

Midnight Cry Messenger

FREELY SHARED WITH THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR TRUTH — NOT TO BE SOLD

Volume LX: Number 2

A Quarterly Publication Of Midnight Cry Ministries, Southern Pines, NC

APRIL-MAY-JUNE 2015

The Battle is the Lord's

by Phil Enlow

From the transcript of a service preached at the Bible Tabernacle in December 2012.

I'm just going to begin by faith this morning. I don't have any great icicles running up and down my spine, to say the least. Anybody else here have icicles running up and down your spine? Are you just in a place of exhilaration and everything is great and grand? No! I believe many of us are in battles and many times they're battles that only you know about. And, I believe the Lord wants to encourage me. I believe He wants to encourage every one of us to understand, to go forward with an understanding and with a greater faith that we're able to push through instead of drawing back.

Turn, if you will, as a starting point, to Joshua, chapter 1, a familiar scripture. I believe there are many things in the scriptures that illustrate truths that the Lord would share with all of us, starting with me.

The situation here is that the Israelites have been delivered from Egypt. They were brought out with a tremendous, miraculous deliverance: the miracle of opening the Red Sea; they went to Mount Sinai and saw the whole mountain shaking and on fire with God's presence. And they were given the Law, and the whole nation was supported for 40 years in the wilderness.

They wouldn't have had to go 40 years if it hadn't been for a generation that just didn't believe God in spite of all this. But anyway, the time came when Moses himself passed off the scene and handed things off to Joshua.

And so it begins, "After the death of Moses the

servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them..." That's not insignificant, is it? "...To the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory..." — and He gives the dimensions of the territory.

He says in verse 5, "No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." Does that sound familiar? That promise is repeated in the New Testament. I believe it applies to every child of God. He's promised never to leave us, never to forsake us.

"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very coura-

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God's Plan for the Church

by Phil Enlow

I don't believe we can improve upon God's plan for His Church. In Eph. 4 we find that there is one Spirit and one body. We find that Christ has given various ministry gifts "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4:12-13.

And beyond the ministry itself, all the members of Christ's body are to be "joined together" and brought to a place where each member functions effectively by drawing strength and ability from Christ the Head. And every member needs every other member. No one is complete in Himself. Completeness happens when every member functions in his or her proper place for the benefit of the whole. This is the order God honors and that will

get the job done.

God gave us a picture in the way the Israelites camped in the wilderness. Think of the chaos there would have been had they rushed helter-skelter for the best spots every time they made camp! It wasn't like that at all. At the center of everything was the tabernacle with the cloud over it. The Levites took care of the priestly duties with respect to the tabernacle and they did it in an orderly fashion. The rest of the Israelites were instructed to pitch their tents in careful order, by tribes, by families, and by rank within tribes and families. Everything and everyone had a place with God's presence at the center.

The Bond of the Covenant

And God's presence was over the holiest place of the tabernacle, the place where the ark of the

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Postage Paid

Midnight Cry Messenger
P.O. Box 685
Southern Pines, NC 28388-0685

Midnight Cry Messenger (USPS 347-880) is published by Bible Tabernacle of US Hwy 22, North of Southern Pines, NC 28387. Periodicals Postage paid at Southern Pines NC. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Midnight Cry Messenger*, PO Box 685, Southern Pines NC 28388-0685.

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This paper is published quarterly. USPS-347880. It is sent out free to all that request it. Its purpose is to present truth and to alert God's people to the lateness of the hour.

Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings to all in the wonderful name of Jesus! Here we are again, hopefully better late than never! God is good!

As we emphasized last time, the world scene continues its descent into darkness at an ever-faster pace. The recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court legalizing same-sex "marriage" in all 50 states may well be the nail in America's coffin. Not only the decision itself but also the open celebration by the White House, complete with rainbow-colored lights, are such an utter rejection of the God in Whom we supposedly trust that it is difficult to imagine any outcome but judgment.

However, as much as we have enjoyed the measure of divine blessing resting upon us in our past, God's purpose is not to "save America." His is always the same eternal purpose, to gather and prepare His people for an eternal kingdom on a brand new earth, the home of righteousness. I'm all for revival but this world is not our home.

God's people are sensing more and more that we are being called deeper, that He is dealing with deeper needs than we may have been willing to face, but also that His grace is always enough! The darkness of the hour will help to separate and purify his people, enabling them to shine in the face of that darkness. Some will see the light and respond.

We rejoice in God's presence and blessing on our recent convention in Jacksonville, Florida. What a contrast there was between God's word and events of that week – one of them being the infamous court decision. It is never a time to live in fear but rather a time to awaken and draw near to the Lord and to each other. His promises will never fail.

Our desire for our readers is that you too will "lift up your heads because your redemption is drawing near." Luke 21:28. Remember us in your prayers that we may use our God-given opportunities to spread the light of God's word – even as we pray for you.

Till next time may God's rich blessings be yours.

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

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geous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go."

So they were responsible for the truth that God had given them. We know that all of that, and the giving of the Law was only meant to be a preparatory thing. It was a transition. It was part of the grand plan to get a people ready so that when Christ came, they had an understanding that would have, should have enabled them to recognize and receive Him. And it did for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear.

But anyway, it says, "Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Over and over again, you get the same thing. Don't be dismayed. Don't be terrified. Don't be afraid. Do you suppose there was a reason for that?

Yeah! The Lord knew that they were going to be in many situations that looked totally hopeless. And they were going to be called to, nonetheless, do what God had given them to do, and respond in faith, and go forward anyway. Now is anybody in a place like that right now where you're looking at something that has a strong tendency to cause you to be dismayed? I see smiles and nods and waving hands, and yeah, I would go like this too. Yeah.

You know, I really believe with all my heart, it is the very nature of things that it is that way. And there's something about us that thinks it shouldn't be, that we should just simply be able to waltz through to heaven, to simply "proof-text" the devil away, whenever he comes, just haul out a scripture and — poof — he's just gone like there's no real opposition, everything is straightforward and easy, every battle takes five minutes.

But you know as well as I do, it isn't that way. And, sometimes it is. Sometimes God just moves in and we're able to speak a word and we see the devil just turn-tail and run. Well, thank God! That's appropriate. But to suppose that, therefore, is a principle, a formula by which we should just take that and apply it to every situation, and, oh God, if it doesn't happen, something's wrong ...!

There are many, many kinds of battles that we fight in many kinds of situations. And if you will look ahead into the actual historical record of the conquest of the land, you will notice that it wasn't a one or two-day affair. This was something that took years, and there were many battles they drew back from and wound up compromising and not fight-

ing. So I'll tell you what, the Lord was not blowing smoke when He warned Joshua about the danger of being dismayed, basically looking at a situation and saying, "That's impossible. I give up."

And I believe with all my heart, God is wanting to encourage us to look things in the eye and not give up, and to be able to move forward. Now, you know how the Lord began to deal with them and prepare them. They crossed the Jordan River, and they did that supernaturally. God absolutely dried it up. All they had to do — the priests, acting in faith and on the Lord's instruction now, they didn't just presumptuously do this. The Lord told them to do it — was to put their feet in the water, and as soon as they did the waters parted, they stopped upstream and dried up, and everybody walked through on dry land.

Of course, that had quite an effect upon the people of the land who were aware of this. They said, "Oh Lord, we are in trouble now!" But anyway, the Lord brought them through, and just began to prepare them. They had to reinstitute parts of the covenant that they had not observed during the wilderness wanderings.

And then, you remember how at the end of chapter 5, Joshua is drawing near to Jericho. That was the first battle. That was the city that was nearest where they crossed. And in verse 13, "He looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, are you for us or for our enemies?"

Well, I think it's pretty obvious from the context and the way he reacted that he understood this was not an ordinary man. This was someone who was supernatural. And therefore, it was a pretty important thing. "Hey, are you for them or for us?" And of course, the (paraphrased) answer was, "I'm not for either of you. I'm here on behalf of the Lord. I'm the Commander of the Lord's army."

You know, we had a message about that a while ago. I'm here to fight **His** battle. And I'll tell you, I believe that is not a small part of what God would have us to realize. We think of battles that we fight as though they are **our** battles and God is standing off to the side, shouting encouragement to us to be sure, but basically saying, "This is your battle, you fight it," when the truth of the matter is, though we have a part to play in battles that are fought relative to the kingdom of God, ultimately it is the Lord's battle.

You see, you go back into their history: Abraham lived among heathens. But God had a purpose for his life, didn't he? He called him out of heathen darkness, made Himself known, brought forth this nation, most of whom remained heathen in their understanding. They did not have any faith. They

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didn't have a clue. This was God's initiative, in other words. This was God intervening among the families of lost inhabitants of the earth, in order to bring forth a supernatural, eternal purpose to reach a people for Himself. And so, at this point in history, this was part of it.

And so, Joshua, of course, bowed down, and he took off his shoes because he realized he was on Holy ground. And he bowed down and he began to take orders. He realized, hey, I'm not on my own. God's just not saying, go do it, He's saying, I'm on the scene here. And I'm fighting, and yes, it's going to benefit you, but I'm fighting God's battle. I'm taking my orders from Heaven. I'm not here to be your servant.

You know, a lot of people try to treat God that way. They're looking at their life. There are things they'd like to see happen, and so they're trying to figure out, what's the formula? How can I get God to do what I want? How many of you think it's that way?

We need to be bowing our head. We need to be humbling ourselves and saying, "God, I want to be part of what You want. Lord, it doesn't matter what I think and what I want. I need to lay all of that, just as Jesus laid down His life, as was mentioned this morning. I need to lay my life down and say, oh God, You're in charge. I want Your purpose. I want to fit in with Your plan. Oh God, just open it up and give me the understanding that I need. But Lord, I'm not here to get You to be my servant. I'm here to bow down to You and be Your servant."

And I'll tell you, if we'll do that, we're gonna see God work because, again, this is God's initiative. Praise God! And of course, you saw what happened, that God gave them the rather unusual, to say the least, instructions about how to defeat the enemy there, and they did. And the walls fell, and they took the city, and, of course, there was great rejoicing.

God continued to give them instructions, and one of them was, don't take any of the stuff. All that nice stuff you see there, don't take it for yourself. And of course, somebody did. But what happened? The second battle, they look at this little city of Ai. That was the next little city on the agenda. And you know, in the throes of that great victory, I don't even get the sense that Joshua went to the Lord and said, "Okay Lord, what's next?" He looked at the city and said, "Well, that's gonna be easy." Anybody ever been in that position?

How does that work out for you? Not very good! It amazes me and blesses me how many times the Lord will be dealing with me in a certain area of need, and truth, and it comes from everywhere. I mean, I've had things that were said in the prayer

meeting the other night, things that were said this morning, things that come into my hand that I've read that just, it's like the Lord's trying to slap me upside the head and say, "Hey, wake up. I'm trying to get this into your thick head so that you can move forward."

But I'll tell you what, we do find: we go through life thinking we can handle stuff. You know? We come up against problems and say, "Well, I can handle that. I can handle that. I can handle that." And then something bad comes along, and we say, "Oh God! I'm over my head! I can't handle this one! Please help me!" The truth of the matter is, we're always over our head. We just don't know it. The idea that we can handle stuff in a way that really fits in with God's plans, that's a bunch of junk!

Now when I say that, I'm not talking about someone who has grown in the Lord and they've learned, and in the spirit of, Lord, "I'm depending on you and I'm believing your promises and I'm exercising myself in faith." That's one thing. But I'm talking about, "God I'm gonna come when I need you. I'm gonna call upon you when I need you. But the rest of the time I'm just gonna kind of muddle through and handle problems myself, and handle issues, and my wisdom is good enough. My strength is good enough." No, it isn't!

And I believe with all my heart, that's one thing God is seeking to teach us. And one of the ways that He teaches us, of course in this instance, was by causing them to fall prey to a very small bunch of people that ran out of the city, this tiny little city, chased the Israelites, and killed a bunch of them. And of course, God had to deal with the sin, first of all, that had brought that about, but I believe also the presumption.

But I'll tell you what, I see something in God allowing situations to get out of control, and to get to where they are obviously overwhelming. Now, one example is Gideon. You remember how the Midianites had, in Judges, oppressed the Israelites and defeated them. God had allowed the enemy to overrun them because of the sins of the nation.

And there they were, and it was time for deliverance. There were people beginning to cry out to God for deliverance, and an angel appeared to Gideon while he was minding his own business, and said, "...Thou mighty man of valor." (KJV). And I know he looked around wondering where this "mighty man of valor" was!

But anyway, you know the story about how God called him. God commissioned this man. Now that alone should tell us that it's not based upon us and our ability. Folks, whatever God has called us to is a totally supernatural thing that has nothing to do with natural ability. And all we do, when we exercise natural ability, is get in God's way. And the Lord has

a way of teaching us that we need Him, and it's only in Him that anything eternal can happen.

And so you remember how they sent out word to all Israel. God has appeared to Gideon. He wants to do something about the Midianites. And so 32,000 gathered. And the Lord said, "It's too many." Well, they already didn't have as many as the enemy. What do You mean, it's too many? But the Lord was wanting to teach them something. And so, "Everybody who's scared go home."

Well, 22,000 went home. I mean, they came because they felt like they ought to, they had to. It was a duty kind of thing. But you know, when it gets right down to it, I'm really not very confident here, so I'm going home. So they're left with 10,000. Well, maybe we can do something. You know, maybe that'll work.

But the Lord had a little test, didn't He? And He said, go down to the brook, and tell them to drink water. He didn't give them any instruction. But, there are two ways they drank water. Some of them were looking like, were doing like this. And others, they got right down to it. And three hundred lapped like dogs, didn't they? And, I guess that would make 9700 that did it the other way.

And I'm sure, I'm positive, knowing human nature, that Gideon figured, well, okay, we lose 300, that'll be okay. But the Lord had a different idea. He said, take the 300. Now why did He do that? Who can tell me why the Lord brought it down to just 300?

The lesson is that if you mounted a battle, and you've got your strategy, and you had a whole lot of people, you'd figure you did it! And the Lord wanted them to understand, you're not the one who gives victory! I'm the one who gives victory! Even if you do have a big army, I'm the one who determines the outcome. And so, what I want you to do is just do what I tell you to do, but understand, big or little — I mean the little things we go through every day don't matter! It's God's battle! Period! End of story!

And so God gave them a great victory with 300 people, threw the enemy into confusion, and they just turned tail and ran. And you know, it reminded me of the situation with David. And, particularly when the Philistines mounted a charge and they sent Goliath.

They came up with a strategy, you know, we've got something special in our army, and we're gonna challenge them in a special way. We're gonna send out a champion and we're going to allow the battle to be determined by one-on-one combat. But guess what? Our champion is almost ten feet tall, and he's been a warrior since he was young. So we're gonna send him out and challenge the people.

Well now, suppose they had had kind of a good

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warrior, but still just one of the guys. What would the reaction have been? You know, they'd have been looking around saying, all right, who's our best champion here. In other words, it would have been reasonable. It would have been possible. It would have been something where they might have said, well, you know, this is difficult but we can handle this. But not him! How many Goliaths has the Lord sent into your life?

And you know, a lot of times we think, when we hear this story, we think about external circumstances. We think about this problem, that situation, this thing here: that's Goliath. Oh, it's "out there." Oh God, defeat that terrible giant. Do you know where my worst Goliath is?

Yeah, it's in here. It's things that mount up that just seem like, oh, my God, oh, this is a giant. Lord, I am in way, way over my head! And of course, the Lord turns around and says, well, you've always been over your head. You just didn't know it. But I don't want you to be dismayed or to give up in the face of all of this, because I understand. I knew about Goliath all along.

And of course, it wasn't just a story about courage. It was a story about somebody who understood what was really going on. He understood that it wasn't the people that were being challenged. This was God. I don't even know if Goliath really, really understood it. But maybe he did. He defied the armies of Israel. He defied their God. He just stood there and said, "You can't beat me. I defy everything that you stand for! You cannot beat me."

Are there things in your life that are like that right now? Are there any Goliaths that are defying you? Yeah. Well, I see a few heads honest enough to nod. If you're not right there now, you will be.

But David understood that this was the Lord's battle. He was the one being challenged. There was a battle going on way bigger than just men on a battle field. There was an unseen realm. There was a God who had taken this rag-tag bunch of heathen people and made a nation out of them.

And here was somebody who was not just a man, not just an earthly giant. This was somebody who was inspired by the other side, the devil. The heathen gods, they understood, were not just figments of people's imagination. There was demonic power behind them. And that was the inspiration that was causing this man to rise up and defy the God of Israel. You cannot defeat me!

But David understood this was not a human battle. You have not defied men. You have defied our God, and I'll tell you, my God is bigger than you! And folks, I believe with all my heart, God is

wanting to remind us that we have a God who is bigger than the biggest Goliath you and I will ever face, and it's Him that's being challenged. We may be the ones on the battlefield, but I'll tell you, the battle is a whole lot bigger than you and me. This is something that's been going on since Satan rebelled against God in the beginning.

You remember the account of Elisha. This heathen king was wondering how in the world his plans kept getting figured out. I mean, he was opposing Israel and every time he tried to do something, it was like they knew exactly what he was gonna do, and where he was gonna do it, and when he was gonna do it, and he said, "Who's the spy? Let's smoke out this terrible spy." And somebody said, "There's no spy. But I'll tell you, there's a prophet over there, and the things that you whisper in your bedchamber, he knows." I'll tell you, we've got a great God, don't we?

If we need to know stuff, He can tell us. And that was the case. And so he said, "Well, I guess if we're gonna defeat them, we're gonna have to do something about that guy. Where is he?" So anyway, they found out where he was in such and such a city, so while they were sleeping that night, the whole army came in and camped around, and they woke up in the morning, and, oh my God, we're surrounded.

And you remember how the servant reacted. He was looking at it as we often do, with natural understanding. We are in way over our heads. We are against a foe we can't possibly defeat. What are we gonna do? Oh, master! And he said, "Lord, open his eyes. There are more for us than there are against us." And all of a sudden, he saw things in a different light. God did open his eyes and he saw.

Wouldn't it be something if the Lord opened our eyes today? We could see how things really are. Oh my! Would it change your perspective? But yet, we have a record of a God who cannot lie, who has told us these things over, and over, and over again. And so, when his eyes were opened, he looked and he saw chariots of fire all surrounding the other army, and he realized, "Oh, Lord, they are in trouble!"

What a different perspective. They have set themselves against God. This isn't just about me! This isn't about me, and my little life, and my little problems. This is part of a cosmic battle between Heaven and Hell.

And, of course, the Lord gave them deliverance. God blinded the army and said, he's not here, and led them right smack into the capital of Israel. And all of a sudden, they opened their eyes and realized what was going on. Anyway, the battle was won. The whole situation was totally defused.

I'll tell you, it is the Lord's battle. You think about the big picture here, because I believe many times this is what we need. We get so mired in the details.

We get mired in our situation, our feelings about our situation, all of those things! And, we forget what's really going on just like the Israelites when they were looking at Goliath. They didn't catch on to what was going on.

But I'll tell you what, we are part of a race that has been totally taken over by Satan! Through the power of sin and darkness, men, apart from the intervention of God, we would absolutely live and die as slaves in darkness! *Don't you suppose that there are good people out there and that God would recognize their goodness?* Folks, we have no goodness.

You look at the prophecy of Isaiah that talks about the condition of the world into which Jesus came. He said, "...darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." (KJV). But then he says, upon you there's a light coming. There was a light that entered into Israel in that time, and God meant for that light to begin to expose and defeat this darkness, and it wasn't just sent for the benefit of Israel, it was meant to go to the ends of the earth, as it did, ultimately.

There's a light that's come into the world. But that's the only answer to darkness! If you did not have God intervening, concerning our situation, every one of us would die in darkness and that would be the end of it. We would have no clue what life was about. So this is God's battle to begin with.

You see, God did invade. God sent His Son to the cross to take our sins upon Him, and that was the beginning. There was a tremendous battle. Oh, wouldn't it have been something to be able to see that battle, what was really going on, not just the physical stuff, not just a man dying on a cross, but to see the forces of darkness and the forces of light? You talk about the battle of the ages, it was fought that day and it was won! We have a Savior who absolutely, utterly defeated the enemy, and the enemy didn't have a clue what was going on. He thought he was winning! And he absolutely engineered, in the purpose of God, his own ultimate defeat!

Praise God! And then three days later that became obvious when Jesus came out of the grave and he couldn't stop it! I'll tell you, the war was won that day!

And you know, you see this pictured in the book of Revelation in symbolic terms of the rider on the white horse riding forth with a sash that says, the "Word of God." And I'll tell you, there has been a war going on ever since.

And it's a war where God is absolutely reaching into the clutches of Satan, the prison houses of sin, and He's calling out a people for His name! Jesus said, "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." You see, men are enclosed inside gates and Satan is holding onto those gates. He's

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got them locked securely. Those are prison gates, folks. But I'll tell you, God has sent His Son with authority to breach those gates, to go in and to rescue prisoners from the prison houses of sin.

This is God's battle. That means the battles that affect you and that affect me every single day, they're not just our battles, they're His battles, because He has set Himself to fight for you and to fight for me. I need Him to fight for me.

It's not just that I need Him to fix my life, and make it pretty, and make it comfortable. I need Him to conquer me. There's stuff in me that doesn't want to let go. And I need Him to conquer me. I need Him to fight that battle. I need Him to just — Lord, just do what it takes to rescue your people.

But I'll tell you, when God brings us up against a Goliath, you think of the effect that it has. If we're looking at it naturally, we will be dismayed. But if we look at it as we ought, God will use that as a reminder of just how helpless and how dependent we are upon Him. And He doesn't do that to make us feel like dirt. He does it to exalt His love, which has reached to us anyway, and has offered us a door of hope. But it causes us to say, "Oh God, I can't."

I mentioned this the other night. I've had this experience more than once, where I literally, on the way up to this pulpit, have said, "God, I can't do this," and had Him say right back to me, "Yes, I know, but I can."

But that applies to everything in every life. That's not just about preaching, that's about living, because the reality is, I don't care what it is in your life, you can't! I mean, if it has to do with serving God, and making progress in the kingdom of God, and walking the path that God has laid before us, running the race — whatever illustration you want to use from the scriptures — we can't do it! We need Him in us, and with us, and upon us.

He's the commander! He's here with Heaven's armies, and He's here on our behalf! We didn't ask Him to do this! He did it because of His character and His love! He shed it upon somebody who is utterly unworthy of any of the least of His mercies, but He's done it! And He's here to fight.

And I'll tell you, He is a commander who will not lose! But oh, we need, every day, to lift up our eyes, and when you're facing Goliath, you need to say, "Thank You Lord for reminding me that this battle is bigger than me, that there's no Goliath that's too big for You. But You're doing it to remind me to turn my heart to you, and just surrender and stand in faith."

And the other thing is this, we like the five-minute battles where we "proof-text" the devil away. But there are battles that last years. It's whatever

God's purpose is in a given situation. There were cities, you know, when they were conquering the land, where they had to lay siege, walled cities. The Lord just didn't make the walls all fall down every time. It wasn't a formula. There were times they literally had to lay siege, and wait, and just hold on, and stand.

Is anybody in a place like that right now? Well, don't be dismayed. Don't think there's something wrong. There's no formula. Every battle is unique. Everything is different. But I'll tell you, the same Commander is here, and He's with us, and it's not your battle alone. It's His battle! It's part of something that God has purposed from all eternity to rescue you and to rescue me from the devil's holds, and the strongholds of the devil in our lives. And I just praise Him today!

As I thought about some of these things this morning, I said, "Lord, I can't preach this. I'm in the middle of something." And He said, "Well, so is everybody else." Let's just at least point them in the right direction. Lift Me up! Because the point isn't that, hey, I've done it, you can do it too. That's not the point. The point is He's done it!

And He's willing to work in every one of us to make us strong, not in our strength, but in His! And you look at a little young man — well, he wasn't a boy. Sometimes David was pictured as a boy, but obviously, I believe, he was a young man. He could have been twenty, I don't know. Whatever it was, he was still he was no natural match for Goliath. But he said, you come against me with spear and sword and whatever, I'm coming against you in the name of the Lord. The battle is the Lord's.

And folks, whatever you're facing right now, it is the Lord's battle. Don't you forget that it's the Lord's battle. Don't you say, if you fall in the mud, "Oh well, He's through with me now." That's part of the Lord's battle is you getting up and saying, "Oh God, I just look to you. I'm trusting in you, God, to give me the strength to fight. Give me the courage. Minister the faith to me to stand."

Lord, if there is a word where I can just dispel this thing, great! That's wonderful. But if not, help me just to stand my ground, and trust in Your name, and look back to the cross, and continually go back to the victory that was won there. That's where our victory comes from.

It will never come from you being smart, from you having a strong will, from your own natural determination. You might as well chuck that in the trash right now and say, "We're in way over our heads." The simplest thing is way over our heads. God wants us to live a life that looks to Him in everything, and looks to Him based upon His Covenant and His Word. And we have a God who will back up His Word and not fail! Praise God!

God's Plan for the Church

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covenant rested. Notice that in Ezekiel 20:37 God promises to bring us "into the bond of the covenant." The covenant we enjoy through what Jesus did at Calvary is an eternal one, far greater than anything known or understood in Old Testament days. What we have is what believers of that day looked forward to.

God desires to bring us into every aspect of that covenant. All that we have been speaking of — His drawing us out of the world and unto Himself together with our brethren, walking together by faith, learning His ways — all these things are necessary if we are to enjoy all that Christ has given us. No matter what the devil does in these last days, there is no safer place than walking with the Lord and His people under that cloud.

One deception the devil loves to use is to cause people to become independent, a law unto themselves, subject to nothing but their own judgment. It is one thing to be alone, yet actively looking to God to find one's place among His people and under the ministry He has provided. It is another to actually believe that the Christian life is just you and Jesus "on the Jericho road." The Spirit of God always brings His people together, causing them to become subject to Christ as He expresses Himself through the various members of the body.

God's people are scattered and in all kinds of circumstances. Many are unable even to find a place where they can be fed spiritually. We hear from them all the time. Yet every one in this position should be actively seeking God to lead them. He has a place for you. He knows how to provide spiritual fellowship and food. Don't be in a hurry. If God answered all your prayers in a day, you might stop seeking Him!

A Word of Warning

Be aware that the devil will do all he can to discourage and sidetrack you if you set out to seek God. Don't let him do either. Keep right on looking to God, asking Him for courage and wisdom according to your need. If he should begin to provide you with someone of like spirit to meet and pray with — or perhaps a small group — just keep on seeking the Lord. Don't be in any hurry to "start something" or to "get organized." He is all the organization we need. Just pray and worship and encourage one another in the Lord.

Often when small groups are meeting informally for worship and prayer, someone with a lot of zeal and perhaps an aspiring spirit will begin to assert himself or herself as a leader, moving according

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God's Plan for the Church

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to their own religious ideas. Part of looking to the Lord is looking to Him that you might be able to discern such things — and to make that discernment known. God can bear witness and help us with these things. Even basically good people need the discernment and wisdom that God makes known through the body to help them to find their proper place. I believe that God's people know it when someone tries to do something God hasn't called them to do. It just doesn't bear witness. And many are so zealous that they don't realize it unless they are told.

The thing we need to prize above all is for the Lord to be at the center of things, leading and in control. He alone knows what we need. We haven't been this way before! What we've learned in religion won't do. We need to learn His ways. He is more than willing to teach us if we are willing to learn. And He has the ministries his people need.

I've tried basically to simply enumerate a number of principles that God has emphasized in our midst over the years, principles that He honors. Certainly high on His list are such things as brotherly love and unity. All of this may sound "spiritual" and vague and impractical but I believe that God is calling His people to just such a relationship — with each other and with Him.

You will, of course, notice that I haven't given you a nice neat chronology of endtime events that lie in our future. I haven't given you a detailed "manual" on how to "set up" the body of Christ. What I have endeavored to give you is something much better than that! It is exactly what Noah had — and also what the saints in Jerusalem had. They made it their one business in life to cultivate a practical relationship with God and He took care of them! What could be better than that? I just don't know any better way than trusting God and believing that He will lead and provide for His own.

Precious Promises!

Earlier I said that all Moses had when he faced the Red Sea was the promise of an unseen God and a stick. What I want to do now is to give just a little sampling of what we have to go on. I pray that He will quicken His Word and cause it to become more than just words in a book, but rather something we can rest our very souls upon. Did not Jesus say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away?"

Heb. 13:5. "...he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." KJV.

Prov. 3:5-6. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in

all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." NIV.

Psalm 23:1. "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." KJV. (And the rest of Psalm 23!)

Isa. 40:11. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." KJV.

Isa. 42:16. "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." NIV.

Isa. 52:12. "But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard." NIV.

Psalm 68:6. "God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land." NIV.

Heb. 10:35-39. "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.' But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved." NIV.

Psalm 91:1-4. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart." NIV.

Isa. 4:5-6. "And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." KJV.

Titus 2:11-14. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." NIV.

1 Thess. 4:16-18. "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with

the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words." NIV.

2 Thess. 1:6-10. "God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you." NIV.

2 Peter 3:9-13. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness." NIV.

Matt. 28:20. "...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." KJV.

2 Tim. 1:12. "...I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." NIV.

Phil. 1:6. "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." NIV.

I believe with all my heart that we are in the last hour of this world's history. God desires that we be aware of this and of the conditions that will exist on planet earth. Within the limits of the plan of God, Satan will be allowed to have his way among men. It may well appear, before it's over, that he has won, but his end is sure! Christ is coming to crush Satan's rebellion once and for all. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

~ Pray For Us! ~

Paths of Dryness

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tage, yet you must recollect we must plough and sow before we can reap.

If you persevere in faith and patience, you will reap an abundant reward for all your labors. Would you be so unreasonable as to expect to find without seeking; or for it to be opened to you, without your taking the pains to knock?

As well might the husbandman expect to see fields waving with grain, without his having been at the trouble to put the seed into the ground.

It is no hard matter to adhere to God while you are in the enjoyment of His comforts and consolations; but if you would prove your fidelity to Him, you must be willing to follow Him through the paths of dryness and desertion.

The truth of a friend is not known while he is receiving favors and benefits from us; but if he remain faithful to us when we treat him with coldness and neglect, it will be a proof of the sincerity of his attachment.

Though Almighty Goodness hath no other love and we seek Him, yet He frequently conceals Himself from us, that we may be roused from sloth, and induced to seek him with more fidelity and more love!

But, with what abundant goodness doth He recompense our faithfulness! And how sweetly are these apparent withdrawals of Himself succeeded by the consolations of His love!

David saith, "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God..." Psalms 40:1-3.

In one case God left Hezekiah, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. II Chron. 32:31.

The Lord led the Israelites forty years in the wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, to know what was in their heart, whether they would keep His commandments, or no. Deut. 8:2-3, 16-18.

Be sure your heart is right with God, and with everybody. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalms 66:18.

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:25-26.

Website: www.midnightcry.org

BOOK CORNER

Delivered From Demons, by C. Parker Thomas

The story of a young girl's deliverance from demon possession and also a collection of a number of other articles relating to Satan's kingdom and activity, specially as it relates to the end of this present age. Suggested Price - \$6.50.

Does God Speak To You? by C. Parker Thomas

This booklet is composed of a wonderful series of articles published in the Midnight Cry Messenger during 1979. In this time of great spiritual darkness and deception what are the various ways in which He speaks and how can we learn to recognize His voice and respond? Suggested Price - \$3.50.

Examine Yourselves, By Phil Enlow

Paul said to "examine yourselves." There must be a way to do that. Can you say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." 2 Tim 1:12. Suggested Price - \$7.50

The Gospel, By Phil Enlow

What is the gospel? Everyone thinks they know--but do they? In this day of watered-down "easy-believism" it is critical to know what real salvation is. What was the gospel that Paul preached? Suggested Price - \$3.00

How Do You Know You Are Right? By Phil Enlow

A spiritual challenge. A study of spiritual knowledge and how it is acquired. This is an area of critical importance in this hour of spiritual darkness and deception. We cannot afford to blindly rest in tradition. Suggested Price - \$4.00

Immortality, By Phil Enlow

What does the Bible teach about immortality, the future of unbelievers, the future of God's people? From the eight-part series in the MCM. Suggested Price - \$5.00.

The Keys of the Kingdom, by C. Parker Thomas

A clear study of the keys as they apply to us in today's world. Suggested Price - \$3.00.

Light in This Present Darkness, by Phil Enlow

From the series in MCM. Message for God's Remnant in the earth regarding the present hour of darkness. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Lying Signs and Wonders, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of articles concerning the end of the age exposing much deception as well as giving forth important truth needed by those who would be prepared for Christ's soon return. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Midnight Cry, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains two articles that set forth the truths concerning the midnight cry: what is it? who hears it? who makes it? what is its significance for us. A must for people who would understand this ministry. Suggested Price - \$1.00

Sex and Marriage in the Light of God's Word, by C. Parker Thomas

From a series of articles covering a whole range of scriptural and practical truth designed to help God's people in this important area. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Sudden Death Overtime, by Phil Enlow

From the series published beginning in 2001. A look at our world and its prospects through biblical "glasses." What can we learn from history? What lies in our future? Why is the world like it is? Things every Christian should know. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Sure Foundation, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of four articles published in the early 1980's on the important subject of the foundation believers have in Christ. Suggested Price - \$4.00.

Tongues: My Testimony, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains the article by the same name as well as an article entitled "Tongues Should be Tested" by Gerald McGraw in which he recounts lessons learned from testing to discover the spirit enabling someone to speak in tongues. Startling! Suggested price - \$3.00

What About Genesis? by Phil Enlow

How should we understand the Genesis accounts of the creation and the flood? Can a simple historical understanding of these accounts be defended in this age of scientific skepticism? Does it matter? Suggested Price - \$4.00.

What Does Deception Look Like? by Phil Enlow

Recognizing spiritual deception at the end of the age. What are its characteristics? Satan is waging all-out war and his chief weapon is the lie. As never before believers need to be grounded in bedrock truth. Suggested Price - \$9.95.

Your Adversary, By C. Parker Thomas

Awhile back, while looking through some of our oldest issues of the MCM, we uncovered this timely gem, published in about 1960! There is a simple directness and clarity in this teaching that will help anyone who desires to walk with the Lord and overcome in this hour. Suggested Price - \$2.50.

Note: The prices listed above are suggested with the thought in mind of simply covering the costs of printing and mailing these materials. It is not our intention to become "book-sellers," selling books for profit. Our desire is to get out truth that can help set God's people free in this critical hour. Please write to us at:

Midnight Cry Messenger

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Through Paths of Dryness and Desertion

Author Unknown

It is very common for us, when we feel the sweetness of the grace of God, to fancy that we love Him. But it is only in the withdrawals of His Presence that our love can be tried and the measure of it known.

There are many, who when they experience meltings of heart, shedding of tears, and other sensible delights, imagine that they are favorites of the Almighty and that they truly possess Him, and so pass all their lives seeking after those pleasurable sensations.

But they should be cautioned lest they deceive themselves; for these self-admirings hinder them from discerning the true light or making one step towards perfection.

No sooner shall we have given ourselves up to serve the Lord than He will begin to purify us and try our faith, in order to draw us nearer to Himself.

And, for this purpose, He will lead us through the paths of dryness and desertion; so that, when we endeavor to fix our minds in silence, in order to feel after our God, we will not experience the comfort and refreshment we expected; but, on the contrary, will be more than usually beset with a multitude of troublesome imaginations.

Insomuch, that we shall begin to think that we labor to no purpose, and that prayer is an attainment to which we need not aspire, seeing that our imagination is so ungovernable, and our minds so void of good. But this state of dryness is very profitable, if it be suffered with patience.

The Lord makes use of the veil of dryness, to the end we may not know what He is working in us, and so may be humble; because, if we felt, and knew, what He was working in our souls, satisfaction and presumption would get in.

We should imagine we were doing some good thing; and this self-complacency would prevent our spiritual advancement.

True Prayer Consists in Enduring and Persevering

And, though in prayer we may feel ourselves to be in a dry and comfortless state, not being able to get rid of our troublesome thoughts, nor experience any light, consolation, or spiritual feeling, yet let us not be afflicted, nor desist from our undertaking; but resign ourselves at that time with vigor, and

patiently persevere as in His presence; for while we persevere in that manner, our souls will be internally improved.

We must be aware that nature is always an enemy to the Holy Spirit, and that when she is deprived of sensible pleasures, she remains weak, melancholy, and full of irksomeness. Gal. 5:16-17.

Remember, that "...they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31.

This kind of prayer may be well typified by that wrestling, which the Scriptures say the patriarch Jacob had all night with God, until the day broke, and He blessed him. Genesis 32:1-28.

Wherefore, the soul is to persevere, and wrestle with the difficulties that it will meet with in prayer, without desisting, until the Sun of internal light begins to appear, and the Lord gives it His blessing.

Required To Be Humbled

If you go to prayer with the spirit and intention of praying, so long as you retract not that intention, although, through misery and frailty, your thoughts may wander, you will, nevertheless, pray in spirit and in truth.

Almighty Power, in due time, will help you to overcome all your difficulties; and when least you think, will give you holy purposes, and more effectual desires of serving Him. Distrust not Him, therefore, but only yourself.

Remember that, as the apostle saith, "He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." II Cor. 1:3. His comforts are sometimes withdrawn, but His mercy endureth forever. He hath deprived you of what was sweet and sensible in His grace, because you required to be humbled.

Perseverance, Faith, Patience

Be of good courage then, and though it may seem to you that you toil without gaining much advan-

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— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

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Monday - Friday

Stat.	Freq.	Location	Time
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KXEG	1280 AM	Phoenix, AZ	9:00 AM
KCNW	1380 AM	Kansas City, KS	12:15 PM 9:30 PM
WKDI	840 AM	Denton, MD	9:15 AM
KXKS	1190 AM	Albuquerque, NM	5:30 PM
KUTR	820 AM/95.3 FM	Salt Lake City, UT	2:15 PM
WDZY	1290 AM	Richmond, VA	2:15 PM
WWVA	1170 AM	Wheeling, WV	9:30 PM

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