

## **“The God of Your Battles” Psalm 18:30-50** **Wednesday 10/23/19 – Jeff Lyle**

The life of a believer is described in countless ways throughout the bible. One of the metaphors that is repeatedly used all throughout Scripture is the picture of life being a battle. Yes, all believers are living out their days on a battlefield. While there are innumerable forces that actively oppose us, God has declared us to be victorious overcomers in the midst of it all. King David’s life is, perhaps, one of the clearest examples of how we must prepare for war, look to God for wisdom and strength, fight bravely as we rely upon Him, and endure all hostility and opposition until victory is secured. David was a perpetual warrior. We are also to consider ourselves to be the same. In this message, we hear the words of David as He reveals so much of what he was taught by God throughout the years of endless battles with military foes, individuals who wrongly resisted him and even painful opposition from those whom he loved. In the end, David learned something that we also must learn: our Heavenly Father is faithful to prove Himself to be the God of our battles.

### **I. The Necessary Surrender Before the Battle (30-35)**

**A. Remember the character of your God (30-31) - “This God - His way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him. 31 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?”**

It is helpful for us that the very first words we read in these verses communicate to us the confidence we should have in God. Though He does not forbid opposition from finding us, His ways are perfect, and He will prove Himself faithful to His own promises. David, the mighty king, had no problem running to the Lord for safety, protection and refuge. David viewed God as the rock in whom he could hide. The other pagan gods of his military opponents were futile resources for his foes. If his opponents trusted in their gods (and they did!), the God of David’s battles would prove Himself reliable each and every time there was conflict. God’s character never changes when days of strife and trouble come our way.

**B. Rest in the resources of your God (32-34) - “The God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. 33 He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. 34 He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.”**

Sometimes, we sense inwardly that we are wholly insufficient in ourselves to win our present battle. The opposition is too strong. They seem to have greater resources than we have. Perhaps momentum is on their side and we are in a

current state of weakness, battle-fatigue or confusion. David had a history with God that he mentions here. In past battles, God had given David supernatural strength from God's own inexhaustible resources. David details that God kept him standing when other forces were trying to cause David to fall. Like the agile feet of a deer on a rocky slope, David was able to stand firm in battle during times when others who do not trust in God would have fallen. David describes the strength of his hands as coming from God also. When he was fatigued from long battles, but needed to raise up his weaponry again to conquer the approaching enemy, David found that he had every ounce of necessary strength to bend the bow and let the arrow fly. Sometimes, we want clear guarantees that we have all that we will need BEFORE the moment of battle. This is a faith-issue with us. **We must, like David, remember that God has come through in past seasons of warfare and that He will not leave us without resources for the coming conflicts.** We have this guarantee, but it is often only accessed in the moment when we need it. We must trust that God will release the necessary resources at the moment they are required.

**C. Reflect upon your history with your God (35-36) - "You have given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your right hand supported me, and Your gentleness made me great. 36 You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and my feet did not slip."**

So much of our present victory is tied to whether or not we will intentionally recall on how God has proven Himself in our history with Him. David looks backward and testifies that God had always come through. He protected David like a shield. He heled David up with a mighty arm of support. He was gentle with David even as He was dominant against David's foes. When it seemed that there were no possible means of escape, God broadened David's circumstantial exit-ramp and made a wide place for David to move forward. Beautifully, David could say that, whenever he relied upon God, David did not fall in battle. **Do not get amnesia in your present warfare! Reflect upon your own personal history with God and draw strength from how He has proven that He is for you.** If you do not yet have much of a history with Him to reflect upon, view this present battle as the invitation to start a history with Him. He wants to fight for you and is awaiting your trusting invitation for Him to become the God of your own battles.

## II. The Undeniable Presence During the Battle (37-42)

**A. God provided power for endurance to David (37-39a) - “I pursued my enemies and overtook them and did not turn back until they were consumed. 38 I thrust them through, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. For You equipped me with strength for the battle.”**

David now describes some summary statements about how, in the strength of his God, he crushed his opposition. While it is true that Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek, nowhere in Scripture are Christians commanded to live as perpetual doormats or Kingdom-pacifists. There are clear commands for us to engage proactively in warfare for the glory of Jesus. We must wage war against sin, the world system that seeks to seduce us and the devil himself. Additionally, there are times when we are called to “contend for the faith that has been delivered” to us (**Jude 1:3**). We are never to pick a fight in the flesh, but we are also not allowed to remain neutral and disengaged in warfare. David’s words reveal that in physical warfare, he was an aggressive man of faith. He pursued. He overtook. He refused to retreat. He thoroughly defeated his opposition. When all was said and done, David gave all the glory to God by declaring, “**YOU equipped me with strength for the battle.**”

**B. God provided seasons of reversal for David (39b-40) - “You made those who rise against me sink under me. 40 You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and those who hated me I destroyed.”**

For any of us who have known the experience of being in fierce spiritual warfare, relational strife or circumstantial opposition, few things are as satisfying as the moment when you see God fighting for you and reversing the momentum in your favor. Human opposition rose up against David, but God caused them to sink down. Military foes ran toward David to kill and destroy him, but God worked for David and his enemies had to reverse course and flee him. David is seen in the bible as a man who rarely initiated an unjust fight, but if someone rose up against him in hate, God empowered David to end a fight that he did not start. When we look to God for wisdom and strength for our battle, He proves Himself by reversing the tide of the battle and bringing us the victory.

**C. God provided clear loyalty to David (41-42) - “They cried for help, but there was none to save; they cried to the LORD, but He did not answer them. 42 I beat them fine as dust before the wind; I cast them out like the mire of the streets.”**

David now contrasts the response of God on his behalf with the unanswered prayers of his enemies who looked to their own gods for victory. When David’s foes cried out to their pagan gods, or when David’s fellow-Israelites presumed that God was for them and against David, the result was that his foes received no

aid. Much of David's military and personal conflict came from those who looked for some form of divine aid. Whether it was a misguided Hebrew who thought God would favor them over David, or whether it was a pagan who called out to one of the Philistine deities, David always ended up in the place of eventual breakthrough and victory. **There is something about living in pure-hearted devotion to God that welcomes His favor.** David was not perfect, but he kept his own heart honest before God nearly all of his life. One of the results of that honest integrity before the Lord is that it invited the favor of God upon David during times of intense warfare. We should have similar confidence in God's protection and provision on our behalf. If we are living in humility and integrity before the Lord, we should have deep confidence that He will fight our battles for us as we obey His wise direction.

### III. The Song of Praise from the Battle (43-50)

**A. David's solidified testimony (43-45) - "You delivered me from strife with the people; You made me the head of the nations; people whom I had not known served me. 44 As soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me; foreigners came cringing to me. 45 Foreigners lost heart and came trembling out of their fortresses."**

Again, David's whole life was in the context of fighting to obtain or defend all that God had promised to him. God made David for warfare. By the time David wrote this Psalm 18, he had enough history with God to raise up a song of praise to the God of his battles. When human opposition continually strove with David, God delivered him time and time again. David's story began with him being the runt in his tiny, insignificant family. Here David praises God for exalting him as the mightiest man over the various people groups alive at that time. David was once a humble servant to his father, his brothers and even to wicked King Saul. Here, many years later, David praises God for making the people of other nations become his servants as they served him, obeyed him, cringed before him and surrendered to him. When we trust God in the midst of our battles and operate in wisdom, humility and obedience, he often makes us the head instead of the tail. He last become first and the first become last. David understood from his own solid testimony that God operates in paradox in His Kingdom.

**B. David's enduring humility (46-48) - "The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation - 47 the God who gave me vengeance and subdued peoples under me, 48 who rescued me from my enemies; yes, You exalted me above those who rose against me; You delivered me from the man of violence."**

This is important!!! David did not become cocky as his victories began occurring one after another. David retained his humility and always made sure to give God

the glory for his breakthroughs. God was the Rock, not David. God was to be exalted above the name of David. David worshipped God as the one who subdued his many enemies during his life. One of the reasons that God exalted David all his days seems to be because God knew that David would never steal the glory for himself. This is a massively important key for those of us who want God to fight on our behalf. We can never rob Him of the glory due His name.

**C. David's intentional singularity (49-50) - "For this I will praise You, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to Your name. 50 Great salvation He brings to His king, and shows steadfast love to His anointed, to David and his offspring forever."**

How encouraging are these final two verses! Having looked backwards and given the glory to God for many past victories in battle, David begins to declare some things about the future. He testifies that he intends to continue to praise the Lord all of his days. He will not grow tired of telling others about the faithfulness of his Lord. He wanted the fame of God to spread from beyond Israel and into all the nations of the earth (which it has!). David would not only talk about God, he would sing of the deliverance, salvation and victories that God continually brought him. The faithful love of God towards David characterized David's heart until the day he died. One sure way to have confidence in the lord for tomorrow is to make up your mind today that you will live as instrument of His praise. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so! Let us exalt His name together! He deserves the glory for being the breakthrough God of your battle!