

Capital City Church - Part 1

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of recognizing spiritual warfare and taking proactive steps to overcome the enemy's attacks in our lives.

Duration: 1:02:22

Scripture: Genesis 9:20-21, 2 Samuel 11:2-4, Jonah 1:1-3, Acts 13:22, Romans 15:4, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:28

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In the video, the speaker shares a personal story about being asked to teach in Malaysia. During their stay, they were shown a video by a Chinese doctor featuring Suzette Hadding, a woman's ministry leader associated with Reinhard Bonnke. Hadding is known for her practical teachings on prayer. In the video, she speaks about putting on the armor of God and emphasizes the importance of meeting the needs of others and giving selflessly. The speaker relates this message to the biblical concept of building the wall and operating in the opposite spirit.

Transcript

Now, chapter divisions, of course, were never part of the original manuscript and sometimes they don't come at the best time, so let me keep on reading. He did with all of his heart and he prospered. After these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came.

He invaded Judah, besieged the fortified cities, thought to break into them for himself. Now notice, after these acts of faithfulness, not after these acts of rebellion, not after these acts of stubbornness, not after these acts of disobedience, but after these acts of faithfulness, the enemy shows up. 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 should be asking why. If you are not a threat to the devil, something is wrong. My father went to one year of Bible college.

He credits the fact that he only went to one year for his success. He didn't have to unlearn. But he went to a Methodist school, sat under a very godly old saint of a man by the name of Samuel Chadwick.

Samuel Chadwick was a real revivalist. He was a man of prayer, wrote a number of books on prayer. It was an all-male school, no distractions.

And on the weekend, they were sent out on preaching assignments to get a little bit of experience. And they had these various Methodist churches in the Yorkshire area of England that they were assigned to. And this godly old man would assemble them together in the chapel, and he would give them their various assignments for the weekend.

And then he would give them a brief word of exhortation. And my father said then he would close in prayer. And at the end of his prayer, he would pronounce his benediction, and then he would pause.

And then he would add, Go, and may the devil go with you. And then he would pause again and say, Because if the devil doesn't go with you, you're not worth sending. That man understood something.

Our job is to give the devil a headache in that sense. And if we are not giving him a constant sort of black eye, if we're not plundering his camp, something is wrong. If we are, he's not going to just sit there passively and say, Help yourself to my kids.

Here is a man that is prospering spiritually. Here is a man that has torn down all the altars that his father erected to Baal and all the other gods and all the idolatry. He's cleaned up the house of God.

And you think the enemy likes all that? You think the enemy enjoys revival? He's just going to sit there and say, Boy, this is great, revival. I don't think so. And so now the enemy comes and he is heading towards Jerusalem and he intends to make war on it.

Notice in verse 2, Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem. That's the city the king is living in. Now, before we go any further, keep your finger there.

And I want to take you to two scriptures. Let's go back to Exodus for a moment. Exodus chapter 13, verse 17.

Now it came about when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was nearer or closer. For God said, lest the people change their minds when they see war and they return to Egypt. Now, the children of Israel in typology have just been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

In other words, they're just babes in Christ. They don't really know this God. They've seen the power of God manifest, but they don't really know Him.

That was the reason they went through the wilderness so God could teach them and give them His law and instruction and so on and so forth. He says, I've borne you on eagle's wings to bring you unto Myself. But at this stage, all they know is that they are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

They're new Christians, if we could put it in a New Testament context. But they are also babes in Christ. And God's purpose is to take them from where they are, which is Egypt, right through the wilderness into the promised land.

And He looks, and obviously the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. The problem is the straight line went right through the land of the Philistines. And God looks at the situation and He says, if I take them that way, that's the closest way to get where I want them to go.

There's going to be war. But My children are not ready for war yet. And therefore, I'm going to bypass the problem.

God is a Father. And just as you that have got children, you know that when you go downtown, you don't send that little toddler two or three years ahead of you to cross a busy intersection, because he cannot grapple with Mack trucks and, you know, logging trucks or whatever it is. And so you pick up that little one, cradle that little one in your arms, walk across that busy intersection, because you know that little toddler is not capable of handling that sort of complex situation at that age.

God looks at the situation and says, if My people get into the Philistine area, there's going to be war, and they don't know how to fight. So therefore, we have to bypass the problem. Now, let's go into the book of Judges chapter 3. This is the same Father, same God, children of Israel.

Verse 1, Now these are the nations which the Lord left to test Israel by them. That is, all those who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan, in order that the generation of the... Excuse me, in order that the generation of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formally. These nations are, notice number one, the Philistines.

Verse 1 again, These are the nations which the Lord left to test Israel, those who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan, in order that they may be taught war. In other words, there is a time when God will bypass the problem. There is another time when God will leave the problem directly in front of you and said, it is now time for you to face the enemy.

There is the Philistine. I've left him there because some of you have never learned how to fight. Now, I know you didn't come to hear that good news tonight.

Our oldest daughter is a missionary in China. Her first year of school was in New Guinea. My wife and I were missionaries there in the early 70s.

She went to an Australian army school called Murray Barracks. It was close by the house where we lived. And she came home from school one day with her first assignment in math.

She had a sheet of problems that she had to do as part of her homework. Two plus two equals, three plus two equals, four minus one equals, you know, three plus three equals, and so on. She came to me and said, Daddy, I've got all this work to do, this homework.

Would you help me? Now, I could have taken that sheet and literally in a matter of 30, 40 seconds solved all of her problems. Two plus two is four, you know, three minus one is two, and just, hey, Lisa, go and play. But I realized that she was now in a new phase of her life.

She was no longer jumping on the trampoline, playing with dolls. She now had to get an education. And so I said to her, Lisa, you need to solve these problems yourself.

What is two plus two? I don't know, Daddy. I don't know. Can I go out and play? After a few minutes, we solved this major problem, two plus two.

Went to the next one, three plus two. I don't know, Daddy. I don't want to do this.

About an hour later, she solved all of those problems. She has a degree today. I don't.

But you see, if I'd have solved her problems, I'd have been getting letters from college. Dear Dad, here's your next assignment. Make sure you have it in by Friday of next week.

And by the way, Dad, we just were told today that there is a major project due by the end of the semester. I'll have details in my next letter, so you have plenty of time to work on it. Now we laugh, don't we? We think that's ridiculous.

But basically, that's what this front row is employed to do. Pastor, solve my problem. Pastor, pray for me.

Pastor, help me. Pastor. There's been times as a pastor where I have sat down with one of my parishioners, I guess you would say, who have come into my office and expected me to solve their problem.

Come in with a problem, expected me to lay hands on them and impart or depart something, and 10 minutes later, go out with their problem solved. And I have sat there and I've looked at them in a loving pastoral way and saying, listen, I believe God has given you a Philistine. And if I kill it, you will never learn war.

And God has left you with this problem so you can learn to fast and pray, so you can learn to use your concordance, so you can learn to bend your knees and get in the place of prayer, so you can cry out to God. But if I solve it for you, you'll never grow. In the book of Revelation, the bride is likened to a city.

That city comes down out of heaven. And you know that the Bible says that city had 12 gates. Those gates are only made of one substance, not made of gold, not made of brass, not made of iron or stainless steel or tin or some other sort of metal.

What are they made of? Pearl. Why does God say that every gate is made of a pearl? Was he just in a sort of, you know, pearly mood or whatever? What is a pearl? A pearl is a problem that's been overcome. Every genuine pearl is created because of a problem.

I've never been an oyster, but you know, if I was, you know, that little bit of grit gets in my shell and I guess it can either irritate me to death and bug me to death or I can secrete that substance and turn what is an irritant into something of incredible value. And the book of Revelation is all about overcoming. To him that overcomes, overcome, overcome, overcome, even as I had to overcome, Jesus said.

In other words, symbolically, God is looking for a company of overcomers. Again, he's looking for a bride, not a wisened up little fearful bride, but a co-regent, somebody that can reign and rule with him. One day we are going to marry the king of kings, we've got to learn how to reign.

One day we're going to marry the captain of the host, we've got to learn how to fight. One day we're going to marry the great physician, we've got to learn how to bind up one another's wounds. One day we're going to marry the judge of all the earth, we've got to learn how to pass righteous judgment.

One day we're going to marry the great shepherd of the sheep, we've got to know how to love the flock and so on and so forth. And this is a dress rehearsal, if you like, for eternity. And God allows certain things in our life to prepare us, to develop us and so on.

And sometimes he will leave a Philistine in front of us and he says, you have not yet learned how to fight. It's, I'm no longer going to bypass the problem, you are now at an age where I can no longer carry you across the road. When's the last time you carried your 21-year-old across the road? You do that with a two-year-old, you don't do it with a 22-year-old.

And God doesn't do it either. This chapter now, if we can go back to it, is all about overcoming. How does Hezekiah overcome the strategy of the enemy? The strategy of the enemy is to overcome him.

The enemy wants to get you back. There are two individuals, if you like, two kings in one sense that are after your life, King Jesus and King Satan, if I can give him that title. The first thing that Hezekiah does, he recognizes that he has an enemy.

Verse 2, when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem. First thing you and I have to do is recognize we have an enemy. And that enemy is out to make war on your life and on my life.

He's making war on the life of a godly man. And the enemy will do everything within his power to sort of sabotage, if you like, what God is doing in your life. Bring fear, doubt, insecurity, try and lure you back into sin, get you to compromise.

Whatever he can do, he will do. He is your adversary, the devil. And he is good at what he does.

And we need to recognize that he is a serious threat. He wants to make war. So first thing that Hezekiah does, he recognizes he has an enemy.

The second thing he does, verse 3, he decided with his officers and his warriors to do something about it. In other words, he is not passive. He doesn't just sort of fold his arm and say, case or us or our whatever will be, will be.

You know, if it's Allah's will, you know, no. He is serious. I am not going to allow the enemy to do what he intends to do.

And he made a conscious decision to combat what the enemy is about to do. And so the thing that he does, he gathers together with his leaders, his warriors, and they cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city, and they helped him. Many people assembled, verse 4, they stuffed up 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? This was one of the great strategies of war.

You remember in the Old Testament, we don't have this problem today because, you know, we get so used to turning on the faucet and there's a supply of water. But you go to other countries, India and other places, and there's entire villages built around one well, a water supply. And, you know, many hours a day they spend lining up at that well, getting their, you know, their water buckets and so on, putting them on their head, walking back to their little, you know, either village or little hut somewhere, because water is essential for life.

You cannot live without water. You may be able to go a few days without food, but you cannot go many days without water. And one of the strategies of war was that you would destroy the source of water.

Remember, Abraham, or Isaac rather, had to dig again the wells that Abraham dug, because what? The Philistines filled them in. So what you would do, you would fill in somebody's well, and therefore he had to go to another well. While he was gone, you would sort of stake your claim and take over his territory.

It was one of the ways in which they conquered, you know, cities and so on. And so Hezekiah looks at the city and he says, we've got a problem. Around this city, we have a supply of water.

Not only do we have a river that runs through the region, but we have got springs. And if the Sennacherib comes, he's going to find an abundance of water. And if there is an abundance of water, he can camp round about this city of Jerusalem and remain camped there.

He doesn't have to go anywhere because there is a water supply. And so what we have to do is cut off that which supplies life to the enemy, what we call in the New Testament repentance. What is it that issues out of my life that feeds the enemy? Jesus said, Satan cometh and what? He has nothing in me.

I do not feed him. He has no legal right, no legal ground. So I have to remove that which will sustain the life of the enemy.

What sustains the life of the enemy? Maybe your anger, maybe your bitterness, maybe your unforgiveness, maybe your pornography, whatever it is, you need to take drastic measures and cut it off. Now, this is not easy. I tell people I am a teacher.

I'll tell you the truth. I'm not an evangelist. I won't lie.

You understand what I mean by that? Evangelists put a spin on things and it sounds so good that it's almost irresistible the way they make the altar call. Come to Jesus tonight, all your problems will be solved and blah, blah, blah. And you think, wow, this is incredible.

And us teachers sit there and say, boy, if you only knew what you're getting yourself into. He's going to slap you on that wheel there and he's the master potter and he's going to put pressure on you and he's going to conform you to the image of his son. But if we told you that up front, you'd never get saved.

So the evangelist comes along with this incredible sort of deal that you're irresistible and then us pastors and teachers have to clean you up afterwards. We got to sort of gut the fish and so on after they catch it. So let me tell you, it is not easy to fill in a spring or to divert a river.

These are not puddles. These are springs. There's life, there's force if you like.

You don't just take a barrel full of sand and dump it there and it absorbs it and that's it. No, this is a spring that has to be capped or stopped. This is a river.

If you've ever tried to divert a river, you take the kids out to some little country place where there's a little bit of a stream and you want them to wade around and so you take the rocks and you begin to make it like a little wading pool and you know how almost impossible it is to stop that river. The water seems to get through and you get some mud and so on. I mean, this is diverting an entire river.

I say that to say this, this is how determined this man is. In other words, this is a major, major thing. I know you can read it in just 10 seconds.

So they stopped at the springs and the river or the stream that flowed through the region. But we've got to take again those drastic measures of cutting off that which enables the enemy to survive. I'm sure some of you may not be cat lovers, others of you may, but maybe all of us at some time or other have opened the door on a cold winter night or morning and there is a little kitten or cat that somehow got strayed and you take pity on that poor critter and you go to the refrigerator and a little bowl of milk and put it down there and guess what? You now have a problem.

Every time you open that door, those little eyes are looking up at you and you think, I should never have fed that thing to begin with. But now that I've fed it, I cannot get rid of it unless I take drastic measures and just have to overlook those woeful, pitiful little eyes that look up and just... We have to do the same thing with the enemy. Do not feed the enemy.

The next thing he does, verse 5, he took courage and he rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down. Again, this is not easy. Number one, he has to be honest.

This is where honesty comes in. He goes around the walls of Jerusalem somewhat like Nehemiah. I don't think they were quite as bad as they were in Nehemiah's day, but he has to go around and he has to identify areas of vulnerability, areas of weakness.

There's a low spot in the wall. There's a crack in the wall there. There's some rocks that are missing over there, weakness there.

Here's another area of weakness. If the enemy comes, these are the places where he can break through. These are the areas where we are most vulnerable.

And every single one of us in this room have got areas of vulnerability, what the Bible calls our besetting sin. And those are the areas that have to be fortified. And it is not again an easy job to strengthen those areas of weakness.

You see, the one thing about the enemy, he is not omniscient. He doesn't know everything there is to know like God, but he does know everything about you. And the way he knows that is he's a fisherman.

Any fishermen here? Good. Okay. And what he does, he comes along with his tackle box and he puts a lure on the end of that line and he casts it into your life.

And he trolls it through your mind. Let's say it's anger. And you know, two or three casts or four or five and he thinks, not working.

This guy is not biting. You know, he's not attracted to this particular problem of anger. Puts the lure back, takes another lure.

Let's say it's lust. Puts that on. This guy has got a problem.

He then writes down in his little palm pilot, if you like, you know, Johnny Brown, lust. He may go through his tackle box and after a while he knows exactly your weakness. And that's why he constantly fishes with the same thing.

He is smart. He's not going to bother you with anger because he knows you don't have a problem with anger. But boy, once he finds your besetting sin, he is not going to let you go.

And he will fish away with that thing and get you just tied up in knots of condemnation and so on and so forth because he's found your Achilles heel, so to speak. And what you've got to do, number one, is be honest and say, listen, I have a problem with this area. This is a weakness.

There's a weakness. There's a weakness. And I have to rebuild that wall.

Let's look at how you rebuild a wall. Turn with me to the book of Ephesians. Keep your finger there and we'll come back to it in a moment.

Ephesians chapter 4, verse 27, do not give the devil a place. Verse 28, let him that steals, steal no longer. Now here's an individual who obviously his problem is stealing.

Now this guy's problem is not just stealing for the fun of it. You get teenagers and they dare one another. I bet you can't go into Walmart and walk out with a pack of cigarettes or something.

And the kid loves the dare. And five minutes later, he's out there flashing his cigarettes. Say, I told you I could do it.

Gets a little buzz out of it. Obviously, that's wrong. But this man stole instead of worked.

How do we know? Because of what Paul says. Let him that steals, steal no longer. Then that does not solve the problem.

That just identifies the problem. He says, the way you solve the problem, he says, get a job. Let him labor.

Performing with his own hands what is good. In other words, this man has spent his lifetime ripping people off, as we would say. Breaking into their homes, taking their jewelry, electronics, whatever it is, if we can modernize it.

And just making people's lives miserable. When my wife and I got married in 1964, our very first job was to work with David Wilkerson in New York City. And one of the jobs I had, along with another friend of mine, was to go to a place called Rikers Island.

It's one of the islands in New York where they have one of the largest penitentiaries in New York City. There was something like 6,000 inmates in that penitentiary and about 90% of them were in for drug offenses. The drug of choice back then, I don't know what it is these days, but the drug of choice in those days was heroin.

And the average addict had between a \$100 and \$200 a day habit, which meant he had to steal \$400 or \$500 worth of material in order to support his habit. So, you know, he'd break into a church like this and walk off with these speakers and maybe the keyboard. And maybe, you know, to replace that, let's say that would cost, you know, \$2,000.

But on the street, he's not going to get \$2,000 for it. He's going to get maybe, what, \$200, \$300 for it the most. Because otherwise you'd go and you'd buy a brand new one.

And so in order to support a \$100, \$200 a habit, he had to steal, you know, \$500, \$600, \$700 worth of material. And there were 6,000 inmates and that was just the tip of the iceberg. Imagine in just one day the destructive value of the drug problem in New York City.

People coming home, opening their apartments only to find out, you know, that their jewelry's gone, your electronics have been stolen, you know, keyboard, whatever it is of value has been stolen. The amount of pain inflicted in one day on New York City by the drug kids alone. Amazing.

And this man has spent his life stealing instead of working. Paul says, you've got to stop. Number two, the next thing you've got to get a job.

Start laboring with your own hands. Then he says, performing with your own hands what is good in order that you may have something to give or something to share with a person that has a need. Now Paul says, start giving.

Let's assume that this guy, and we need to understand, you know, you think, how could somebody go to church and not know it was wrong to steal? Well, I think it's William Barclay that says, if we understand the New Testament church, you know, it's this minority in many ways surrounded by a majority of heathenism. And so the church is, you know, obviously picking up steam, but people are coming into the church and, you know, maybe here's a guy that his whole life has been spent stealing. And one day Paul talks about stealing.

He says, boy, that's news to me. I didn't know that was wrong. You know, he says, what should I do about it? Paul says, you stop today, get yourself a job and so on.

You know, a few weeks later, he testifies and said, I've got a great job. I've never had so much money, obviously single. And he says, what do I do? And Paul says, I'll tell you what to do.

You see that lady on the back row, you know, husband died a few weeks ago. She's got three little toddlers. She's having difficulty making ends meet.

We've been trying to help her as a supporter a little bit, but you know, Johnny's got a birthday coming up, her oldest boy, and he's been talking about, you know, roller blades or whatever the equivalent was in the New Testament. I'll tell you what you do. You go down to Walmart, buy some roller blades and give them to Johnny for his birthday, because I know she can't afford to give him some.

He's going to be incredibly disappointed. So why don't you write him a little note? Dear Johnny, you know, sorry to hear that your daddy has been killed. But I want you to know there's another daddy that's promised to look after you.

Happy birthday. And Paul says, by the way, don't sign it. I mean, in essence, that's what Paul is saying here.

Look for needs and begin to give. Why? That's how you build the wall. You operate in the entirely opposite spirit.

This man has been taking everything is about me and mine and ripping you off. Now he starts to give. He gets a job and he starts to give.

That may not be a problem. I hope it isn't. Next one, maybe.

Verse 29, let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth. The margin of my Bible says, let no rotten word literally come 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. My dad used to say the tongue being in a wet place is very apt to slip.

Some of you may have that problem. And, you know, we love, certain people love the latest gossip, and it's very easy, isn't it, to just tear down somebody and spread all the muck and mire around, so to speak. And Paul says, stop doing that.

It is destructive. Instead, a word of edification. You see, it is the opposite.

You've been, you know, you've been destroying people's personalities. You know, guess what? Have you heard about Mrs. Brown? No. What's happened? Well, you know, Susie, her daughter? Yeah.

Well, she's pregnant. Oh, no. You know, and the news spreads all over town.

Instead, you should call up and say, listen, why don't we do something for Mrs. Brown? Her daughter's pregnant. I can't imagine what she's going through. We need to pray.

We need to support her. You know, I want to go over there and just console her a little bit, be with her at this time. This is the most, you know, there's always a different reaction.

Edify, try and build up instead of tearing down. The next one, verse 30, do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. How do you grieve the Spirit? By allowing bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander.

He says, put it away from you along with all malice and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving. You grieve the Holy Spirit when you are not willing to forgive. And instead, you allow bitterness and anger and wrath and all these things to just fester away towards that individual.

And Paul says, get rid of that, be tenderhearted, be kind, be compassionate, be forgiving, because God at least did that for you. The least you can do is turn now and do that for somebody else. There you have, if you like, three separate problems that are overcome.

First of all, the need, the problem, stop doing it, but that doesn't rebuild the wall. Stop doing it is good, but it doesn't rebuild the wall. You rebuild the wall by doing the opposite.

And so, we have to rebuild the wall. Whatever your weakness is, you know, find the opposite of it and start practicing that. As the pastor said, you know, holiness unto the Lord.

If you've had a problem with uncleanness, then confess the very opposite, you know. The next thing he does, verse 5, we're back now in 2 Chronicles. He erected towers on it.

He rebuilt the wall and he erected towers on it. Now, I don't know, I have not done any more research into this, whether Hezekiah was the first one to erect towers on the walls of Jerusalem or whether they'd been broken down and he rebuilt them, but it says here he erected them. So, I'm assuming he was the one that built the towers.

Now, the towers were an early warning system. All across America and no doubt Canada, we have huge satellite dishes at strategic places that sort of constantly are scanning the heavens in case, you know, one of these rogue nations, North Korea, somewhere launches an attack and we can hopefully blast that thing to smithereens before it lands in North America. You know, we have surveillance on all the time.

In the Old Testament, obviously, they didn't have all that sophisticated electronic gadgetry and so they had watchmen. And the watchmen would be in the tower. He would have the vantage point.

Obviously, he was towering above everybody else and his job was to scan the horizon, you know, a certain area, another watchman this area, another watchman this area, depending on the size of the city, you know, different watchmen. And if he saw a cloud of dust on the horizon, he had to discern. Is this an advancing army? Are we in trouble or is this a bunch of camels and the, you know, traders coming to the local bazaar to, you know, sell their spices or whatever? And once he determined that it was an advancing

army, he would sound the alarm.

He would blow that trumpet and then somebody else would pick it up, somebody else, and around that city, the warning would go out to the people out in the fields with their flocks and so on. They would gather their things together. They would head back in.

The last one in, of course, they would lock the gates and they were safe. Why? Because somebody sounded the alarm. We need to do the same thing.

The Bible says in the New Testament, the equivalent of the watchtower is be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, goes around as a roaring lion. Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

We have all sorts of admonitions to be alert, to be watchful of the enemy. In other words, we can precipitate, if you like, what the enemy is about to do and cut him off at the pass, so to speak. And so he builds these watchtowers and he establishes somebody in them.

We need to have that same mentality. Everything in America, and I'm sure Canada, has changed since 9-11. Before that, we were convinced that we are the greatest power in the world.

We've got the greatest weaponry and so on and so forth and all of this, and nobody's going to touch us. We're American, sort of thing. And after 9-11, we realized, listen, we are vulnerable.

And now we're on the alert. You go to any airport, there's all the screening and so on, orange and all the different degrees of alertness. We're constantly vigilant and we've got to be the same.

We've got to constantly watch out for the attack of the enemy. If we were literally at war right now, we would not just sort of walk out of this building at the end of the meeting. We'd have guards or somebody out there, you know, come on, it's safe right now, you know, right? We'd have a totally different approach, but we are under attack.

The enemy is alive and well, and he is going to set up things, you know, the spiritual landmines, if you like, and we've got to be... the Bible says we should not be ignorant concerning his devices, concerning his methods. And he's got all these, if you like, booby traps for us. You know, World Wide Web is one of them, you know, you can type certain things in before you know it, you're on some pornographic website, you know.

And we've got to guard against it. Pastor told me about his daughter, I think she was about 10 or 11, had to do a project on small animals or something, type something in about small animals, and before she knew it, she was on a website about bestiality. I mean, all sorts of tricks that the enemy has now, you know.

Thankfully, she didn't know anything about it and asked her daddy, and of course, he shut it down quickly. But, you know, it's amazing, you know, how the enemy is just so deceitful. You know, even somebody did a report on the White House.

Before you know it, you're into something about Monica Lewinsky. That was a few years ago. But, you know, something as innocent as just typing in about doing some research about the White House.

I mean, there's all sorts of things the enemy is doing, and we've got to be aware of it. So, he erected towers. The next thing he does in verse 5, he made weapons and shields in great number.

Now, you'll notice that up until now, he has been defending himself, but now he is prepared to go on the offensive. He has made weapons and shields. He is not going to sit there when the enemy comes.

He is going to retaliate. He is going to fight back. About 22 years ago, my wife and I, we were living in New Zealand at the time.

We were asked to, I was asked to do some teaching up in a place called Penang, up at the northern part of Malaysia, and stayed with a wonderful Chinese doctor, beautiful home. And one afternoon, my wife and I were sitting there. Our youngest daughter was with us at the time.

And he said, listen, would you like to watch a video? I said, sure. And so, he put a video on, and I was introduced to a woman's ministry by the name of Suzette Hattie. I don't know if you've ever heard of her, but she was for many, many years associated with Reinhard Bonnke, still is, very good friends.

But she would go in advance of his crusades, rally the churches together, and teach on prayer. And she possibly is one of the best teachers on prayer that I've come across, because all very practical, you know, sort of stuff she's learned in the trenches, so to speak. And this particular video was made in a large church in London called Kensington Temple.

And she is speaking about putting on the armor of God. And she's got with her a little sort of a kid's plastic toy armor. And she calls up, I think he's the associate pastor, there's somebody sitting on the stage.

And she said, could I solicit your help? And he comes up, and she puts on this helmet and talks about the helmet of salvation. She puts on a breastplate and talks about the breastplate of righteousness, you know, girds a sort of a belt around his loins and gives him a sword and a shield and shoes on his feet and, you know, goes through the various parts of the armor. And then she said, the reason that we put on the whole armor of God is because we have an adversary.

And she said, the enemy is out to try and destroy us. And so she said, I'll show you what I mean. She said, okay, you are the Christian, you've got on the full armor.

And she said, I'm going to be the devil. And she reaches over to the top of the piano, and she's got a dagger, a knife of some sort, sword. And she says, okay, let's fight.

And she goes like this, you know, and she's stabbing away at this guy. And he moves his shield and she stabs away, he moves his shield. And she said, okay, okay, stop, stop, stop.

Says to congregation, see, he's like most Christians, he never used his sword once. I've never forgotten that. That was worth, and I mean it, that was worth my entire trip to Malaysia.

Never used his sword once. Now that doesn't mean that the shield isn't wrong. Obviously, it's part of the armor.

But most of the time, all we do is plead the blood, you know, or move the shield around, plead the blood, plead the blood, you know. No, we have weapons. And the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they're mighty through God to the point down of struggles.

Jesus used the Word of God. Now you did pretty well a few minutes ago when I said, what were the gates made of? At least a couple of you said pearls. So now I'm going to ask you another question.

Now that you've graduated, you know, new levels, new devils, or somebody said, questions get tougher. What's the difference between the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and our loins girt about with truth? Okay, the Bible says you girt about your loins with truth, but you also have the Word of God that is the sword of the Spirit. You got truth? You got the sword of the Spirit? Okay, that's pretty good.

Well, the Bible says the sum of thy word is truth. The sum of thy word, the totality of God's Word is the truth. And it is that belt of truth that the scabbard or the sword attaches to, right? You draw your sword from that scabbard.

And so you use the truth of God's Word against the enemy, right? So here is for guys, pretty young girl, and there is a tendency to lust, but you're a Christian. You know you shouldn't be doing that. And so you take that sword and you go, Jesus wept.

Word of God? It's the Word of God, isn't it? Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. No. You see, the sum of thy word is truth.

This is the logos. But from that logos, you need a rhema word, a specific word. Turn these stones into bread, Jesus.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That's why it's important to know the Word of God so that you can use skillfully, if you like, and take a specific word. You wake up in the morning, you feel lousy, it's not the flu or the swine flu, it's condemnation.

So you take out that sword. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. That's the Word of God.

Now, you need a specific word. There is therefore now no condemnation. And so we have to use the weapons.

Hezekiah makes weapons, weapons and shields. Yes, he's ready to use the shield of faith, but he is also ready to use the sword of the Spirit. And most Christians, again, never use the weapons that we should.

We're always in that defensive mode, plead the blood, please the blood, and the blood almost becomes like a rabbit's foot in that sense. We've got to understand that what we are really saying about the blood is that 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ dealt with the enemy. And it's on the basis of that blood that we are free.

And we remind the enemy, 2,000 years ago, you were stripped of your power. Jesus Christ made an open show of you, triumphed over you, and on the basis of that finished work, I can come against you. But we have other weapons, the name of Jesus, that the name of Jesus every knee has to bow, the Word of God, a weapon, and so on.

We've got to use those weapons, not just sit there sort of cowering and hope that shield is going to cover us. I mean, it will, but it's not the only piece of equipment. The next thing He does, which is in conjunction with this, verse 6, He appointed officers over the people.

And then He says, And He spoke encouragingly to those, rather, He gathered them in the square of the city, and He spoke encouragingly to them, saying, 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 only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us to fight our battles. And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Now, what is He doing? He is using the Word of God to encourage the people.

He gathers them together in the town plaza, if you like. They're in the square of the city, and we've got walls all around, so obviously there's a big area. Everybody's called together, and He speaks the Word of God to them.

Listen, don't be afraid, don't be dismayed, don't be fearful, be strong, be courageous, don't panic because of the multitude that is with Him, for the one that is with us is greater. Where did He get that from? Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 20. There was a specific promise.

Verse 1, When you go out to battle against your enemies, in this case it's the enemy coming to you, and you see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them. For the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt is with you. And it shall come about when you're approaching the battle, the priest shall come and speak to the people, and in this case it's the king, and say to them, Hear, O Israel, you're approaching the battle against your enemies today.

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. Almost word for word. When do you panic? You panic when you're outgunned, when you're outnumbered.

You know, if you're walking down the street alone, there's five thugs coming towards you, you're going to panic, but when there's five of you and one of them, you're pretty confident. And God says, Listen, when there are more numerous than you, don't be afraid, don't panic, don't tremble, God is with you. Don't let fear come in, but He will fight for you.

And so He begins to encourage them with the Word of God. In Romans chapter 15, I mentioned this to the Bible school students this morning, it says, verse 4, Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through the perseverance and encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. The Word of God is given to encourage us so that we might have hope.

I've mentioned a good friend of mine, Winky Prattney. Winky is an absolutely brilliant genius of a man. He's written numerous books, does a lot of huge meetings with youth.

And I've seen Winky stand up in front of hundreds of people and hold up the Bible and make the statement, I want you to know this Bible is full of mistakes. And people sort of, you know, wow, that's pretty brazen to say something like that. How did this guy get invited? You know, he doesn't even believe in the Word of God.

He says, No, I want you to know this Bible is just full of mistakes. How many of you believe the Bible is full of mistakes? You know, and then somebody maybe... He says, I can prove it to you. It began with Adam's mistake, followed by Eve's mistake, followed by Noah's mistake, you know, followed by this mistake and that mistake.

But imagine if it wasn't full of mistakes. You see, I say this Bible is full of stories before and after stories. You know, the ads where you've got some skinny little runt and then he takes this protein powder and the

next thing, you know, he's a... Well, the Bible is like that.

You know, here's a guy that's failed, you know, he's committed adultery, he's done this, he's got drunk and disobeyed God and so on. And the next scene is, you know, God redeems him. I mean, this is a book of redemption.

But imagine if it wasn't full of mistakes. Here you are, you come out of a life of absolute, you know, filth and somebody says, Read the Bible, it will encourage you. So he starts reading Genesis.

Every single person, perfect, perfect, perfect, perfect, perfect. Nobody ever got drunk, nobody ever committed adultery, nobody ever stole, nobody ever got discouraged, nobody... Wouldn't that be encouraging? Now we know pastor could identify, but the rest of us, you know, through the encouragement of the Scriptures. So if you've blown it, maybe you've had a call of God and you've blown it and you read the story of Noah, not Noah but Jonah.

Word of the Lord came to Jonah, very clear word, go to Nineveh. What does he do? Goes the opposite direction, totally disobeys God. Next chapter, what does it say? The word of the Lord came a second time.

Hey, I'll take that. God is the God of the makeup test, second chance and third sometimes, you know, you commit adultery, you know, your life's over, what about David? Man after God's own heart. Noah got drunk, uncovered himself and I mean, you know, the Bible is full of all sorts of sin but there is the redemptive side, you know.

You see again God's opinion after this man repents and so on. David, a man after God's own heart. Abraham supposedly staggered not at the promises.

Well, hey, I would say he staggered a little bit, you know. But through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. He gathers them together and he encourages them with the word of God.

Now, let's... we're getting to an end here. The enemy finally shows up. Notice what he does, verse 10, after... oh, verse 9, after this, Sennacherib the king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was still besieging Lachish with all of his forces with him against Hezekiah king of Judah and against all Judah who were in Jerusalem saying, thus says Hezekiah king of Assyria, what are you trusting that you're remaining in Jerusalem under siege? Is not Hezekiah deceiving 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 they're making fun.

Listen, don't trust Hezekiah, you know. He says God's going to deliver you guys, you're crazy. Has not the same Hezekiah taken away the high places, my Bible says his high places and his altars and said to Judah and Jerusalem, you shall worship before one altar and on it you shall burn incense.

I think my understanding of that is here is obviously a heathen king. He's heard what Hezekiah has done. Hezekiah has torn down all these altars to the false gods and he's basically saying, you know, you guys at one time, at least you had a multitude of gods to help you.

Now this crazy guy has left you with only one God to trust in. You know, you're nuts, you know, just give up right now. You know, why remain under siege? We've got you surrounded.

You can't go in or get out of this city. So you might as well just, you know, put up the white flag of surrender. Do you not know verse 13, what I and my fathers have done to all the people of the lands where the gods of the nations of the lands able at all to deliver their land from my hand.

Who was there among all the gods of the nations, which my father has not utterly destroyed who could deliver his people out of my hand that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand. Boy, I mean, the enemy will come with all sorts of accusations. Listen, you know, we have taken bigger cities on this.

You, you, you guys are crazy. We, you know, I and my fathers, we've taken city after city, nation after nation. What makes you think that you're going to make it? You know, enemy comes along today.

Listen, I took out Jimmy Swaggart. I took out Ted Haggard. I took out, you know, Todd Bentley.

I took, you know, who'd you think you are? Oh, he's good. Now, therefore, verse 15, do not let Hezekiah deceive you and mislead you like this. Do not believe him for no God of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my father's.

How much less should your God deliver you from my hand? Verse 17, he also wrote letters to insult the Lord God of Israel, speak to him saying, oh, as the nations of the lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah shall not deliver his people from my hand. They called out with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall to terrify them so that they might take the city or to frighten them to terrify. I mean, he will do everything in his power to try and put fear in you and the fact that you are not going to make it.

And then verse 20, and the last thing, but King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos prayed about this and they cried out to heaven. And the Lord sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the King of Assyria. And so he returned in shame to his own land.

And when he entered the temple of his God, some of his children killed him with a sword and the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of the King of Assyria and from the hand of all others and guided them on every side. Last thing he does, he prays. Now, the wonderful thing about this prayer is that even though he is a King, he prays with the prophet Isaiah.

In other words, he doesn't say, listen, let me handle this. I'm the King. I can make it by myself.

No, one will chase a thousand to 10,000. We are to bear one another's burdens. We need to go to a brother or sister.

If we are going through some sort of attack and we need to say, listen, would you stand with me? This is a man who is not ashamed to say, listen, we are in a bit of a bind. I need you to help me right now. Would you pray as I pray that God would take this situation? Because in the natural, it is impossible.

We are surrounded. We are surrounded by, you know, 200,000 people almost, because you recall, if you want the rest of the story, you can read about it in Isaiah 37. You've got more details.

But when God sent that angel, that one angel, he destroyed 185,000 Assyrians, one angel. That's a pretty good size army, almost 200,000 troops surrounding the city, shouting out on the walls, you're not going to make it, trying to terrify them, write letters of insult and so on, bragging about all the other kingdoms they've taken and so on and so forth. But prayer, if God be for us.

And what Hezekiah says, listen, don't be afraid of the multitude because the Lord our God is with us. He believed that and he prayed. God sends an angel and the angel destroys every mighty warrior and saves them.

Now, I would love to rewrite this chapter. This is the way I would like it to read. After these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came and invaded Judah, besieged the fortified cities, sought to break into them for himself.

Verse 1, when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, he prayed with Isaiah the prophet and the Lord sent an angel. That's the way I'd like it. Hey, I don't want to have to rebuild walls.

I don't want to have to divert rivers. I don't want to have to build watchtowers. I don't feel like fighting.

Lord, take care of it, would you? Bleed the blood. You see, there are things sometimes that we have to do. It wasn't that prayer was a last resort.

That's not the point. The point is there are other things. You can pray till you're blue in the face, but if you don't cut off the water supply, get rid of the Playboy magazines or whatever it is.

Unless you repent, you can go on a fast for the next 60 days. In other words, prayer does have its place, but so does repentance and so does just practical other things where God says, listen, I've given you the armor. You wrestle.

I don't do the wrestling for you. You fight. You do the warring.

Here's the sort of spirit. Here are the scriptures. Get into the Word of God.

Learn who you are in Christ. Begin to confess that. Begin to use that and so on.

I want you to grow up. I'm leaving you with a Philistine, and if you overcome that Philistine, you'll be better off for it. You'll go from what? Faith to faith.

David killed the lion and the bear, and then he went after Goliath, and we will go from faith to faith, victory to victory, and so God allows these things in our life in order to, number one, demonstrate His own greatness and His own power. I've told Bible school students, one of the most dangerous prayers you can pray, Lord, I want to know you. You can know God one of two ways, theologically or doctrinally.

For instance, I could give you a bunch of scriptures on healing. Write this down, you know, I am the Lord that healeth thee, so by Him stripes shall be healed, and you've got all the facts now in front of you. That's one way, but that's theological.

The practical way of knowing God heals, got to be sick. Oh, Lord, I don't really want to know You as Healer. I just want to know the scriptures.

Isn't that right? Jehovah-Jireh, my provider, got to have a need in order to have provision. See, it's dangerous to say, Lord, I really want to know You. Next moment, you're on your bed sick or something.

Well, you said you want to know me. You know. See, the names of God, you've got to be in that situation to prove that those things fit.

Isn't that right? And God allows those things to mature us many times, you know. Oh, I went to Bible school. I know God heals, but one day in New Guinea about a week before we were due to leave, we had all our things packed.

We were going to take a liner, actually a cruise ship. It was cheaper than flying to Australia and then to New Zealand. And our daughter, the one that's in China now, came home from school complaining of just a stiff neck and not feeling good, lay down on the bed.

Within an hour, she was not able to move hardly, couldn't get up to go to the bathroom, complaining against us about this headache. My wife and I gathered around. My wife said, God just gave me a word.

I said, what? She said, I don't know what it means. I just keep getting this word, meningitis. I didn't know what meningitis was.

I guess, you know, I figured it was some sort of disease, but we didn't know the symptoms or anything. She said, you know, our medical book that we had was packed. All of our belongings were packed.

We had a thunderstorm that night, but I called the doctor. A Chinese doctor came and examined her. He said, she's got meningitis.

Confirmation. We rushed her to the hospital. One other girl in the ward, meningitis.

We had prayer at the YWAM base. My wife stayed with her all night. About six o'clock in the morning, my wife said, God just said it's over.

By seven o'clock, my daughter was up wanting to have breakfast and so on. The doctor came in, examined her. He said, I don't know.

He said, it obviously wasn't meningitis, but she's healed. She's okay. He didn't use the word healed.

If it wasn't for the fact that we had two confirmations, that my wife just out of the blue said, God gave me meningitis, and the doctor said meningitis. They could not understand it, but you see, I can testify God heals, not just theologically, but practically. That's the best way to know God.

He's my shield. He's my butler. He's my high tower and so on, but you've got to be in those situations in order to prove that God is who He says He is, and so the most dangerous prayer you can pray.

Lord, I want to know you, but let's go back. Overcome. Now, I talked you out of an altar call tonight because I'm not going to do your homework for you, but at the same time, I think there are times when, you know, maybe we face a crisis and we need to go like Hezekiah or somebody else, and if you're in that situation, I'd be glad to pray, or anybody else, I'm sure, here to pray, but basically, God wants you to rise up, rebuild that wall, and overcome the enemy.

Bless you.

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