

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 24 April 2022. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

“I Will Not Be Afraid”

Hebrews 11:29-31

In **Psalm 18:3** King David declared, *“I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”* Throughout the **Psalms**, and throughout the entire Bible, God promises, again and again, to deliver those who love and trust in Him.

Yet, despite all these sure promises from God, many Christians respond to the promises in one of two wrong ways. Some Christians simply *forget* that God has promised to protect and deliver them: thus, they live their lives as though there is no one to deliver them, except *themselves*. Other Christians do remember God’s promises of protection and deliverance; but they take God’s protection for granted. They forget that God protects us *on the condition* that we serve Him faithfully, and that we, *in faith*, call upon Him for help. When the enemy assails, many Christians are not prepared for the onslaught, because they have not really learned how to walk by faith, or how to cry to the Lord for help.

This morning, we will be examining the faith of not just one or two people, but of *many* people (most of whose names we don’t even know). Particularly, we will see how these saints exercised faith in God when threatened by mortal enemies. In this section of the Hall of Faith, we shall see that believers can, by faith, **escape the enemy; attack the enemy; and save the enemy.**

In **Psalm 3:6**, David confidently said, *“I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.”* From this verse, I have drawn my title for today’s message: *“I Will Not Be Afraid.”*

Read Hebrews 11:29-31.

I. By faith, believers can escape the enemy (v. 29).

In our last message (from **Hebrews 11:28**), we were reminded that Moses, by faith, kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of the blood. Now, in **verse 29**, we are reminded of the next great deliverance that followed Passover night: the parting of the Red Sea. Let’s go back to **Exodus** and fill in the details of that awesome day!

Read Exodus 14:21-28.

Have you ever wondered why God did this miracle? After all, if God had so willed, Pharaoh and his armies could have simply let the children of Israel go, and not have tried to chase after them. Yet, God didn’t do it this way. In fact, the Scriptures specifically tell us that *God* hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he would go after the children of Israel. Because Pharaoh continually hardened his own heart, God *helped* him to harden his heart further, so that he would pursue after Israel. Yet, what *was* God’s purpose in allowing Pharaoh to chase Israel? Why did God arrange for him and his army to be drowned in the Red Sea?

There are several reasons why God allowed this to happen. First, we are told that after Israel crossed the Red Sea, the people *feared* and *believed* the LORD, and his servant Moses. God wanted to establish the authority of Moses before the congregation of Israel. Secondly, God wanted to show His great power to all generations. Thirdly (and most importantly), there is a lesson in the parting of the Red Sea that extends to all believers of all times. **That lesson is that God *can* make a way of escape from the enemy!**

Now, let's look at the symbolism of this. We know that the **Passover** was a picture of **redemption**. The sprinkling of the blood over the doorpost in order to avoid the death of the firstborn, and the roasting and eating of the spotless lamb, pictured deliverance from *God's* wrath, by placing one's faith in the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. What, then, does the parting of the Red Sea, and the drowning of Pharaoh's army, picture? It pictures our deliverance from the world, the flesh, and the devil. **The Passover pictures our deliverance from *God's* wrath; but the crossing of the Red Sea pictures our deliverance from *Satan's* power.**

I have a news flash for every Christian in this room. It *shouldn't* be news to those of us who are saved; yet, too often, we forget this truth. The truth is that **Satan does not give up on you after you are saved!** Armed with innumerable wiles, he *will* attack you, and he *will* try to bring you back into captivity to the world and the flesh! He *knows* how to stir up your own sinful flesh against you. He knows how to entice you. If he can't entice you to give in to the flesh, he also knows how to stir up real, flesh-and-blood enemies against you. He will try to raise up enemies in order to hinder you in your service to God. He will also try to hurt you physically, or bring devastating crises into your life, if God will allow him to do so. He does these things in order to get your eyes off God, so that you will either blame Him for your trials, or live in doubt and fear. Either way, he wants you to be ineffective for God.

Too often, Christians look at the circumstances that they are going through, or at the temptations that bombard them, and they conclude that there is no escape for them. Not only do they virtually surrender to the enemy, but they blame God for their trials and temptations.

That's exactly what the children of Israel did. When faced by their enemy, they blamed God; and from a human perspective, it isn't hard to see why they did so. Think of their situation. Millions of Israelites were walking through a narrow valley, which cuts through a very mountainous part of the southeastern Sinai Peninsula. The valley was a quarter mile width, at most, and was surrounded by high mountain walls on both sides. Then, when they reached the Red Sea (the modern Gulf of Aqaba), they literally were at a dead-end. They were camped on a narrow, sandy beach, with no ability to go forward, backward, or sideways. In short, they were trapped. All the shoreline to the north and south of this little peninsula was one solid, steep mountain cliff, which dropped straight down into the Red Sea. Beyond the beach was seven miles of sea; and behind them, coming down through the narrow valley, was the most well-trained army in the world, with 600 chariots and horsemen. Furthermore, the Egyptians were *not* in a good mood. Their country was in shambles; and they were blind with rage. They were ready to kill. To top it all off, the Israelites were unarmed, and unprepared for war; and they were exhausted from seven days of hurried travel through the desert. What would *you* do in this situation? Well, here's what most of the children of Israel did.

Read Exodus 14:5-12.

In utter despair, the children of Israel fiercely blamed Moses. We are not told that they blamed God; but the reality is that they *were* blaming God. They knew very well that it wasn't really Moses, but *God*, who had led them to this place. They had seen God's visible presence in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night; and they couldn't deny it. Thus, by accusing Moses of leading them into an impossible situation, they were really accusing God. They were accusing God of being either cruel, or incompetent.

Now, before you say, "How could they do such a thing?" think of how many times *you* have indirectly blamed God. You may not have said it out loud; but by your anger and complaining, or by your decision to just go ahead and give in to that sin, you were telling God that He *couldn't* deliver you—or, worse yet, that He *wanted* you to fail! Does it grieve God when you do this? Yes, it grieves Him deeply—just as it grieved Him when the children of Israel murmured against Him by the Red Sea.

God certainly had every right to destroy the children of Israel for their rebellion. Yet, He didn't. Instead, He instructed Moses to tell the people, "***Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day.***" God is still saying these words to His people today. In the midst of your little temper tantrum, Christian, God says, "Don't be afraid. Just calm down. Be still. I have a way of escape for you, if you will just wait on Me."

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

In **2 Peter 2:9**, Peter wrote, "***The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.***" Do you believe this, Christian? Do you wait on the Lord when everything seems to be crashing down around you? Do you cry out to Him for help when temptation comes, and it seems that you can't resist it? Or do you say, "Well, it's just this one time. Besides, if the Lord had put me into better circumstances, I wouldn't be tempted in the first place"? When you say such things in your heart, you are doing exactly what the children of Israel did. You are giving in to the enemy, and then blaming God for it!

Brethren, God promises that there is *always* a way of escape from Satan and his wiles. It's time for us to start placing our faith in this promise! By the way, what happens when you *don't* trust in this promise? What is at stake when you, in your heart, capitulate to the enemy?

First of all, your own walk with the Lord suffers greatly. However, it doesn't stop there. Your lack of faith affects others, as well. When other Christians see *you* failing to trust and serve God, there's a good chance that *their* faith will be weakened, too. When they see you failing to attend church, when you were able to do so, they might begin to think that *they* don't need to attend all the time, either. When they see you lashing out in fleshly anger, or gossiping, or railing against those in authority, they might conclude that it's not such a big deal for *them* to do those things. When they notice that *you've* told a little lie, they might conclude that telling a little lie isn't a big deal. Worse yet, *lost* people will see your powerless testimony, and will conclude that your God must be powerless. They'll say, "I'm just as good as that Christian--maybe better. After all, *he* lies. *He* gets angry. When things are going wrong in his life, he acts as though God isn't even around. Why should *I* become a Christian?"

Now, the good news is that when we trust in the Lord, our testimony can *embolden* Christians to serve the Lord, and can *attract* lost people to Christ. Consider what happened that day by the Red Sea. Were *all* the Hebrews who crossed the Red Sea were true believers? Certainly not. In fact, probably the *majority* were not saved. (In every age, true believers have always been a small minority.) Of those who *were* saved, how many of them were people of *strong* faith? Probably not nearly as many as we would hope. Nevertheless, God used the strong faith of Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Hur, and others, to bolster the faith of the whole multitude.

Read Exodus 14:13-16, 21-28 and 15:1-2, 20-21.

When all was said and done, Moses, Miriam, and other godly believers, led the whole congregation in praise to the LORD. Possibly, many in the multitude who had not truly been saved before this event placed their saving faith in Jehovah, because of the faith that they saw in Moses that day. You may also be sure that many people who were saved, but who were wavering in their faith, were strengthened greatly in their faith that day; and it was all because some of God's people chose to stand fast, and trust God.

Christian, there may be unsaved people around you who will never decide to place their faith in Christ until they have seen your faith triumphing through a great test. If you are saved, and you are going through a trial or temptation, your *salvation from death and hell* doesn't depend on whether you trust God through your temptation; yet, someone *else's* salvation may be at stake. That person is waiting to see if this God in whom you *say* you trust is really all that you *say* He is. Also, there are other *believers* who are weak, who would be strengthened in their faith if they would only see *you* exercising faith the size of a mustard seed!

I have often heard Christians speak of "daring" faith. However, I don't think that "daring" is the right word to describe faith. You can be a "daring" person, and be operating completely in the power of your flesh. In fact, *unsaved* people are very capable of doing "daring" things. Pharaoh and his army were very *daring* to drive into the Red Sea--especially since they had just witnessed the complete destruction of their country by ten awful plagues, and had seen the supernatural wall of darkness that had separated them from the Israelites. (That wasn't a good sign!) To go down into the sea after all that they had seen God do to their country was utter madness! Yet, they were daring. In his self-will, Pharaoh chased after the Israelites with all the might of man; but his end was destruction. In contrast, Moses, and other faithful members of the congregation of Israel, placed their faith in *God*, and found deliverance.

God isn't looking for "daring" men. He's not looking for "tough" men. He's not looking for strong-willed men. He's looking for *faithful* men. He's looking for men who acknowledge that they are weak and helpless, and that they need to rely on God. Hudson Taylor, the missionary who took the Gospel into the interior of China, was a weak and sickly man; and he didn't exactly have a magnetic or charming personality. He was harshly criticised even by many Christians both in China and in Europe; and his mission work was painfully slow-going for the longest time. Yet, in His time, God did great things through him. Taylor himself put it this way: "God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on him." He also said, "All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them." Christian, do *you* believe that "He is able to deliver thee"?

II. By faith, believers can attack the enemy (v. 30).

(Read verse 30 again.) Of all the curious military strategies in history, this one takes first prize, doesn't it? Obviously, human strategy and might had nothing to do with the collapse of the wall of Jericho! This couldn't have even been a psychological tactic. All the mind games in the world can't make walls fall down. This was completely an act of God. Yet, why in the world did the Lord command the children of Israel to walk around Jericho for *seven days*, and then to walk around another seven times on the seventh day?

Personally, I believe that there might be a prophetic picture in this. I believe that this could be a picture of 6,000 years of human history with *man* in charge, which will be followed by, and completed with, the *seventh* millennium, in which *Christ* will reign on earth. Just as the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week) was God's day, so the seventh millennium will be God's "day." The sixth millennia (six being the number of man) will end with man's "best try" at utopia—the kingdom of antichrist: and it will end in unspeakable disaster. However, when God has *His* "day," there will be righteousness, peace, order, and prosperity.

However, regardless of whether or not this is a picture of human history, there *definitely* is symbolic meaning in the numbers. In Scripture, six is always the number of man. Seven is the number of God—and, as such, it is the number of perfection and completion. After the children of Israel had marched around the strongly fortified city for six days, without making any attempt to launch an attack of any kind, human logic would have protested that this was silly and foolish. Human logic would have said that Israel was losing time, and giving the enemy time to come up with a strategy. Human logic would have said that they were showing their weakness, and giving the enemy increased confidence. However, they hadn't reached the seventh day yet. *God* had a plan for day 7 that would *blow everyone away!*

You know, many of our songs and hymns speak of the Jordan River as a picture of death for the Christian, and of Canaan as a picture of Heaven. However, as we saw in **Hebrews 4**, this is not Scripturally accurate. The Israelites' conquest of Canaan is not a picture of Heaven: it is a picture of *spiritual victory* in this life—both for the individual Christian, and for the church. Perhaps the most powerful statement regarding the spiritual victory that God's people should expect is the statement that Jesus made to the disciples at Caesaria Philippi.

Read Matthew 16:18.

Think about the analogy that Jesus is using, here. Jesus says that the "***gates***" of *hell* will not prevail against *the church*. In other words, *hell* is being attacked by *the church*, and not the other way around! *Hell* is not able to withstand the *church's* assault! And what is our weaponry? Is it big church buildings? Is it rocky, groovy "Christian" music, just like the world's music, that draws in the crowds? Is it loads of fun activities to keep everyone hopping? Is it being "seeker sensitive," to cater to the tastes of our culture? Is it holding hands with churches that teach heresy, and laying aside sound doctrine, so that we can find Christian "unity"? No! Our weaponry is the same as it always was: **The Word of God, and prayer!** The plain, simple proclamation of the Gospel still saves souls! However, it cannot happen unless God's people are getting down on their knees together, and praying fervently!

We say we believe this: but how *strongly* do we believe it? This church takes a strong stand on the Word of God; but how are we in the matter of prayer? Jesus spoke about this very weapon immediately after He made His statement about the church.

Read Matthew 16:19 and 18:15-19.

What are the “keys of the kingdom”? Is it the authority of St. Peter to send people either to Heaven or to hell, as the Catholic Church teaches? No! Only Christ has that authority! The “keys” are the spiritual authority to bind or to loose; and according to **Matthew 18:19**, *all* believers in the local church have this “binding and loosing” authority, *collectively*. **The authority to “bind” and “loose” is the authority to “bind” or “loose” spiritual forces through prayer.** Satan *can* be bound, and his power *can* be restricted, through the prayer of God’s people. People can be “loosed” from Satan’s grip (be saved), and the angelic realm can be “loosed” to help and assist us, through the collective prayer of God’s people!

This is why Satan fights so hard to keep us from praying! Why are church prayer meetings today so dry? Why is it like pulling teeth to get Christians to come to prayer meeting? Because we are listening to the enemy, who whispers in our ear, and tells us *not* to pray. “The prayer meetings are too long!” he whispers to us. “I don’t want the service to go over an hour! I’ve got to get home! Someone else can pray! Besides, we’ve been praying for those lost people for years, and they’re still not saved. It’s pointless!” Brethren, when we fail to pray and fast, or when we pray very little, or when we pray mechanically, but without any real faith behind our prayer, *we have no power*.

Christian, when you know that someone is going out on the doors to share the Gospel, or on the street to distribute literature, or to someone’s house to share the Gospel with someone, do you stop what you’re doing, and pray for that brother or sister? Do you even believe that evangelisation works? **First Corinthians 1:21** says that *“it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* Everywhere Christians went in the days of the Apostles, they either preached, or talked with people in the marketplace; and when they weren’t *publicly* reasoning from the Scriptures, they were taking the Gospel to people’s own homes. In **Acts 5:42**, we are told that the early Christians were *“daily in the temple, and in every house,”* teaching and preaching Jesus Christ. In **Acts 20:20-21**, Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that he had taught them *“publicly, and from house to house, testifying...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”* There are some who say that this was not door-knocking, but rather discipling of people who were already saved, in their homes. However, if this be so, then why would Paul have needed to tell people who were already saved about *“repentance and faith toward Christ”*? Clearly, Paul went to every home in Ephesus, and personally confronted lost people with the Gospel!

Why, then, are churches today not following this pattern? Why are churches not doing all in their power to evangelise the lost? Why are churches members not dying to know when they can organise times to knock on doors, or to hand out literature, or to do public preaching? Why are church members not urgent to know what specific hour they should be praying for a brother or sister who is sharing the Gospel with a lost person? Why are churches not packed out for prayer meeting time, so that they can pray together for the lost? “But, Pastor, nothing has happened. No one’s getting saved. So why bother?” Maybe Christ’s churches won’t see more souls saved until they start really *believing* that they have a mandate from the Lord, and

that He has given them all the power they need to accomplish that mandate, through His Holy Spirit. The *pagans* believe in the power of prayer. I know of witches in this country who get up at 3 a.m. every morning, and pray to their evil spirits, and cast spells on people. They believe in the power of *their* spirits. Do *we* believe in the power of God's Holy Spirit?

Jesus said, "***But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me.***" Do we really believe that? Are we attacking the enemy?

III. By faith, believers can save the enemy (v. 31).

(Read verse 31 again.) We've been talking this morning about our enemies; but we need to remember that our real enemy is not flesh and blood. Jesus told us to *pray* for our enemies, that they would repent and be saved. Our real enemies are principalities, powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world (Satan and his angels). Those who are unsaved are (whether they realise it or not) part of Satan's kingdom. They are serving him, and thus are opposing God's Kingdom. Yet, there are some in Satan's kingdom whose hearts have been prepared to hear the truth. They want to be free, and they have responded to what light they already have. They would believe, and be translated into God's kingdom, if someone would take the Gospel to them. Such was the case with Rahab. Let's look at her story.

Read Joshua 2:1-15.

In case you didn't notice, Rahab was *not* a basically moral person, who just needed a little more "polishing up." She was a harlot—a prostitute. Yet, she had heard about the God of Heaven. She had heard about God's people, the Israelites. She already recognised that Israel's God was the one and only true God; and her heart had been convicted by the Holy Spirit. She had responded to what light that she had. And guess what? Of all the places the spies could have hidden in Jericho, it just "happened" to be Rahab's house! This was no coincidence, folks. God sent them there. We don't know everything that the spies said to her before she hid them and sent them away; but whatever it was, it was enough for her to believe on God with true, saving faith. By the time the spies left the city that evening, she was a believer. How do we know this? Because Paul says that it was by *faith* that she "***received the spies in peace.***" (Only saved people can exercise faith in God!) What's more, God used this woman from the wicked Canaanite race to be a great grandmother of the Messiah, Jesus Christ! What higher honour could she possibly receive? God transformed her life!

God sent the two spies to the right place, at the right time, in order to tell Rahab about the true God. She was ready to receive the message; and she got saved. Likewise, God sends His people to the right place, at the right time, to take the Gospel to people whose hearts have been prepared. Does this mean that people will be saved right away? No. It often takes many confrontations with the Gospel before a person is saved. However, when God's people are Spirit-led, God uses them to translate people from Satan's kingdom to His kingdom.

Conclusion: David said, "***I will not be afraid.***" As we've seen this morning, believers have the power, through Christ, to escape the enemy; to attack the enemy; and to save the enemy. Perhaps your heart is stirred, Christian. Perhaps you have not really been exercising faith as you should. Why don't you talk to God about it this morning, and ask Him to give you the faith that you need?

Maybe you are not saved. Perhaps, like Rahab, you are close to salvation, but are not there yet. This morning, you have heard the truth. Salvation cannot be earned by any amount of reformation, good works, or clean living. It is a free gift, and it is freely offered to you. However, this salvation wasn't free for Christ. He purchased it with His own blood. He did for you what you cannot do for yourself. Won't you believe on Him, and ask Him to wash away all your sins? He will save you today!