with that necessarily, but it's not really as much a weapon as the word of God is. Let me ask you, you did so well on the first test about what the gates are made of, let me give you a little test here. What is the difference between the word of God, or the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and our loins good about the truth? What is the difference between truth, our loins are good about the truth, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God? See, there's a little tougher question.

Well, the Bible says that some of that word is truth. In other words, the totality of God's word is truth. And we are to have that truth around us, we are to gird ourselves with the truth of God's word.

And then from that belt of truth is where the scabbard of the sword hangs. And we draw from that truth a specific word. So here you are, a young man, you're in your twenties, and here is this pretty girl walking towards you, and you think, you know, my goodness, you know, I need to turn my head the other way, or I'm going to take out my sword right now, and you say, she's a slut.

That's the word of God. Right? Right? In other words, it's not just truth that we need, it is the raven word from the logos. We have our belt of logos.

In other words, that's the general word of God. But we need a specific word. So you wake up in the morning and you feel like you've almost got the flu, spiritually speaking, and you just feel lousy and so on.

You know, you don't just say in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. You need something more specific. There is therefore now what? No condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus.

When Jesus was confronted with turning these stones into bread, what did he say? Man shall not live by bread alone. In other words, he counteracted it with a word that dealt with that particular thing. And so we've got to be skillful with the word of God, but we won't be skillful with the word of God until we have our loins girt about with the word of God, our loins girt about with truth, and then we can draw from that whatever we need at any given time.

These days, there's a dearth, I think, of knowledge when it comes to the word of God. You know? We train people not to bring their Bibles to church anymore because if they put it up on the screen, you know, nobody reads them anyway the rest of the week, and you know, there's a major dearth, isn't there, of knowledge, especially with the younger generation. And we've got to get back to, you know, girding ourselves with the word of God, being familiar with the word of God so that we can use it appropriately when the time comes.

And we know how to resist, effectively, the enemy. And so he makes weapons and shields in great number. Verse 6. And he appointed military officers over the people, gathered them in the square of the city, or the city gate, and he spoke encouragingly to them, saying, Now this goes along with these weapons.

He is now encouraging them with the word of God. Keep in mind that we're in the Old Testament. People did not have Bibles.

Everything was done meticulously by hand, so there was no possible way that everybody had a copy of the word of God. And that's why in the New Testament, Paul says, you know, Pay attention to the public reading of the word of God. Jesus went into the temple, and he took the scroll and opened it to Isaiah the

prophet.

The scroll of the Lord is upon me. He didn't say to everybody, Take out your scrolls and turn to the book of Isaiah, because nobody had a scroll. It cost a fortune.

They were all, again, meticulously done. Now we have the benefit of printing presses, and everybody can have the word of God. And so the king knows what the word of God is, and he brings all the people together, and he encourages them with the word of God.

And he says this, Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude that is with him. For the one that is with us is greater than the one with him.

With him is not only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles. And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Now where did Hezekiah get that promise? Is that just something he sort of made up? Well, there is a specific promise.

You go back to Deuteronomy, chapter 20. Let me read it to you, because this is almost verbatim, if you like. This was a promise that God gave to his people.

Verse 1, When you go out to battle against your enemies, and you see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, in this case, of course, the army is coming to him, but they are more numerous, when do you get afraid? When there's ten of you and one of the opposition, or when there's only one of you and ten of the opposition? When there's ten people against you, when there's a greater crowd against you than is with you, then you tend to have fear. When you're in the majority, you don't have fear. And so God says, listen, when you go out to battle, and you face people that are more numerous than you, in other words, you're outnumbered, you're outgunned, and so on, he says, do not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you.

In other words, remember past victories. And it shall come about when you're approaching the battle, a priest shall come and speak to the people, and he shall say, let hear, O Israel, you're approaching the battle today against your enemies. Do not be faint-hearted, do not be afraid or panic or tremble before them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies.

And to save you. So again, this is something that Hezekiah has got to hold on. He knows this particular promise, and he is able to quote it virtually verbatim.

Again, let me read it now to you. Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed, because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude that is with him. For the one that is with us is greater than the one with him.

To him it's only an arm of flesh, but with us it's the Lord our God, to help us in the fight of our battles. So he says, don't fear, don't be dismayed. All the things that he had found.

He found that promise, in other words, that he could hold on to in a situation that was very, very similar. We need to do the same thing. The Bible says in Romans 15, through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.

Through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. Now, I have a good friend. His name is Winky Crackney.

Some of you may know him. I've read some of his books. He's a New Zealander.

And I've seen Winky. He's a brilliant man. I've seen him stand up and hold up his Bible and say, listen, I want you to know that I've studied this book for years and it is full of mistakes.

Full of mistakes. People sort of, you know, how on earth did this guy get to preach at this conference? You know, he doesn't even believe in the word of God. And he says, no, I'm serious.

The Bible is full of mistakes. It began with Eve's mistake, followed by Adam's mistake, followed by Noah's mistake. Now, aren't you glad the Bible is full of mistakes? Because imagine if you come out of a background of absolute, you know, carnality and immorality and every other conceivable thing, someone says, you need to read the word of God for an encouragement.

And, well, where should I begin? Well, why don't you begin at the beginning? So you begin in Genesis and every person you read about. Perfect. Perfect.

Perfect. Lameness. Sinless.

Perfect. Perfect. Wouldn't that be encouraging? I don't think so.

I think it would be discouraging. Everybody else I read about is perfect. Nobody else had ever had a problem.

Nobody else ever got drunk. Nobody else ever committed adultery. Nobody else ever did this.

And so on. Now, the Bible is full of people that were redeemed by the blood of man. What were they redeemed from? A sinful man.

And so you've got rapists and you've got murderers and you've got thieves and everything else reported. This book really should be called a before and after story. Isn't that right? It is full of before and after stories.

From weakness they were made strong. And through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have it. You take, for instance, Peter.

Peter bragged, of course, that he would go down with the ship so to speak. When Jesus chose twelve, Peter says, you know, you got the finest when you chose me. You know, a good old Peter.

You know, I'll go with you even if it means giving up my life. And then, a few days later, he betrays the Lord. The little girl points a finger.

What have these disciples done? The soldier says, yeah, I've seen you. You know, bystander. What have these disciples done? Three denials.

Can you imagine how Peter felt? Jesus said, after the resurrection, go and tell Peter and the disciples. And Jesus stands there on the seashore because Peter is so discouraged. He's got the rest of them discouraged.

They've all gone out fishing. They haven't caught a single thing. They come in and here is a stranger on the seashore.

And he's made a charcoal fire and he's got breakfast waiting. And the last time that Peter saw this man pretty much was around the charcoal fire. The night in which he was betrayed.

And Peter was warming himself around the charcoal fire. And somebody said, do you know what these disciples are doing? He says, no. And now, Jesus calls him to a charcoal fire.

And he says, Peter, I need to ask you something before we have breakfast. Do you love me? Peter says, you know that I do. I'm going to ask you again, Peter.

Do you love me? Three affirmations for three deniers. That's encouraging. I always loved the teacher that gave the maple test.

I never did well at school. I brought home Fs on more than one occasion. My parents always taught me the job of doing it's worth doing well.

And so I did it well. But I brought home Fs. But every once in a while the teacher would say, listen, if you fail that test, you can take it again.

Thank God that I could redeem myself. God is a God of redemption. Isn't that right? We have the story of Jonah.

It's a very clear mandate from God to go to Nineveh. It goes the opposite direction. You know the story.

The Bible says, the Word of the Lord came up a second time to Jonah. God is the God of the second chance, the third chance, the fourth chance. Through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.

Here is a man now. He is encouraging his people with the Word of God. Let's quickly move on.

It says that the enemy now has arrived. Verse 9. After this, Zechariah the king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was besieging Lachish with all of his forces with him against Hezekiah the king of Judah and against all Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, Thus said Sennacherib of the king of Assyria, On what are you trusting? That you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege? Is not Hezekiah misleading you to give yourself over to die by hunger and by thirst, saying, The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria. So here now, he is challenging the Word of the king.

That's what the enemy does, doesn't it? He challenges the Word of the king. Why are you trusting in the Word of God? Why are you trusting that God is going to look after you and protect you and so on? And he begins then to magnify what he has done. He says, Do you not know, verse 13, what I and my fathers have done to all the people of these lands where the gods of the nations of these lands are able to deliver their land from my hand? Who was there among all the gods of these nations which my father did not utterly destroy who could deliver his people out of my hand? That you, O God, should be able to deliver you from my hand.

Many times, the enemy will come and he will begin to boast about, you know, I did this, I did that, I took out this person, I took out that person, I brought down this great ministry, I brought down this great ministry. Who do you think you are? You know, you've never been to Bible school, you don't know Greek,

you don't know Hebrew, and so on. I mean, the enemy will use all the strategies and tactics he can to try and get us to just give up, throw up our hands.

Who do you think this Hezekiah is? Don't trust him, don't believe him, and so on. You can read through this little portion, it's interesting. But, let's go to verse 17.

He also wrote letters to insult the Lord God of Israel to speak against him, saying, as the gods of the nations of these lands have not delivered the people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah shall not deliver his people from my hand. And they called this out in a loud voice in the language of Judah, to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten, to terrify them, so that they would take the city. And they again will try and produce fear to terrify us, and so on.

He knows our language, he knows he spoke the language of the people. And then we drop down to verse 20 and we bring this to a close here in the morning. But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, prayed about this, and they cried out to him.

You know, what I like about this little phrase here is that Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah. You know, Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah. And Hezekiah And Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah.

sent word to Isaiah. And Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah. And Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah.

And Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah. And Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah. And Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah.

And Hezekiah I am going through a time of battle of the last couple of weeks last couple months of whatever this discouragement about whatever it may be and I need somebody to stand with me. And Hezekiah is that sort of individual that he opens up and he goes to Isaiah the prophet and they cry out and they pray And verse 21 And the Lord sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior commander and officer in the camp the king of Assyria. So he returned in shame to his own land.

When he entered the temple of his god, some of his own children killed him with a sword. So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, from the hand of all others that guided them on every side. You can read in Isaiah 37, and it gives a detailed account of virtually this same chapter.

But it tells us that the king of Assyria sent 185,000 troops, and one angel destroyed in one night 185,000 troops. Jesus said on the cross, I can call 12 legion of angels. Now, legion was between 5,000 and 6,000 Roman soldiers.

Jesus said, I can call 12,000, no, 12 legion, well, 5,000, 6,000, imagine 60,000 angels. If one angel can destroy 185,000, I don't know if my math isn't working right now, but multiply that by 185, and you've got an awful lot of people, you know, or angels. But we need to realize, he that is with us is greater than he that is against.

And here, he's able to overcome not only that, but the enemy is defeated, the enemy is destroyed. Now, let me just very quickly say this. I would love to rewrite this chapter.

And here's the way I would like it to read if I were to rewrite it. After these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, came, invaded Judah, besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make

war on Jerusalem, he prayed with Isaiah the prophet, and the Lord sent an angel to destroy their mighty war.

That's the way I would like to summarize the chapter. In other words, I don't want to have to put in the effort of blocking up, you know, diverting rivers, filling in springs, rebuilding walls, erecting towers, you know, getting the various weapons in place, and so on, encouraging myself by having to read the word of God. I just want to say, God, take care of it.

But you know, you don't grow that way. God allows certain things in our life. He will allow the Philistines so that you can be an overcomer.

And there's no shortcuts. I'm not saying that we shouldn't pray. We should pray.

But the Bible says, having it all, stand. There are certain things that we have to do. And prayer will not get rid of the Playboy magazines, if that's your problem.

You've got to burn them, take them out to the dump, get rid of them, or whatever, or go to the computer and block that particular site. Prayer will not do that. There are certain things that we have to do.

We've got to obey God in certain areas. Obey God to come in and make up what is lacking, if you like. And so Hezekiah had to do these things.

And then finally, he prays, and God responds. And here we have a man now that can go down in history as one of the great overcomers, the overcame. God is looking, again, for a church of overcomers.

Know how to resist the enemy, know how to stand. And the day of battle, we're facing a greater onslaught today than we've ever faced before. The enemy is coming like a flood.

We need to have God arise and scatter those enemies, and we need to do our part as well. Now, I realize, and I am closing, that in some ways, I am purposely talking you out of an altar call. There was a time in my own life as a young man in Bible school, where I made it, I won't call it a vow, but I made a commitment that I'm not going to answer another altar call.

Not ever, ever, ever, but I was always traipsing forward every time there was an altar call, because I needed prayer. And I realized one day, I was asking whoever it was that was praying for me to take care of my assignment, to do my math problem for me. Oh, we'll pray for David, and so on.

And I came to a place where I said, God, I want to know the Word of God like these counselors know the Word of God. Why can't I be that smart, if you like? Why can't I know the Word of God like they do? And so I made an effort, a determined effort, that I'm not going to come forward every single time to get prayer. I'm going to get along with God, I'm going to open my Bible, learn to use it in accordance or whatever, and begin to overcome.

Now, I say that because, you know, many times, we want somebody else to solve our problems. But that's all right if you're a baby. You know, a baby can't feed itself, so you've got to stick a bottle in its mouth, and so on.

But, you know, we are mature enough naturally to be able to feed ourselves. Spiritually, we should be able to do the same thing. Now, having said that, there are times when we need somebody to stand with us.

And so tonight, I want to say this, let's just stand together as we close. If you are facing a battle, and that battle is something that you've done the best you can to resolve, you've spent weeks maybe fasting, praying, whatever it is, and yet you just feel powerless, then the Bible says, you know, we need to go to a friend, confess your faults to another, pray to one another, that you may be healed. And so if you're in that situation where you say, listen, I'm just desperate, I need somebody to stand with me, I need somebody to pray with me, I'm facing a problem that I just can't seem to get the picture of, I've put, you know, things aside in my life, I've repented of this, I've done everything I can, but the enemy just seems to be standing there, and we'll be glad, I'll be glad, I'm sure Pastor, his wife, will be glad to pray with me.

So let's just close in prayer right now. Father, You know every single situation that's here in this meeting tonight. Father, You know emotional needs, physical needs, financial needs, spiritual needs.

Lord, out of the abundance of Your grace, You're able to meet each and every need. You're an all-sufficient God, You're not deficient in any area. Lord, You don't wring Your hand saying, if I could, I would.

Lord, You say, call unto me, I will answer you. And Father, I ask tonight that Lord, You would raise up out of this group of people tonight, Lord, an army of overcomers, Lord, men and women that know how to triumph, how to walk in victory. And yet Lord, if there's people here tonight, Lord, that need, again, a brother or a sister to agree with them in prayer, I pray, Lord, that You would just allow them the grace to come forward, to be ministered to.

And Lord, they would leave this place tonight knowing, Lord, that enemy has been destroyed, that Lord, we're going out in victory. So Father, touch lives tonight, it's on You again. Father, if we could do it in our own strength, we would.

Lord, we call upon You. You said, don't be afraid. The Lord, Your God, is with you.

Lord, we acknowledge again Your greatness, acknowledge Your power, acknowledge Your compassion and mercy towards us tonight. Lord, You're a God that never changes. A God that has no variables, no shadow to Him.

Father, let faith arise in them. Lord, that one that is discouraged, that one that the world has been defeated for weeks and months, Father, let tonight be a night of victory. If that's You tonight, just feel free to come forward.

But, the place where You feel comfortable when You come and see me afterwards, when You come and see Pastor afterwards, let's not allow the enemy to gain the upper hand anymore. Again, be a threat to the enemy. Be a threat to the enemy.

God in the Old Testament says, Go and may the devil go to you. If the devil doesn't go to you, you're not well sent. Father, we thank You again for Your Word tonight.

Lord, just seal it again with a very fleshy tablecloth. In Jesus' Name.

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