

Battle for your Soul #2: Lessons Learned in the Wilderness

Battles of the Soul

By Robert Rohlin

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 10:11; Exodus 14-15

Preached on: Monday, June 1, 2009

First Baptist Church Las Colinas

1930 Gateway Drive

Irving, TX 75038-2405

Website: www.firstbaptistlascolinas.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/rrohlin

This morning we are going to continue our study in the seven battles of the Promised Land which I believe represents seven battles for our soul. Last week we had an introductory message in that vein talking about getting ready for the battles of the Promised Land. We spent a lot of time establishing the fact that man is made in three parts as spirit, soul and body, and that there are three parts to salvation that correspond that there is justification, which is... happens to me the moment I receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior that I repent of my sins and I ask him into my heart to forgive me of my sins and become my Lord, become my Savior. And he regenerates me. He makes me a new creature and that process is instantaneous and it is called justification.

But then there is an ongoing process that happens for the rest of my earthly life and that that process is called sanctification and that means eliminating those things in my life that God is not pleased with, doing the things that he wants me to do and that he has called and wired me to do and, to most of all, to become more like Christ himself. And that process is called sanctification which is a word that means to... the process of making something holy. That takes place not in my spirit, but in my mind, my will and my emotions which is meditating on Scripture is such a big important part of that process because I need to change how I think and how I feel and how I make decisions.

And then one day when either Christ comes back to get me or I go home to be with him, he will give me a glorified body that Paul says in Philippians three will be like his glorified body and he does this according to the power that he has to subdue all things to himself. And that is called glorification.

So I gave you a little math formula that if you add justification plus sanctification plus glorification then you have salvation which is why Paul could say in Romans five that being justified by his death, much more shall we be saved by his life, because salvation is so much more than just knowing that we are going to heaven. It is far more than that.

Now you may remember that after Israel left Egypt, they had to go into the wilderness. And I thought it would be good for us to look at the lessons that they were supposed to have learned in the wilderness and make sure that we have learned them.

See, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 that the exodus, that is, the leaving Egypt, the wilderness wandering, the battles of the Promised Land, all these things are pictures that teach truths that apply to us today. The book of Numbers that talks about the wilderness wanderings is not just a historical book. It is not simply a part of the Pentateuch that a young Hebrew man would study to get ready for the bar mitzvah which means to become an adopted son of the commandments, but rather Paul says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."¹

This stuff is for us.

Now there are some beautiful pictures, the picture either of the Pharaoh wore the cobra on top of his crown and leading... leaving slavery to the serpent king as a picture of our leaving slavery to sin. They couldn't leave, by the way, until they had eaten a lamb. The lamb had to have been a perfect lamb. It had to be a male lamb. It had to be examined. It had to be a slain lamb. It was a sacrificial lamb. It was a shared lamb because they shared it with the other people that were around them. And when the children of Israel left Egypt they had the lamb inside them and you can't leave slavery to the devil until our sin nature, until we, first of all, put the Lamb of God inside of us.

That got the people out of Egypt. Now they are going to the wilderness and they are going to wander for 40 years and the purpose of the wilderness wanderings was to now get Egypt out of the people.

Now I live in the big city. I live in the Dallas Fort Worth area and everywhere I drive is pretty much concrete unless I drive for at least a good hour to get out of the city and start seeing the countryside. But I grew up in the country. I did part of my growing up in [?] Canyon, climbing the rocks out in west Texas. I did the rest of my growing up in east Texas where the pine trees are. And I love the country. And they may have taken the boy out of the country, but they have not gotten the country out of this boy. And yet God needed four years to get the Egypt out of the people. And then there is the Promised Land conquest which is what we are really going to focus on is what do those seven battles represent and how do they reflect seven battles for our soul?

Now there are some questions we ought to ask. Why did God make Israel stay in the wilderness for 40 years? What was it that caused them to stay in the wilderness? What happened to them while they were there? What lessons did they learn? And, most importantly, what does any of it have to do with you and with me?

So here are some lessons that I encourage you to use the handouts that you have been provided to write these things down.

Lesson one, the old life tries to call you back. And we are told in Exodus chapter 14:

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:11.

And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.²

That is a lot of chariots, by the way. That was there great military advantage they had.

“And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.”³

By the way, a lot of people hate that verse. A lot of people struggle with that verse. How... why would God harden someone's heart? But you need to understand that about nine times prior to this it says, “And Pharaoh hardened his heart.” God doesn't harden Pharaoh's heart until Pharaoh has done a pretty good job of it himself.

And it goes on. It says:

But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.⁴

You see, Pharaoh lost his authority over Israel. He said, “You go.” Not only did he say, “You should go,” but he says, you know, the people of Egypt are saying, “Here, we will give you our wealth. We will give you our money. We will give you our gold if you will just get out of here,” because they had had nothing but misery. They had been through 10 plagues, the last of which was that the first born son in every family in Egypt died. What a horrific thing to go through.

And they are like, “Please just go. Here. Take our stuff. Just go. Get away from us.”

² Exodus 14:5-7.

³ Exodus 14:8.

⁴ Exodus 14:9-12.

But Israel, in spite of all of this newfound wealth and abundance and opulence, they get... and having seen God work miracle after miracle, after miracle, they get to the edge of the red sea and they grumble. I wish I could tell you I was made of better stuff, but I can't, because very often in spite of having seen God work miracle after miracle in my life, I still come to places where I grumble and I complain and I say... and I try to engineer my own way out of my predicament. And then I give up in despair.

See, we are quick to rule out a miracle. We just look for a way to go back to the status quo which is Latin for "the mess we are in." How can I go back to the way things were?

Satan's goal is always to drag us back. He can't have our spirit anymore. When Jesus Christ sent his Holy Spirit to live in our spirit, the spirit was off limits to the devil. But the devil sets up camp in our soul if we let him, if we give him a place. Like Paul said in Ephesians, he says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."⁵

Our anger when it is not resolved allows the devil to set up a stronghold in our soul. He tries to drag us back to the old life to get us to doing the old ways, to thinking the old thoughts, to having the old feelings to making the old decisions. He wants to dominate us by the old man. And it always seems easier to backslide than to conquer, but conquering is better. Let's work at it.

Listen to... God wants to gain glory in your life by overcoming the impossible. He wants to gain glory in your life by overcoming the impossible.

Exodus 14 tells the story of Israel when they are at the edge of the Red Sea and the people are complaining and it says, "You just brought us out here, basically, to die in the wilderness. What is going to happen?"

And in Exodus 14 it says:

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the angel of God, which went before the

⁵ Ephesians 4:26-27.

camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.⁶

Now we will read more of that story later and talk about how God parted the waters of the Red Sea, but I want you to notice what is going on here. God sends... first of all, Israel has the strongest force, military force in the world at that time was Egypt. And now all of Egypt's military might is upon... Egypt had a significant advantage in that they had the technology of chariots. And they had trained their arches to... one guy would drive the chariot and an archer would be on the back on the chariot and he could pull arrows out of his quiver and put them on the bow and shoot them almost as fast as a semi-automatic firearm today. And he would shoot from while they were going. And the fact is they worked out methods of just being able. Sometimes they would have two archers, one on either side of the chariot. And they would just shoot in every direction. And it was devastating to watch an Egyptian chariot go through an army shooting arrows in all direction. And it was a significant military advantage because it was hard for everybody else to hit the moving target.

And these were the best trained warriors of the ancient near east. So what does God do? He puts his shekinah glory between Egypt and Israel. Israel has this overwhelming opponent and now God puts his shekinah glory.

By the way, it says that it became a darkness to the Egyptians, but it gave... during the day, but it gave light to the night to he Israelites.

So it is on one side it is the cloud aspect. It is covering everything up and making it dark. On the other side it is the fire aspect of the shekinah glory that lights everything up.

So and this was very similar to the plague of the darkness. You may remember that one of the plagues against Egypt while Israel was in captivity was this plague of darkness that the Egyptians couldn't see anything. In the middle of the day, at noon time they could see nothing. They could light a lamp by feel and yet not even see the light from the lamp. And they would stumble all the way.

Meanwhile, the Israelites could do everything they wanted to do any time of the day. They could... they were capable to see. It was a supernatural darkness that came upon Egypt. And this is what happens as Pharaoh's army is standing there. There is a supernatural darkness upon them, but there is a supernatural light that God gives to the children of Israel.

And this is an amazing thing because the Bible tells us there were 603,500 fighting men at this time. If they had that many women and if all these guys were married and they had an average of four children for family which is pretty conservative, that would make

⁶ Exodus 14:13-20.

about 2,414,200 family members. That is a total, if you add the fighting men back into it of 3.6 million people. And then the census didn't take into account those who were over 50 years of age. It would have been a camp roughly 10 miles square. They had livestock on top of that. This is amazing because 430 years before there was only 70 people.

It is said by Bruce Wilkinson and others that if they marched 10 across, which is a typical road width, that would have formed a line about 190 miles long; if they marched 50 across, about 40 miles long. I don't know how wide God spread the water. The Bible doesn't tell us. He certainly spread it wide enough for them to go across. But I will say this. I don't think that Israel crossed the Red Sea in the 10 minutes that is given to it by Charlton Heston in the *10 Commandments* movie. In fact, I think that he would have... it would have taken him two to three days to cross the Red Sea. And the shekinah glory of God kept Egypt in darkness that long and gave Israel light that long and held back the waters that long so that they could cross.

Our God is able to do the impossible. You see, I don't know if you ever felt that you wanted to do something for God, but you were afraid of what will happen if I try that, if I follow his principles or I don't have provision to do that, but I know it is the Lord's will, but how am I going to do God's will?

God delights in working miracles for his children so that he can get the glory, because when he is glorified people will be drawn to him. And that is how he can then show love to them when they come to him.

So obedience, our obedience comes before our understanding. We can obey God now and understand later.

My mother-in-law told me something before we got married. She said, "Robert, when God wants to work a... when God wants to do something great, he starts with a problem, but when he wants to work a miracle he starts with an impossibility."

Can't tell you how many times I remembered that phrase when I felt like I was facing an impossible situation and God worked a miracle as part of it.

Lesson number three. The Lord desires not only our redemption, but our healing from the sickness of the soul.

And, by the way, this is not to say that God doesn't want to heal us physically. Sometimes he chooses to do that. I walked on a cane for eight and a half years. The doctors told me my disease was incurable. They gave me medicine to take. I was taking 26 pain relievers every day. I was on a prescription amphetamine that had a very special prescription form that came in three parts because it was addictive and you had to basically take it to the pharmacy within the three days of the prescription being written and it was a controlled substance. I had to do that so I could be alert and awake enough to function at my job. The doctors told me, "Don't ever get away from a job that offers

disability insurance, because you are going to be disabled one day by this condition. You need that.”

And I tried all kinds of things and I became a little bit like Asa. The Bible says about king Asa that Asa “was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.”⁷

Now I tried all the doctors things first. And I tell that to my shame. That was a stupid thing for me to do. I should have looked for God’s solutions first. And finally I did look at God’s solution and I tried some things that God revealed to me from his Word and God supernaturally healed me so that I don’t have that disease today.

I still have aches and pains occasionally, but it is just because I do too much and I am not proud of that and I am going to talk about that in a few moments, but, you know, I do abuse my body on occasion and I still pay for it. But God healed me from that disease. But he doesn’t heal everybody of their physical ailments. And it is not because they don’t have enough faith.

Paul prayed three times for the Lord to deliver him from his thorn in the flesh, but God said, “Hey, my strength is made perfect in your weakness.” And Paul said, “Ok, I would rather glory in my infirmities then, that I can have the power of Christ to rest upon me.”

Paul left Trophimus in Miletus sick because he couldn’t heal him because God had a purpose in Trophimus’ illness. So...

But God does desire to heal those things in our soul, our mind, will and emotions.

Exodus chapter 15 they came to some water and they were thirsty and they were looking forward to it and it says in verse 23:

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.”⁸

Marah is the Hebrew word for bitterness.

And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?
And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of

⁷ 2 Chronicles 16:12.

⁸ Exodus 15:23.

water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.⁹

See, there is a lot more to the Christian life than just knowing that you are going to heaven. God wants to change you from the inside out. He wants to transform your inner man and he wants to make you what he originally designed man to be.

In fact, he goes, I will go one step further than that. I believe that God wants to make of me something better than he made Adam initially. Now that is... I don't think that is being cocky. I don't think that is being proud. Adam was created perfect, but one day I am not only going to be perfect, but I am going to be redeemed and I will live in eternal gratefulness to God because I am getting something more. I am getting more in Jesus Christ than Adam lost in his sin. And that is an amazing concept to me.

Lesson number four, you need to learn to look to God as your source of daily provision. When you start looking at the statistics of what God had to provide to the nation of Israel while they were wandering in the wilderness, it is mind boggling. His name is Jehovah-Jireh. Every day manna fell from heaven. Manna is... comes from the Hebrew word מַן (mawn) which means "what is it?"

So the first day that this white frostlike substance fell not eh round and they went out to gather it up and they brought it back and they ground it into flour and they made cakes out of it to eat, the kids said, "Manna," meaning, what is it?

And mom said, "Precisely."

Dad said, "Yup, that is it. Manna, what is it."

They never came up with a name for the stuff. And every day they would go out. Let's go get the what is it?

I don't know about you, but I have had some experimental meals sometimes from some of the, you know, people in my family cooking and I have been tempted to sit down and look at the plate and say, "Manna, what is it?"

But... and then they had to have water every day. Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and he says about the water that, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them."¹⁰

Paul is quoting from the Hebrew commentary on the Scriptures and because in the Talmud and the Targum it talks about the rock that followed them. It is kind of like every where they camped after Moses struck that rock the first time, there was always water.

⁹ Exodus 15:24.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Sometimes there was water when they found an oasis, but there was a rock that just always seemed to be there and water came out of that rock and they talked about the rock that followed them.

Now Bruce Wilkerson has said that at the very least the most conservative estimates are that there was 1.3 million people. Now you... that is not hard to come to when you consider that they had 603,500 fighting men. Basically if every one of them was just married that leads you to 1.3 million and that is without kids and without people 50 years of age.

So the most smallest possible number you can pretty well have is 1.3 million. I think it is more along the line of the 3.6 million. But they would require... there was only 100 and 1.3 million people, it would require 160 box cars of food and 1000 tank cars of water every day. It would be a train that was nine and a half miles long that would have to provide food and water every single day. And yet God did that. He did the impossible. He provided. He was the source.

And how often do you and I doubt God's ability to supply our puny little needs? We doubt that we are going to be able to, you know... and, by the way, most of our problems with supply are due to our own fault. We have got so in debt that we pay so many bills that there is not enough ... there is too much month left at the end of our money, but that is not God's fault. It is we are suffering the consequences of our poor decisions.

And yet we often just think that God can't supply our need and yet look what he did for the children of Israel.

Lesson five. You need to learn to follow the principle of rest established by God. In Exodus chapter 16 God makes a point and he sets up this... he reinforces this concept and, of course, Exodus 20 is where we are going to get the 10 Commandments, but in Exodus 16 and verse 23 it says, "And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning."¹¹

In other words, if you are going to do any baking, if you are making stew or cooking anything or boil anything, now is your big chance.

And verse 26.

Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye

¹¹ Exodus 16:23.

every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.
So the people rested on the seventh day.¹²

Now, we need to be clear about something on the sabbath. First of all, a lot of people think the word sabbath comes from שְׁבִיעִי (sheb-ee-ee') which means the seventh. It actually comes, instead, from a word that means to rest or cessation. And so it is not the sabbath day isn't merely the seventh day, it is the rest day.

Now it just so happens it was on the seventh day, but God designed more sabbaths than just the seventh day of every week. There was the first day of the seventh month. There was the seventh day of the week. There as the 10th day of the seventh month. There was the 15th day of the seventh month. There was a seventh year sabbath for the land and Israel ignored this for 490 years and so they ended up spending 70 years out of the land until God had given the land the rest that it should have had. There was 50th year sabbath called the jubilee.

Now we worship on the Lord's Day. I still firmly believe in my heart and you can feel free to disagree with me. This is not a point of fellowship. I personally believe that the sabbath is still on Saturday. But we worship on the Lord's Day. And a lot of people say, "Oh, well, we are going to keep the sabbath at Church."

I don't do that. I go to keep the Lord's Day. And that is, you know, I am ok if you want to call it the sabbath. You know, I will be glad to go to sabbath with you, ok? That is not that big a deal. But, see, the sabbath to me is still Saturday. It ... the 10 Commandments, the only commandment not repeated in the New Testament is the commandment to keep the sabbath day. Why? Because we worship on the Lord's Day. The sabbath commemorated God's finished work of creation, but the Lord's Day, the day that Christ rose on the first day of the week, commemorates the finished work of his redemption.

But there is an underlying principle that is more important than the what day it is on and that principle is that you should take a day of rest to chill out, to cease from your labors, to quit striving to do stuff and to just think upon God and upon his Word and to spend time apart with him because he deserves that time from us. It is to be intimate with him.

If you read the book of Psalms, I will promise you no matter how hard you study and I had the privilege of writing a commentary on Psalms for our denomination one time and every one of the 150 psalms has one thing in common. God desires intimate fellowship with us. You need to spend time talking to God and listening to his Word. Don't feel guilty about a day of rest. You need it.

You and I need to understand that God values our quiet worship more than our service to him or our productivity.

¹² Exodus 16:26-30.

Now I have got to be honest with you. I am the world's worst at this. I am all about productivity. I am all about doing stuff. And the fact is I have been accused of not being a human being, but being a human doing. And yet you and I need to remember that we are not even human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey. And you and I need to spend time as spiritual beings resting in God and fellowshiping with him and spending time with him and thinking and meditating on his Word and we need to carve out a special day to do just exactly that.

Now I haven't been good at this. And as a result I lost my health for a lot of years. Before I got sick for eight years and walked on a cane for eight years with a disease doctors said was incurable, I had been burning the candle at both ends working seven days a week, working until 2:30 or three in the morning, driving home, getting home by six, 6:30, getting a few hours of sleep and then getting up and going after it again. I earned what I got. I don't rest easily. And that is to my shame. And I want to caution you not to make the mistakes that I have made and that is to always be busy.

And I appreciate the fact that some of you in this church have started to realize that I still... I have these tendencies and you realize why, you know, when somebody wants to, you know, host a seminar or something I start to say, "No" now and it is kind of like well, you do it. And I appreciate those of you who say, "Just let us know what you need done and we will do it," because I can't do it all and I shouldn't try to do it all.

But we need to spend time with our families. Don't feel guilty about taking a day off. Spend time with your kids. Talk to them about the greatness of God. We need to worship God with all our substance. Our time is one of those things. We need to spend time with him. We need to minister to others. We need to also give of our tithe.

You know, we don't really tithe, by the way, until we relinquish control of the funds. Sometimes I have thought, "Well, I am just going to put that money in a special tithe account and then when I see a special ministry need that that needs to go to, I will take it out of my tithe account and I will..."

No, tithe means that we give it to the Lord, we take it to eth Lord's house. We give it to him and we relinquish our control. We no longer say what we are going to do with that.

By the way, the tithe was the method of God's supporting the local church to carry out the work of the ministry and it is important that we do that.

Lesson six. God and not his servants win the victory. God and not his servants win the victory. In Exodus chapter 17 there is the battle with the Amalekites where God reveals himself as Jehovah Nissi.

In Exodus 17 it says, "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi,"¹³ which means the Lord is my banner.

¹³ Exodus 17:15.

You may remember this story. Joshua was a great warrior, but he couldn't accomplish the victory. He is down in the battle fighting the Amalekites and Moses is standing up and praying as long as Moses can stand up and pray they would be winning the battle, but then Moses would get tired and he would drop his arms and he quit praying and the battle was starting to be lost again and in Exodus 17 it says:

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.¹⁴

God prevailed against the battle. It was plainly apparent that Joshua didn't win the battle. It wasn't the army of Israel that won the battle because the deciding difference was when God's power was being cried out for and as prayer was continuing and as the rod of God was lifted up they would win the battle.

You and I only win battles when we cry out to God. We can only prevail in battle when we cry out to God to fight for us. And all of our efforts and all of our fighting is in vain and you going to the psychologist is going to be in vain and you taking drugs to help with some of your mental problems and your emotional issues is going to be in vain if you are not crying out to the Lord. The primary weapons of our warfare are prevailing prayer, prayer that keeps prevailing until God brings the solution and crying out to our heavenly Father.

Lesson seven, the Lord makes us holy and sanctifies us through obedience to his law.

There are in Exodus 19 God reveals himself as Jehovah Makkedesh, that I am the Lord who sanctifies. There are three times that God reveals the 10 Commandments and others laws. Why? Because he is holy, holy, holy. He does it in Exodus 19 through Exodus 23. Moses hears God's law and he writes it down. And then Moses goes back up, of course, into the mountain for 40 days. He takes Joshua part of the way with him. You may remember he... God writes the 10 Commandments down for him, Moses fasts. And then,

¹⁴ Exodus 17:8-16.

of course, you remember at one point Moses broke the tablets and so he had to go back up again, to get the tablets and the first time God had carved the tablets out of the stone, the second time Moses had to carve the tablets out of the stone. God wrote things with the finger of his hand. And then later there is a second telling of the law which is where we get the word Deuteronomy in Deuteronomy 9:18.

So we have the law revealed three times for us in Scripture. Why? Because he is holy, holy, holy. It is God that makes us holy. After reading the law to the people, Moses passes on this word in Leviticus chapter 20 and verse seven that God is the one that makes them holy.

Thank God that he does this. Thank God that he makes us holy.

Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you.¹⁵

I am the one that makes you holy.

This name follows the command to be holy. He says, “You be holy, but I am the one that makes you holy.” The fact of the matter is, I can’t be holy in and of myself. God has to do it for me and he makes us holy by his Spirit and through understanding his laws and his principles, because it is right here in conjunction with his law.

Lesson eight. God has a plan for your fellowship with him. Justification, sanctification, service and unhindered fellowship. It is in the pattern of the tabernacle. When you went to the tabernacle which we are told in the book of Exodus this is something they built and it tells...

By the way there is more written on the tabernacle than any other subject in Scripture except for Christ himself. There is more said about the tabernacle than is said about any other single subject except for Christ and maybe for King David.

But when you came in to this, the tabernacle was surrounded by basically a fence and there is a gate on the east side and you had to come in through the east side and the camp of Judah camped on the east side and, first of all, you had to come through the tribe of Judah to get in to worship God and Jesus is called in the book of Revelation the lion of the tribe of Judah.

And when you came in there was this brazen altar and sacrifice was offered there for sins. And it is a picture of justification. Back beyond that was a large brass, looks like a cup and saucer, huge cup and saucer. And the priests had to wash their hands in the top of it and their feet in the saucer like portion at the bottom before they went into the tabernacle proper which is the tent and it says, “Lest you die.” So it was important and that represents sanctification and it represents, you know, cleansing ourselves from the filth of

¹⁵ Leviticus 20:7-8.

the world. And then they went into the tabernacle proper and what was called the holy place. And there were three items in that holy place. There was the table of show bread off to the right which represents the Word of God. And then before the curtain there was an altar of incense that represents prayers. And off to your left was the lamp stand filled with oil and burning brightly which represents the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God. And then back behind that curtain that was in front of the altar of incense was the holiest of holies. And only the great high priest could go there on the day of Yom Kippur which was the Day of Atonement and that was where the ark of the covenant was and the 10 Commandments were inside the ark of the covenant. But covering the 10 Commandments and all the wrath that they brought when they show us that we are a sinner, we are in violation of God's holy and righteous judgment, was the mercy seat. And every year on the day of atonement the priests sprinkled blood on the mercy seat because the blood cover our violations of the laws and the violations of God's commandments. And it is by his mercy and by the sacrifice of his Son that we are covered from that.

And so there is a pattern of justification and then sanctification and you being involved in service to Go through his Word and through prayer and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And ultimately when Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom and we, between the holy of holies, the holy place and the holiest of holies showing that we now had unhindered and unfettered access to God.

Lesson nine. When we focus on our own abilities we will miss God's blessing.

In Deuteronomy chapter one verses 28 through 32 Moses gets to the edge of the Promised Land and he is ready to go in and ready to take the land which is what God had commanded them to do. And yet the people or the princes come to him and they influenced him a little bit and Moses often didn't demand his own rights. He was kind of a meek guy and one of the meekest men it says ever.

Deuteronomy chapter one in verse 28 it says this.

“Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.”¹⁶

So they basically persuade Moses. “Let us send in these spies.” And they send in the spies and send in 12 men. Joshua and Caleb come back and says, “The Lord is going to give it into our hands. Let's go.”

The other 10 come back and said, “Oh, the children of the giants, they Anakims are there. And they are taller than we are.”

And Moses...

¹⁶ Deuteronomy 1:28.

Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God¹⁷

They didn't believe. They said, "We, you know, we... we can't... we can't handle it." They even went so far as to say, "We are like grasshoppers in their eyes."

Somehow or another it was like they had... climbed up into the skull of these giants and got right next to their optical nerve and looked out at the camp of Israel and said, "Look. They think we are a bunch of grasshoppers. That is how puny we are compared to them. We are all going to die."

And they came back and gave that negative report. Now this is the difference, by the way, between man's devices and God's counsel. The man's devices are originated by man. But God's counsel originates with God. Devices are man centered. It is built around his thoughts and feelings, but counsel is God centered. Devices are uncertain, but counsel has a unity of purpose and an immutability of design. It will never change. Devices cannot be hidden from God, but God's counsel is hidden to all except to whom he reveals it. Devices are based on selfishness and folly and uncertainty, but counsel is based on wisdom and life and stability. Devices want to alter circumstances. Counsel wants us to focus on eternal realities. Devices lead to ruin, but counsel restores the full and productive and happy life. But these people came back with the devices, the 10 did. And their appraisal was so grim. Why? Because they focused on their own abilities. They said, "We can't do it. We are like grasshoppers in their sight." They weren't think about how big God was.

Now Joshua and Caleb thought about that. They said, "Oh, God is so big. He can do anything. The spies saw the walled cities and they rebelled against God's direction."

By the way, I don't... I am not convinced that majority rule is God's way. I have seen it not work too well in most churches that had a democratic form of polity and everything got voted on and a lot of times the wrong stuff got voted on because the majority just kind of went the way of one or two. I think God's real pattern was to have godly men to be the elders and in a church, but they were supposed to work not by majority, but by unanimity. They were supposed to do things together and have a unanimous feeling about it.

Well, they were unwilling to do battle and the children of Israel, as a consequence, wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. They were still redeemed from slavery, but they weren't enjoying what God had for them. And it is possible for you and I to receive justification from God and have our sins forgiven and yet we remain perfectly miserable

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 1:29-32.

even though we are redeemed. But that is not God's will. He wants us to win the battle. He wants us to win the battles of our souls.

Lesson 10. God never leaves you alone even in the wilderness he is faithful. God went with them the whole time with the shekinah cloud of glory. It was like a cloud of ... by day and fire by night and even when they were stiff necked and disobedient, he remained faithful. What a lesson.

I am so thankful that God does not leave me even when I am unwilling to conquer. I am so glad he doesn't take his presence from me like David was worried about in Psalm 51, but that his Spirit stays forever with me. But God stays with me and reveals his character through my trials.

I talked to a pastor one time whose conviction was that their church should build debt free. He didn't think it was God's will to go into debt to build and I happen to share that conviction with him. And they were beginning a massive building project and so I went back several weeks later to visit with him in his office and the church had voted to borrow the money to build a building in spite of what he had encouraged them to do, to just trust God to provide the funds in advance.

And I asked him. I said, "Brother, what are you going to do now?"

He says, "I am going to go through the wilderness with my people."

Because he understood that God would have to teach that church some tough lessons and God did. And yet that pastor was faithful and here some 20 years later he is still the pastor of that church.

There is a purging while they are in the wilderness God purges from the nation all those that are old enough to think that Egypt... going back to Egypt is easier than fighting. And he leaves only two godly older people, Joshua and Caleb and a bunch of zeal filled younger generation who would rather fight than spend the rest of their lives wandering in the wilderness and eating manna.

Sometimes God has to purge out from our midst.

Most of you are unaware of the history, recent history even of this church, but our pastor labored here faithfully for many years without seeing any real fruit or any real growth to his ministry. And we made just a few changes to the constitution even just last year because there were some people who were in positions of authority that really weren't qualified for that. And those people got upset and they decided that rather than just give other people an opportunity to serve in the church, that they would throw a little bit of a... they would leave the church. And the very next Sunday we had 20 something visitors here and our whole church usually ran in the 20s for a while. And we had 20 something visitors. I looked up a month later and we had 29 members and 61 visitors and God has

just continued to bless that. God wanted us what... he had to do some purging of those whose heart was not with him before he could bless.

Joshua in Joshua chapter one says, "Ok, guys, we have wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Let's eat. Let's prepare victuals. Let's get food. Let's get ready for the journey. Let's pack. Let's get ready."

As we begin next week looking at the seven battles of the Promised Land, we need to get ready. I want to encourage you this week to spend time in the Word of God. I want you to read it. I want you to read it. I want you to ask God every day that you read your Bible, "God show me just one verse today that is for me. Slap me in the face with one verse that I need to apply to my life." And then memorize that verse. Meditate on it. Chew on it. Think about what it means. Get... ask God to give you a rhema, a personal insight into a word that could be applied to your life. And begin this process, if you are not already engaged in it, of sanctification by spending, feeding your spirit with the Word of God, communing with God in prayer and dedicating your life to the will of God.

I truly believe that studying the seven battles of the Promised Land may be the most important journey you and I will ever take together in terms of helping us realize how to fight the battle. And because of that, I think you and I need to be in prayer that God will help us to be alert to the wiles of the devil as he attacks us to prevent us from learning these important truths.