

Dealing With the Enemy

by Jenny Daniel

Dealing with the enemy requires being aware of the spiritual forces that are working against us and taking steps to resist them, with the help of the standard of the Lord.

Duration: 31:42

Scripture: Psalm 44:5, Isaiah 54:17, Isaiah 59:2-4, Isaiah 59:15-19

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by discussing the importance of a standard or banner as a powerful symbol and rallying point. He then shares a story from history about Caesar's failed attempt to conquer Britain, where he encountered fierce warriors who struck fear into his army. The speaker also mentions the devastating impact of the Huns under the leadership of Attila, emphasizing the feeling of powerlessness and fear that can overwhelm us in the face of the enemy. He concludes by highlighting the need to be prepared and aware of Satan's tactics, as he is constantly on the warpath. The speaker also shares a personal experience of feeling overwhelmed and discouraged after the death of their father.

Transcript

Dear Father, each one of us are facing different circumstances and we ask Thee that Thou who knowest our circumstances will encourage us and bless us in this morning. Lord, we want to hear Thy voice. Come, be in our midst and speak to us.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Does it matter if the kids make a noise? If they make a noise, I'll just speak louder so the mothers can be relaxed. I'm used to it.

If you've had Roy, Noel and Samuel, then you can deal with noise. Now my subject for today, a few years ago I spoke about plunged into war, but today I'm going to come from a different angle. So my subject for today is dealing with the enemy.

Dealing with the enemy. This verse has encouraged, there's a verse that has encouraged me since my childhood and that has followed me right up to today. The day we become a Christian, which is so beautifully described in Acts 26 verse 18, when God has opened our eyes and turned us from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, life does not become easy.

Those who tell us so are not truthful. Satan is determined to regain what he has lost. Therefore we must be sober, be vigilant because our adversary the devil has a roaring line, seeketh whom he may destroy.

Which Christian has not had to deal with the enemy? If we belong to Christ facing us in deadly warfare, our soldiers in battle array, in different uniforms, enemies sent by Satan out to destroy us. They may be dressed in the somber garb of discouragement, tiredness, fear, the lure of the world, disappointed hopes, the attacks of fellow Christians. Perhaps there's someone even in this dining room who is weary from the fierceness of the battle that they so secretly discouraged to such an extent that they are tempted to turn their back on Christ.

It's essential to know how to deal with the enemy. By the aid that God promises each of his children in the height of the battle and today we are going to refer to an overwhelming enemy and my key verse is in Isaiah 59 which has blessed me since my childhood but which has been so such an anchor to me in the year that is passed. Now Isaiah 59 deals with iniquity and sin which separates us from God so that his ear will not hear.

Sin is described in verse 3 and 4 then God marvels in 3 to 14 then God marvels in verse 15 that there's no judgment on evil. Verse 16 he marvels that there's no intercessor and then 17 and 18 in Isaiah 59 describes the conquering Messiah who steps into the scene and then verse 19 mentions those who fear the Lord and then we get to this portion when the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. I'm going to repeat that when the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

Now there are other verses that we all know the wonderful insurance and confidence we can have in Isaiah 54 17 that no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper and every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. Isn't that wonderful? Then who we look to through God we shall do valiantly for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.

Psalms 44 verse 5 through thee we push down our enemies through thy name shall we tread down them that rise up against us and we know we fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. Psalm 27 verse 1 says the Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? Then it says in verse 3 though a host should encamp against me my heart shall not fear though war should rise up against me in this will I be confident. What am I going to be confident in? The Lord is my light and my salvation.

So now the picture I want to hold up for to all of us in this morning is when the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. Isaiah 59 verse 19. Now I have in my possession two sets of DVDs that I absolutely love and treasure.

I don't usually lend them because they're out because I'm scared they're going to get scratched but under much persuasion they are lent out to a home schooling family while I'm overseas. Now these DVDs are part of the great courses and the one set deals on world history from the Fertile Crescent to the American Revolution and the other set deals with American history. Now the teacher makes the history come alive.

He dresses up in the characters of that one character in that era and when you watch these DVDs you can't wait to see what is going to be next and what accent he's going to try and put on. And the one time he's Socrates the next time he's a Roman gladiator. The funniest is when he was a Empress with a long

wig on.

But one of the most terrifying times that this history DVD describes is when the Huns in 434 to 453 AD swept over Europe. Devastation sweeping nations out of the way. There was fear on all sides and their leader, I'm sure you've heard of him, was called Attila the Hun.

Nothing could withstand them. None had the power to arrest their flood of devastation until I believe God struck him. Havoc and terror, the enemy coming in like a flood across Europe.

And to me it's such a clear picture of the powerless feeling that overwhelms us in the grip of the enemy. Who of us have not experienced the time when we've been overwhelmed? When fear has gripped hold of us? When our confidence, our courage, our faith has been swept away? As if by a flood we are overwhelmed, struck down. Dear Lord, as I stop, consider the past and the battles fought, I bow in shame for defeated in the enemy's clutches caught.

When discouragement swept in, I cowered and sunk down in deep despair. Despite thy banner waving victorious in the air, when people railed, opposed me, I turned my back and fled. Doubting thy love, I crumbled and wished that I was dead.

Financial strains and hardship, a somber dark army had made me shrink and turn back, not faithful unto thee. Is this where I am stranded? Today as I look back, not ardent in the battle, but weary, bitter, slack. Now we first have to consider the enemies that may have accosted us in this year that's been passed.

Some enemies are arrayed against us in uniforms that are so bright, they bright like the British uniform. Have you ever considered, I wonder why the British wear a red uniform. They call the red coats.

They were seen miles away against the green background. And so some of the, when the enemy comes against us, sometimes he's wearing red. I remember a lady telling me that she was asked by someone to watch very questionable DVDs or TV or internet.

And she was so shocked. And she said, no, never. How can you ask me to do that? I will never ever, ever watch anything like that.

That was the enemy in a red coat, wasn't it? But what happens when the enemy comes subtly, when we press the keys of the computer and the wrong images or invitations or things pop up, then the enemy is not so visible and sometimes we succumb. The enemy can come in like a flood or a hurricane that sweeps from the sea. There's no warning.

We didn't, we weren't prepared for him. We didn't stand on guard. He sweeps in and gathers momentum.

And it reminds me, there was an Orlando Sentinel report on the internet and I looked at it on the 24th of September about Florida. In the 1920s, there was a land boom in Florida. Properties, their prices soared.

At first, the lots were \$50, but within months it was \$10,000 for the same pieces of property. There was no end to the boom. The land was resold many times in one day, the report tells us.

And then, in September the 17th, 1926, without warning, a violent storm struck Miami. Without warning, because the weather forecasting was primitive. Hurricanes hit without warning in those days and it rolled through Florida, tearing down hundreds of buildings, the winds 125 miles per hour.

392 people were killed, 7,000 were injured, 17,000 were destroyed. And the entire town of Moorhaven on Lake Ocotobee was rubble when the boom was over. But people got comfortable again, they rebuilt, and they picked up their lives.

And what happened? Worse in 1928. Hurricane winds at 160 miles per hour. The water was a 12-foot high wall.

Around the same Lake Ocotobee, 2,000 people were swept to their death. And they say the true death toll, no one knows to this day. They're still digging up remains when people excavate or do things.

And the 1928 storm was considered the third worst natural disaster in the USA. Is that not how the enemy comes against us, sweeping us up with despair and crippling failure? The enemy of disillusionment, has it floundered you? The hordes floundered you in the battle? You had such different views about the course of your life recently. You expected to be a wonderful influence for God, gathering souls under your wing.

You wanted to be the one looked up to, to heal family breaches perhaps, to be a tower of strength. You dreamt you would lead your children to the Lord in this year. Instead, they have turned their back on God.

The goals you set were never realized. Everything you endeavored to do seems to have floundered and fell to the ground. You feel a failure under the onslaught of the foe.

You seem dreadfully defeated. You know, I often repeated my story about my granny. In those 40 years that she prayed for her husband, there were times when she felt defeated in the battle.

She prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed, and the answer had not come. The answer did come after 40 years, but there were times when the enemy came up as a flood and she cowered, and she had to get up again and say, God, I trust Thee. I know that my prayers will be answered.

Perhaps you thought in this year that Mr. Right would come along, and you disillusioned, fearful of God's will. You almost feel like going over to the enemy's side because that answer has not come yet. These past months have been hard ones.

The goals set out for me were never reached. I floundered, despairing constantly. Discouragement's great army came sweeping against me.

Defeated in her onslaught, I groaned in agony. Dear Lord, reach out in mercy. I need Thy outstretched hand.

Bend down in great compassion and help Thy child to stand. Now it reminds me of some time I might have mentioned it to you before when somebody asked me, what have you been doing all day? They asked me that about two years ago, and suddenly a flood of disillusionment overwhelmed me. I felt such a failure.

What had I done that day? I'd been in bank queues, and in our country you can stand a few hours in a bank queue. I'd been in post office queues. I'd dealt with office issues on the phone while a mountain of preparation work was waiting, and there were people that I knew I could visit and I couldn't get to them.

So I felt so disillusioned. I thought I'd done nothing. And you know what? In that disillusionment, I almost said nothing.

But then the Lord Jesus said to me, my dear, walk now before me and be thou perfect. What you've done is part of your work. It's part of following me.

It's part of pleasing me. I knew the person wanted to know about meetings and souls and victory. And even though I wasn't able to answer with all those wonderful things, I still knew God was faithful.

But what I'd done that day was essential. And so even as mothers, sometimes we feel, what are we doing? We're changing nappies. We're making beds.

We're cooking the food. We're just doing nothing. Don't let the devil get you under with disillusionment.

That's all part of pleasing God and walking before him. Disillusionment like a sweeping enemy comes like a flood to overwhelm us. Don't let it happen.

Your fear for the future, perhaps. Perhaps this is the army that's coming against you. Will God provide today's economy, the tumbling money markets, retrenchment? It's an army of fear that comes against you and would cripple you and rob you of your joy and trust in God, his faithfulness, his tender care.

I remember once, about four years ago, there was a giant of faith very close to me, dignified with absolute confidence in God. We all looked up to him. But one day, calamity after calamity after calamity had overwhelmed it.

And suddenly I was sitting at the table and he sat with his shoulders slumped. And then tears rolled down his cheek and he said, it seems as if an enemy is trampling me underfoot. All I do is squashed.

He'd fainted in the battle. But it wasn't but a moment before he squared his shoulders and he cried, though the battle be sore, though the enemy whispers, God has failed, God will fail. I will rise up and conquer in Christ's name.

What does it say in Psalm 27 verse 3? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Dear Lord, instead of trusting thee within the battle fray, I feared that thou would not supply my needs from day to day. When finances were pressing, I thought that thou would fail.

And thus against thy dealings, I angrily did rail. As a defeated soldier, I sit within this wall, trampled and crushed, defeated, not courageous at all. Psalm 69 verse 4 says, they that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head.

They that would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty. Criticism from people, from fellow Christians, is a very hard battle enemy to face. Undeserved criticism, unlooked for, undermining.

Now I have told you this before, but I'm going to repeat it. What do I do with criticism? I see criticism because I always think in pictures. I see it as a suitcase flung at me.

And what do I do with the suitcase? I open the suitcase. After all, it has my name on it. And I look at the contents.

Do they belong to me? Is this a just criticism? If it is, I ask the grace to say, God forgive me and help me to love the person who has criticized me. But if under God's eye, I see that there's nothing in the suitcase that fits me, I close that suitcase, I lock it, and I kick it over the fence. And that's the end of the suitcase.

As soldiers in the battle, we need to open the suitcases, not ignore it. Do the things fit or belong? Does it come from God? But if not, fling it away. A soldier cannot fight the enemy hampered with suitcases.

And I've often reminded you that the Lord Jesus said the enemies can be those in our own household. What does Matthew 10, 34 to 36 say? You know it so well, think not that I'm come to send peace on the earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword.

For I'm come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household. As we visit and counsel family after family, minister's home after minister's home, we realize the reality of those words of the Lord Jesus.

And it's so hard to keep smiling with sore hearts, deep burdens about your children. But we have to be faithful, steadfast, stalwart, and not allow that flood of sorrow to cripple us in the battle. And the accusations of Satan that constantly rise up in battle array.

What does Satan say to us? You did wrong. It's all your fault. You should have been more strict.

You should have been more lenient. He uses those tactics to stop you being bright and full of joy and focused on the Lord Jesus. He says you're inadequate, a failure.

Your personality isn't right. Why witness? That's often with witnessing. We have found in our work that sometimes there have been workers that have been so discouraged because of these voices of Satan that would say your personality isn't the right thing to serve God.

And I remember particularly a fellow worker that was a wonderful worker who left God's work just because of these whispers of Satan. The enemy came in like a flood and he fell before the enemy. Don't let the enemy, don't let Satan rob you of your courage, your faith, your hope in God.

The Lord Jesus said to Peter, get thee behind me, Satan, in Matthew 16, verse 33. What did the Lord Jesus do? He didn't see Peter. He saw Satan that was using Peter.

And so we have to see who it is that has come across us. It's not the people, but it is Satan wanting to sweep over us and destroy us. Sometimes the enemy doesn't come in like a flood or it's not a visible flood, but like guerrilla warfare.

We're so unprepared and therefore the battle is lost. A little word of discouragement can be like the giant Goliath. I remember after my dad's death, I'd been organizing the funeral with others, with my family, and I'd been there that precious week of my dad cared for him.

And I just couldn't come to terms that he'd gone so suddenly. And physically, emotionally, I was exhausted. And then somebody said just one word, three words or four words to me.

And under those words, I crumpled. It was so difficult to get up again. I said, didn't God care? Does God care? Doesn't he see what it has been this last week? Satan is not sleeping.

He knows exactly when we are vulnerable and emotionally challenged. He comes in like a flood. He uses his agents in guerrilla warfare to secretly and suddenly spring upon us.

Satan is on the warpath. His arm is in a ray. With sweeping power they move in, increasing day by day.

Amongst them, stealthy agents to undermine and thrust. Cruel words like deadly sword stabs to lay us in the dust. But we need not be vanquished.

A standard held up high calls us to march behind it. Victorious is its prime. Now we're going to hasten to the standard.

The standard is the vital thing, a vital thing to help us withstand the enemy. There's a position that we need to take in confronting the enemy, and that position is behind the standard. But let's look at the standard.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. Jeremiah 51 verse 12. Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon.

Make the watch strong. Set up the watchmen. Psalm 60 verse 4. Thou hast given a banner like a standard to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of thy truth.

The idea of a standard or loft, a banner or loft, is a very powerful image. Now the Roman standard was a pennant, a flag, a banner or an eagle suspended to a pole. It was a rallying point.

It was a symbol of pride. It was a means of communication. Where the standard was, there they followed when the trumpet blew.

It led the soldiers into action for the charge. Now in the island story H.E. Marshall, they speak about the Roman landing on the British shores. Now Caesar had gathered together 80 ships and 12,000 men, and he thought he'd just put his men onto the shore in Britain and they would conquer them.

But he was in for a big surprise. When he arrived at the British shore with his 80 ships, he suddenly saw lined across the shore these fierce, terrifying looking warriors. They didn't even wear clothes.

They just tattooed themselves. They're not like the British today. They were just tattooed in marvelous colors all over, and they just looked weird and fierce.

And as they came near to the shore, they just showered arrows upon the ships. And so Caesar thought, wait, wait, wait, wait, let me just go where I'm not so vulnerable. So he goes round the corner to a shallower place, but it was still deep water.

And he says to the soldiers, jump into the sea, go against the enemy. They said, we're not going to jump into the sea and face those people. And while the ships had gone along, the Britons had run in their masses, and they just were their horses that plunged into the water.

They had no fear. They knew every bit of that sea as much as they knew the land. And so the Romans cowered in the ship, a galley, not a ship, petrified, absolutely petrified.

And then suddenly one brave soldier, Roman soldier, seeing his fellow soldiers so gripped with fear, seized the standard, probably with an eagle, and leapt overboard. And as he leapt, he cried, leap forth now, soldiers, you dare not betray our ensign to the enemy. I will bear myself as is my duty.

And wherever the eagle went, the soldiers followed. It was an emblem of honor. They fought for it.

They guarded it. It was their precious possession. So what did they do? They plunged into the sea and had a dreadful battle.

And the Romans conquered. Now, in the same way, we dare not disgrace our standard. Though we go through hard times, which come against us like a flood.

What is it saying to Timothy 2 verse 3? Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We cannot reach heaven wrapped up in cotton wool. It just doesn't work that way.

The standard is ahead of us as to help us oppose the enemy. Thou has given us a banner. Thou has given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of thy truth.

Now, there are different emblems that are used as banners. The one is, I believe, the Holy Spirit holds up holiness unto the Lord when the world tugs us as he did Demas. We march behind holiness unto the Lord and we conquer the enemy and we do not forsake God and flee as he did.

What about thy will be done? The Holy Spirit holds up when tragedy and sickness overcomes us or there's a swift home call like with my father. We're behind the banner. Thy will be done.

I will never leave you or forsake you is another banner the Holy Spirit holds up when friends turn against us, undermine us, persecute us, lies overwhelm us. They are sharp arrows of the fifth column that work stealthily. The banner is brightly held up high and it gives us courage.

It assures us of God's faithfulness whatever men may do. How can we dishonor the banner? The Spirit of the Lord holds aloft. As the Romans' shoulders were ashamed and hesitated, once that standard bearer held the standard aloft, they plunged into the sea.

Let us be ashamed to hesitate, to stand upright, ready, sword in hand to attack the fiery darts of the wicked one. Faithful behind the standard, we march against the foe. A rally point, it calls us.

Where it leads, we must go. We dare not lag or falter. We must not turn or flee despite fierce opposition forward to victory.

And what is our position? It's behind the standard. Behind the standard with the Holy Spirit between us and the enemy to warn us and his faithful one, even that still small voice that tells us, know my child, this is wrong. Between us and the enemy, he is formidable and an adequate banner to stand between us and the enemy.

He bars the enemy while he leads us into battle to conquer. And I have told you before of this big worker that we had helping us in a town years ago. And I'll just shortly mention it.

And I always took my children with me. I just took toys with me to visit people because I like to have them with me. But this day I couldn't.

And so I had to leave little Roy. Noel was in a little school. Roy had to leave with her.

And I said, please, whatever you do, it was a dangerous time in South Africa, do not open the door to anybody. Don't. It doesn't matter what they look like.

They might look like angels, but don't open the door. So she filled the door like this. And she says, Madam, no one comes past me.

And in the same way, the Holy Spirit, if we are behind the Holy Spirit in obedience to God's word, no one will come past as long as we are behind the banner. And don't expose our back to the enemy. We have no cause to fear and no reason.

The enemy cannot reach us. The question is, am I faithfully and eagerly following the standard? The enemy has come in like a flood, but am I flattened and destroyed like those Roman soldiers who cowered in the boat? Am I paralyzed with fear, even fear about God's will? What is he going to do with my life? The things I thought haven't happened. What is happening? As the Roman soldier grabbed the standard, the golden eagle on the pole, and plunged into the sea, crying, follow the standard.

So I cried to you in this morning. Look at the standard bearer holding the standard aloft. Let us gather our forces and go forward, not confident in our own strength, but that which the standard bearer represents.

He represents the captain who conquered the world, the all-victorious one. Psalm 98 verse 1, he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm had gotten him the victory.

That is our captain that leads us into battle. Dear Lord, life's heavy hardships have been too much for me. The enemy on all sides closed in to flatten me.

I lost my courage, faltered, shrunk back and weakly cried. My very sword hung useless as I froze, petrified. The finances, the future, sickness and great fatigue, the tongues that railed against me with subtle, sly intrigue.

Loved ones are further hardened. They're plunging into sin. I'm losing faith that thou canst them rescue, their soul win.

Discouragement overwhelms me. My prayers, not bright with hope, as doubts attack, assail me. I falter, cannot cope.

The world looks over, leering, to giving, tempted, sore, forgetting that against it, I am arrayed in war. But thou, in thy great mercy, has lifted up on high the standard, and behind it I'll march until I die, knowing that as I follow, thy strength will be enough to conquer and to triumph, even though the battle's tough. Thy standard far too precious to let the enemy capture it.

Therefore, forward, I'll march to victory.

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