

12. Water from the Rock

8/27/2006

As I am getting older, I am experiencing frequent memory losses. From not remembering why I went to the kitchen to what I am supposed to say.....

It is one thing to be forgetful for what we are supposed to do, but it is completely different to be forgetful for who the Lord is or what He has done for us.

No sooner did God provide the bread from heaven daily to the people of Israel after He rescued them from the Egyptian soldiers' hot pursuit at the Red Sea, the Israelites are thinking that God is going to let them die of thirst in the wilderness now. Isn't it awful how quickly we forget what God has done before? How quickly we can end up in despair and imagine the worst!

It is my earnest desire and prayer that we remember God's faithfulness, mercy and love for us every time and all the time that whenever we face difficulties, we can rely on Him.

A. THE FORGETFUL TWO MILLION PEOPLE

Exodus 17:1-3 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?" 3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

We have to notice that Israel did exactly what God commanded at this point, yet there was no water to drink. It is possible that we can be completely in the will of God yet we face great difficulties for our growth.

Here again God wanted them to learn to trust Him instead of relying on their own strength. After all, it was His responsibility to take care of them just like God would take care of our daily needs according to His riches in glory.

When we have a problem, it is much easier to blame someone than to think through the problem carefully and spiritually. We often don't come to the Lord for a solution, but we become the problem itself.

B. WATER FROM THE ROCK

Exodus 17:4-7 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" 5 And the Lord said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

About this time Moses was probably ready to throw a towel and let somebody else take over his job.

Can you imagine the amount of water God provided for these two million people? If each person uses two gallons of water for drinking and washing each day conservatively, God had to provide them four million gallons of water per day in the wilderness where there is no river. One gallon of water equals 8.33 lbs. Once a week these two million people would have consumed more than the weight of USS Nimitz Aircraft SuperCarrier which weights 98,300 tons. What a generous God we serve!

Moses still had to lead these two million complainers, even in the difficult situation. A leader who is under attack may find it easy to shrink back from leadership, but God still wants leaders to lead.

The rod that was used to divide the Red Sea gave confidence to Moses, because he saw God use the same rod to do great miracles before. But the confidence he received by picking up the rod actually was a confidence in God, not in himself, nor the rod itself.

What does this rock in v6 represent? We are not left to guess work or our own speculation or our own wisdom. The Holy Spirit of God explains it in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

The bread that Israel ate was manna, which was a picture of Christ, 'the Bread of Life'. Christ is also 'the Living Water', and 'the Rock' is another picture of Him.

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Psalms 61:2 From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Although this is a marvelous picture of Jesus Christ to us, this plan didn't make any sense to Moses. But Moses himself had to operate in obedience to God. God required faith from Moses as the leader. To do such a thing in front of the two million people meant Moses had to have a lot of trust in God. He would look very dumb if he failed, so he had to depend heavily on God.

God faithfully provided them abundance of fresh water out of this Rock. This was a great miracle of God's provision and a rebuke to unbelieving and rebellious Israel. We don't know exactly how God provided water from this rock. The method God used doesn't matter, because He can bring forth water out of nothing if He wants to.

Millions of people around the world are dying because of spiritual thirst. The channel is blocked by man-made religions, log-jammed by intellectual doubts, corroded by personal sin and insulated by indifference. Many people those who profess to know God but who in reality do not know Him stand near the Living Water of Jesus Christ yet dying of thirst. Because they are not taking the first step to drink it from

Him. If you are that person, I will give you a chance to drink the Living Water from God at the end of the service.

C. AN INTERCESSORY PRAYER AND A BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES

Exodus 17:8-10 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

The Christian life is one of battles as well as blessings. Up to this point, Israel had not had to fight. The Lord had fought for them. But now, the Lord chose to fight through them to overcome the enemy. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau the brother of Jacob. The Amalekites represent the flesh in Scripture.

Note that the Amalekites did not appear until after the water was given the Israelites. When the Holy Spirit comes in to dwell in us, then the fleshly desires within us begin to oppose Him.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

The method of attack used by Amalek against the Israelites was down right dirty and inhumane.

Deuteronomy 25:17-18 Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.

Exodus 17:11-13 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

How did Israel overcome the enemy? They had an intercessor on the mountain and a commander in the valley! Moses' role on the mountain illustrates the intercessory work of Christ, and Joshua with his sword illustrates the Spirit of God using the Word of God against the enemy.

It is extremely important for us to pray and intercede for the Kingdom of God, but it is also important to be led by the Spirit of God to do actual work. They go together like hands and gloves.

Moses alone could not win the battle of prayer. He needed others to come by his side and strengthen him in prayer. Prayer is sometimes sweet and easy, other times it is hard work. This is why apostle Paul described the ministry of Epaphras as always laboring fervently for others in prayers in Colossians 4:12.

It is important that God's people obey Him in gaining victory over the flesh by faith to put to death the deeds of the body. Moses alone on the hill could not win the battle, nor could Joshua alone on the battlefield. Victory required both of them. How won-

derful for us to know that we have the interceding Son of God who is for us, and the indwelling Spirit of God who is for us, plus the inspired Word of God in our hearts!

This amazing passage shows us the great importance of prayer. Life and death – the course of history itself – depended upon prayer. We can conclude that many times the people of God are defeated today because they will not pray, or their work is not supported by prayer.

D. THE LORD IS MY BANNER

Exodus 17:14-16 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; 16 for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Though Moses knew his prayer was important, he wasn't foolish enough to think that he won the battle by himself. As an act of worship he built an altar and praised the name of Jehovah Nissi – "The Lord is my Banner".

This doesn't mean that the Israelites completely destroyed the Amalekites once for all. They are going to face each other in later time just like our battle against flesh cannot be over with one battle against them. The battle against our own flesh is constant and it will not be over until we pass from this life to the eternal one in heaven.

E. APPLICATIONS

- 1) We often don't come to the Lord for a solution, but we become the problem itself. Let's come to the Lord with complete dependence.
- 2) Many times the people of God are defeated today because they will not pray, or their work is not supported by prayer. Let's pray without ceasing and work as the Spirit leads.
- 3) The battle against our own flesh is constant and it will not be over until we pass from this life to the eternal one in heaven. Let's not let our spiritual guards down.

The Living Water is within your reach. You don't have to do any special thing to receive God's salvation through Jesus Christ other than a simple surrender. Haven't you tried enough to make your way to have hope and peace in your heart and not successful? Stop fighting, stop resisting. Accept Jesus Christ into your heart today. He will quench the thirst of your soul with His Living Water and fill your heart with His Bread of eternal Life.