

Getting Up After Being Down & Kicked 2

Being Solid in God's Character

(1/26/25)

Please turn to *Psalms 86*.

LAST WEEK:

- Enemies, both human and spirit, have a pattern of attack that mimics those of predators.
- They “lie in wait” waiting for just the right time and target to strike.
- They don’t attack the head of the herd where the strongest and most aggressive bulls are leading.
- They target ones who are lagging behind because they’re weak, sick, injured, old, or too young to keep up.
- In the Bible, human and demonic enemies attacked the nation of Israel and individuals when they believed God had forsaken them.
- Enemies KNOW when someone belongs to Christ!
- They also know the same person has a measure of God’s protection and provision.
- When they believe God has abandoned one of His own is when they choose to attack.
- Most have times when we struggle in our relationship with Jesus.
- Days when we think He’s ignoring us, doesn’t have our back, and won’t help us in our suffering.
- While that’s normal, when we stay there consistently it sends a signal to enemies that WE believe God has forsaken us and NOW is the right time for them to attack us!
- Enemies try and weaken us by telling us the same: God has turned His back on us, doesn’t care, and ignores us.
- Yet the Psalms tell us that God has commanded our Salvation and appointed us to it!
- Hebrew word for “Salvation” is Yeshua: Jesus!
- We have been appointed to Jesus!
- 2 steps we take when feeling attacked:
 - 1) Encourage ourselves by (out loud!) thanking and praising God.
 - 2) Going to other Christians to be reminded that we’ve not been orphaned by our Heavenly Father.
- Last week we spoke mostly of the enemy’s pattern of attack, today we focus more on our response.

[Psa 27:13 NKJV] 13 [I would have lost heart], unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE has been a popular topic in church. In my opinion, ***some people have made it really complicated.*** I recall attending a spiritual warfare conference years ago that got hijacked by one dude asking a question. He asked: “*when you cast a demon*

away, where do you send it? To the desert places, the abyss...where?" This launched a discussion and debate that ended up taking too much time especially when the seminar was only partially focused on dealing with demons.

Later I read a book about SW and the author encouraged everyone to **“put on the whole armor of God”** everyday. He spoke of a ritual he did every morning when he got up: he would recite *Ephesians 6:10-17* along with a “prophetic physical action” of pretending to put on all the parts.

I was also given a **“spiritual warfare prayer”** that **“covered all the bases.”** It was written on a sheet and I was told that I needed to recite this prayer every day. It was a very long and complex prayer that used big words and supposedly cancelled all the enemies’ plans against me, my family, my possessions, my property, and my future.

I submit to you that we’ve made SW too complicated and that it’s far simpler.

Some of King David’s Psalms were written when **he was going through “the valley of the shadow of death.”** He talks a lot about enemies and pleads with God to deal with them, yes.

Yet his main spiritual warfare isn’t sending demons to desert places, but **reminding HIMSELF the following: WHO God is (His character and deeds).**

Please remember enemies—both human and spirit—*will assail our hearts and minds about all these things and our best spiritual warfare is here.*

What is the character of God and how does His character affect what He does and doesn’t do?

A major chink in our armor is when we consistently doubt God’s goodness.

We know in our minds that God is good, holy, righteous, just, merciful, loving, patient, generous, and kind. **It’s our hearts that struggle to believe that God is all these all the time.**

My dad was in FL when I found out that he was dying and my sister & I booked a flight immediately. My goal was to see him one last time, hold his hand, and tell him I loved him. I also wanted to share the Gospel one last time since I wasn't confident that he knew Jesus.

When you're in the air you put your phone on *"Airplane Mode"* and can't take it off until you land. I landed and immediately turned internet back on...and there was a voicemail from my wife waiting for me: my dad had passed while I was literally on my way down. First was shock, then guilt, and then anger. My sister and I still had to walk through the airport, get our rental, and then it was a 2-3 hour drive to my parents' home.

During that time I demanded of the Lord: *"You couldn't have let dad hold on for just a few more hours?! I was going to share Your Gospel with him one last time!"*

I felt like God let me down, let Dad down.

- Wouldn't a "good" God have let me see Dad one more time?
- Wouldn't a patient God let Dad stay a few more hours to hear the Gospel again?

VISUAL: last week I talked about *herds of wildebeest and the lions* who travel with them, lying in wait for the right moment and the right target. Suddenly a lone wildebeest separates from the herd and lags behind: now the lions are on high alert. They see their target and will attack.

Doubting God's character is just like being that lone wildebeest. It's a signal to human and spiritual predators that we are vulnerable to attack.

We read the Bible & devotionals, we sing worship songs, and listen to sermons all telling us how good, generous, kind, patient, merciful, holy, and just that God is. *Yet personal experience comes along and punches us in the face!*

On a personal level, **we or someone we love gets sick**, injured, cheated on, is going through divorce, just lost a job, unjustly accused and prosecuted, can't get ahead, home burned down...the list seems endless.

On a worldwide level there's war, starvation, disease, natural disasters, fires, immorality, and so much more.

Our hearts cry out: **"Where is God during all this?"** Why didn't He prevent our house from burning down? Why didn't He heal the sickness or injury? Why didn't He save our marriage? Why didn't we get a raise or promotion? Why hasn't He revealed the truth for all to see when we're being falsely accused? Why doesn't He stop all this fighting in the world?"

When our bad experiences clash with what we know about God we need to have a better counterattack than “*God must have a reason for letting all this happen....*” That’s a weak milquetoast statement. Let’s swing the Sword of the Spirit and **not the butter knife of the Spirit.**

King David went through things that most never have to endure of the some of the Psalms were a direct result of what was going on inside his heart. **They were also David’s counterattacks to being hit** along with conversations he had with himself, convincing his heart and mind of the truth.

[Psa 86:1-4 ESV] 1 A Prayer of David. Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. 2 Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you-- you are my God. 3 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all the day. 4 Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

The first 4 verses are David asking God to ***save and protect him from enemies***. It’s not clear what David was going through when he wrote this, but he was clearly in the middle of something major that had not yet been resolved.

[Psa 86:5-7 ESV] 5 For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. 6 Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace. 7 In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.

How many of us know that negative consequences are painful?

- Wouldn’t this be the time we might be tempted to say God is being harsh rather than merciful?
- That He’s making us feel pain vs giving us His grace?
- That He’s mad at us and hasn’t forgiven us?
- Doesn’t hear our prayers?

David reminds both himself and any enemy listening that God is forgiving AND that He answers prayers. THAT is the start of his SW in this Psalm! Please remember David majorly messed up a few times in his life and his sin had terrible consequences on him and others. It’s more than possible this Psalm was written while he was bearing out said consequences.

[Psa 86:8-10 ESV] 8 There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. 9 All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. 10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

Continuing to swing the Sword of the Spirit, ***David declares that Yahweh isn't like the other gods who are mean, spiteful, vengeful, fickle, and don't help their followers.*** He speaks of God's greatness and power!

[Psa 86:11-13 ESV] 11 Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. 12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. 13 For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

Isn't it true that **after we've come through a bad time we learned a lot?** I'm not talking about cynical things like "I learned I can't trust no one except myself!" but true wisdom.

A bad time doesn't primarily expose the shortcomings of others, but ourselves.

When we've matured, ***we can look back on a rough period and realize the beneficial things we learned from them.*** Things that drew us closer to Jesus and didn't push us away.

David is **still in the middle of his troubles** and look what he says: ***"teach me O Lord."*** He then speaks to his own heart, leads it, and says he will worship God and glorify Him with his WHOLE heart. He declares God's love and uses the word "steadfast" meaning it never stopped shining on David even once.

[Psa 86:14-17 ESV] 14 O God, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men seeks my life, and they do not set you before them. 15 But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. 16 Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant, and save the son of your maidservant. 17 Show me a sign of your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me. Enemies are at the gate! They want to kill David and take his throne!

He's not absolutely certain they won't succeed or he wouldn't be pleading with God to save him!

His heart is having doubts, stressed out, and in grief (as reflected by him saying so in other psalms). His heart might also believe God is punishing him for sins he committed. What's his response, his counterattack?

To declare that God is merciful, full of grace, slow to anger, faithful, and loving.

He doesn't merely slump his shoulders and say *“well God, You must have some sort of plan. IDK what it is, but I'll just have to trust You.”* Instead he declares the truth and remember: a Psalm isn't just a poem, it's a song that he and others would play to and sing. Whether he strummed his guitar in private or summoned the priests for public worship, these things were written down to be sung out loud.

Spiritual warfare is done when you and I say, out loud, how good God really is.

Not only can an enemy hear this, but so can our own hearts and minds.

The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth. (Exodus 34:6)

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. (Psalm 145:9)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness. (Psalm 145:5-7)

The one at the beginning:

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