

LENT 2024

JOURNEY to FREEDOM

MONDAY 18TH MARCH

READ: Exodus 17:8-16

Moses' hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. Exodus 17:12

Do you ever secretly wish that some of what God said was not in the Bible? Sayings like, 'The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation'? It doesn't immediately sit comfortably with 'I am gentle and lowly of heart.' What are we to make of this? First, here we find an uncomfortable but important truth: **God has enemies**. Ever since He said, in the Garden of Eden, 'I will put enmity between you . . .', there have been individuals and nations who have hated God. As God is bringing His people from slavery in Egypt to freedom in The Promised Land, there are those who long to stop Him and His work. As Jesus journeyed from the cradle to the cross, enemies tried to destroy Him. As God brings us today from this life to eternal glory, there are people who hate the name of Jesus and would rather His name, than Amalek's, would be 'blotted out'.

Therefore, we ourselves who belong to Christ are in a **spiritual battle**. There is the battle within—think of the grumbling in yesterday's passage—and the battle without. The New Testament is clear that our battle is 'not against flesh and blood' (Ephesians 6:12) but against spiritual powers and spiritual realities; therefore our weapons are not the sword of Joshua but the armour of God. Nevertheless, the battle is no less real. Have you grasped that reality?

How comforting, then, to know that **the battle belongs to the Lord**. That phrase is from elsewhere, but the thought is equally here: it is The Lord who will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Ever since he said, 'I will put enmity . . .', God has been personally committed to this warfare, and to winning it. As the book of Revelation taught us last Advent, in the End the Lamb wins. Yes, we are in a spiritual battle, but in Christ the outcome is assured.

Finally, that little detail that I have always found so touching, of Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' arms as he grew tired. Moses is the mighty intercessor. Moses is the one holding the staff of God—so symbolic and important in Exodus. What do Aaron and Hur contribute? They hold up his hands. That's all. It's a lovely reminder that **God uses people** in His purposes. God used the mighty apostle Paul. But He also used the 80 or so ordinary people, named in Paul's various letters. As one who is in Christ you are in a battle—but it belongs to the Lord, and He will win, and He can use you.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, as we await the sure and final victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, help us to keep wrestling in prayer and to stand firm in our faith until he comes. Amen.*

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