

# Glad Tidings Spring Convention B2

by David Ravenhill

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of applying the opposite spirit to our lives, being honest about our weaknesses, and being on the alert for the enemy's strategies in spiritual warfare.*

**Duration:** 46:31

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:28-31

**Topics:** "Christian Life", "Rebuilding Lives", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of rebuilding our spiritual lives by adopting an 'opposite spirit' in our actions, particularly in how we respond to past behaviors like theft and gossip. He illustrates this through the example of a young man who, after being saved, learns to give rather than take, and encourages the congregation to edify one another with their words instead of tearing each other down. Ravenhill also discusses the necessity of being alert to spiritual warfare, using the metaphor of watchmen on towers, and the importance of utilizing the weapons of our faith, such as prayer and the Word of God, to combat the enemy. He concludes by reminding believers that God is with us, greater than any adversary we face, and encourages reliance on God's strength and guidance in our battles.

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## Transcript

He may have something to share with him that has a need. And notice how Paul talks about rebuilding wall here. He, you're going now to the, you're, you're, you're doing the, the opposite of what you were doing.

In other words, you're using the opposite spirit. Here is a man that has made people's lives miserable. When my wife and I were first married back in 1964, we worked with David Wilkerson in a teen challenge there in New York.

And they estimated at that time, because of the incredible amount of heroin addiction, which was the drug of choice in those days, that the average drug addict in order to maintain a hundred to \$200 a day habit had to steal between six and \$800 worth of material. And then he would take it down to a local, you know, pawn shop and pawn it off and, you know, get a hundred dollars. But he'd have to take maybe, you know, a stereo and a TV or some jewelry or something that was valued, or at least had a replacement value, six or \$800.

And all he would get for it is a hundred. Now you can imagine the amount of misery that thousands, if not tens of thousands of drug addicts caused in one day in New York City, people coming home, finding the jewelry boxes open, you know, finding this missing, that missing and so on and so forth. I mean, you know, here they were working hard to supply the needs of their family only to come home and find it was missing.

And so this man has made people's lives miserable for years. And so Paul says, stop doing what you're doing, get yourself a job. And then he says, now that you've got excess money, extra money, he says, start doing good.

Start sharing with the one that has a need. Let's assume that this young man, say 18 years of age is single and he's just got saved. And like, you know, a lot of heathen back in those days, he didn't know, you know, his whole lifestyle was given to theft.

He never thought much of it. And all of a sudden Paul's preaching away one day and he realizes, man, he's talking about that. I didn't know that.

I mean, Paul says he didn't know about covetousness until he read it in the law and he was a good righteous Pharisee. And so this man, all of a sudden, he's convicted. He goes up to Paul and he says, man, he says, you were talking about stealing.

I've been doing that all my life. I was trained to do that. You know, what am I supposed to do about it? Paul says, well, stop and get a job.

And then the guy comes to him maybe a couple of weeks later and he says, listen, I've got a job and I've got all this extra money now. I don't have a wife. I don't have children, but you know, God's blessed me with this wonderful job.

What do I do? And Paul says, well, see, here's a congregation. In that congregation there are needs. There's a lady over there, single mom, her husband walked out on her.

She's got three little toddlers. She doesn't make much. She can barely make ends meet.

And you know, Johnny's been running around church lately, telling everybody that his birthday is coming up and he's going to get some rollerblades or whatever the equivalent was in those days. And Paul says, you know, I know she can't afford rollerblades, but he's determined. You've got this money.

I tell you what, why don't you go down to, you know, came out there, buy some rollerblades, wrap them up in a box, go by his house, drop them off. Don't knock. And just put a note, Johnny, I know you don't have a daddy anymore, but God's your daddy.

And he knows your needs and he can supply. And he just wants you to know he loves you. See, I mean, this is what Paul's taught.

This is practical Christianity here so that you may share with the one that has a need. You see, it's the opposite spirit. It's not just saying, well, you know, I used to steal.

I don't do that anymore. No, now I give instead of taking. See now that may not be your problem.

I hope it isn't the next one might be. Chances are it's a more likely verse 29. Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth.

My father used to say the tongue being in a wet place is very apt to slip and some of us have a problem, don't we? With our tongue. Let no unwholesome, the margin says in my translation, literally rotten, let no rotten word proceed out of your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification. In other words, here's a person now who's always tearing down, always critical, always, you know, passing on all the latest gossip and rumors and so on.

And God incidentally says, I hate those that sow seeds of discord among the brethren. But he doesn't just stop now. He reverts now to blessing.

He reverts now to edification, to building up. Instead of passing on that which is rotten, he's now has a word of edification according to the need of the moment that it may give grace to those that hear grace, not justice. You see many times you think, well, you know, I'm being, I'm being honest.

So-and-so, you know, this happened to that happened. So-and-so forth. I'm not gossiping.

It's true. You know, so-and-so's daughter's pregnant. It's true.

I'm not gossiping. It's true. You know, but is there grace in it? You know, are we getting on the phone and saying, you know, did you hear, you know, Mary Smith's pregnant? I can't imagine what it must be like for a mother to get that sort of news here in the house of God, the embarrassment, the humiliation and so on.

You know, we need to band together and call her and say, Susan can't imagine what you're going through, but listen, we want you to know we're behind you. We're here to support you. We're here to lift up your hands.

We're here to do anything we can for Mary. You know, see, there's a difference. It's the opposite spirit.

You're rebuilding now an area of weakness in your life. And you say, God, by the grace of God, I'm going to be a one that edifies, one that passes on and encourages it, has grace in my life. Verse 30, 31, do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

Verse 31, let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander be put away from you along with all malice and be kind one towards another. Tenderhearted, forgiving each other. See here's an individual again, he's full.

His problem is bitterness, anger, wrath. I mean, you know, he's, there's been unjust injustices done against him or betrayal or whatever. And he's lashing out.

I worked with a man for 15 years in New Zealand. He used to say, David, hurt people, hurt people. It's true, isn't it? When a person's hurt, he spreads hurt, hurt people, hurt people, but heal people, heal people.

And the word of God says, listen, you've got to be tenderhearted. Forgiving even as God forgave you, not holding that anger, not holding that bitterness, not holding that resentment, not being full of wrath and slander and so on, but release, God release you after all. And so that's the way in which we rebuild the wall.

You can find in the word of God again, your need, your problem, and then go in the opposite spirit of that. Begin to apply that in your own life. I'll never forget, uh, many, many years ago, Joy Dawson.

Some of you may know Joy who is a wonderful teacher on intercession, teaches a lot with youth on the mission, written a number of books and she talked about how long before she became famous, she used to have a prayer meeting and one night a gentleman walked in and she said there was just something about him she decided she didn't like. She didn't like the way he calmly says she didn't like the way he walks. She didn't like the way he talks.

She said, I didn't know a thing about him. I just made up my mind. It was just something I just didn't like about this guy.

I can't stand it. And she said, every time he came in, I just, you know, I just couldn't stand the guy. And she said, all of a sudden, one day she's got God began to convict me.

And she said, I began to pray for that man and she said, I prayed for him every single day. I prayed that God would bless him, that God would increase him in the area of business, whatever he was involved in. She said, I determined every time his name was mentioned in conversation, I would never talk about some thing I didn't like about him, but rather I would find something that I did like about him.

And she said, after about three or four months of doing that on a daily basis, she said, she literally, she said, I had to hold my hands behind my back when he walked into the room because I wanted to embrace him. Not in a wrong way. She said, God just put such a love in my heart for that man, totally changed the way I thought of that man.

You see that's rebuilding a wall. It isn't easy. It takes time, but you see Hezekiah is determined.

We need that determination. Lord, I'm tired of being stunted in my spiritual life. I'm tired of, you know, week after week, year after year, still clinging to all these problems.

I have these problems cling to me, never growing, never developing, never allowing again, the life of Christ to be manifest through me. Because obviously that's the ultimate thing that God wants to do in our life. Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

The songwriter said, all His wondrous compassion and purity. He wants to mold us into His image, doesn't He? Conform us into the image of His Son. That's the standard that God has that we take on the image.

The word image is the word character. Hebrews talks about He is the expressed image of God. Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, the closest we can come to it is He's a photocopy.

He's a, you know, it's taken from the old ring there with an insignia on it. You pressed it into the wax and it had the exact copy. And Jesus Christ was an exact copy of the Father.

If you've seen me, you've seen the Father, but He wants to mold us into His image. That's why the Bible says that they were first called Christians at Antioch. They were so like Christ.

In fact, you know, I, and it's not a teaching that is done a lot these days, but you know, back in the discipleship days, when we talked about discipleship, everybody was into discipleship. And it was as though you start out as a Christian and when you end up as a disciple. And I said, no, biblically it's the other way around.

You start off as a disciple and when you arrive at your goal, you're a Christian. You see, the Bible says the Pharisees had disciples. Moses had disciples.

John the Baptist had disciples. Jesus had disciples. Disciple was just an individual or a group of individuals that followed a master in order to become like their master.

And Jesus said, it's enough that you become as your master. We have disciples today, you know, that may study the piano at some, you know, the feet of some great concert pianist or study the violin, you know, some great Boston pops, you know, player or something. And, you know, our whole aspiration would be to play as well as that man plays or that woman plays.

And so we study in order to learn their techniques and become like them. And so discipleship was just a common thing in New Testament. Again, John, Moses, all of them had disciples.

But Jesus said when a disciple arrives at his goal, he says he will be like his master. And it was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christ ones, Christians. They'd arrived at their goal.

People looked at them and said, you're just like your master. And that's what God wants to do in our life. And so here now back into verse five, he took courage and he rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down.

You see, we've got to be honest about what is broken down in our life. Hezekiah was not trying to cover things here. He went around the city inspecting the city just like Nehemiah did.

And he says, listen, we're vulnerable to attack right there. There's a weakness there. There's a weakness over there.

There's an area that's broken down. Here's an area where the stones are all loose and the mortars just about, you know, falling apart and so on. If the enemy comes, he can get access there.

And we've got to be honest about our lives and say, listen, this is an area of weakness in my life. And the enemy knows. Now the enemy is not omniscient.

He doesn't know everything about you. And yet in another way, he does know everything about you. You know how he knows he's a fisherman and he goes fishing and he takes his fishing rod and he puts a lure on the end that says lust and he casts it into your lake and you know, winds it in and all of a sudden, gotcha.

And he says, aha, I know what the fish are biting on in this lake. You know, and he may try a few lures. And so he writes them down there in his little notebook and he knows exactly.

Try somebody else. You know, lust doesn't work on this person. Tries again, doesn't matter.

Tries again, nothing. So he puts anger on the end. Cast again, gotcha.

Another it's fear, another it's pride, another it's whatever. And he sort of dials up in his Rolodex sort of speak when it's your day and he knows exactly what to feed you. And you wonder why is it? The enemy always gets me on that one area.

You know, he knows your weakness. You've got to rebuild that thing by the grace of God. Now the next thing that he does, it says that he erected towers on the wall.

Verse five, he rebuilt the wall that had broken down and erected towers on it. Now the towers were the places where the watchman stood. We have in America right now, right up in the Dakotas, different places.

We have huge satellite dishes that are there as a defense system. And if Russia or China or Korea or somebody else launches an attack against this nation, those satellite dishes pick up a blip on the screen and we can mount a, an attack against that thing. We can blow it out of the air or send up some, you know, aircraft or whatever, and hopefully deter that thing or avert it before it arrives here in the States.

Well, obviously in the old Testament, they weren't quite as sophisticated with electronics. And so they had towers and those towers would go up 20 or 30 feet over the wall of the cities. And in them as strategic places around the wall, there was the watchman and the watchman's job was to constantly be on the alert.

And if he saw a cloud of dust on the horizon, he had to decide or decipher, is this, you know, caravan of mules coming or, you know, camels coming with spices? Is it just a bunch of tradesmen or is this a, an army advancing and maybe they'd have people out there, I don't know, sort of relays and they would send word. But once they determined that the enemy was coming, then they would blow the trumpet. And all of a sudden as one blew the trumpet, the other would pick it up and the other would pick it up and all around the city, the trumpet would be blown.

And the inhabitants working out in the fields would run in, they would gather their children, they gather their belongings and maybe bring in their cattle. They maybe dig a few extra potatoes or whatever and they would come in. And as soon as they got in the confines of the city, they would close the gates.

And then they were safe. By the time the enemy came, they were there and they were closed in. The walls were built.

They didn't have to worry. Now in the New Testament, the Bible says that we are to have a tower. That doesn't say in so many words, but it says, be on the alert.

Your adversary, the devil goes around as a roaring lion. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. In other words, we are constantly to be alert to the strategies of the enemy.

You remember Peter and the rest of the disciples the night that Jesus was betrayed there in the garden, he leaves them and he says, I'm going a little bit further in to pray. And he says, you guys watch and pray. Peter, watch and pray.

Comes back an hour later. Could you not watch with me one hour? Everybody's sleeping. And he says to Peter again, Peter, watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.

Three times. I think it is that Peter is warned. Barely an hour or so goes by.

Judas betrays him. Jesus is arrested. Peter follows.

The Bible says of the distance, he comes into the courtyard there where Jesus is being put on trial and he's warming himself around the fire. It's a cold winter night and a little girl looks at him and says, I've seen you somewhere. Peter says, no, no, I've seen you.

Yeah. You're one of his disciples. Peter says, no, that's all right.

Never seen this man. Don't even know who he is. You know? And what happens three times that night, Peter betrays the Lord.

But Jesus said to him, listen, Peter, watch. Isn't that interesting? He said to Peter specifically, so Peter, of course, was the one that bragged the most and said, Lord, you know, if I'd have been choosing disciples, I don't know if I'd have picked these guys. You know, they're likely to betray you, Lord, but you know, you're looking at somebody that will go to death if necessary.

You know, I'll be there right to the end Lord. And all it takes is a little girl and he goes to pieces. You see, he wasn't alert.

He wasn't watching. He wasn't sensitive to what was going on. And many times the enemy comes in when we are in a place of sort of neutrality, so to speak.

We're not alert. You know, we're just sitting there. The kids have gone to bed.

We're thumbing through the channels, especially if you've got cable television or something. There's something and you think, well, I'll just watch it for a minute. And all of a sudden, you know, there's an impression.

Five years later, you can still play back that five seconds of whatever it was you were watching. And there's a pollution that's come into your city. The enemy has a hook.

we've got to be alert. I mean, if we were at war tonight in a literal sense, if this neighborhood was, you know, riddled with gang members and so on, you know, I can assure you we don't just go bowling out of the door at the end of the meeting. We'd have somebody out there, you know, checking and making sure the coast is clear or whatever.

You know, we'd run to our cars, we want to just sort of saunter along. We certainly want to be going at the back of the building by ourselves, you know, and we've got to be that way spiritually. We're in a spiritual warfare.

Notice that on the news in the last couple of days, it's been saying now that a terrorist attack in America is inevitable in the next five years. One of the greatest fears that we have now, terrorist attacks. And the greatest fear is a chemical warfare.

Anthrax or something where you can just take a can of like an aerosol can and wipe out half of New York City. You see, the thing about it is it's invisible, but it's deadly. Spiritual warfare is that way.

It's invisible and it's deadly. We don't have an enemy that we can see, but we've got to be alert spiritually. I tell you, there's a deadly foe out there that has his sights on your life, has his sights on my life, on our marriages, on our ministry, on whatever it is.

And he's determined and it's when we least suspect it. And that's why we have to be in our tower. Verse five again, it says he made weapons and shields in great number.

Now, so far, what Hezekiah has been doing, of course, he's been strengthening his position. He's been defending himself. It's been a defensive mode or posture, but now he goes on the offensive.

Notice he is making not only shields, but he's making weapons. We've got to learn how to fight. My wife and I, about 12 years ago, maybe more than that now, we're ministering in Malaysia.

We were living in New Zealand at the time and staying with a Chinese doctor. For a few days up in a place called Penang, very beautiful place up in Malaysia. And one afternoon, this doctor asked us if we'd like to watch a videotape.

And I said, sure. And he put in this video and it was a tape of a lady by the name of Suzette Hadding. Some of you may be familiar with her teaching, possibly one of the greatest teachers on intercession and prayer.

The lady that for many, many, many years worked for Reinhard Bonnke and did all his advanced work in Africa. Rallied the churches, got people praying, and she's just an amazing teacher. And on this particular video, and it was the first time I'd been introduced to her ministry, but she was in London teaching.

And she had one of the pastors come up. He was sitting on the stage and she asked him to come up. I think he was a youth pastor.

And she had this little sort of a kid's toy armor outfit. And she put this helmet on the man's head, a little plastic helmet, and then a breastplate and gave him a sword and got him all sort of decked out. And she said, now here he is, the Christian.

He's got the helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness, and he's loins good about with truth, the sword of the spirit at his side, the shield of faith, and his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. And she said, that's the way God wants us to be. He wants us to be dressed up at all times.

And she said, I'm going to be the devil. And she reached over to the piano and she brought along a knife, sort of a toy knife, if I remember. And she says, okay, let's fight.

And she begins to stab away at this man and he moves his shield all over the place. And it goes on, you know, for about 20 seconds or more. And then she says, okay, stop, stop, stop.

And she turns her congregation. She says, see, he's like most Christians. He never used his sword, only his shield.

I don't think I've ever forgotten that. He never used his sword, only his shield. And that's the way many of us are.

We're always cowering and protecting ourselves and, you know, moving this, pleading the blood or whatever else we, you know, have learned to do. But, you know, God is wanting us to go on the offensive. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but what mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.

And we have, of course, the name that is above every name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess whatever you ask in my name. It doesn't just mean a magic formula like a rabbit's foot.

It really means whatever you ask in my nature, that we have to have the nature of Christ as a part of our nature. In other words, we're asking in his name. We have his authority because we're part of his family.

We have the right to use that name. So you don't have the right to use the name Ravenhill until you're part of the Ravenhill family, so to speak. And we've got to recognize that we are part of the family of God.

And therefore we can use that name with authority and power against the enemy. Then we have the blood. They overcame him by the blood of the lamb, not with the blood.

A lot of people these days are sprinkling the blood again like a rabbit's foot, you know. No, they overcome him on the basis of the blood. The blood isn't shed every day.

The blood was shed once. Hebrews, once, once, once, all the way through Hebrews, once, once, once. In other words, on the basis of what Jesus Christ did 2,000 years ago, he stripped principalities and powers.

Therefore, on the basis of the blood of the lamb, we can come. We have authority. And we remind Satan of what happened 2,000 years ago.

It's not as though we've got a little bit of blood in our pocket type thing. You know, plead the blood, plead the blood. Yeah.

I mean, we get lazy in our theology sometimes. And then we wonder why it doesn't work. It's on the basis of that.

In other words, you know, 200 years ago, whatever it is, Abraham Lincoln signed the Declaration of Independence, Emancipation Proclamation. And slaves then could say, you know, on the basis of that proclamation, I am free. They didn't go around with that proclamation, you know, beating their, you know, beating their masters over the head and say, you know, I'm, this is the, you know, I mean, in other words, that's the way we use the blood.

No, it was on the basis of a legal transaction that was signed into law with all the authority and power of the United States behind it, that they said, listen, you can go to Washington or wherever it was that it was signed. And there, written in the law, is the fact that I am free. And we need to point back again to the blood of the lamb and say, listen, 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ stripped you, Satan, made an open show of you.

We've got weapons. We have the word of God. The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Now, you've got to say, well, what's the difference between our loins good about with truth and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God? What's the difference between the word of God and truth? And you've all got question marks over your head. I can see. Well, the Bible says the sum of your, the sum of thy word is truth.

The sum of your word is truth. In other words, we have our loins good about with the logos of God's word. And then from that logos is the place that the sword hangs, and we draw the rhema from the logos, and it becomes the sword of the spirit.

In other words, we don't just quote scripture, you know. When the enemy comes, we don't say, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, you know. It might be a good scripture.

But no, we need a specific scripture. Jesus said, man shall not live by bread alone when the enemy says, turn these stones into bread, you see. And so he drew out of the, out of the, his loins good about with truth.

He was the truth. I am the way, the truth. And he drew a specific rhema word that became the, the sword of the spirit at that particular time.

See, that's why it's important that we know the word of God, so we can draw from it. And so there are weapons that we can use against the enemy. And we've got to get back to some of the basics.

We were talking a little bit, the pastor and I in the office, and you know, there's all sorts of weird and wonderful things going on now in the area of prayer. You know, I go into, travel extensively every weekend. I'm somewhere, and you know, I see people with flags and everything else, and you know, trying to wave them as though somehow there's some mystical, magical power in a piece of cloth.

There isn't. It's not scriptural. I'm not saying, you know, that you don't get a little bit of exercise by doing it.

It may be beneficial that way, but it doesn't have any power. It's only the blood that has power. It's only the name of Jesus that has power.

It's only the word of God that has power. You know, and we, we've got to be careful. There are people now going to the four corners of the state and, you know, taking communion and burying the emblems in the, in the, in the ground and to sort of ward off evil spirits entering the state and all sorts of weird stuff.

It's getting weirder and weirder out there in the realm of spiritual warfare. And we've got to come back to basics. We do.

We've got to come back to the word of God and you know, lay, lay, lay some of this other stuff aside. I mean, I know it's mystical and it's intriguing and it's, you know, everybody doesn't, nobody questions it and so it gets, you know, weirder and weirder. But we've got to be careful.

And some of the leading men in the nation are teaching some of this stuff. Sharing with a pastor, I won't mention his name, one of the leading authorities in spiritual warfare, I read a book where he wrote the introduction. In the introduction, I memorized it.

It says, what you're about to read is not scriptural, but it's not biblical, but it's not non-biblical. It's not a red light that says stop, but it's not a green light that says go. It's an orange light that says proceed with caution.

And I thought, you know, I'm reading all this stuff based on an orange light? I don't think so. You know, we've got to get back to what the word of God says. See, in the volume of the book, it's got to be written.

In the volume of the book, not some minute little thing that you take and you use it. And yet people get so upset because, you know, they're feeling people. But you went there, we lifted up this banner and, I mean, you went there, you should have felt the atmosphere.

I mean, it was, you see, banners were never used for war in the Old Testament. They're simply a rallying point. They're just a rallying point.

They're a means of identifying the tribes. It's like uniforms. You know, you belong to the Navy, you belong to the Air Force, you belong to, I mean, it was, you know, each tribe had a different banner.

But they were never used as a weapon. And even if they were in the New Testament, everything is spiritual. Those were shadows.

Now we have the substance belongs to Christ, you see. And what was practical in the Old Testament, obviously they used swords in the Old Testament. But now it's the sword of the spirit.

There were literal shields in the Old Testament. Now it's the shield of faith. And so, you know, we've got to get back to some real down to earth basic understanding of the scriptures.

So I was in Mexico last year. They were showing me a video. And I'm getting off now.

But they're showing me a video of all these sort of intercessors that climbed up this huge mountain somewhere over in the, you know, the region of Nepal or somewhere there, the way up above the snow line. And here, in the midst of all the ice, there is this huge rock that sticks out. I mean, the rock must have been, I don't know, twice the size of this part of the room here, this huge rock.

And underneath there was this icicle that had formed, or stalactite or whatever. Anyway, just huge thing coming up. And here they were with all their sort of ski masks and, you know, down jackets and so on and so forth, and all their maps and everything else.

And they've got this ice pick and they determined that this principality lives in this icicle. Could have thought of a better place for a principality to live. But anyway, and here they are wielding this thing and breaking and shattering in pieces and all praising God, you know, and I thought, you know, give me a break, you know, where'd you get this stuff from? You know, it's getting weirder and weirder, it really is.

You know, I mean, after all, the weapons of our warfare are now pickaxes. My Bible says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they're not natural, but they're mighty through God. You know, I mean, we've got some strange stuff going on.

But he made weapons in order to counteract the enemy. We've got to know what the weapons of our warfare are, you see. And then verse six, we've got to go on.

And he appointed military officers over the people, gathered them in the square at the city gate, 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 which 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 in the fight our battles, and the people relied on the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Now notice, he gathers all the leaders together.

In those days, of course, not everybody had a Bible, obviously. Everything was written by hand, and so they had the, you know, what we would call the Torah, I guess, today, and they would open it up and read. And he's encouraging the people with the word of God.

Now, the Bible says in Romans chapter 15, through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. Through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. I have a good friend, some of you know him, Winky Prattney.

He lives just down the road from where I live now. And periodically, we get together, and Winky's written a number of books, and a couple of books on theology, and he's just a brilliant young man. But Winky has a saying, and he says, you know, how many of you know the Bible is full of mistakes? And people look at him like, you know, how can this guy write a book on theology, and then sort of demean the word of God

by saying it's full of mistakes? But I agree with him.

This Bible is full of mistakes. Oops, it begins with Eve's mistake, followed by Adam's mistake, followed by Noah's mistake, and a whole bunch of other mistakes. And aren't you glad that the Bible is full of mistakes? Because it's through the encouragement of the scriptures that we might have hope.

You see, can you imagine if every single page of this Bible, nobody ever sinned, nobody ever doubted God, nobody ever got drunk, nobody ever committed adultery, nobody ever put their foot in their mouth, nobody was ever disobedient. I mean, every single person was absolutely perfect. Page after page, perfection, perfection.

Now, how many of you would be encouraged? It would be very discouraging, wouldn't it? Isn't there anybody like me, Lord? Doesn't anybody get tired? Doesn't anybody get weary? Doesn't anybody doubt you? Doesn't anybody have any fears? Doesn't anybody, you know? But the Bible says through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. You see, this book is a redemptive book, and it's full of before and after stories. Men that committed adultery, and then they become the great psalmist of Israel.

And God says in the New Testament, man after God's own heart. You have people like Jonah. Jonah had a mandate from God, go to Nineveh, a very clear word.

And what does he do? He goes the opposite direction. But aren't you glad that the Bible goes on to say, and the word of the Lord came a second time to Jonah. That's encouraging.

Cuz if you've had a word from God and you've disobeyed, you can say, God, you're the God of the second chance. And I find, as I read the word of God, God is the God of the makeup test. Don't you just love those makeup tests? I did, I was never very good in school.

And I dreaded those teachers that would walk in, you know, with a big smile and say, take out a clean sheet of paper and put your books on your desk. We're gonna have a test. You know, those surprise attacks.

But you know, the ones I loved the most was, listen, if you failed, on Friday we're gonna have a makeup test. And I had a few days to cram and, you know, study and then I could pass. God's the God of the makeup test.

And all the way through the Bible, you have individuals that had fears and insecurities and sins in their life and so on. Peter, we talked about him a few minutes ago, three times denied the Lord. What happens after the resurrection? Jesus takes him aside there, he's been fishing all night, hasn't caught anything.

Jesus takes him aside and says, hey Peter, I want to ask you something. Peter says, what? He says, you love me? Peter says, yep. You sure, Peter? Yep.

Positive, yes. Three affirmations for three denials. That's the God I like.

Through the encouragement of the scriptures. And so here is the king now. They've done all these things.

And he said, listen, I want to encourage you. The God that is with us is greater than the God that is with the one that's coming against us. With him is an arm of flesh.

With us is the Lord our God. And he's going to help us and fight our battles. We don't do this alone.

See, we have God on our side. You know, we need to magnify God and diminish the enemy. You know, sometimes we have the enemy so big that God, you know, is sort of down here and somehow, you know, no, it's the other way around.

We have two-thirds of the angels on our side. Got to remember that. We have the God that created the devil on our side.

You can snuff him out overnight if he wants to. You know, I mean, God is on our side. The Bible says, when you go out to fight against your enemies and the more numerous than you, don't be afraid, don't panic, don't tremble, because I am with you.

Deuteronomy chapter 20. So be strong, be courageous, he says. Do not fear, don't be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, verse 7, nor because of all the multitude which is with him.

For the one that is with us is greater than the one with him. Let me just read this verse in Deuteronomy 20 and then we'll need to close, otherwise we'll be preaching the everlasting gospel here. Verse 1. Here is a promise.

When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people, what, more numerous than you. See, that's the time to be fearful. When there's one of you and ten of them, chances are you're going to be afraid.

When there's ten of you and one of them, you're pretty confident. But when the tables are turned, and God says, listen, when you go out to battle and the more numerous than you, he says, don't be afraid. It shall come about when you're approaching the battle, the priest shall come and speak to the people and he shall say, hear, O Israel, you're approaching the battle today against your enemies.

Do not be faint-hearted, do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies and to save you. I believe Hezekiah is quoting that portion of scripture, because all the ingredients of Deuteronomy 20 fit into exactly what he says here. You see, that's why it's important that you and I get into the word of God.

We find out what does the word of God say. And that way then we can draw the sword from that knowledge of the word of God. It's interesting, in fact, that when the enemy does come and he finally arrives, verse 9, after this, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was 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 Sennacherib, king of Assyria, on what are you trusting that you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege? Is not Hezekiah misleading you by giving yourselves over to die by hunger, by thirst, saying, the Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria? Has not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars and said to Judah in Jerusalem, you shall worship before one altar, and in it you shall burn incense? Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the land? Were the gods of the nations of the land able at all to deliver their land from my hand? Who was there among all the gods of the nations, which my father utterly destroyed, who could deliver his people out of my hand? That your God should be able to deliver you out of my hand.

In other words, the attack that comes now is exactly what they have been encouraged about. That's the advantage of reading the word of God on a daily basis. Because when the enemy comes in and he begins

to say, listen, God doesn't love you, brother.

You know, your sins are not forgiven. You know, and you've read that morning, the thoughts I have concern you are not thoughts of evil, but thoughts of good. You've read that morning, there's no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

If we confess our sin, you see, and we've got that word to hold on to. I mean, this is the exact strategy. Who is your God anyway? Who's this Hezekiah that you're relying on? I mean, haven't you heard about what I've done? I've destroyed city after city after city.

Man, I can wipe you guys out, no problem. But see, they've encouraged themselves in the word of God. Verse 15, don't let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this.

Do not believe in him for no God of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less your God, but they've got a word. Listen, the one with us is greater.

With him only is an arm of flesh. With us is the Lord our God, you see. And then he goes on, he writes letters of insult and so on.

Finally, verse 20, and we'll close. But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, prayed about this and they cried out to heaven. Here is a man that has done all that he's able to do.

He's cut off the supply of water. He's rebuilt the walls. He's erected towers.

He's made weapons and shields. He's encouraged the people and yet the enemy still keeps on. And finally, he goes to another man of God, Isaiah the prophet.

And he prays, he says, brother, I need your help. You know, there are times when we do everything we can. We fast, we pray, we read the word of God.

And it just seems like the enemy just is unrelenting. And there are times when you and I need a brother or sister to go to and say, brother, stand with me. This has been a rough week or a rough month.

I don't know what's going on financially. You know, there's been problems, sickness in their family. This and that, the other thing, you know.

I need somebody to stand with me. And he's not ashamed to call in another man of God. And it says, they prayed about this and cried out to heaven.

Verse 21, and the Lord sent an angel and he destroyed every mighty warrior. The Bible tells us in another portion of scripture, 185,000 Assyrians, just one angel. That shows you that we've got two-thirds on our side.

Jesus said on the cross, I could call, what, 12 legion of angels. If one is capable of destroying 185,000, I don't know what that comes to with 12 legion. You know, that's billions, I guess.

I don't know what. You know, we need to magnify the Lord, don't we? We need to understand how great he is here. After all, he created the heavens and the earth.

And he's seated far above all principalities and powers. Not only that, but he's raised us up also and seated us with him. And so the Lord sends an angel, destroys every mighty warrior, commander, and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria.

And they returned in shame to their own land. And when they entered the temple of his God, some of his own children killed him with a sword. And the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, from the hand of all others and guided them on every side.

Now, I would love to rewrite this chapter. And I'd like to rewrite it this way. That 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, king of Assyria came, invaded Judah, besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, he went to Isaiah the prophet and prayed about this and cried out to heaven. And the Lord sent an angel and destroyed every mighty warrior.

That's the way I'd like to rewrite the chapter. Because I don't want to have to cut off the supply of water. I don't want to have to divert rivers.

I don't want to have to rebuild walls. I don't want to have to erect towers. I don't want to have to make weapons and shields.

I don't want to have to read the word and encourage myself. I just want God to do everything. That's the way we are, aren't we? We're Americans.

I'm including myself in that. You know, the instant, you know, everything's instant, you know. God, just take care of this.

Take care of that. I thank God that He does come through. But you see, He doesn't let us bypass putting on the armor.

Listen, here, you put on the helmet. You take up the shield. You put on the breastplate of righteousness.

You gird your loins about with truth. You learn how to use that sword. Here's a shield.

Begin to use it, you see. And having done all, you stand. Then I'll come and I'll help you.

We get very lazy, don't we, sometimes. See, God is looking for overcomers. And for some of you, no doubt, there are some Philistines.

God says, listen, I bypassed the Philistines long enough. Now I put one right bang in front of you. Because some of you have never learned how to fight.

See, you and I are going to be the bride of a warrior. Lift up your heads, all your gates. Speedily lift it up, the everlasting doors, that what? The King of Glory may come in.

Who is the King of Glory? The Lord, mighty in battle. We're going to marry a military man. We better learn how to fight.

He's not looking for a wimp. He's not going to marry a little bride that's going to be clutching, you know, these skirt tails, sort of, and hiding behind him all the time. No.

We are to reign with him. We are to rule with him. He has seated us also with him in heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, you see.

We've got to learn to use the weapons that he's given us. That's the way we grow. This is the end of this presentation.

By David Ravenhill. Given on Monday evening, June 5, 2000 at Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Abington, Massachusetts. In the conference, Turning the Battle Toward the Gate.

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