

Glad Tidings Spring Convention B1

by David Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's presence and resisting the enemy's attacks in order to live in victory and triumph over spiritual adversity.

Duration: 46:25

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 31:20

Topics: "Christian Life", "Victory in Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the necessity of living in victory and resisting the enemy, drawing from the story of King Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles. Hezekiah's reforms and faithfulness to God led to spiritual prosperity, but also invited attacks from the enemy, illustrating that spiritual growth often comes with increased adversity. Ravenhill encourages believers to recognize their adversary, take decisive action against sin, and cut off the sources that sustain the enemy's influence in their lives. He stresses the importance of building spiritual walls to protect oneself from the enemy's attacks and to cultivate a life that reflects God's glory.

Transcript

Turning about toward the gate, God's people gathered to seek revival. This is cassette number 3 in this series. David Ravenhill is our speaker, speaking on Living in Victory and Resisting the Enemy, a message from 2 Chronicles chapters 31 and 32, given on Monday evening, June 5, 2000, Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Abington, Massachusetts.

Here to introduce our speaker is Pastor Paul Taylor. ...nights to get home from work, get a bite to eat and get over here. But we do welcome you here at Glad Tidings Assembly of God Church and are believing for God to do some great things.

Let me lay some ground rules, you might say. Sometimes when you come into another person's church or another body's church, you feel intimidated or you feel like you have to behave yourself. We're all here to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

And we want you to be free to worship the Lord and just to seek His face tonight. Seek Him to come into your life and strengthen you. That's why this conference, or what this conference is really all about, is the fact that we want more of God.

And we are believing for revival in New England. We're doing everything that we possibly can to join pastors and churches together across denominational lines to see that that takes place. And we believe that that is causing great attack, a great attack upon the church.

And we can only say we've experienced it in tremendous force here in this church. And that's why the title of the theme of our conference is Turning the Battle to the Gate. And we realize that we must turn the battle to the gate.

The enemy is trying to break down. The enemy is trying to destroy the city of God which he has established. And we're just turning that battle right back to the gate and believing for God to give us the victory.

So that's what this is all about. As we worship tonight, we encourage you to just open up and let God come down and visit you in a powerful way. And not only visit you, as Brother Ravenhill spoke last night, but our desire is to be His abode.

That He will be with us wherever we go. And as our saying here is we want to break the mold of the church. We want to get out of the church and do the work of God.

This is just practice, so to speak. But there's the real battle out there. And so we ask you just to let it happen.

Let God move. We're not here to make something happen. We're here to allow God to do what He wants to do.

And I really believe as we do that, God will. He's more than willing to do all. In fact, what? Far beyond what we can even imagine this evening.

The Scripture is in Isaiah 28, verses 5 and 6. In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people and for a spirit of judgment to Him that sitteth in judgment and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate. Our prayer is tonight that God is going to give each of us that strength to turn the battle to the gate. And as you know, the enemy seems to be turning the heat up each and every day.

The world is getting more and more evil. It's time for the church to get more and more holy, more and more righteous in Christ. Of course, we know He is the one that equips us and provides for us.

Let's stand to our feet tonight as we begin an opening prayer. Hallelujah, Jesus. Hallelujah, Lord God.

Oh, we glorify Your name. We glorify Your name, Jesus. Oh, Lord Jesus.

Hallelujah. Inhabit the praises of Your people this night, God. Oh, we're here, Lord Jesus.

Hallelujah. Lord, we want Your attention, God. You more than well know our needs, God.

And we cry out as we prepare our hearts tonight to meet with You and to receive from You, Lord God. Strengthen the hands of Your people, Father. Lord, teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight, God.

Oh, Lord, strengthen us in such a marvelous way. Lord, that we'll go from this place, not having said we've gone to church, Lord, but having said we have been in Your presence tonight, we have been with You,

Lord Jesus, and that we go from here, Lord Jesus, with just a little bit more understanding, Father, a little more strength and knowledge, God, of what You want for us and what You want to do through us. We thank You that You have supplied every need, Father, every need, Jesus.

This night we believe that, God, that You, Lord Jesus, are able to meet every need that is here, Lord God, every person that has come in here this night. You know the needs that they have. You know the burdens that they carry, Lord.

Lord, we pray for Your anointing to break the yoke, Jesus. We pray, Lord, for a freedom to worship You this evening. That God, as we worship, Lord, that You will begin to do something new and fresh and alive in every person's life, Father.

And, Lord, from this place, there's going to go ripples. God, ripples, Lord Jesus. Spiritual ripples out into our communities, God.

Oh, Lord, we pray for souls, souls, souls to be saved. Transform, God. We come, Lord, in Your name, believing it to happen, Jesus.

And we'll thank You. And we'll praise You for it this evening, God. In Your Son, Jesus Christ's name, amen.

And amen. And I do pray for you, my children, that I come to bring you life. Do not hide anyone.

Come to worship me. Give me all that you have. Do not hide in the darkness.

Jesus. I just had an overwhelming sense of the holiness of God. And that we need to walk so softly in His holiness, in His holy presence.

And I thought about Moses when he went up to the mountain and he saw the burning bush. And the Lord told him to remove his sandals for the ground that he stood on was holy ground. And we desire that same encounter with God, that same coming into His presence.

But we can't take it lightly. Oh, Jesus. It's holy.

Yes. Holiness that we can't comprehend. We need to tread softly.

Jesus. Oh, God. Oh, God.

Oh, God. We can only come through the blood. Yes.

Your righteousness, Lord. It's His covering that protects us in His holiness. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. Have a time of inspection. Begin to look into our own hearts.

Brother Ravenhill spoke last night on the abiding presence of Jesus Christ. The environment that is necessary for Him to abide with us. And it's the same in a corporate setting.

The environment that is necessary for Him to abide here. Oh, hallelujah. Let's just take a few moments just to begin to search our hearts and ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and to prepare us.

Prepare us for the Word. To prepare us to become more like Jesus. That that Word might transform us.

That that Word might reveal things in our lives that maybe we don't want to see. We may even know that they're there. And I'm sure we do, if we're all honest.

But we have turned from dealing with those issues. God is getting the Bridegroom or the Bride ready for the Bridegroom. And it's time for the Bride to prepare herself.

The book of Revelation says, She getteth herself ready. She maketh herself ready. Oh, God.

The world looks at the church today many times and laughs because the church is undone. It's not ready. We are here.

God doesn't work with numbers necessarily. It doesn't matter how many is here. He just is looking for those who will bow their knee and say, Lord, here am I. Take the coal off the altar.

Take the coal off the altar, Lord. Oh, cleanse my lips. Cleanse my lips.

Lord, I'm an unclean vessel. Forgive me of my sins. Oh, Jesus.

Let's just take some time. We have time. We have time.

We're here. Honestly, no special music tonight or any night. We're not here to entertain.

We're here to come into His presence. Because it's only in His presence that we can be changed, transformed. It's in His presence that He reveals in a loving and a merciful and gracious way our faults or our need for change.

Oh, God does it so wonderfully. Don't fear coming to Him. Don't fear hiding in those shadows, in that darkness.

But come into the light. He's not there to embarrass us. He's there to make it right and to cleanse and to make us after His own image.

Come to Him tonight. It's been such a privilege and a joy to have with me, with us, but being able myself to spend some personal time with Brother Ravenhill, pick his brain, talk about the Lord, talk about things that are taking place all around the United States and world, just to be able to be with him. If you haven't been with us, obviously many of you haven't because you've had your own churches to go to yesterday.

The services or the messages are on tape and you can purchase them from Brother Sanders in the back later. Thank you, Brother Sanders. All of the services are on audio cassette.

Awesome word. Amen? Those that have been here, awesome word. Deep, hits you between the eyes.

He's one of those that can smile and cut you. I've said that to several people before. How do you get away with saying some of the things that you do? When I say it, people get upset at me.

They say, you've got to smile when you cut them. Hallelujah. He's given us some great insight into the Word of God.

And that's the reason that I brought Brother Ravenhill. Last year when we were at Awake America and I heard him and then given the book, For God's Sake Grow Up, which is a great title, which is also a great message for the church. All pastors say amen.

All people say amen. Praise God. One of the greatest detriments to the church being fruitful for the Lord is the fact that many are still babes in Christ.

And there's no doubt there's a special place for praise and worship. Dancing and shouting. I love to dance and shout with the best of them and worship the Lord.

But it is truly the Word that matures us. It's the Word that causes us to look into the mirror and see ourselves in the light of Christ and to recognize that there's a lot of things that need to be changed. And Brother Ravenhill has done that very, very well over the last two evenings.

Last night's message is still lingering with me as I ponder the thoughts of Christ abiding with me and the environment that I must create and its holiness as we were just singing and crying out to God for Him to dwell with me. What a difficult thing that is sometimes today in our society. Television, you just turn it on and it's not on for but a mere minute or so and you realize you're battling right then and there.

It just seems like every place that we turn to, it's the things that come against our minds and so forth. It's a constant battle. And yet we have to work with the Lord and the Holy Spirit to continually fight for that atmosphere and that environment, for the Holy Spirit to abide with us.

And I'm convinced that it can happen because God's Word tells us it can happen. And I'm so thankful for the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and I'm determined, and I know you are in your lives, to take the Holy Spirit out of the church and into the workplace. That's the New Testament church.

All the acts of the Apostle, very few of them happened in the church. They all happened out there. And that's what we're endeavoring to do, is to be so full of God when we come in here that when we go out there, it can't help but splash over on somebody else and that we will walk boldly with the Lord.

Brother Ravenhill, thank you so much for coming. Come and share the Word with us this evening. Praise God.

Let's just pray again, shall we? Father, we just thank you for this time of lingering in your presence. Thank you, Lord, there's no substitute. The Lord, that anointing oil can't be duplicated.

And Father, we just again cherish these times when we can lay aside the concerns of the world and just draw aside the concerns of the world and lay aside and meet with you. Lord, be refreshed. You said, Lord, be holding.

We're changed. Lord, we desire again that transformation. Lord, we might more and more, Lord, reflect your very beauty, your very life, Lord, would be manifest through us.

So, Lord, come and take this Word again, Lord, and quicken it to us, we pray. Have your way in Jesus' name, amen. If you have your Bible with you, turn with me to 2 Chronicles, chapter 31, and then into chapter 32.

And I want to speak to you about how to live in victory, how to resist the enemy. I find there are so many defeated Christians, and we have got to learn to triumph. The Bible says He always causes us to triumph, not seldom, as is the case of some, but He always causes us to triumph.

And this is the story of a wonderful man by the name of Hezekiah. Hezekiah ascended the throne after his father. His father was a wicked man, an idolater, a man that caused his sons to pass through the fire,

erected all sorts of high places, burned incense to the bales, and so on and so forth.

His final act was to turn the nation of Israel away from God and go into the house of God and close up the temple, seal it off from the people. And then Hezekiah comes along and he tears down all the high places and he cleanses the house of God and he brings about tremendous reformation in the nation of Israel. And his life is summarized in verse 20 and verse 21 of chapter 31.

And it says, Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah. He did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. It doesn't matter whether you do it before your denomination or before the elders or before your husband or wife.

What really counts is whether you do it before the Lord. Hezekiah was not trying to influence man. He was wanting to bring pleasure to the heart of God.

And so it says, He did that which was good and right and true before the Lord his God. And every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all of his heart and he prospered. That's a pretty good summary of an individual's life.

I've often said and I've told my wife if I die before she does and there's enough money left for a tombstone, that I would like these two verses on the tombstone just modified a little bit. I'd like it to read this way, And David did throughout all America 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 law and in commandment, he sought God with all of his heart and he prospered.

Pretty good summary. I don't think anybody would want to add anything or subtract anything. Everything he did, he did because of the blessing of God upon his life.

Why was the blessing of God upon his life? Because he prospered. Now as a teacher, one of my pet peeves are chapter divisions. And if you have a modern translation, I'm reading from the New American.

Somebody said there were ten versions, five wise and five foolish. But you'll notice verse 20 begins with a bold print. Meaning that that's a new paragraph.

And chapter divisions are not inspired. They were never there originally. So let me read it the way it was written.

Just from verse 21 on. And every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in law 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.

And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib would come, and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem. Notice after these acts of faithfulness, not after these acts of rebellion, not after these acts of sinfulness, not after these acts of perversion, but after these acts of faithfulness the enemy comes. A good sign that you're prospering spiritually will be that you're under the attack of the enemy.

Now I know you didn't come and sign up and pay money to hear that tonight, but it's true. A good sign, let me say that again, a good sign that you're prospering spiritually is that the enemy is attacking. I had the privilege of being four years in Kansas City.

And Mike Bickle had a saying, I don't know if it was from him originally, but he used to say, New levels, new devils. That as we progress spiritually, the enemy unleashes an attack against us. And so I measure my spiritual growth by the amount of spiritual adversity.

And the amount of strategies again that the enemy sort of brings against me. And so here is a man that is prospering, here is a man that is seeking God, here is a man that is doing tremendous things for God. And of course the enemy doesn't like that.

My father went to a Methodist Bible school for one year, sat on a very godly old man by the name of Samuel Chadwick. Samuel Chadwick wrote books on revival, he was a tremendous man of God, things on the baptism of the Spirit and so on. And it was an all-boys school, training men for the ministry.

And on the weekends they would be assigned various teaching posts around the Yorkshire area of England. And they were given their preaching assignments, what church they were to be preaching at that particular weekend, the sort of student teachers. They were given the times and the addresses, and how to get there and so on.

Samuel Chadwick used to bring them into the chapel and give them a little word of exhortation, send them out for the weekend, and then he would pray for them. And my father said many times at the end of his prayer, he would close with these words, Go and may the devil go with you. Because if the devil doesn't go with you, you're not worth sending.

That's a good Methodist. You see obviously we are called to tear down the ranks of the enemy. We are called to undermine what the enemy is doing, and likewise the enemy is called to undermine what we are doing.

We have an adversary right in the very beginning in Genesis. I will put enmity between your seed and the enemy himself. And so if you don't have an enemy, you have to ask yourself the question, why don't I have an enemy? I think too many Christians are made terms of peace with the enemy.

In other words, they've gone, sort of made an appointment with the devil, and say, devil I've got a little proposition here, and it's this, if you don't bother me, I won't bother you. Do we have an agreement? The devil says, well I've got an awful lot to do, I'll shake on that. You know, you don't bother me, I won't bother you.

I think that's where most Christians are. And they never really get involved in any sort of spiritual warfare, whether it's personal or whether it's on a national level, because they've made terms of detente, if you like, with the enemy. But here is a man that now has to resist the enemy.

Notice it says that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, verse 1, has already invaded Judah. He's already besieged the fortified cities. So he's already destroyed many of the cities of God, the people of God.

He's broken in, he's dominated their lives, dominated their cities. But now he is advancing on Jerusalem where Hezekiah is. And it says in verse 1, he thought to break into them for himself.

The enemy has got one design, and that is to get you back. He wants you for himself, God wants you for himself. Somebody said, both the devil and God have the same plan for your life, they both want to kill you.

It's true, isn't it? God wants to bring us to the end of ourselves, we've got to take up our cross, we've got to die. The enemy obviously wants to kill us for another reason. He comes to kill, steal, and destroy, but nevertheless, he wants to break into your life for himself.

He wants you back, he's a poor loser. You were once part of his kingdom, you were once part of his family. You were of your father the devil before we're saved.

He is a shepherd in one sense. He is a strong man that guards his house. He watches over everything that God does.

He counteracts, if you like, or he copies. Thank God that we have a shepherd that looks after the flock as well. But he's a poor loser, and he wants you back.

He wants to break back into your life, and dominate your life for his cause, for his purpose. And so Hezekiah recognizes that, and he sees that the enemy has come, and that he intends to make war on Jerusalem. Now before we go any further, let me have you keep your finger there, and I want to have you look at a couple of verses.

The first one is in Exodus chapter 13. Exodus 13 and verse 17. And it speaks here about the children of Israel.

They have just, in typology, been saved. The blood of the lamb has just been sprinkled on the doorposts, and they've had this wonderful deliverance come through, if you like, the waters of baptism. The old taskmasters that dominated their lives have been drowned.

The horse and the rider has been drowned in the depths of the sea. And God's purpose is to take them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and ultimately into the promised land. And so it says in verse 17, 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 closer and nearer.

For God said, lest the people change their minds when they see war, and they return to Egypt. Now God here is looking at His family. Again, they're young, they're inexperienced, they're just new Christians, again in typology.

And He says, I want to take them into the promised land, and the quickest way, and the shortest way, is to go right through the land of the Philistines. But then He looked at their spiritual condition, and He says, if they get into the land of the Philistines, there's going to be warfare. And they are not experienced yet in the area of warfare, and so therefore they're going to turn, they're going to run, they're going to go right back into Egypt.

Now God obviously is a Father, and those of you who are parents here, and you've got young children, you know that there is a season where you protect that child from problems. You go down to one of these, you know, into the heart of Boston there, and you're crossing a busy intersection, you pick up that little two year old, and cradle that two year old in your arm, and you walk across the street. Why? Because that little two year old is not old enough, or experienced enough to negotiate the traffic by himself.

You just don't say, you know, Johnny, you know, there's a green light, run across the road, you know, I'll be there in a few minutes. You know, you watch over that child. God is the same.

He keeps us from war, many, many times. Now that is not a sign that we're spiritual, it's a sign that we're immature. Now go with me over into the book of Judges.

Judges chapter 3, and verse 1. And it says, Now these are the nations which the Lord left. If I was Steve King, I would have you say with me, say this, these are the nations that the Lord left. Anyway, 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 sons of Israel might be taught war. Those who had not experienced it formally.

These nations are, notice number one, the Philistines. Now here is the same God, the same Father. His children now are a little older.

But he says, listen, things have changed. I'm not going to bypass the Philistines any longer. In fact, I have purposely left the Philistines in your path.

Because some of you have never learned how to fight. You've never been taught war. And therefore I want you to learn how to fight.

And so I'm going to give you something to fight against. In other words, I'm going to give you something to overcome. You see, there comes a time when we begin to mature.

And part of that maturation process is that we have to learn how to resist the enemy. We have to learn how to overcome the enemy in our own lives. My wife and I have three children, three girls.

Our oldest is 34 almost now, in a couple of days, at least about another week. And then we have a 31-year-old with three grandchildren, one on the way. And a 24-year-old, one in China, one in London, one in Colorado Springs.

They all fled the coop. But when they were younger, I remember Lisa, who is now in China, been there for many, many years, and I remember her coming home from school with her first math assignment. And here were these major problems.

2 plus 2 equals 1 plus 1 equals 3 plus 1 equals 4 minus 1 equals, and so on. And Lisa came to me and said, Daddy, I want you to help me with my homework. Now I could have taken that sheet of problems and literally in a matter of 30 seconds solved them all and handed the sheet back and said, Lisa, go out and play.

But you see, she was entering now a new stage of life. She was now 5 1/2, 6 years of age, and she was in school. She was no longer playing with dolls and just running around the house and no responsibilities and just enjoying life.

She now was in school. It was a new phase of her life, and she had to learn to exercise this muscle between the ears called the brain. And that had not been exercised a great deal prior to that, and so we sat down together and I said, Lisa, what is 1 plus 1? And the tears began to flow.

Daddy, I don't know. Daddy, I don't know. And after about five minutes, we solved it.

And then we doubled the problem, 2 plus 2. And again, the tears flowed. Daddy, I don't know. I want to go out and play.

And another five minutes, and we solved that problem. And about an hour later, all the problems were solved. Now you see, if I hadn't have done that, she now has a degree, which I don't, but I would have been getting letters in the mail from university.

Dear Dad, here's your next assignment. Please have it in by Friday. It's got to be at least 2,000 words on nutrition, you know, double-spaced and blah, blah, blah.

And by the way, Dad, there's a project due at the end of the month, and it's going to count for a third of my grade this semester, and so I want to give you plenty of time to, you know, be able to study and develop this thing and so on, so I'll give you all the details in the next letter. Now I know that's rather humorous, but we do that, don't we? That's what we pay pastors to do, solve our problems. I literally, as a pastor, and I pastored for many, many years, I literally have had people come into my office, wanting, of course, to walk out 15, 20 minutes later after my incredible wisdom, and have their problems solved.

Have me lay hands on them and part something or de-part something, whatever the case may be, and walk out 15 minutes or 20 minutes later, you know, with all their problems solved and not having to worry about a thing. Here, Daddy, do my assignment for me. And I've sat there and I've said, Listen, I know you.

You've been in the church now for 5 years, 10 years, whatever it is, and I believe God has left you a Philistine, because you're now in a new phase of life. Oh, a few years ago you were just saved, you were just learning the ropes, so to speak, but now it's time that you learn how to overcome. You see, God is looking for overcomers.

To him that overcomes, to him that overcomes, to him that overcomes. You can't overcome something unless you've got something to overcome. If you remove the thing, then you don't have to overcome it.

You know, you remove the mountain range, you don't have to go over the mountain anymore, you just go on the level. It's interesting, isn't it, in the book of Revelation, that there is only one access, actually 12, but one means of access into the holy city, which is the bride, and that is through one of the 12 gates. And if you recall, those 12 gates are made of only one substance, and that substance is pearl.

The gates are not diamonds, the gates are not sapphires, the gates are not rubies, they're not made of gold, they're not made of silver, they're made of pearl. And what is a pearl? A pearl is a problem that's overcome. You see, there is no such thing as a genuine pearl, unless at the heart of that genuine pearl there is a problem.

That little piece of grit gets into the oyster, and the oyster has a choice, I guess, never having been an oyster, but, you know, it can allow that thing to irritate it the rest of its life and bug it, or it can say, listen, I'm going to overcome. And so it secretes a certain substance and it overcomes, and the more it overcomes, the more value that thing has, isn't it? And I think God knew what he was talking about, he always does. And I think when he talks about pearls being the means of access, he's talking about the fact that this bride that I'm looking for is an overcoming company of people.

That they've had some grit in their oyster. And they've learned how to apply the grace of God to that situation. You know, Paul had some grit in his oyster, and he said, God, take it out, would you? Do a little bit of surgery on me, Lord.

And the Lord said, no, my grace is sufficient, Paul. I don't want to hear any more about it. So now we're learning in this portion of scripture, if we go back to it, how to overcome.

The first thing we've got to recognize is verse 2, that we have an enemy. And that an enemy intends on making war. In other words, we are in a spiritual warfare.

The Bible says, your adversary, the devil, goes around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. It's not the person on the left of you or the person on the right of you, it's your adversary. And he's out to undermine your faith.

He's out to bring discouragement and doubt and unbelief and all the other things into your life. To try and frustrate the work of God in your life. And so we've got to recognize that we have an enemy.

Now there are two extremes that we can go to when we talk about the enemy. One is we can join the sort of the higher critics. Those are men in the theological realm that have got more brains than faith.

And they would tell you that there is no such thing as a devil. That 2,000 years ago there were no names for sort of depression and mental illness and so on and so forth. And so they sort of blamed it all on this mythical figure called the devil.

Obviously that's not true. But that's one extreme, to sort of deny his existence altogether. The other extreme is just as bad, and that is to give him too much credit.

My father used to tell the story of the devil sitting by the side of the road weeping. Sort of overcome with grief and a well-meaning Christian going up and his arm around the devil and say, devil, what's wrong? And the devil between his sobbing said, it's you Christians, you blame me for all the things I'd love to do but I don't have time to do them. Now that's the other extreme, that every time you sneeze it's the devil.

You know, we blame the devil for everything. You spend the night out in the cold without a sweater or something and then you wake up in the morning and you blame the devil for the bad cold. And it was your own stupidity.

But anyway, he gets blamed for a lot of things. But in between those two extremes, there is a devil. Your adversary.

It goes around seeking to destroy, to devour, to undermine. Now Hezekiah, in verse 3, decided with his officers and his warriors to do something about it. And you and I need to be decisive.

I think there's too much passivity when it comes to the enemy. In other words, we know theologically that he exists. We sort of can quote scriptures.

Yes, he's, you know, our adversary, the devil. But most of the time we really don't believe that he is actively involved day after day, along with all his demonic hosts, you know, trying to destroy the activity that God is doing in our life. And then we certainly don't get to the point of making a decision that I'm not going to allow this anymore.

We're very passive most of the time. We just allow the enemy sort of access. We allow him to sort of run over us, so to speak, beat us up, and so on.

Hezekiah was not that sort of an individual. He makes a decision. And he says, along with his officers and his warriors, we are going to cut off the supply of water from the springs, which were outside the city.

And so they helped him. Verse 4, And so many people assembled, and they stopped 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? You see, one of the things that Hezekiah did, he had a word now that the enemy was advancing. He's already besieged certain of the fortified cities of Judah.

He's already broken in. He's already dominated certain areas of the nation of Israel. And he is advancing towards Jerusalem.

And so Hezekiah looks around, and he comes to this conclusion. Listen, he said, We've got all sorts of springs around the city. Not only do we have springs around the city, but there is a river that flows through the region.

And if the king and all of his army come, and they find this abundant supply of water, we will never get rid of them. See, water, obviously, as it was in those days, as it is today, is essential for life. Now, we, of course, get so used to turning on the faucet, and there's always a supply of water.

We never really think where it comes from. But if you go to other nations like India and so on, their entire towns or cities are built around a water supply. They're very, very conscious of the fact that if this well runs dry, this city literally will die or will have to move on to where there is a supply of water.

And one of the strategies of war in the Old Testament was to fill in the wells. Remember that Isaac had to dig again the wells that his father Abraham had dug. Why? Because the Philistines had filled them in.

It was a strategy of war. So if we can cut off the water supply, then that person cannot exist. He's no means of living.

He's got to have water to survive. He's got to have water to provide for his crops and to feed and water his plants and so on and so forth, the vegetation. And so if we can destroy the water, we can literally drive him out of that area, and then we can take over.

We can re-dig that well and establish our own setup. And so Hezekiah says, Listen, we've got to cut off that which will sustain the life of the enemy. Now the way in which you and I overcome the enemy is by doing the very same thing.

We have to ask ourselves, What is it that flows out of my city, so to speak? What is it that flows out of my life that sustains the life of the enemy? It may be lust. It may be pride. It may be anger.

It may be resentment. It may be, you know, pornography. It may be some other thing.

But whatever it is that we are feeding the enemy with has to be cut off. That's what, of course, we call in the New Testament, repentance. Dealing with sin.

The Bible says, Don't give place to the devil. Another way you can read that, if you like, is don't feed the devil. I think it was Bob Mumford many years ago that used to say there are two ways of getting rid of the devil.

One is to cast him out. The other is to starve him to death. And I rather like that theology that we need to starve him to death sometimes.

Jesse Penn Lewis, who gave us one of the greatest books, I think, on spiritual warfare during the height of the Welsh Revival, said it's very easy to cast a demon out. It's very difficult to deal with the grounds that allowed that evil spirit to come in. In other words, there was something that gave place to that thing.

There was lust. There was pride. There was anger.

You can get rid of the demon, but you've got to get rid of that which provided a landing strip in the first place for him to sort of come in. And so we have to be ruthless. Now, this is not an easy thing.

I'm a teacher. I'm not the evangelist. I get into trouble when I say that.

But, you know, most of us bought into a lie. And that was when the evangelist came to town and said, Listen, if you come to the altar tonight, all your problems will be solved, and so on and so forth. You'll have joy, peace, and happiness.

And we all flocked forward thinking, this is an incredible deal. Well, I'm here to tell you, you know, all that was a lie, but at least it got you to the altar. You know? That when you come forward, all your problems begin.

You know, you have the great sculptor himself that takes the chisel and begins to work away at you. Or, you know, he's the potter, and he slams you down on the wheel there and spins you until you don't know which way is up. And he begins to apply pressures and so on.

And the evangelist never tells us all of that because we'd never come forward in the first place if he did. But I'm a teacher, so I've got to come along and give you the sort of fine print. And it isn't easy to fill in a spring.

There's a force behind it. There's life, if you like. It's not easy to divert a river.

Again, if it was a little puddle, you could just fill it in readily. But such was the determination of the king and the men of Jerusalem. Now listen, we are going to cut off that which supplies life to the enemy.

Because once you begin to feed the enemy, you'll never get rid of it. Some of you have made the mistake of opening the door in the middle of a cold, wintry, blustery morning, and there's a little ball of fluff called a kitten that somehow has strayed into your neighborhood and it looks up woefully at you. And, you know, you're not especially a cat lover, but you, you know, remember your days in the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts or whatever.

And so you go to the refrigerator, pour a bowl of milk and put it down and do your good deed for the day. The problem is you now have to do your good deed every day. You're fed it, try and get rid of it.

And the devil is that way. Once you feed him and continue to feed him, you will never ever get rid of him. And so therefore there has to be this ruthless cutting off of that which will sustain the life of the enemy.

Cut off the internet, you know, throw away the girly magazines or muscle men magazines or whatever it is, you know, quit listening to the music you're listening to. You know, whatever those things are, there's got to be that determination. That Lord, I'm not going to allow the enemy access into my life anymore.

Now the next thing that Hezekiah does, it says he took courage, verse 5, and he rebuilt the wall that had been broken down. Now the Bible says in the book of Proverbs, like a city that is broken into and without

walls is a man or a woman who has no control over their own spirit. In other words, the Bible likens your life and my life to a city.

We're all like cities in the mind of God. And the Bible says there are two types of cities, those that have walls around them, and in that case, if your wall is intact, you are in control of your city. You reign, you rule, so to speak, you govern your life.

On the other hand, if that wall has been broken down, you've already been invaded. And I find that there's a lot of Christians, if you like, that the enemy has come into their life. They're dominated in certain areas of their life.

Oh, I'm not talking about possessed necessarily, but they've got major problems in their life. Again, a problem with anger that seems to just dominate their life, or a problem with greed, or jealousy, or fear, or whatever it is. And the enemy has come in, and he's established, if you like, a beachhead in your life, and you're under the dominion of that thing.

You can't seem to break out of it. You're in a prison. Jesus came to open prison doors.

And so we're like cities, with walls or without walls. Again, when I passed it, I could almost, you know, after a number of years of seeing the congregation, I could almost go down, you know, each individual and say, with walls, without walls, with walls, without walls, with walls, without walls. You know, I knew those that had problems and those that seemingly didn't have problems.

There are always surprises, of course. But he rebuilt the wall that had been broken down. Now, again, this is not an easy task.

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