

Exodus 17:8-16 Contending with the Flesh

8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.
9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.
14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; 16 for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." **PRAY**

In our Journey through the book of Exodus

A)We have seen God's mighty Power and Provision in Delivering Israel from Bondage in Egypt

B)Through the Plagues in Egypt –**God brought the Salvation**

1) They didn't do anything but apply the blood of the lamb.

C)And God parted the Red Sea, they only need to move forward in faith

D)God brought the miracle manna and water from the Rock –

1)Again all they had to do was to partake of the miracle provision

All that God did for the people of Israel

A)We could call all of that the Joys of Salvation

B)The same is true for us as Believers

C)Our Salvation is the Work of Christ Alone on the Cross at Calvary

1) **He Declared – It is finished! DONE**

D)He ALONE paid the price for our sins –

Three days later he beat death when HE ROSE – Now gives life to all who believe

A)He established a New Covenant – He gave his Holy Spirit to help us lead us teach us – empower us

B)He gave us HIS WORD to feed our Spirit

C)And through the Holy Spirit lead us into deeper fellowship with Christ.

God has done all of that for us in Christ

A) Our need is to embrace that truth, grow in our understanding of that truth

B) And Learn how to walk in the reality of that truth

Now we saw back in Chapter 13 of Exodus –

A) That God did not lead them in what would have been a more direct route –

B) But it would have meant they would have passed through the land of the Philistines – and War

1) The Philistines were a great Foe

C) The Lord said: He felt that at the site of war the people lose heart and want to turn back to Egypt

¹⁸ So God led the people around *by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.*

So at the start of their journey God seeks to protect them but now we read in V.8 **8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim**

A) Now we learned on Wednesday night – that the People of Israel camped at Rephidim

B) Uninhabited place – God instructed Moses to strike the Rock – water would come out

C) Picture of the Rock at Midian – Ginormous

At the base of that Rock is this Valley – where this battle takes place. Picture of the Valley

A) This is what we learn from this – Spiritual highs are often followed by Spiritual battles

B) Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim

C) The Amalekites were the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau (Gen. 36:12, 16)

1) who was “a profane person” (Heb. 12:16).

D) A profane person is a godless person who lives for the world and the flesh and despises spiritual things

E) Esau gave up his birthright for a bowl of stew to satisfy his Physical Appetite

So Amalek becomes a picture of the Flesh

A) That is always wanting to forfeit spiritual things to satisfy its lust and cravings, needs.

B) We have these natural cravings that go along with living in these human bodies

C) Cravings for food, for relationships, provision, even sex – all of these are God given natural desires

D) But those desires can all be abused – and that becomes the struggle – living to please the flesh

Now Coupled with those desires are the lust for pleasure and ease and comfort

A)Self- centered and self -indulgent

B)Prior to coming to Christ that is how most of us living 90-100% of the time to please our flesh.

C)We primarily lived to please ourselves

Then we get saved: Come to Jesus –

A)That is when we discover that we have two natures as a believer in Christ, the old nature, the new nature.

B)The old nature that comes from Adam, the flesh with all of it's urges, lust and impulses.

C)The New nature that comes to you from Christ in being born again, born of the Spirit.

D)Paul in Galatians Chapter 5:17, tells us “the flesh wars against the spirit, the Spirit wars against the flesh. These two are contrary to one another so that you cannot do the things that you would.”

Now before you gave your life to Jesus Christ, there was no war.

A)You were totally under the dominion of the flesh. It dominated you.

B)What will I eat? drink? What we'll I put on?

C)Those are the things that occupied your life. It was all about you. It centered on you.

1)There was no battle with the spirit.

D)You didn't have a spiritual nature yet. There was no conflict yet.

E)You were totally under the dominion of that nature that came to all of us by Adam.

1)#1 Objective- How do I please self.

But then you came to faith in Christ –

A)Experienced Sins forgiven, guilt removed, a sense of freedom and Joy – never had.

B)Now that you have been born again of the Spirit – Spiritual things are making sense –

1)the Bible is coming alive

C)Things like worship that you never understood – now you love.

1)Now there is this desire to make an impact on others and serve.

But another thing also happened in you – You discovered there is now a conflict –

A)Battle going on inside of me

B)I've been renewed by the spirit and I have desires toward the things of God

C)But I still have those old impulses and urges

D)There is this war going on inside of me – and sometimes it is really intense.

Sometimes it seems like my flesh wins.

A)Remember on the night when Jesus was betrayed

B)He goes into the Garden of Gethsemane with the Disciples

C)He pulls aside – 3 amigos – Peter, James, John – My heart is troubled – pray for me. -

1)He goes over by himself to wrestle in prayer

He Comes back and the 3 amigos – are sleeping –

A)He wakes them up – guys I really need prayer right now pray for me please

B)Now Those guys loved Jesus – I am sure they prayed for a bit –

1)but they ended falling back asleep – wakes them up again

C)Happened 3 times – Final time – Jesus said the **Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!**

D)When Jesus said that it wasn't so much of an indictment but a fact

1)that all of us deal with from time to time

The Spirit is willing – longs for the things of God

A)But the Flesh is weak – just a reality.

B)Paul describes the Conflict in Romans 7:14,15 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

C)Note that – relate - The things I want to do – I know to do, so often I don't end up doing.

D)Paul is saying sometimes unfortunately **The flesh wins**

One man described the battle between the flesh and the Spirit is like owning 2 dogs that fought all the time.

A)You want to know which dog usually wins? The one that I feed the most!

B)Though not a perfect analogy – there is truth to it in this way-

1)if you feed the old nature – the flesh – stronger

C)But if you starve the flesh and feed your Spirit – your spirit is going to get stronger.

The Bible exhorts us to die to our flesh, crucify the flesh.

A)To make conscious choices to walk in the Spirit and say no to the flesh.

B)You are doing that today: Came to church today –

C)Seek the Lord study the Word – said no to sleeping in – or something else

D)Next week some of you are going to Struggle ☺

1)NFL season starts next week – your team is on in the morning

E)I have to see that game – what will you do?

1)Incredible invention: DVR – Record it – fast fwd commercials

So the scene before us here in Exodus 17 – is a picture of the battle -between the flesh and the Spirit.

A)Note this the Amalekites fought dirty –

B)In Normal war – the armies would line up in a plain – Run at each other.

C)But we are told in Deuteronomy 25 – the Amalekites were ruthless.

1)Ignored normal protocol for war

D)They would send a squadron around to the backside – where the opposing armies camp was

1)They would invade the camp and kill the defenseless – the women and the children

So the army would hear the screams and cries from their families in the distance behind them

A)Or see the smoke of their encampment burning – Distracted

B))Satan is Ruthless as well – he doesn't fight fair either –

C)Have you ever noticed – watching TV – the game – no distractions no interruptions

D)The minute you turn off the TV / pick up your Bible –

1)Or seek to engage in a spiritual conversation – wife and kids

E)Phone is blowing up – Kids start fighting – emergency call from work

1)That is the way the enemy is.

At the Conference this past week – Pivot in our schedule –

A)Send the Pastors and their wives off to talk and to answer questions.

B))Overwhelming response was – Man did we need that – it has been a while since we talked like that

C)The Devil loves to use our flesh and the things of life – responsibilities of life –

1)to keep us from focusing on what is most important

Which is Building up Our Spirit in Christ.

A) Here is what happens when we don't do that –

B) We become Human DOINGS – rather than Human Beings

C) We are just running from thing to thing constantly

1) and not really growing in the relationships that matter the most

D) 1st with God – then with those closest to us

1) Friends, spouse, kids

Our Relationship with God becomes a routine or stale

A) Missing out on that Vital union with Jesus –

B) When we get so busy and distracted – not experiencing real Koinonia with those closest to us

C) No real Fellowship

D) Not stirring each other up in the Lord – Spouses/ friends kids in the Lord

1) **Doing Life – but not really being Alive!!!!**

E) That is what the Devil is constantly seeking to do – get us – focused on the flesh

1) Distracted by life – from spiritual things – Thorns

So what can this passage teach us about having Victory over the Flesh? Note 3 things

A) **#1 Victory Involves both Action and Dependence**

⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

B) This is the first mention of Joshua in the Story – he will eventually be Moses Successor

C) He starts off as sort of the Military General of this group of **not commandos** but former slaves –

1) never trained in combat – Imagine

Joshua is down in the Valley for the Battle –

A) That is the Action- Joshua is fighting on the Physical front.

B) There is an actual Physical battle taking place!

God could have sent an army of Angels to wipe out the Amalekites but he doesn't do that.

A) He wants his people to engage this time in Physical combat

B) So Joshua is down in the Valley for the Battle

C)And Moses goes up on the Mt with Aaron and Hur to get a tan? – NO to pray – Dependence

D)How much and often we pray is will be the mark of our true dependence on God.

“The flesh thrives in self -dependence; but it dies in God dependence.”

Prayer is often the last resort – all else fails pray!

A)Asa the King of Judah – battle with Baasha King of Israel – rather than seeking the Lord –

B)He aligned himself with Ben Hadad the King of Syria –

**1)compromised giving him Gold and Silver temple
He was Defeated**

C)Contrast that – when Assyrians came against Israel –

King Hezekiah was giving a letter – demanding surrender

A)Israel was greatly outnumbered – out maned

B)Hezekiah took that letter laid it before the Lord and prayed – Lord what do you want me to do ?

C)That night God sent one angel – he destroyed 185,000 men in the Assyrians army – ONE ANGEL

1)That was God’s answer to King Hezekiah’s prayer

This time the Lord is going to have the people of Israel engage in a physical battle

A)But there is always a spiritual element to every physical battle – don’t forget that.

B)Fighting with your spouse – The Devil is behind it – trying to bring strife and division

C)Struggling with your teenage child – there are spiritual forces at work

**D)Conflict with you boss – not just a work conflict – there are forces at work in the spiritual realm –
1)always in the life of a follower of Jesus**

Recall Daniel prayed – Angel was dispatched – took 21 days – 3weeks to get to Daniel with the Answer –

A)Why does God put that in the Bible – remind us – there is always a Spiritual battle taking place

B)If we could pull back the curtain on the Spiritual realm – right now –

1)We would see – forces Demons and Angels at work

C)So while Joshua was fighting a Physical battle in the Valley

D)Moses is up on the Mt fighting a different kind of Battle – Battle in Prayer

Moses raises his hands - This phrase describes the Israelite posture of prayer very demonstrative

A) Bowing heads folding hands – western thing

B) Jews raise hands – illustrating the posture of their heart – their need surrender, receptive praise

C) Moses raises his hands – with the Rod – horizontal like a banner

Interesting his Rod was called the Rod of Moses but also the Rod of God

A) It spoke of God being a Shepherd to his People. –

B) The Shepherd's Rod was used to protect the sheep from predators

C) So Moses' Rod was seen as combination of a human instrument and Divine power

Moses on the Mountain is a picture of prevailing prayer.

A) Prayer is a powerful weapon in spiritual warfare.

B) Ephesians 6 section on Spiritual warfare and the Armor of God – prayer is listed as the last weapon

C) Praying always....

D) Prayer is an offensive weapon in spiritual warfare

In Col 4:2 Paul said we must continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.

A) Continue earnestly denotes the idea of enduring – not easy – prayer is work!

B) Being Vigilant - carries the idea of a battle – intensity

C) Paul spoke of a prayer warrior by the name of Epaphras – in Colossians 4:12 – **always laboring fervently for you in prayers –**

D) Laboring = (working hard) fervently – with intensity.

Samuel M. Zwemer, a missionary to the Muslim world, used to call prayer **“the gymnasium of the soul,”**

Sometimes prayer is just sweet – but most of the time it is Work – Workout

A) It is labor intensive. It can be a battle – mind has hard time focusing -

B) One reason I pray out loud!

C) Prayer walks in my neighborhood – Earbud in my ear–

1) so my neighbors don't think I am talking to myself ☺

11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed

Now this is interesting Moses gets tired praying

A)When Moses arms are up Israel prevailed –

B)When he got tired and his arms droop – Amalek prevails

C)Prayer is hard work and can be exhausting

Lesson: The Flesh gains ground when prayer declines!

D)Victory involves action and dependence

**1)Joshua – Action fighting physical battle in valley
Moses – Dependence praying on the MT**

2nd Principle for Victory

A)Victory Requires Support V.12

¹² But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun

B)Moses is not on the Mt by himself – He takes Aaron and Hur with him

1)Note: HUR is a HIM! ☺

C)Historians tells us that Hur was the Husband of Miriam – Moses Sister –

1)so Hur is Moses brother in law

D)Aaron is Moses older Brother

“Though this was Moses’ work to do, it was more than he could do by himself. Moses alone could not win the battle of prayer. He needed others to come by his side and strengthen him in prayer.” David Guzik

So Moses is battling in Prayer with 2 of his closest confidants.

A)We are not to battle alone - Leadership team

B)Five really close friends who are pastors – Reach out to on a moments notice – Pray for me.

C)All the guys in my Cohorts – 20 pastors – from 3 groups – we are always praying for one another

D)Christian life is not a Lone ranger game – need Support

1)Not in the battle alone

The 3rd thing this passage teaches us about Victory and this will lead us into our Communion time

A)Victory is always from the Lord.

¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶ for he said, “Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

B)Interesting: The Lord says I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” = On the earth.

**C)Ever met an Amalekite? – They aren’t any of them. Blotted out
1)Mean? Cancer**

For years after this the Amalekites were a plague to the people of Israel

A)Several attempts in the OT to annihilate the people of Israel

B)God finally said: Like he did with Pharaoh – Done with you.

**C)Moses writes a memorial – for Remembrance =
1)Always creating those talking points – points of remembrance**

D)THIS IS WHAT GOD DID! HIS VICTORY

Built an Alter and called it Jehovah Nissi – the Lord is my Banner!

A)On that altar there was a Sacrifice that was given – Thanks giving for the Victory the Lord Brought

B)We too have banner to point to that is also altar – THE CROSS

C)Jesus on a Hill – between 2 guys – stood in the gap

Moses stood on a Hill with outstretched arms standing in the Gap for Israel..... 2 men

A)2000 yrs ago Jesus stood on another Hill with outstretched arms – nailed to a Cross 2 men

B)Victory was accomplished – Jesus beat sin – paid the price

C)Today We raise up the Cross as a banner celebrating Jesus Victory

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1,2

D)Jesus Endured – Hupomone – Conquered – so we can conquer

So we have a Banner THE CROSS And we have a memorial – Communion

A)Body broken and given – Pay the price

B)Blood shed – for our redemption

C)High priest intercession – Arms never fall down

D)Never tires