

Exodus Chapter 17 v 8 - 16

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Date: 23 July 2017

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[0 : 00] verse 8. 17 of Exodus and the 8th verse. Thanks Ben. Speak up. The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

Moses said to Joshua, choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands. So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill.

As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning. But whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up, one on one side, one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses, write this on a scroll as something to be remembered, and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Moses built an altar and called it, The Lord is my banner. He said, For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord. The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation. Let's pray. Lord, as we turn to your word now, we pray that you would enlighten it through us, that as we look at battling against the Amalekites, we might come to understand what it is to battle in the Christian life, and to know that through the battles, you prevail, and as ultimately, victory awaits.

[1 : 44] So Lord, we pray you'd help me to speak. Help us to listen. Change us, we pray. Let us rejoice to be in your presence tonight, and rejoice to go here, renewed in our strength for you.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, I've been preaching a series elsewhere through the book of Exodus, looking at some of the events in the life of Moses.

And in that series, I've been preaching, and as I'm preaching short notes this evening, I'm just going to drop into, to part of one of these, of this series, and share some thoughts with you from Exodus 17.

But as I look through the life of Moses, with the first part of our series, we went through the, there's just the enslavement in Egypt, the plagues, the Passover, the passing through the Red Sea, and then Moses gets on to the far side of the Red Sea, and there the people rejoice.

We read there that great song of Moses in the 15th chapter of the book of Exodus. And the people sang and rejoiced that God had freed his people, that the Egyptians had been washed into the sea and destroyed forever.

[3 : 01] And then I pick up again, as now the people are moving away from the Red Sea and are on their journey, that journey to the promised land, that land that God has said, I am taking you to a place flowing with milk and with honey.

And in that story, we've gone through the bitter waters of Marah, the waters that were not drinkable, that they were bitter, until Moses threw that log into the water, and the waters cleansed and made sweet.

But they went from the bitter waters of Marah to the bountiful provision of Elam at the end of chapter 16. There they were at Elam, where they had plenty to water there.

There was lots of provision in those 12 springs. But then moving on from there, they move into the desert of sin. That's a place. It's not talking about our wrongdoing, the desert of sin.

And there they received the bread from heaven. God gave that manna that came down from heaven. But then from there, they move on to Rephidim. And that's where we're going to pick up the story in chapter 17 of the book of Exodus.

[4 : 15] They move on to Rephidim. And this begins in the first part of the passage there about the water that flows from the rock. It's that we're not going to look at it in any great detail, not because it's not important.

It is important. Everything written for us in the Word of God is important. But we're just going to comment on it very briefly, because they've already been without water, or the water was bitter. They cried to God, we need water.

And God made the water sweet. But the people didn't seem to learn. Sometime later, again, they need water, and they cry out to God. Water, food, it's all they ever seem to want on that journey. And God provides for them again. The very fact that they had to cry out again to God for the same thing when he'd already provided similar for them suggests they had not learned from past experiences.

They hadn't learned from the errors of the past. God had provided before, surely he could do it again. He'd done it for them at Elam. They'd had plenty of water. And now when there's no water, they cry to God.

[5 : 25] It seems as if they're saying to God, God, you're not capable of doing this. We don't have our trust in you. And I kept saying to Moses, did they not on the journey? Why have we left Egypt? Why can't we go back to Egypt?

Why can't we go back to where we have plenty of food and drink? Well, we sat down and there were meat pots. There was drink. There was everything we needed. Sometimes we only remember the good things, don't we?

We think of the good things and we forget that the bad things, the things that we just blot out. When they were in Egypt, they lived in slavery, but now they've been freed from that.

And so they should rejoice more than they did. We go again into Numbers chapter 20, and again, we see the same response there. They want water. Moses hits the rock, but he doesn't do it in the way God says.

They get water, but Moses at that point is excluded from entry to the promised land. What does Moses do? You see, when he does something for God, God's given him this staff, this stick, and he tells them, raise your staff up, or he tells them to hit the rock, and the water comes out and so on.

[6 : 33] There's something very special and very powerful about that staff. But it's not so much because of Moses, it's because of the God of Moses who was behind Moses, who was behind the staff.

And we're going to see that staff again in this chapter as it goes on. So let's move on. Let's move on, and we see what happens when they battle the Amalekites. At this point, you see, we can of course note that through the trials, God brought victory to his people, and they win a victory here. They've already won a victory coming out of Egypt. But we can't assume that all will be well for the future. God doesn't necessarily give us what we hope or expect, but he does give us what's best for us.

And that's a real lesson to learn, isn't it? We can think of all these good things we want of God, but God knows better. Do you believe that? When the hardships come, when the problems of life come, when you feel all that's coming in upon you, when you feel assailed and battered, and yet God knows best.

What a great God we have. How are you doing in life with the problems? Because I know you've got problems, or you have had, or you will have, because we all have problems in life, don't we?

[7 : 56] It's part of being human. It's part of the sin that exists in this world. How are you doing with the problems in life? Are they disrupting your walk with God, or are they actually enriching it and producing maturity?

In the issues of food and the water, the problem is physical. But now, as they face the Amalekites, they're entering into a spiritual warfare against the forces of evil.

You see, now as they battle the Amalekites, this is the first battle since leaving Egypt. Israel hadn't fought battles before, but the day had to come when they would.

If they were going to conquer Canaan, they needed to defeat the enemies of the people of God. If they were to enter the promised land, and life will confront us.

Life will confront us with challenges and with battles to be fought. You and I are in a spiritual warfare. Our battle is, as it were, with the dark forces in heavenly realms, as Paul writes.

[9 : 05] And we're in a battle. And that battle is not always easy. And there are moments in that battle when we feel that we have lost. We might lose a battle, but we will never, ever, ever lose the war.

Because God's on our side. Don't take the devil for granted. Take him lightly. The devil is powerful. A lion roaring against us.

But our God is greater still. Let's put that in context as we go through this battle scene this evening. We're in spiritual warfare. As the hymn writer said, we are to fight the good fight, as Paul himself wrote, we're to fight the good fight of faith.

There's no evidence that the Israelites had fought any battles in Egypt. But once they delivered from the bondage of Egypt, that's when the battles begin.

See, it's when you and I lived in bondage to sin. We didn't have those sorts of battles we might have today. Why? Because when you and I were in a bondage of sin, the devil would leave us alone.

[10 : 12] We were on the devil's side. The devil's not going to fight against his own. But when you and I come to that moment, we trusted Christ for salvation when he died upon the cross. Then when we look and go forward, we are now the enemies of Satan because we are the friend of God.

And so, we now have the devil fighting against us. And so the battles come. But in a sense, perhaps we need those battles in life.

Perhaps we need those battles to help balance the blessings. Otherwise, we become too confident, too comfortable. We're sure of ourselves. We start trusting the Lord.

Sometimes, it's through the battles, it's through the hardships, it's through the difficulties, that that is when we get closest to God. The Christian very soon learns in his newfound faith that the path of true discipleship is beset with warfare.

Sin and the devil are not easily conquered. Battle characterises even a youngest and newest believer. And so we're like the Israelites of old.

[11 : 22] You and I are in a battle. So the Amalekites, you see, they come, they make an unprovoked attack on the Israelites there at Rephidim. But who were the Amalekites?

Who were they? Well, the Amalekites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. The name of Amalekites comes from Amalek, the grandson of Esau.

Do you remember Esau? What he was like? He was described as a skilled hunter, a man of the field. He's a bit of a wild man. Jacob liked the home life, the comfort of home. But Esau, like the wildlife.

They've got different personalities today. Some of us are very comfortable at home. Some of us want to be out there doing wild and exciting things. But now we've got, you see, the Amalekites, the descendants of Esau.

It's a case of, like, father, like son, and grandson, and so on, down to generations. Listen to this, and here we see part of God's elective purpose, that there was division between Jacob and Esau.

[12 : 25] That God says in the Bible, he says, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. There's this concept of division, this concept of the separation of a special covenant people of God.

And that continues then, down the line of the nations, right down to today. And so we see the problem today between the Jews and the Arabs. The Amalekites were a fierce, nomadic tribe who made part of their livelihood by making frequent raids on other settlements, carrying off the spoil and the booty.

They killed for pleasure. One of the greatest insults at that time in Israelite culture that you could give to any other Jew was to call them a friend of Amalek.

And we don't get the force of that, do we? Daniel and I were talking about this earlier on. I think it was Daniel, something to somebody anyway, about this. How do we grasp what that means, oh, you're a friend of Amalek?

It doesn't mean anything to us. So how would you put that today in similar things that you're a friend of a new certain language? But really, I can hardly say the sort of ideas we come up with.

[13 : 35] I couldn't even say that. It would be so politically incorrect. It would be so offensive to people. And that's the kind of the force of this expression which we don't really grasp here, to be a friend of Amalek, which is to be an enemy of God.

When the Israelites entered their region of the Amalekites, the Amalekites saw this as a perfect opportunity for both pleasure and profit. But this hostile tribe didn't realise what they were doing. They were moving in now, not just on any group of people. They now attack the wrong people because they were now attacking the people of God. For the Israelites, slaves, with no experience of warfare, to come out and fight against the Amalekites, surely there's proof that God was with them as he had promised.

that God was able to bring about that most unlikely victory. And victory, victory for three reasons. Firstly, the power of God in heaven.

That's the overriding cause of victory. If God is not in our cause, we have lost before we start. But secondly, victory because Joshua fought there on the battlefield with all his might.

[14:50] But thirdly, because Moses held up his hands steadfastly in prayer before the Lord and working there to gather this victory.

So I want for the next few moments to look here at just three headings, three thoughts within this passage. As we break it up like this, three points, we see partnership.

Each different group, each person, everyone has their role to play. In partnership together, there's victory. But secondly, we see the theme of prayer and thirdly, permanence.

The fact about events which are ongoing as we'll see. Partnership, prayer, permanence.

Partnership then. Moses realised the victory rested on two things.

It rested on the power of prayer and it rested on the physical action in battle. And we see in all this then a partnership. There's Joshua on the ground.

[15:48] Joshua fighting, but Joshua himself has taken chosen men. Joshua himself on the battlefield is in partnership with chosen men of battle. And Moses is there on the mountain.

Moses in partnership with Joshua, but Moses himself is in partnership with his two great helpers, with Aaron and with her. True intercession. True intercession is a demanding activity and it needs partnership and it needs support.

We need today leaders in our church as leaders with the insight of Moses. Moses' new victory wouldn't come from action alone. How often you and I try to do things in our own strength.

If you had that little experience, the most minor thing, where something's not going right and suddenly you say, I need to pray about this and suddenly the situation changes. It would be something silly as you can't find your watch or your car keys and eventually we think, why did I pray in the first place?

But there's much bigger issues than this, though the principle is the same. We cannot do things in our own strength. We convince ourselves that what we're doing is right because God is in us, but we don't really seek to know what God really wants in our own strength.

[17:07] God wants to show us that victory is ultimately down to Him. He uses all that goes on in a way that brings glory to Himself.

He won't share His glory with another. We too, sometimes, we can be full of ourselves, full of pride. Pride is our own ability not just a man at the front that says, oh, I'm a good preacher or the person in a children's club that says, I'm a good children's worker. It's down to the person who says, I make the best cups of tea in this church, you know.

You see, little ways, we can be kind of full of ourselves, can we not? But this is not about us. This is about God. And in this passage, we meet Joshua as part of this partnership.

We meet Joshua for the first time. Joshua is already seen then as a military great, a capable military commander who can lead. But his statue will continue to grow.

[18:11] He will become Moses' right-hand man. Eventually, he will become the successor of Moses. He will be chosen as one of the 12 spies to spy out the Promised Land.

But he's one of only two, Joshua and Caleb, who say, like the others say, the enemies there in the Promised Land, they're big. Yeah, we agree they're big.

Joshua and Caleb probably say, yeah, they're big. But the difference, ten of them said, whoa, they're so big, we can't cope with that. We can't go in there. And then we've got Joshua and Caleb. We can do it through the power of our God.

And so Moses, we see, growing in stature. But he must already have been a man of stature, the fact he was called to lead that battlefield that day. We sometimes meet people who think so highly of themselves.

They think they can just walk into work, into a job and a situation at a high level and just take over leadership in some way. Within United Beach Missions, it doesn't work like that.

[19:17] Nobody in our leadership just comes in and says, oh, you can come and join us for your first time ever and be a leader. It doesn't work like that. And it shouldn't work like that. In a sense, we've all started at the bottom, worked our way up.

Now, some people with gifts the Lord's going to use will be noted very quickly and given responsibility. But if we think we can just walk in and think with a bee's knees, we've got something

sadly wrong.

Paul, remember, wrote to Timothy about the appointment of deacons. It's a principle that can apply to so many other aspects of Christian work. He wrote it to, he wrote in 1 Timothy chapter 3, and let them also be tested first, then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.

Certain qualities look for there. And so too, as here in the battle, gospel work is partnership work. Each of us has a role to play. In a sense, no one's more important than anyone else.

Paul brings us out, doesn't he, with the analogy of the body. When he talks about each part, having a body, having a part to play. Could you imagine a body made up of nothing but legs, or heads, or arms, or feet?

[20 : 30] Could you imagine, team, could you imagine a team with nothing but 14 of me? Perish the thought. We're all different, and we need to be all different. I believe the gospel work is partnership work.

I believe, in a sense, in every member ministry, we all have a part to play in the life and the work of the church and of the gospel. So there is partnership, but secondly, secondly, there is prayer.

This is often the great theme that's preached from this passage, and it is a very prominent theme.

And we're going to look at the theme of prayer now, but as you gather from what I've already said, I don't believe it's the only theme that we draw from this passage, but prayer is central in everything, isn't it?

Moses says that tomorrow he's going to stand on the hill, and when he stands on the hill, and Joshua, you go to the battlefield, I'll raise my hands before God, I'll pray to the Lord, and you will win the battle.

I'm sure Moses knew that. He believed that with him praying, with God's help, he could win that battle. What a striking figure. Moses must have appeared that day, silhouetted on the skyline, like a standard raised in battle.

[21 : 51] But the standard was not so much Moses, he was the God of Moses, the God who lay behind Moses. It's said, is it not, behind every great man, there's a woman, but behind every great man of God is God himself.

Moses, he was a one-time soldier, he was a soldier of the Egyptians before he even led the people out of Egypt. Now is Moses, 81 years of age.

I wonder now, Moses maybe felt a little bit old, and a little bit past it, always went totally past it by any means, because, you know, he still sees him. Who else is 81?

Lots of us couldn't that day, to probably walk up mountains like he did and so on. Sometimes, though, the spirit may be more willing than the body. Think of our queen.

How old's a queen? I'm 91, 92, whatever she is. And she's still working, did an amazing job. And yet, we see her song to pass on some of the baton, some of the work to younger members of the royal family.

[23 : 01] Maybe in a sense, that's what Moses is doing. You know, a television programme years ago, last of the summer wine, there we had some old, grumpy old men, men who had passed their former glory.

Weren't they the men they once were? Seems a bit of a buffoon in some ways. Grumpy old men. Not so, these men that went up the mountain that day.

Not so, Moses and Aaron and her. These were mighty men of God. They knew what they were doing and God was going to use them. Perhaps there was a time when Moses thought the only way to win a battle was to fight.

Now he realises the power of prayer. Paul learned that too as well, didn't he? Remember Paul in prison, how he may have felt frustrated. Oh, now I'm in prison, I can't be on these journeys, I can't be helping the churches, I can't be doing these things.

And Paul had to realise he wasn't the only man to be out there who could do this work. And in a sense, as Paul is in prison, God has another ministry for Paul, and that's this Paul prays.

[24 : 19] Notice in all of Paul's letters written from prison, how he says, I am praying for you daily, I remember you constantly in my prayers. He wrote to the Ephesians, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

Prayers. Oh, what power! What power! That the prayer of Moses prevailed that day. Prayer that's represented by raised hands. For when, he could no longer physically hold him up.

His two colleagues, her and her, sitting on a stone, and they hold his hands up for him. Here's a case, a bit of prayer warrior, having supporters in this. Here you see, is that theme again of partnership. When there was prayer, there was victory. Today, we often see a lack of victory.

Today, we often see a lack of prayer. You don't have to be an Oxford professor to draw the conclusion from that. Moses may have seen that day a long way from the battlefield.

[25 : 22] There he was up there on the mountain. Sometimes military commanders have that role. Their role is strategic. They stand back from the battle, but they are directing the campaign towards victory. prayer was something even an old man could do.

Hey, this evening, maybe you're feeling your age, your feet. I'm not looking at you, John, just generally commenting. Just, just generally, we may be, so after we look in the old way, you know, we may be feeling our age.

We feel there's not much more we can do from the Lord. I knew a lady in our church back home many years ago. She went to be with the Lord 20 odd years ago now. But in her 80s, almost up to 90, she had a great ministry.

She wrote to people. She prayed for people and people were greatly encouraged by her. So never think you're past it. We don't retire as Christians.

We just, somebody said, we become retired, new tires on us, ready to set off in a new work. And there's Moses, the staff of God.

[26 : 38] That may seem an odd thing. It defies human reasoning, doesn't it? That this stick could seem to symbolise so much power. Why?

Because the world leaves God out. And if we leave God out, some of the things that happen don't make sense. But the Christian doesn't leave God out. And setback to the work comes when, when we do not pray.

Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. And there's Moses on the hilltop. He has this great view of battle.

He's in touch with the Lord, but he's also in touch with the situation on the ground. Both are important. He could pray, but he could pray knowledgeably and intelligently.

How often our prayers become so vague. Dear Lord, please bless the missionaries. Amen. But there's more to that. We need to know what we are praying for.

[27 : 39] I think, and I might have the wrong person here, I think it was W.E. Sangster that said that a Christian, when they come to the quiet time, should come with their Bible and their newspaper.

Now he's not saying that the newspaper is more important than the Bible far from it, but what he's saying is when we come to pray, we come and pray intelligibly. So we want to know what's going on in the world.

We can bring the world before our God. And this staff then was so significant. In a sense, it's symbolic of prayer as Moses is there with his staff upon the mountain.

It's about seeking for God, the Lord, in prayer. But it's also symbolic of power, the power of God at work. You see, the Malachites were a powerful people, but God is more powerful still.

Since Moses held the staff of God in his hand, what he's doing, he's expressing total dependence on the authority and the power of Jehovah.

[28 : 46] It wasn't Moses who was empowering Joshua and the army that day. It was God. Moses becomes a channel of God's work as God, as Moses calls down from God that blessing upon the battlefield.

Let us therefore learn to pray. Let's fill our Rephidims, our situations, with strong crying and tears, that we may obtain by faith for ourselves and for others such victories as no prowess, no human ability could ever attain.

We need to be found all more often on the top of that mountain with the uplifted staff of prayer in our steadied hands. God's work is not the church is weak today because the church does not fall upon its knees.

the church is dying on its feet. Why? Because it is not living on its knees.

Let me say that again. The church today is dying on its feet because it is not living upon its knees. You know, one of the things about being a preacher is that sometimes you say things that really you think I'm a hypocrite to say that and I know how much this applies to me as much as to any of us here this evening.

[30 : 18] Let's bring everything before the Lord in prayer. There is partnership, there is prayer, but then there's permanence. You see, the victory at Rephidim is by no means the end of the story of the Amalekites because of their unprovoked attack on the Israelites God puts the Amalekites under a curse, under a permanent ban that they ought to be destroyed.

It says in Jude's Romance chapter 25 remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary and cut off your tail he cut off those who were lagging behind.

He doesn't bully does that, doesn't he? The bully goes for the weak for those who can't keep up.

The bully doesn't go for the big one big of themselves and in a sense Amalekites are bullies.

They go after the weak those who are lagging behind but God says that therefore when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you in the land that the Lord your God has given you for an inheritance to possess you will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

You shall not forget. It's noted it's also at the time this initial attack how you see that goes after the weak after those who are lagging behind.

[31 : 40] Doesn't Satan do that? He goes after our weak spots. He will go after the weak point in your life. Satan knows the area in life where you are most struggling. Satan knows the member of this church or any other church who is most struggling and Satan is devious and Satan has his plans and Satan will go for the weak.

But our God is greater still. A year later in Numbers chapter 14 after the Israelites listened to the ten spies and they wouldn't decide they decided not to even try to take the promised land and God says okay have it your way you'll die in the desert of those of you refusing to do this now.

And they would not enter the promised land. But at that point the people realised oh we've done wrong against God oh we should have done it we should have gone in so we're going to go. Moses said no it's too late God's told you no now do they change your mind now?

And so they go in they try to take the land what happens? They are now defeated by Amalek they are defeated by the Amalekites. The two later episodes in the book of Judges again where they fight against Amalek and then remember the story of Samuel who told Saul to destroy the Amalekites and all their livestock but when Samuel comes along what does he hear but the bleating of sheep he realises that Saul hasn't done as he was told.

He has not destroyed the everything belongs to the Amalekites even the king that he should have destroyed he let the king of the Amalekites live and so the problem the Amalekites lived on.

[33 : 21] Oh he says Saul says but I'm keeping these animals to sacrifice before the Lord I'm keeping the best for the Lord what does God say? He says I didn't ask for sacrifice I asked for obedience and his sacrifice in all life that does not come out of obedience becomes meaningless.

So the battle goes on with the Amalekites the Amalekites are still around in the time of David and of Hezekiah and in a sense you know the Amalekites represent they're a type of the devil they in a sense represent the world and the flesh and the devil they represent sin these things of life these sins that keep coming out against us again and again you know the flesh they're thoroughly defeated and broken the Calvary is still apt to pop up from time to time and it's life we'll never be perfect but we need to be aiming that direction even when we become Christians the old ways have a habit of lurking there in our lives so I'd say like the Amalekites as a way of suddenly rearing its head in ugly moments in unlikely moments when we're cause of our God when we are not watchful so friend tonight be on your guard be on your guard against the attacks of Satan

Satan is wily Satan will come when you do not expect him and we need to take our stand and we will not do that unless we stand with God like the Israelites who were supposed like the Israelites were supposed to do with the Amalekites their first encounter destroying what should we do at that moment when we become Christians our aim should be to put sin behind us but we haven't and we should do and wherever you stand tonight if you're a Christian tonight and you feel my walk with God is not as it should be I have not put sin aside resolve tonight that you will put sin behind you and walk closely with your God with great urgency don't underestimate the power of the devil victories are a great thing to look back on they're a great thing to thank the Lord for but they won't suffice for today each day is for itself so we've got to take the daily situations that comes and bring that before the Lord we can learn lessons from the past surely but that's no substitute for dealing with the present zero tolerance as a concept in policing zero tolerance of crime should be the attitude of every Christian to sin we should have a zero tolerance towards sin in our lives now look

the Amalekites they don't exist as a people today and yet we are faced today still with many modern Amalekites those and things today which are enemies of the gospel of Jesus

Christ those things today which are enemies of the people of God modern political correctness our society which has not tackled problems and threats when they first arose moral issues which rose in the past have been allowed to grow and to fester false doctrine has been allowed to grow the Amalekites of liberalism and of unbelief have been allowed to grow the cross and the blood of Jesus have been played down social gospel and good works though important features and have many important features about them have been allowed to suggest that this is the main purpose of the church I was watching a video a while ago of a church on their website saying what they do as a church oh we do this for the community and we have a food bank and we have a sports club they can come to and we have all these different things and we do a furniture scheme whatever and they tag on at the end and we meet on Sunday to worship the very central purpose of the church is to worship God and all these other things flow from it it's not the other way around we face these permanent enemies today than the

Amalekites are today but this this permanent suggestive continuing problem with the Amalekites God told Moses to keep a record of the special blessing of the past and he tells him to recite it in the ears of Joshua that will not suffice for today many blessings of God in the past are great but what the Lord has done he can do it again there's permanence in the battle but there is also permanence in the final victory verse 15 of this chapter we read that Moses made an altar and called it the Lord our banner Jehovah Nisse the Lord our banner and that banner is understood to be a rallying point a battle standard in this place here it commemorates desert victory over the Amalekites Moses was careful through building this altar to the Lord he was given praise to God not to himself not to Joshua oh we need to be careful don't we how easy we take praise for ourselves somebody says something nice good to encourage each other but let God have the glory the flag that you serve under tells you where your allegiance lies you know you and I as

[39 : 01] Christians we serve under the banner of the cross of Jesus and giving less than 100% is not good enough the world will give 100% to its passion for sport and for entertainment and so on how dare we give God anything less than 100% so in conclusion here in chapter 16 and 17 of Joshua we're seeing this Israel face of Exodus rather Israel faces one difficulty after another and there are times in life when all seems to be going well physically emotionally materially spiritually oh this may sound like a prosperity gospel par excellence but really there is no prosperity gospel sooner or later the problems will come and when they come they may come in close succession one problem after another and there may well be a reason for this that God wants to teach us humility dependence on him empathy with others that we may better help them we may need to learn the real meaning what otherwise may just be shallow words and so it's such disastrous moments the best perhaps the only thing that we can do is to call on the Lord but sometimes the Lord allows us misfortunes to befall us so we do depend more upon him the reality is that we always need to depend on God so often we forget that we take everything for granted all life is rosy could anything possibly go wrong a lady I used to work with once described about her father and I want to remember this many many years later her father was in his fairly 50s diagnosed with cancer he'd never been ill before and she said this and these words have struck me for the first time in his life she said for the first time in his life he came face to face with his own mortality and something we'll all have to do sometime maybe you're there right now maybe you've got a terminal illness maybe you just received bad news and you tonight are struggling with this of coming face to face with our own mortality remember

Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20 how he found he was going to die and how he was anxious and upset and terrified of the thoughts and God gave him 15 more years that won't be true for everyone and even for Hezekiah that moment came when he died face to face with our own mortality we may come through a situation we may not but one day you and I will have to face our maker so the close let me ask you seriously earnestly compassionately how would you fare on that day that day when you have to stand before a holy God and give account to Him may well be someone here this evening and you honestly can't say with certainty in your heart that you know you're going to heaven maybe you know for absolute certainty you're not are you concerned enough tonight for the state of your soul that you might seek after God oh how can you neglect such a great salvation why will you reject it because the devil wants you to but at the cross

Jesus has defeated the power of Satan yes he will battle with us yes he will fight us but he is ultimately defeated when Jesus died on the cross he opened up heaven to all believers will you trust upon him tonight we shouldn't be surprised by the attack of the Amalekites God's enemies are constantly attacking God's people in one way or another be it physically materially emotionally spiritually nor should we be surprised that victory was won through prayer but it was also prayer in partnership with action and each of us has his or her role to play in the work of God very different roles but the Lord would use as he sees fit so Moses prayed so Joshua won the victory over the enemy of God's people it's only through our daily trust in the Lord and through obedience and prayer that we can arrive at such mature discipleship let us not forget the battle goes on the Amalekites as such no longer exist today but we are faced by these new Amalekites there is a permanence in this battle praise God there is also permanence in victory and so let us tonight let us rally to the Lord Jesus Christ let us rally to the blood of Jesus let us rally to his cross let us rally to that place where there is victory for you and for me and one day we will leave this world and we have a permanent home in heaven and whatever your situation is tonight I can promise you this that the best is yet to be Amen Now the Lord bless you and keep you the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you the Lord lift up his counsel upon you and give you peace Amen Let us ■ as you