

# Steadfastness in Conflict

by Duncan Campbell

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*Duncan Campbell's sermon emphasizes the necessity of steadfastness and divine reliance in spiritual conflicts faced by believers.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 17:9, 2 Chronicles 15:2, Proverbs 24:21, Isaiah 54:17, Isaiah 59:19, Matthew 19:26, Romans 1:17, Ephesians 6:12, Philippians 4:5, 1 John 3:21

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Steadfastness"

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## Description

Duncan Campbell emphasizes the necessity of steadfastness in the face of conflict, drawing parallels between Israel's battle against Amalek and the spiritual struggles Christians face today. He highlights that true victory requires reliance on God, as exemplified by Moses' leadership and the support of others during the battle. Campbell asserts that while the enemy may be formidable, faith and obedience to God's call are essential for overcoming challenges. He encourages believers to recognize their responsibility in the fight against spiritual darkness, reminding them that God empowers those who are willing to act. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a commitment to prayer and unity in the pursuit of God's victory.

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## Transcript

"My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change" (Proverbs 24:21).

In the way to the Promised Land Israel had many trials to encounter. One of these was warfare with Amalek. The enemy tried hard to turn Israel aside and defeat her in her purpose. Israel had been redeemed from Egypt and was now on her way to Canaan, but the enemy was there to bar the way, and Israel must fight if she would win. The Amalekites were a mighty host, skillful and brave warriors. Joshua had only an army of liberated slaves, but the story of the Battle of Rephidim proclaims aloud that one with God is a majority, and "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

But this record of CONFLICT from the pages of an Old Testament story is also a picture of life, and especially the Christian life. The man who is out to possess his possessions will soon discover that there is no easy way to victory. The highest values in life must be fought for and won. We all have our Amalekites to face, and blessing will depend upon how we react to the challenge.

On the spiritual battlefield of the present day, the Lord Jesus Christ has taken up His position, and those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, are fully persuaded that the last great CONFLICT has begun and

Jesus is summoning His followers to stand with Him. But the enemy is there, strong and well entrenched, and equipped with armor, with which a past generation did not have to contend.

Those battles of Old Testament days are suggestive of the CONFLICT to which the redeemed people of God are called. True, we may not have to contend with flesh and blood, although the day may yet come when we may be called upon to "resist unto blood," standing for the Crown Rights of the Redeemer, as did the Covenanters of old. Should that day come, may God find us faithful! No, not contending with "flesh and blood," but with "the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6.12).

Now, it is of interest to note how Moses prepared to face the enemy. To Joshua he said: "Choose us out men" (Exod. 17.9). He began by utilizing the human forces at his command. In effect, Moses was saying: "Unbelief in the midst is challenging the very existence of God." "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (Exod. 17.7), were the words with which Moses was challenged. What chance was there of victory, with the spirit of mutiny among the people? "What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me" (Exod. 17.4), was how Moses described the situation, as reflected in the attitude of the people. But, how true, that often it is the sheer weight of our own helplessness which casts us upon the Lord. So, Moses, in the hour of his extremity, cries unto the Lord, and at once God is at hand to help. How true, "when we come to an end of ourselves, we have reached the beginning of God" (Dr. W. Graham Scroggie).

To me, it has been a source of great comfort and strength in the day of battle, just to remember that the secret of STEADFASTNESS, and indeed, of victory, is the recognition that "the Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4.5). So Moses prepared for the battle, and calls upon Joshua to choose out men. They were to be chosen men, suggesting that only by giving of their best could victory be won. Here we have a general and universal principle -- that we count upon God when God can count upon us. In this word of command to Joshua there rings a note of confidence: "Go out, fight with Amalek" (Exod. 17.9). Moses was strong in the assurance that "no weapon that is formed against God can prosper" (Isa. 54.17). The enemy may be strong, but he must be faced with holy confidence in God.

Who present could ever forget a certain midnight meeting during the Hebridean revival! The enemy was attacking and the going was hard: it looked as though the battle was lost. Just then a young man rose to his feet, and with words that gripped the souls of all present, he challenged God to fulfill His covenant engagement, and called upon the Most High to vindicate His name by commanding deliverance. He kept repeating the words of Scripture: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59.19). With Pentecostal suddenness, the power of God swept into the meeting house, and many were the "slain of the Lord." We speak of 'mighty moments' in the history of this gracious revival, and this certainly was one of them. What was it that changed defeat into 'victory's ringing cheer'? Surely the STEADFAST confidence of one man who, in the hour of test and trial, personified the truth that: "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3.21).

God teaches men largely by the example of others, and in this case the example of Moses is impressive and instructive. He has surveyed the possibilities within the limits of his resources, and in this the Church has both an example and a lesson.

There is today a certain school of thought, growing in intensity. Its main emphasis is on the sovereignty of God: man can do nothing. We all believe in the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men, but when this view is strained to the point of eliminating man's responsibility, we have no hesitation in saying it borders on heresy. God makes use of men. One is reminded of words spoken by the Apostle Paul: "The Church is looking for

better methods, but God is looking for better men." In Exod. 18.21, we get an insight into the men whom God could trust, not only in the field of administration, but also in the field of battle, "able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness."

Mention could be made of many who, in response to the call of God, like the chosen men of Israel, went forth to do battle against the forces of darkness, impelled by the conviction that while God alone could provide the victory, they must dig the ditches (2 Kings 3.16), and in this connection we might mention a few. One's thoughts go back to pre-Reformation days. Think of the [Roman] Church of that period. What mighty defenses she had raised around her; she seemed impregnable! Outside her boundaries there was no salvation. She could make monarchs and cast them down again. Her wealth was boundless, her civil power supreme. To be her favorites was to be blessed, but to be excommunicated was death. Then across Europe came the cry of Luther: "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1.17). Soon the mighty defenses of this [Roman] Church were crumbling to the ground! From its ruin there arose the Bride of Christ -- a Church, unfettered, free! Luther was steadfast in the day of battle, and like the warrior of a later day, he could sing:

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,

And looks to that alone;

Laughs at impossibilities,

And cries 'it shall be done!'"

The story is often told of Luther burning the 'Pope's Bull'. Standing in the presence of the crowd, with the flaming paper in his hand, he said: "See, here, this is the 'Pope's Bull!'" Spurgeon, referring to the incident, says: "What cared he for all the Popes that were ever in, or out of, hell!" He was God's instrument and the human agent in revival.

One thinks of the great revival of New England, and of Jonathan Edwards' great address to the people around him, on the subject of "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." God's instrument in this revival was so mightily used by God that, on this occasion, trembling sinners were heard to cry: "Edwards, Edwards, be merciful!" When this awakening swept that part of New England, another chosen instrument was preaching to the Red Indians, and thousands were brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. David Brainerd was God's instrument. By day and by night he gave himself to prayer. It is said of him that whole nights were spent in agonizing prayer until his clothes were drenched in the sweat of his travail.

Coming nearer our own day we have Evan Roberts. Was he not God's man for Wales for his day and generation? It is estimated that in a very short period thousands were added to the Church. God is the God of revival, but He found Evan Roberts an instrument whom He could use, and the story of this mighty awakening might be regarded as the story of a man chosen by God for his day and generation also. "Choose us out men" is still God's method. Such men may have been in the mind of the one who penned the words:

"Give me men to match my mountains,

Give me men to match my plains;

Men with empires in their purpose,

Men with eras in their brains.  
Give me men to plead for nations,  
As Elijah on his knees,  
Who, in hours of death-like stillness  
Wait to catch the heavenly breeze;  
Give me men of faith and vision,  
Stripped of every earthly gain,  
Till across the fissured valleys  
Black will roll the clouds of rain."

"From the very beginning of things God has purposed that His people should be the communicating means of His blessing to the world," said someone. That, of course, implies that the one who would be a channel of blessing must recognize that God is sovereign and that it is his responsibility to carry out His instructions. We read: "So Joshua did as Moses had said to him" (Exod. 17.10). The blessing that flowed from the intercession on the hill was conditioned by the obedience of the men in the valley. We have a further lesson to learn from this Old Testament story -- a lesson suggested by the words of Moses: "Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand" (Exod. 17.9).

It is well to remember that human efforts, however commendable and well-intentioned, are futile apart from the Divine enabling, so Moses sought Divine assistance. He stood on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand, not only as an inspiration to the soldiers, but as representing intercession with God for success and victory.

How often the missionary at home and abroad has been inspired and encouraged by the knowledge that there are those who are praying for him, and the lesson we must learn from the victory at Rephidim is, that the determining factor in this encounter is unchanged today. The words of Azariah brought to Asa set this in clear light: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chron. 15.2). Moses recognized that strength in the day of battle must come from on high, so away from the din of battle, he goes to the top of the hill -- the place of blessing, and there, with holy hands uplifted, he seeks the Divine aid that alone assures victory.

But active resistance to the forces of evil by prayer means CONFLICT -- a conflict that often brings physical and mental strain, so we read that "Moses' hands were heavy" (Exod. 17.12). Is it not interesting to note that strength came through the help of others? Aaron and Hur came to his assistance, and together, strengthened by fellowship and unity in the place of prayer, they held on until the sun went down and Israel's victory was complete. How arresting are the words: "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exod. 17.14). When God takes the field He does a thorough work, but in this connection we do well to remember that it takes the supernatural to burst the bands of the natural.

The lesson that comes from the three men on the hill clearly proclaims that man must have God. Think of the confidence expressed in the words of Wesley:

"Is there a thing beneath the sun  
That strives with Thee my heart to share?  
Ah, tear it thence, and reign alone,  
The Lord of every motion there!  
Then shall my heart from earth be free,  
When it hath found repose in Thee."

What are the implications? Surely this, that when God takes the field He is 'Lord of every motion!'

Let us lay hold upon this truth, and make it basic in our Christian experience, that with the rod of God in our hand, or in Scriptural terms, "God's anointing" resting upon us, we will know the power that will grip the soul's scattered energies, and send us forth to do battle, and know victory through Him who was "manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3.8).

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