

The Battle Belongs to the Lord

2Samuel 5:1-25

One of the best Old Testament kings we read about in the bible is a guy by the name of Hezekiah.

Things were really bad spiritually speaking when Hezekiah became king and yet he had the faith and the courage to follow the LORD.

He broke down pillars, statues, and got rid of the ‘high places’ where people would worship false gods.

2Kings 18:6 says that, “...he held fast to the LORD. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded.”

That was no small task considering how much idolatry there was when he took the throne.

Think of the courage it must have taken to say to all those people. You are idolaters and I’m going to destroy all of your religious stuff because God hates it!”

Because of his passion for the LORD, the bible says that “God was with him and he prospered.”

That was put on full display when a foreign king, a guy named Sennacherib, sent his army to Jerusalem to attack it.

He sends a huge army and a message. The message is roughly, “Don’t be deceived. Your God won’t be able to help you against me. What god of all the other nations that I have conquered has been able to stand up against me?”

Do you know what Hezekiah does when he hears that message? He goes to the house of the LORD to pray.

He pleads with the one true God to act on behalf of his people for the sake of the glory of the LORD.

That is exactly what happens. God essentially says to Hezekiah, “Stand back and watch me go to battle against the Assyrians.”

It says in 2Kings 19 that the angel of the LORD went out against the Assyrian army and those that remained woke up in the morning they saw what happened and they went home.

There is a lot for us to learn from that situation, but one thing that is made abundantly clear is that, “The Battle Belongs to the LORD.”

That is true in every situation whether God intervenes in miraculous ways, like He does for Hezekiah, or whether things appear to happen as a result of normal everyday circumstances.

This is perhaps one of the simplest and yet most profound truths in the Scriptures. It is something that is fairly easy to say with our mouth, but something that we can struggle to believe in our hearts.

[This is the subject of our text this morning **2Samuel 5:1-25**. Do you feel like life is really good this morning? You need to hear what this text has to say. Do you feel like there is only trial and trouble before you? You need to hear what this text has to say. Whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not there are wars going on all around us both physical and spiritual and we need the truth of God's word in midst of that. There are at least three powerful and important lessons for us in this text. The first is this, that...]

Point #1 – God's power guarantees His promises. (Verses 1-5)

Because the LORD has absolute sovereignty over every created thing whether seen or unseen, He can say with absolute certainty that He will accomplish all that He pleases.

To get the full impact of what is written in the first five verses of chapter five we have to go back all the way to 1Samuel 16 roughly twenty years earlier when God sent the prophet Samuel to 'anoint' David as king of Israel.

When God makes that choice there is no earthly reason to think it was going to happen. David was a simple shepherd. He had no rank, wealth, power, or birthright that would suggest he would become king.

From the day Samuel came to his father's house up until this moment he had faced trials of many kinds which could have kept him from the throne.

In spite of all that we read this in **verses 1-2**.

Notice it says, "...all the tribes of Israel came to David".

The whole nation is represented and what they have to say all relates to why they want him as king.

They say, "...we are your bone and flesh" meaning we belong to the same people group or we are your family.

They also reminisce about years gone by when David served under Saul.

In those years it was David that led the army out and returned.

They are recognizing David as a proven warrior which was a desirable quality in a king.

And thirdly they say these words, “The LORD has said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be ruler over Israel.’”

How is it that David rises from obscurity to sit on the throne? How is it that he survives all his trials? How is it that he had success in so many battles over the years?

Because almighty God raised him up according to His word.

There is a recognition of that in **verses 3-5.**

All the elders come and David makes (literally cuts) a covenant with them. They make a promise that they pledge their lives to, and this happens it says, “...before the LORD.”

Everyone involved here is affirming that this is what God wants for the nation of Israel.

This is what He has said would happen and it happens.

That is how it is with everything God promises.

Why? Because He has the power to keep every promise He makes.

He never has a doubt about fulfilling a commitment because there is nothing in all creation that can keep Him from what He wants to do and that is why we can trust the Bible.

[Just think about the creation for a moment. How much of all that exists did the LORD make? All of it. The bible says things visible and invisible, everything that exists God brought into existence. Think about that! If God brought everything into existence what did He make it out of? If He made everything then He had to make it out of nothing because if He starts with something then He couldn't have made everything! I was listening to another preacher on that subject and he made a very profound statement. He said, there is a whole lot of nothing! Did you know that you can never run out of nothing! God makes everything out of nothing by the power of His word.]

Because that is true, there is nothing in all creation can resist the power of God.

I hear people sometimes say things like, “We need to give God permission to do something!” or “God can't come in unless you open the door!”

Listen, God does what He pleases. He can go through any door He wishes. He acts the way He does towards us according to His will alone.

Now He always acts in perfect justice and thankfully He is abounding in grace, but He does all that He pleases according to His unmatched power.

That is why you can trust this book!

I like how RC Sproul puts it. He says, *“If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God's sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled.”*

[When God said David would be King it is more than a wish or desire, it is a guarantee and He works through the course of history to make it happen. It is the same with all the promises of God. When God says, “He works all things together for the good of those who love him” we can believe that because He has ultimate power over all things. Because that is true it has some really important implications for what we put our trust in. In verses 6-16 we see a contrast between trusting in created things and trusting in God and that contrast shows us this important lesson...]

Point #2 – Human strength fails but God’s power can be trusted. (Verses 6-16)

Trusting in the ability of created things will sooner or later lead to disappointment, but trusting in the LORD will always end in victory.

Now that there is peace among the people of Israel David turns his attention to a group of non-Israelites. (Verse 6)

A bit of background is helpful here. The Jebusites were descendants of Noah’s grandson Caanan and lived in rebellion against the LORD.

They lived in a section of Jerusalem that was situated on top of a large hill, what some might think of as a mountain.

The geography there made it a very difficult place to attack and up until David’s time the people of Israel had failed to drive out the Jebusites as God had commanded them to do.

Worse than that, the book of Judges tells us that some Israelites had joined themselves with them and had taken up their false religion and evil practices.

David is likely looking to fix that problem by taking his men to the city.

When the inhabitants see David they are extremely confident in their defenses.

So confident they say to him, “the blind and the lame will ward you off.”

In other words they are so confident in their fortress that even people with a severe disadvantage when it comes to fighting a battle could defeat David and his men.

They are trusting in the strength of their position and look what happens (**verse 7-8**).

David's comments on the 'blind and lame' are likely in response to what the Jebusites say back in verse 6 and should be understood as referring to the Jebusite army rather than people with disabilities in general.

They thought their fortress was impenetrable, they trusted in their strength and it failed. On the other hand, David resettles Jerusalem refortifies it and makes it the capital city of the nation.

Look with me at **verse 10-12.**

The building of his palace is a sign of strength and peace.

Why does that happen for David? Verse 10 says it is because the LORD is with him.

David was a mighty warrior, but it is not his strength that has established his kingdom it is God acting on His behalf that does that and verse 12 tells us that David knows it.

He is not perfect, we see that again in verses 13-16, but he does show us that the LORD can be trusted.

[This is a lot like having to get around on crutches. Anybody ever had to do that before? When someone needs crutches they put their weight on the crutches so that they can take that weight off their injured leg. Every time someone does that they are putting their trust in the strength of those crutches. If the material isn't strong enough to bear the weight then the crutch breaks and the person using them falls and gets hurt worse than they were before.]

Putting our trust in human strength is like putting our trust in a pair of rotten crutches, when you lean on them they break and you get hurt.

We can do that in many ways.

How often do we put our trust in things instead of the LORD?

We think if I can only put enough in the bank then we will be secure.

Listen, it is wise to plan for the future, but there is nothing that we can acquire that cannot be taken away in a second.

Eating well and exercising are good things to do, they can be God glorifying things to do, but if you think we can guarantee a long life by your own strength and discipline then you are leaning on a rotten crutch.

How often do people look to people to decide between right and wrong?

How often do we look to people for joy and satisfaction? Those are rotten crutches.

On the other hand, putting our trust in the LORD is like having a pair of crutches made from material that can carry ten thousand times our body weight. Every time we lean on them they hold us up and keep us safe.

We can see the power of God in many different ways in the pages of the Bible.

The LORD does miracles, wins battles, heals people, raises up and brings down kings and empires, and He even raises the dead.

If you are in Christ that is the kind of power you are trusting in.

Only Jesus Christ has conquered the grave for you brothers and sisters.

The author of life Himself took on humanity so that He could live a perfect God glorifying life and He takes His earned righteousness and offers Himself as a perfect sacrifice for His people, He takes our punishment, He takes our sins upon Himself and dies the death that we deserve to make us right with God.

But death does not win. Not at all, after suffering and dying for our crimes, He is raised from the dead by the power of God never to die again.

If you are trusting in that, the glorious power of God in Christ, then you too will share in that same kind of eternal life.

That is something really worth trusting in because it will never let you down.

[Compare those two for a moment. On the one hand you have human strength which always fails and on the other you have the strength of the LORD which never fails. What are you trusting in this morning? If you have realized this morning that created things will get you nowhere and you are saying, “I want to trust in the LORD!” that is very good and prepares the way for us to hear this third point from our text. It is good to want the LORD on your side, but how can we know that He is on our side? How can we know that we will receive God’s promises? How can we know that His power is for us and not against us? The answer we see in this text is that...]

Point #3 – God goes before those who want His leadership. (Verses 17-25)

The LORD wants His will for our lives and when we seek it out we will find that He is already leading the way.

It has been a few chapters since we have heard anything about the Philistines who were neighbors and enemies to the Israelites.

Verses 17 tell us that the Philistines hear that the people are uniting under David and they take action to put an end to David.

Verse 18 says they “come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim”.

The sense of the original language there is that they covering a huge portion of the valley.

They bring a huge army looking for war.

Now look at what the king of Israel does and the result in **verses 19-20.**

He 'inquired of the LORD.'

He asks God what to do, the LORD answers and things turn out exactly as God says they will.

There is something very important to notice here. David and his men go and fight but who does the king give credit to for the victory?

It's God. He says, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me like a breaking flood."

David is saying his victory is the result of God going ahead of him.

After the Israelites win that battle, the Philistine regroup in the same place and want another fight.

Again at the beginning of verse 23 we are told that David inquires of the LORD, look with me at what happens. (**Verse 23-25**)

David wants to hear from the LORD and do what He says and God graciously leads him and gives him a clear sign of His going ahead of the Israelites to fight on their behalf.

We are told that there is victory from Geba to Gezer which means the Philistines are driven out of Israel and back to their own territory.

Why does that happen? Because David wanted God's leadership and went where he was told.

[Back a number of years ago I did a little bit of long distance road cycling. One of the biggest challenges in cycling is wind resistance and the best way to deal with wind resistance is to draft. If you tuck in close behind another rider or a group of riders all of the sudden the pedaling becomes easier and you can maintain a faster speed with less work. That only works if you are willing to go where the lead cyclist is going.]

That same thing is true in our relationship with God. We only get the benefit of God going before us if we tuck in behind Him and go where He is going.

It is an easy thing to get that upside down. There are a number of false philosophies that are out there in the broader Christian culture.

They are packaged in different ways disguised to make them look biblical, but if you stop and critique them you find that they are trying to sell people on the idea that you can get God to do what you want.

You will find two common themes in philosophies like that. One theme you will find is that they will use Christian words, but they mean something totally different than what they have historically meant.

The next thing you will find is a dissatisfaction with the Bible.

They will say that parts of the Bible no longer speak to us, or that they have a new word from the LORD, or they will have long and complicated argument to try and convince you that it doesn't mean what it clearly means.

Those philosophies are not an option for the Christian.

God doesn't change! He does not adjust His character or His plans to cater to our sinful desires.

He is not our heavenly butler, He is the LORD of all creation who has graciously made Himself known in His glorious word.

We cannot change Who He is or the goal He has in mind for His people, but we can get behind Him.

He has given us all we need for every aspect of life in the Scriptures and if we truly want His leadership this is where we find it.

If we do that He will lead us and if He is going before us then nothing will stand against us in a final sense.

That is exactly what it says in Romans 8:37-39, it says,

"...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

No matter where we may find ourselves in life the outcome is in the LORD's hands.

Everything that He has promised will happen because His power is sufficient to do all that He pleases.

If we know and believe that, we will put our trust in His strength rather than created things.

If that is where we are putting our trust, then we will want His leadership and He will go before us in all things to the eternal glory of His Name.

That is an amazing way to live.