

Place: Lurgan Baptist 2:12:2013

Reading: Exodus 17:8-16

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

14. “ THEN CAME AMALEK,”

You may or not my be a fan of boxing, but names like Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, Mike Tyson and Barry McQuigan are well known names in the field of boxing. C. D. Blalock on the other hand, is not so well known, but he did something in the ring that made him one of the most famous boxers of all time. In the 1930's Blalock stepped into the ring to go “ toe to toe,” with another opponent. *But what happened just after the bell rang to start the fight, was said to be one of the most embarrassing moments in boxing history.* Blalock came at this opponent with a hugh uppercut that missed and ended up hitting himself right in the nose. He staggered a few steps then fell down for the count. He became the only prize fighter in the history of boxing to defeat himself by a knockout. Now are there not many believers just like C.D. Blalock ? They might be fighting against the flesh, the world, and the devil but neither one needs any help because they keep knocking themselves out. Now all of us are in some kind of battle.

1. There are some who are in a fitness battle. They are not completely well physically; or emotionally

well. It is a constant battle for them to even make it through a full day without some form of hurting in your body.

(2) There are some who are in a family battle. They are fighting for their marriage, fighting for their children. Once there was “ peace,” in their home; now their home has become a war-zone, or a constant struggle just to get along with one another.

(3) There are some who are in a financial battle. There are those who just can't seem to get a handle on their money.

(4) There are those who are in a faithfulness battle. They have found it difficult at this point of their life to maintain a strong walk with the Lord.

Now, in order to win a battle, you must have the right weapon. In the story that we have before us, we are going to see that there was a fight going on and this was a fight to the finish. But it was not a fight that was won by physical might, rather it was won with spiritual might. You see, as Christina believers we face three specific enemies. The world, the flesh, and the devil. The world, that's *the external enemy*, the flesh, that's *the internal enemy*, and the devil that's *the infernal enemy*. (1 Jn 2:12-17) Now although we can distinguish between the world, the flesh and the devil, we cannot always exclusively attribute temptations to any one of these three. In many cases Satan's angels work with the world system and our sinful nature to lead us into conduct which does not glorify the Lord.

Now what has all this got to do with this passage ?
Well notice here,

(1) THE CONFLICT WE ENCOUNTER

Do you know Rephidim means ? It means “ *resting places*.” You see, its not long after we know redemptive rest in Christ, or come to “ *Rephidim*,” that we discover that we are not only opposed by the word (Egypt) and the devil (Pharaoh) but by the flesh (Amalek) as well. You see, Israel,

(a) WERE ATTACKED SUDDENLY:

Did you notice the word “ *then*,” in (17:8) ? This is a little word that we should not overlook. Here before us beginning in (17:8-16) we see that Israel has come face to face with the *Armies of Amalek*. Here the children of Israel are confronted with their first war. Up to now it had been blessing after blessing. First, God divided the Red Sea and allowed the children of Israel to walk over on dry ground, delivering them from their Egyptian bondage. Then they came to a place in the wilderness called “ *Marah*.” I wonder are you there this morning ? The waters were bitter but when Moses applied the tree, the waters became sweet. Do you recall that when they were between Elim and Sinai they murmured because they had no food ? And God graciously said, “ *Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you.*” (16:4) Again, God came through but now they are at Rephidim, and there is not water and they are at it again. What ? Murmuring. And God comes through again, as Moses strikes the rock and water

flows to meet the needs of the people. “ *Then came Amalek*,” My is it not when we are spiritually elated that the enemy directs his fiercest blows against us ? It was so in the life of Christ and is it not so in the life of the Christian ? Do you recall that after the Lord Jesus was baptized He heard the words of the Father, “ *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt 3:17) “ *Then was Jesus tempted of the devil.*” Mark says, “ *Immediately.*” You see, after the approval of heaven, there was the assault of hell, after the dove, the devil, after the benediction, the battle, from a Jordan experience to a wilderness conflict ! Have you not found that to be so true in your spiritual experience ? Times of benediction followed by times of temptation, times of blessing, followed by times of buffeting. You see, suddenly out of nowhere the flesh with all the force of hell behind it, is desired up to withstand the desires of the new man. (a)

(b) WERE ATTACKED SAVAGELY:

“ *Then came Amalek and fought with Israel*,” (17:8) Now who was “ *Amalek* ?” General Douglas McArthur once wrote an article entitled, “ *Requisites for Military Success.*” He said, “ There are 4 ingredients necessary to win any battle. (1) Morale: (2) Strength: (3) Supply: (4) Knowledge of the enemy. Of the last ingredient McArthur said, “ *The greater the knowledge of the enemy, the greater the potential of victory.*” I found out something interesting about Amalek in my study. Amalek was the grandson of Esau. (Gen 36:12) The Amalekites were Edomites or the offspring of

Esau. Now Esau is known for being the man who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. So we see here that his descendants became the first nation to oppose Israel after they left Egypt. In the Bible, "*Amalek*," represents "*the flesh*," that sinful nature we are born with that causes us to do bad when we want to do good. The "*flesh*," stands for that part of man's nature wherein his natural desires have free rein. The flesh represents the sinful tendencies that become part of your existence at birth. All of us were born "*in the flesh*." But then something wonderful happens. We receive Christ as our Saviour. We are born spiritually, (Jn 3:5) and at that moment we receive a new spiritual nature, the new man.

Now your new spiritual nature represents everything you can be by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. You see, the unbeliever is a one natured man, the flesh, but the believer is two natured, the flesh and the Spirit. Paul explains the conflict between these for he says, "*the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*," or "*the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit*." (Gal 5:17) There is the flesh lusting and saying "*feed me*," and there is the Spirit lusting and saying "*feed me*," and it all depends who you feed, you will control your life that day. I mean one Sunday morning your new nature wants to get up, go to church, hear the Word and remember the Lord.

But your old nature fights it, "*You are tired*," an inner voice says. "*You've had a tough week, don't get up so early. Have a rest. You deserve a break*." Have you heard that voice ? Have you ever know that struggle ? The new nature likes to give. Some believer is in need.

The new nature wants to give some money to help them. But the old nature says, "*Oh you can't afford that. They don't deserve it anyhow*." The old nature wants to look at a filthy film and the new nature says, "*these scenes will pollute your mind*." "*Then came Amalek and fought with Israel*," savagely, for according to Amos the sins of the Edomites were aggression and anger. (Amos 1:11)

(c) **WERE SUBTILY:**

The Lord says a very interesting thing about Amalek in the book of Samuel. He says, "*I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt*." (1 Sam 15:2) Amalek attacked Israel at the weakest point, they attacked weary Israelites who were straggling along at the rear of the company. My do you know who is most vulnerable to Satan ? Those believer's who are lagging behind, those who are not diligent or strong in their daily walk with the Lord. "*Then came Amalek*," Seemingly out of nowhere, Amalek in all his military strength arose to battle the children of Israel. Is that not just like the flesh ? "*Then came Amalek*,"

A pastor moves to a new church and at the first business meeting discovers a person who is determined to have his way, no matter whose feelings he hurt. "*Then came Amalek*," Jim and Susie planned their wedding for months, spent a fortune on it. Then they return from the honeymoon and the bills start coming in. They had prepared for the wedding but thought the marriage would take care of itself. He says, "*If you buy that*

dress I am going to buy another shotgun..” “ Then came Amalek,” My the real battle is not visible, but invisible, not human but superhuman. The war is raging all around us, but more frightening is the way that is rages inside. Our real enemy is Satan himself who with all his unholy helpers attacks our flesh. (1)

(2) THE COURSE WE ENSUE

Because the Israelites had never fought a war, Moses could have argued with the Lord about the inexperience of His people. But when Amalek attacked instead of quibbling about the conflict, Moses immediately set in motion a course of action. Look if you will at (17:9-10) Now this course of action illustrates for us,

(a) THE NEED FOR PARTICIPATION:

Dr. James Merritt made a statement, “ *If you pray, but you don’t go to war, you’re a fool. But if you go to war without praying, you’ll be a failure.*” Moses said, “ *Go out,*” what a contrast this was to what he said when they faced the Red Sea, for then he said, “ *Stand still.*” (14:13) Then they could do nothing, but now they could do something. Some Christians lean too heavily on ‘ *the Moses side,*’ or the trust side. They stress so much that the battle is the Lord’s that they give the impression that there is nothing the people of God can do. Others incline too much to ‘ *the Joshua side,*’. They stress so much the need for serving the Lord that they neglect the importance of trusting the Lord. Does this incident not remind us of the need for balance in Christian living ? God is over all and He will enable us

in the battle but He chosen to work through means. Moses at the throne, praying, Joshua with the sword, fighting. Do you remember the command that Oliver Cromwell gave to his soldiers centuries ago ? “ *Trust in God and keep your powder dry.*” (a)

(b) THE NEED FOR DEMONSTRATION:

A demonstration of the power of God. That’s why Moses said to Joshua, “ *To morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.*” (17:9) The symbol of divine power. My ... “ *the Amalekites were at that time the most powerful race in the Peninsula.*” (F. C. Cook) I mean the Israelites were going up against a strong military force. They really needed God’s power. You see, we are never sufficient in ourselves but “ *our sufficiency is of God.*”

(2 Cor 3:5) Its does not matter who we are or how much we have been trained, or how great has been our past accomplishments, we still need God’s power in the battle. Moses recognized that as he held up the rod as he had done on previous occasions, when God acted in a powerful way on Israel’s behalf. You see, when the rod was let down, Amalek prevailed, for without God’s power Israel will not win the battle.

(c) THE NEED FOR SUPPLICATION:

Look at,

1. The Place of His Prayer:

“ *And Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill.* ” (17:10) You may be wondering why Moses went to the top of the hill. Think about this.

(a) From the top of the hill he could get a better picture.
(b) He could get the best view. (c) From the top of the hill, Moses could see all the battle. (d) From the mountain, Moses could see the strength of his people, and he could see the weakness of his people. You see, Moses represents the prayer warrior. Moses is praying while Joshua is fighting. My any time a Christian prays, he or she always moves to higher ground.

2. The Posture of His Prayer:

“ *And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand,* ” (17:11) You see, the uplifted hand is emblematic of prayer. The psalmist says, “ *Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle.* ” (Ps 28:2) Paul says, “ *I will that men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.* ” (1 Tim 2:8) What a sight this must have been the man of God lifting up his hands in the attitude of prayer.

3. The Power of His Prayer:

“ *And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.* ” Do you see that word “ *prevail,* ” ? In the Hebrew language it literally means “ *to be given strength,* ” “ *to increase strength.* ” My prayer not only blesses you, but it also strengthens you and the

people you are praying for. That’s why it’s important that you pray for others. Moses knew as long as he prayed, Joshua would be in full strength. Now do you see the wording of (17:11) ? “ *And it came to when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed.* ” This verse doesn’t say, “ *Joshua didn’t prevail.* ” We are told that “ *when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed.* ” You see, when you don’t pray, we not only weaken ourselves, we strengthen the enemy. When we don’t pray, we take strength from ourselves, strength that belongs to us, and we give strength to our enemy. But when, we wield the power of prayer, the power of God swings into operation. Prayer decides battles, sways the tides of history, opens and shuts the windows of heaven, puts to rout our spiritual enemies ! (Eph 6:18 James 5:17) ***According to the prayers of a church so are the successes of a church.*** Do you realise that prayers instils power for spiritual warfare ?

***Restraining prayer we cease to fight
Prayer makes the Christian armour bright
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees***

(d) THE NEED FOR COOPERATION:

Moses was on the mountaintop praying for Joshua. But he didn’t go alone. Aaron and Hur went with Moses. Joshua didn’t go into battle all by himself; and Moses didn’t have to go and pray all by himself. When these men went to the mountaintop to pray, they were interceding for Joshua. But there is something

interesting about these men I want you to notice. *In fact, there is only one of these men that really encourage me.* We are told that while Moses was praying, his hands became weary and heavy and his hands couldn't stay up. When that happened, there were 2 men who were there to intercede for Joshua and help their leader, Moses as he prayed. Joshua represents a *Great General*. The men that were in battle represent *Great soldiers*. Moses represents a *Great leader* Aaron represents a *Great High Priest*. ***But Hur was just an ordinary man.*** Yet Hur was just as important on that mountain praying for Joshua as Moses and Aaron. Hur represents those unsung heroes in the church. Those who live in the shadows while others around receive the glory. A pastor, writing in Decision magazine, told of an experience he had in Jamaica. He was there with others from Massachusetts to help erect a small cement-block church building. One day a sudden storm interrupted the work, and he and a Jamaican man named Daniel sought shelter together. As they watched the rain, Eastman asked, *“Are you an officer in the church?”* *“No,”* Daniel replied. *“I’m the man behind the church.”*

He meant he was not one to be up front in the church, pastor, teacher, elder, deacon, Sunday School teacher, but one who stayed in the background, doing all sorts of things to keep the church functioning. That was Hur. My we need more Hur's today. Sure, we have the preachers, the teachers and the singers they all get their pats on the back and hear the people say, *“Well done.”* But we need more Hur's today. We need more prayer warriors. After the battle, can you imagine Joshua as he

led the victorious Israelite army back into camp? I am sure there were congratulations all around, slaps on the back and shouts of *“Good work, Joshua.”* I can see the people as they received Moses back into the camp with shouts and expressions of gratitude. I can hear Aaron as he led the congregation in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for giving them the victory. Then I can see a fellow named Hur as he walks wearily towards his tent to rest. *No one pats him on the back, no one tells him that he did a good job.* In fact, only a couple of people know what he did that day. To the people, he is invisible, but in his heart, he is overjoyed because he knows that what man does not, God does! While no one in the camp is telling Hur that he did a great job that day, the Father in Heaven makes note of Hur's sacrifice and whispers, ***“Well done thou good and faithful servant.”***

My are you willing to be a Hur ? Someone that will touch heaven for others, for this church, for other Christians, for families, for the lost. This Church needs some people that will stand on one side of this preacher, and some who will stand on the other side of this preacher, and help me hold up my hands in prayer that the enemy will be defeated. My will you be that person ? Will you touch heaven for others ? Will you strengthen someone through the ministry of prayer ?

(1) (2)

(3) THE CONQUEST WE ENJOY

For we read, *“And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”* (17:13) The word

means “ *weakened or disabled.* ” Joshua and his warriors put Amalek down. But I want you to know that the battle was won in the valley because the battle was won on the mountaintop. Did you notice that there was,

(a) A TESTIMONY TO THE LORD:

Look at (17:15) It means “ *Jehovah is our banner,* ” The altar was not called Moses or Joshua, but “ *The Lord is my banner,* ” indicating that their victory was in the Lord. Joshua fought, Moses prayed, but it was God that gave the victory. And victory in the valley is first won on the hilltop. My the outcome of the battles we fight in life are not determined by the battle we can see but by the battle we can't see. And John says, “ *And this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith.* ” (1 Jn 5:4) (a) And then there is,

(b) A PROPHECY FROM THE LORD:

Look at (16:16) And by the way it was and it is true. Not only did Joshua have to fight the Amalekites, Saul had to fight the Amalekites (1 Sam 14:48) and David had to fight the Amalekites (1 Sam 27:8) Now remember the Amalekites represent the flesh. My until you got to heaven you're going to have fight Amalek. Now the bad news is that you are no match for Amalek without Jehovah-nissi, the Lord your banner. The good news is that Amalek is no match for Jehovah-nissi. My here is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. **Either you conquer Amalek or Amalek will conquer you.** One day thank God we will never have to contend with the flesh again (17:14)

Soon the battle will be over. But until then there is a call to arms. My we need some prayer warriors who will touch heaven for others. We need some Hur's that will encourage others in the battle. Will you be one ?

When William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army, felt the call of the Lord to go into the streets of London and begin ministering to street people, he stood up in a Methodist Conference meeting and requested permission from the presiding minister to be released from his church to go into the streets and preach. The minister heard the request and denied it telling Booth that they would not waste a man of his education and talent on the people of the streets. Upon hearing this, Booth sat down, resigned to defeat.

His wife was seated in the balcony, because women were not allowed on the first floor. She stood up and leaned over the rail. She called to her husband and told him to listen to God and not to man. She vowed to stand with her husband against every foe. She came down from the balcony, Booth took her by the arm and they left the building to go into the streets to win people to Jesus Christ William Booth was ready to quit, but his wife, a lady who usually stayed in the background, stepped out of the shadow of her husband to hold up his arms at a critical time in his life. She was a Hur to him. She encouraged him in the battle, she strengthened him in the fight, she fortified him in the conflict. Now let me ask you, will do that ? Will you be a Hur to others ?

