***God's Power in our Weakness – Hezekiah and David  
  
RV43-01***

We are studying Revelation 3:7-13. This is segment number seven. The Lord Jesus Christ, in this letter, is reminding His faithful fundamentalist believers of Philadelphia that he had opened to them a door for personal spiritual maturity and for rewarding Christian service. This door is wide open to them, and there isn't anybody who can close it. It will remain open. The implication of this opportunity for personal spiritual development and consequent spiritual service that God can reward is that there would be great results in terms of eternity for going through this open door and pursuing the opportunities that it presents. The implication here is that these Philadelphia fundamentalist Christians did exactly that. They responded with positive volition to this open door policy of the Lord. This open door is for building the spiritual maturity structure in the souls of the believers, and thus for securing treasures in heaven.

We are told that this door was provided in response to their willingness to take a place of weakness in their society. The Lord said to them, "You are weak," meaning that you don't bear a lot of influence. You are not a significant factor in terms of the society in which you live. They probably did not have a large congregation numerically. It was probably a small group of people. They did not have an ornate place of worship. They actually met in homes. They had nothing like the pagan temples. They did not have cushioned chairs to sit on like the rich churches do. They just sat on whatever they had to sit on, and sometimes on the floor. They did not hold, in short, any religious prestige in their community. That's what the Lord means when he said, "I recognize that you're weak in terms of the fact that, in the society that you are in, you're insignificant. You don't bear a powerful, influential voice.

Though the Philadelphia church was weak by the world's standards, they were (by that very fact) in a position to receive the almighty power of God. This is the Bible doctrine principle which we have read that the apostle Paul declared in 2 Corinthians 12:10. Paul says, "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak then I am strong?" Paul's weaknesses in terms of these qualities that he suffered from, which represent the factors that develop the spiritual maturity structure in the soul, were things he rejoiced in because it resulted in his developing that structure of spiritual maturity – the capacity in the soul to receive maximum blessing from God.

**Human Weakness**

Human weakness, when it is recognized, will enable the believer to capitalize on the power of God that is available to him. Make no mistake: The power of God is available to you and me today to the same degree (not in the same way, but in the same degree) as it was in the New Testament church. We do not have the Pentecostal type of gift expressions that they had following the day of Pentecost. Those were necessary for the establishing of Christianity, and for the establishing of the New Testament and all that was to follow. These were the distinguishing factors from the Old Testament Judaism. God, having served that purpose, then settled down to the normative procedures of this age. But God the Holy Spirit is at the core of everything we do, and His power is as powerfully expressed today as it was then.

**Heroes of the Faith**

Hebrews 11 has a roll call of Old Testament believers who, though functioning on a variety of weaknesses, were, with God's power, immortalized by the feats that they rose to. I want to read in Hebrews 11, beginning at verse 32. After naming a series of well-known personalities in Old Testament history, all of them who suffered one kind of weakness after another, these heroes of faith are described in these words:

"What more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell it of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtain promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, (and here it is) *out of weakness were made strong*, became valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned. They were sawn asunder, were tested, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having received witness through faith, received not the promise: God, having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The writer of Hebrews says that these heroes of faith, in spite of their weakness, accomplished such monumental feats of devotion and of obedience to God. They did not come into the possession of the promises made to their people: the promises of a better city; or, the promises of a better spiritual condition. But he says that they are going to get it, but not without us. We have an infinitely greater position because we are in Christ. None of those Old Testament people, that you can read about in this chapter, have the relationship to Jesus Christ that you have. They are not in Christ. They are not to be united to Him as His bride. But you and I are. If they could do that on their Old Testament ground, out of their weakness, when God's power was joined to their incapacity, can you imagine what you and I as believers can do when we get things straightened out, and we get ourselves aligned through doctrine with the thinking and the practice of God, which is the only way it can be done?

So, here, out of weakness, these were made strong. Their inability to make it on their own enabled them to look to God. It's easy to ignore God when you and I think that we have power to make it on our own. When we're doing all right on our own, we do not look to God. It is when we are in a distressed situation that we begin to look to God. That is kind of foolish when you stop and think about it. It is too bad to have to find yourself in some difficult straits so that you will turn to God. It would be wiser to practice prayer when things are going well for you, and not to wait until you're in a desperate situation, and then you come and you start wanting to pray about something.

We looked at a classic example of divine strength through human weakness in Gideon last time. Here was this retiring, insecure man on his own. But he was turned by God into a fighting tiger. He put the Midianites to the slaughter and to flight, and he gave Israel 40 years of peace from oppression. The key was human weakness depending on divine direction.

So, in Judges 6:14, we read, "And the Lord looked upon him (that is, Gideon) and said, 'Go in this your might (here's what you're going to be strong in). And you shall save Israel from the hand of Midianites. (And here's the might:) Have not I sent you?'"

Verse 16: "The Lord said unto him, 'Surely I will be with you. And you shall smite the Midianites as one man.'" In the Old Testament, the believers were not indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. God did not move with them on a moment-by-moment basis. That is one of the distinctives of the church age. Because God the Holy Spirit indwells us, we can go nowhere without the very presence of God. That is fantastic. We have become the tabernacle of God. We are His temple. Therefore wherever we go, God is with us. And that might be well worth remembering in terms of where we go and what we do.

So, Gideon is a fantastic example. All of this is possible because the Lord Jesus Christ (we're told in Matthew 28:18) has all power given to Him: "Jesus came and spoke to them saying, 'All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth.'" God the Holy Spirit is the agent who delivers this power (this supreme power) of Jesus Christ to the believer.

In Acts 1:8, this principle is taught. Jesus (before He went to heaven), said, "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you." Then it describes what you would do with that power in the witnessing ministry. Therefore, it is true that all power belongs to Jesus Christ, and that power is delivered to the believer through the indwelling Holy Spirit. So, the apostle Paul, in Philippians 4:13, could say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens with me."

That's not just a cute little thing. This is a favorite verse that people like to make a plaque out of, and they like to hang it up in their homes. So, you look up there and see Philippians 4:13 and it says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And you smile and say, "Oh, that's nice." It's more than nice. It's the most fantastic truth in all the world. You can actually do this. There is nothing that you cannot do in God's service – zero nothing, because of the fantastic power of God that you have now. You can't do it if you're cocky and sure of yourself. But if you are ready to recognize your weakness and incapacity, then you become the fighting tiger that Gideon turned out to be.

**Hezekiah**

Turn to Isaiah 36. Let's look at another Old Testament example of weakness that God turns into fantastic accomplishment. This is the time when King Hezekiah was reigning over the southern kingdom of Judah. The city of Jerusalem is under siege by Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. Sennacherib has conquered several cities of Judah. Isaiah 36:1: "Now, it came to pass, in the 14th year of King Hezekiah, that Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them." The Assyrians were a tremendous military force at this time in history. They swept through Judah, and the fortified cities fell like autumn leaves before them. Now, Rabshakeh (which is not a name, but a title – the field commander of Sennacherib of the Syrian Army) stands before Jerusalem seeking to demoralize them.

Isaiah 36:2: "And the King of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field." At this particular point in time, the Israeli army was not much. It had deteriorated in spite of the warnings of the prophets not to let the military establishment come apart; not to let the military establishment deteriorate; and, not to do all the things they were doing, like producing poor products. The example that the prophet gave is, "You're diluting your wine." And they were not to debase their money. This was another thing that the prophet said: "You have debased your coinage." They were diluting the gold and the silver with baser metals. So inflation was running rampant, and the army had been permitted to deteriorate.

So now they're in a life and death situation. Here, they are faced with the greatest army of the ancient world at that time, led by expert military men, and they're outside the city of Jerusalem. They have demonstrated their military capacity all over Judah. What can King Hezekiah (as he stands there and looks over the wall at this army) expect? Now, this is what you call weakness. That's exactly what they were in.

So, the field commander comes up to the wall and seeks to demoralize Hezekiah and the Jews. Verse 13: "Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language (that is, in Hebrew) and said, 'Hear the words of the great king, the king of Syria. Thus says the king: Let's not Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD saying, 'The LORD will surely us.' This city shall not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria.'" You notice it, in your English Bible, the word "LORD" is in all capital letters. That is to indicate to you that that is the sacred Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew: "Yahweh." It is the name that we translate as "Jehovah." It is the most sacred; the most powerful; and, the most significant name of God. So, here is blasphemy that should make your skin creep.

Verse 16: "Hearken not to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make an agreement with me, by a present, and come out to me, and eat every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink every one of the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you saying, 'The Lord will deliver us.' Have any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria? Where are the Gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered some area out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?'" And here, the blasphemy is compounded because Jehovah is compared to the rest of the pagan gods. The field commander says, "Don't listen to your king. You know our reputation. Nobody stands before us; we don't care who his god is; and you're not going to do it either." This is weakness.

Now, King Hezekiah, in panic, sends an appeal to the prophet Isaiah to inquire about this situation. Isaiah 37:3: "And they said to him (that is, to Isaiah, the messenger), 'Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day is a day of trouble and of rebuke, and of blasphemy, for the children are come to birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh whom the King of Assyria, his master, has sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord your God has heard. Wherefore, lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.'" They asked Isaiah to go to God in prayer in their behalf.

Verse 5: "So, the servants of Hezekiah came unto Isaiah, and Isaiah said unto them, 'Thus shall you say unto your master: 'Thus says the Lord. Be not afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will send a wind upon him. He shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'" Well, the news was good. Isaiah says, "God recognizes your weakness. He respects the fact that you have turned to Him to solve this problem. He says to put your hearts at ease because, 'I'm going to send a false report. Sennacherib is going to be told that his country is under attack, and he will turn and hightail it back to Ninevah. The result will be that when he gets there, I'm going to put him into a situation where he's going to be assassinated.'" Well, that is good news. Isaiah's answer was very reassuring.

However, Sennacherib kept up with his pressure and with his blasphemy. He follows up what the field commander said with a letter which was written to Hezekiah. This is one of the great passages of Scripture: the threatening letter from Sennacherib to Hezekiah. Isaiah 37:10: "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah, King of Judah, saying, 'Let not your God, in whom you trust, deceive you, saying, 'Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' Behold, you have heard what the kings of Syria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly, and shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them that my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the King of Hamath, and the King of Arphad, and the kings of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?'" So, the letter says, "Forget it. Don't trust your God. Don't count on it. He is not going to free you." Sennacherib is saying, "I've given you an offer. If you'll open the gates, and if you'll come out, I'll put you in a situation where you'll have food; you'll have provision; and, I'll take you off to another land. I'm going to take you off as captives, but it'll be a land that you'll enjoy. It'll be a pleasant place that you go to."

This represents shades of World War II. This was exactly the principle that Adolf Hitler used in getting the Jews to go from all parts of Europe that the Germans had conquered, and to be willing to go to the eastern resettlements. They used exactly this approach. It's a pity that the Jews who succumbed to that did not know their Bible better, and suspect something when they were told that they were going to be resettled in the East, and that they would have very attractive lands; they would have great provisions; they would have peace; and, they would have comforts. Many of those that were headed for the crematoriums paid for their own train fare to get to their death destination.

**Crucifixion**

I want to remind you also that the Assyrians who stood before Jerusalem, and Sennacherib in particular, were the originators of the system of execution known as crucifixion, except that it was not the kind of crucifixion that we know of in Jesus' day, and that He experienced. You remember that the Assyrians, who invented the method of crucifixion, came up with a method that would execute their enemies, but would put them in a position that would strike fantastic terror for those who observed it. The method that they came up with was to find a tree; cut it off at a certain place; knock off all the branches; and, put the top into an intensely sharp point. It was a piece of wood. This is why crucifixion was referred to as being "on the wood."

The method of original crucifixion was by impaling a person. The victim would be taken; his clothes would be stripped off of him; he would be taken hold of by four strong soldiers who would hold his arms and legs; and, then they would take him up and ram him down on this sharpened stake in a sitting position. They were trained to do this in such a way that they would not hit the heart. They would simply ram right through, as far as they could, so that he was now impaled on this stake. He sat there writhing and screaming, and would be in the position where he would live for quite a while, as long as they didn't hit the heart. The result would be a most agonizing death, screaming in an unbelievable way, in agony, and for a period of time, he would live. Finally, he would die, and they would leave him there to rot, and to be eaten by the birds.

Sennacherib boasted on the fact that one time he had filled a vast hillside with impaled enemies – all of them impaled on wood, writhing and screaming in agony, in order that he might strike terror into the hearts of those who opposed him. I want to tell you, folks, that Hezekiah and the Jews in Jerusalem knew all about that. When they looked at the field commander, they knew that what his threat implied was this kind of impalement. They knew exactly what awaited them if he came through. Now, do you begin to feel the weakness; the helplessness; and, the pathetic position in which Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem found themselves? What are they to do?

Hezekiah recognizes his weakness, and he does the smart thing. He takes the letter; he goes to the temple; he spreads it out before the Lord; he goes to prayer; and, he discusses the matter with the Lord. Isaiah 37:14: "And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it. And Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying, 'Oh, lord of hosts, God of Israel, who dwells between the Cherubim. You are the God, even You alone, of all the nations of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.'"

**Prayer**

I don't think for one moment that Hezekiah is on his face here praying with the impression that prayer is sort of a bubble that floats up into the sky, and bursts, and doesn't amount to anything. This man knows what's in store for him if the Assyrians get him, and he knows that he is speaking to a God who is listening. Be careful that the practice of prayer does not become a simple, futile exercise that you can do or not do, depending upon how you feel, that you can be part of or not be part of, because it really doesn't make any difference. It makes a great deal of difference. It is a desperate situation in your life without it. Don't wait until you get into a panic condition. Don't wait until you get into a boxed-in canyon where you're in desperate straits, and then you go to prayer. We wonder how much Hezekiah was faithful in praying before this point. But he knows what to do now. There's only one way out. His weakness somehow has to be tied in with God's almighty strength, or there is no hope for them.

So, he puts it to the Lord in verse 17: "Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, who has sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries." Hezekiah knew very well that the field commander was not lying, and that Sennacherib was not putting on airs. He knew that they had indeed done this, and they had left the trail of victims impaled on stakes all through the countries and the territories that they had conquered.

"And have cast their gods into the fire, for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands – wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them." All of the gods of the people that they found, they burned them. Sennacherib says, "I'll show you what your gods can do."

It is very interesting, again, that this was exactly what Hitler said at one time: "You talk to me about law, and so on. But I'm going to match you against my guns, and we'll see who has law and who has right.

"Sennacherib says, 'I'll take your gods and I'll burn them.' Now, therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, even You only." That is a great prayer. And God answers.

Verse 21: "Then Isaiah, the son of Amos, sent unto Hezekiah saying, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel, whereas you have prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, this is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning him. The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, and laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you.'" This is kind of interesting. The Lord says, "Sennacherib has been making a pass at you." It's like some young virgin girl that this slob has made a pass at. She turns him off; rejects him cold; tosses her head out at him; puts her nose up in the air; and, says, "Drop dead." And that's what he means here.

"Whom have you reproached and blasphemed, and against whom have you exalted your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Even against the holy one of Israel. By your servants you have reproached the Lord and have said, 'By the multitudes of my chariot's I am come to the height of the mountain, to the sides of Lebanon, and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof, and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel. I have dug, and drunk water, and with the soul of my feet I have dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.' Haven't you heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it. Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be to lay waste fortified cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore, their inhabitants were of small power. They were dismayed and confounded. They were like the grass of the field, and like the green herbs, like the grass on the housetops, and like a grain blighted before it is grown up. But I know your abode, and your going out, and your coming in, and your rage against Me. Because you rage against Me, and your tumult, is come up into My ears, therefore I will I put My hook in your nose, and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way by which you came."

The Lord says, "That's right, Sennacherib. You've conquered a lot of people, but those people were those that I permitted to come into your hands because of what they were guilty of. And you have been an instrument for Me to use in punishing them, but you're not going to do that to Jerusalem. You're not going to do that to My people. When you get here, I'm going to stick a hook in your nose, and I'm going to put a bridle through your lips."

"And this shall be a sign onto you. You shall eat this year such as grows of itself; and the second year that which springs of the same: and in the third year you sow, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. And the remnant that is escaped of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." The Lord says, "I'm even going to make the crops develop so that you'll survive until you can make a new planting. This is what he meant earlier. The children are being born, and the mothers have barely strength to deliver them, because these people, under siege, were now suffering from starvation.

"For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this. Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the King of Assyria, 'He shall not come into the city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. But the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into the city, says the Lord. 'For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake, and for My servant David's sake."

Then, indeed, God was as good as His Word. His strength came in, for in verse 36, we're told that the Father sent the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ who took over the battle and finished the job in one night: "Then the Angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000. And when they arose early in the morning, behold, these were dead." They woke up the next morning dead – 185,000 who were finished off by the Lord Jesus Christ in one night. That is real top-notch soldiering. 185,000 were killed by the Lord Jesus Christ in one night. Weak and helpless Hezekiah was driven to the Lord for help with no army to turn to. His weakness made God's almighty power possible. There was no doubt in the minds of Hezekiah and the Jews of Jerusalem as to who had pulled them through.

As for Sennacherib, he didn't get away with it either. Isaiah 37:37-38 tell us that he rushed back to Ninevah, because God sent him a false rumor, and that he went into the house of his god to worship. And while he was there worshiping, two of Sennacherib's own sons came in and assassinated him. And that was the end of the power of one of the great tyrants of all history.

This is another classic example that illustrates the point to the Philadelphia church: "You're weak. You don't have much going for you. But with My power, you are an unbeatable factor. You're an unbeatable combination."

**David**

Who of us cannot imagine the weakness that little David must have felt in 1 Samuel 17. Little David faced-off with Goliath. David, as a youth, was put up against Goliath. His older brothers who were in Saul's army rebuked him for coming around; for asking questions; and, for seeking to figure out what's going on. David was puzzled by their attitude because he was indignant at what Goliath was saying about the Lord's people, and about the Lord's army. He considered this a personal insult to the Lord.

So, in 1 Samuel 17:31, we read, "And when these words were heard which David spoke." This means his indignation over what had taken place. Up in verse 39, David said, "What have I now done?" This was after his brothers rebuked him for being a mischievous teenager. David said, "Is there not a cause?" This meant, "Isn't there a question? Isn't there an issue? I just want to know why you people are letting this guy get away with this."

So, verse 31 says, "And when the words were heard which David spoke, they reported them to Saul, and he sent for him. David said to Saul, 'Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant (meaning himself) will go and fight with this Philistine.' Saul said to David, 'You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he is a man of war from his youth.' David set unto Saul, 'Your servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. I went out after him, and I smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth. And when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.'" This is shades of Davy Crockett.

The king said, "You're not equipped to do this. This guy's an experienced warrior." David said, "That's no problem. One time I had a bear that came after my father sheep. I went after him; grabbed him by his beard; finished him off; and, that was it." The king said, "That's pretty good."

Verse 36: "Your servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine will be as one of them, seeing he has defiled the armies of the living God." He says, "I didn't only do it to a bear, but I did it to a lion."

"David said, 'Moreover, the Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear: He will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'Go, and the Lord be with you.'" Here you have weakness. David knew what he was. David knew his limitations. He had some experience, and Saul finally said, "Go to it."

So, Saul, you remember, tried to put the armor on him. David tried it and then he took it off. He says, "No, I can't take it because I'm not used to this." Verse 40: "So, he took his staff in his hand, and he chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had even in a wallet. And his sling was in his hand, and he drew near the Philistine."

Now, at the place where this battle took place, David and the giant Goliath are facing off. Between them runs the brook where the smooth stones are. David moves out to face the giant. I want you to observe the fact that he didn't have any ammunition when headed out. He goes for the stream, and he stops there, and he picks up five aerodynamically perfect stones. He knows how to handle a slingshot. He knows how to pick a stone that'll fly true and straight, and he picks appropriate stones. The Philistine is standing here, tapping his foot, waiting for this guy to get over here to fight the battle, and David is sitting there fooling around with his rock collection down here at the stream. So, right away, Goliath is saying to himself, "What's he trying to do here? He is trying to confuse me and demoralize me. But David knew what he was doing. He had no concern because he was aware of his weakness, and he was plugging it in to God's strength.

So, he moves out, and stops to select these stones. Verse 41: "And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David, and the man who bore the shield went before him. When the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and a fair countenance. The Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog that you come to me with staves?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods."

By the way, I want you to notice what it said there: "And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." Do you see why curse words are calling upon a satanic power? Curse words are calling upon a power base. There are only two power bases in the universe. One is God, and the other is Satan. Curse words from the simple "hells" and "damns" on down to the more gross obscenities, right down the line, are all (when they are used and uttered) calling upon the gods of the demonic world. The Bible is very explicit here: "The Philistine cursed David by his gods." The curse was calling upon demonic forces – upon satanic powers. You'll have to get the Philippians series that deals with that particular commandment – the commandment of not taking the Lord's name in vain, to get the full details upon that.

Verse 44: "And the Philistine said to David, 'Come to me, and I will give your flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.' Then said David to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield, but I (a weak boy) come unto you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defiled. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will smite you, and take your head from you, and I will give the carcasses of the hosts of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saves, not with sword and spear (and here's that great statement:), for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." David said, "You can talk big, big boy, but I am telling you that the Lord has already informed me as to what's coming. I've had a preview. I'm going to take your head off, and I'm going to send the rest of your troops fleeing in panic. The army of Israel will pursue them, and we're going to have a big feast for the birds all over this battlefield." Why? Because he killed a bear one time? Because he killed a lion one time? No – none of that foolishness. David knew what he was up against, but David also knew that his weakness was being overridden (as with the Philadelphia church) with the almighty power of the living God.

**The Battle is the Lord's**

So, David phrased that in those words: "The battle is the Lord's." That's a phrase that you should memorize, and that you should often repeat when you're up against the hard places in life; when you're up against a discouraging place; when you're in those blue moments; when you're up against a desperate situation; when you've put your foot into your mouth and bitten yourself off good and properly; and, all the other things that happen. The battle is the Lord's. This includes when you're not appreciated; when people misrepresent you; and, when you think nobody is concerned over the problems that you have to carry, or is interested in the things you're seeking to achieve. The battle is the Lord's. He makes the difference.

Verse 48: "It came to pass when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to David, that David hastened and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. David put his hand in his bag and took from there a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. So, David prevailed over the Philistine with the sling and the stone, and smoke the Philistine and slew him. But there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore, David ran and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled," just as David had said.

David gets on top of that Philistine and stands on top of him. He had no sword. He pull out Goliath's sword. It was big heavy. He probably had to have two hands to handle it. He shouts, "Glory to the Lord;" finishes off the Philistine; and, then gives them the "coup de gras" by taking his head off. Then he let's go with a Tarzan-like cry, and that scares the Philistines out of their wits, and the army flees:

"And the men of Israel and of Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines until they came to the valley and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way, to Shaaraim, even unto Gath and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing at the Philistines and plundered their camp. And David took the head of the Philistines and brought it to Jerusalem. But he put his armor in his tent."

What a fantastic victory! What a demonstration of weakness tied in to the power of God! David's weakness in the face of Goliath's strength enabled the Lord to give David a great, great victory. This is perhaps one of the all-time examples of not only weakness, but of personal discouragement – when you become aware of your weakness in the face of the problems that you face and in the face of the very things sometimes that you think God wants you to do. Sometimes things fall together in such a wrong way. Yet, you're confident that you're on the course that the Lord wants you to be on. Yet, you are facing problems, suffering, and conflicts.

One of the great examples of that is, Elijah and his confrontation with the Baal structure and the sex worship of Ahab and Jezebel, and what this man internally experienced; the discouragement; and, the deep, deep sense of weakness. Perhaps in this example, you can come into a feeling of human desperation and the magnificent achievement of the power of God that illustrates the Philadelphia principle. We'll look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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