

02. The Book of 2Samuel—1:19-27

“How the Mighty Have Fallen”

(6/19/16)

Last week, as we reviewed the end of 1Samuel and started 2Samuel, we saw how Israel was defeated in a major battle with the Philistines.

Many Israeli soldiers were killed—including King Saul and David’s beloved friend Jonathan, Saul’s son.

After David learns of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, being a song writer, he composed a song of lamentation which he called, *“The Song of the Bow”*—let’s read it:

2 Samuel 1:19-27 (NKJV)

¹⁹ "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen! ²⁰ Tell it not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon-- Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. ²¹ "O mountains of Gilboa, *Let there be* no dew nor rain upon you, Nor fields of offerings. For the shield of the mighty is cast away there! The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. ²² From the blood of the slain, From the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan did not turn back, And the sword of Saul did not return empty. ²³ "Saul and Jonathan *were* beloved and pleasant in their lives, And in their death they were not divided; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions. ²⁴ "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury; Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. ²⁵ "How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan *was* slain in your high places. ²⁶ I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me; Your love to me was wonderful, Surpassing the love of women. ²⁷ "How the mighty have fallen, And the weapons of war perished!"

Three times in this song David uses the phrase—*“How the mighty have fallen”*.

Of course David was speaking literally of those Israeli soldiers that died in this battle with the Philistines—referring especially to Saul and Jonathan.

However, this morning, I'd like to make a spiritual application from David's song and apply it to the soldiers of Christ—let's not call it "*the song of the bow*"—rather let's call it "*the Song of the Body (of Christ)*".

As New Testament Christians we are in a war—a war that, although invisible, is still very much real.

We are at war with an extremely powerful, super intelligent, hyper-malevolent spirit being known as the Devil who commands a very powerful army of demonic soldiers.

The Devil and his army are determined to destroy your walk with God, your witness for God and the work God wants to do through you so that God gets no glory from your life.

The Devil isn't playing games—he's deadly serious about wiping us out and doing whatever he needs to do to accomplish his mission.

As we read the N.T. we see in many places (especially in Paul's writings) military themes and language used to communicate the reality that God sees us as soldiers fighting a spiritual battle with the forces of evil.

Ephesians 6:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NKJV)

³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

1 Timothy 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

1 Timothy 6:12a (NKJV)

¹² Fight the good fight of faith...

The word for “fight” in 1Timothy 6:12 is *agonidzomi* from which we get our English word *agonize*. (Explain)

The N.T. says that all of God’s people (because they have God’s mighty Spirit within them) are mighty warriors who are commanded to fight the good fight of faith for the truth of God against the lies of the devil!

Jesus said the devil is the father of all lies (false teachings).

Paul the apostle said that the devil is a master deceiver who can make himself appear good—like an angel of light—to DECEIVE! (teachings and practices that bring peace and make people feel good—like yoga, TM etc.)

Paul went on to say that he even makes those who work for him in Christian churches (pastors, professors and evangelists) to seem like “*ministers of righteousness*”. (2Cor.11:15)

Jesus warned, as did Paul and all the other N.T. writers, that the closer we got to the Lord’s return to the earth—the more the spiritual deception would ramp up and therefore the need for God’s people to “step up” the fight for His truth.

And yet as Israel lost an important battle against the Philistines (unbelievers) in their day (at the end of 1 Samuel)—I fear we are losing our battle against the enemies of God’s truth in our day.

In fact, more and more I find myself lamenting like David—“*How the mighty have fallen*”.

Yes, many pastors and church leaders have fallen due to sexual sin and had to step down from ministry—some of these were mighty men of God at one time with powerful ministries.

But many others are still in the pulpit or are evangelists who have fallen in a different way—they have fallen from their steadfast commitment to the power and authority of God’s Word.

Some have fallen due to political correctness and are now embracing things like homosexuality and gay marriage.

We see this going on in many churches where it doesn’t matter that God says homosexuality is a sin and forbidden—many churches, pastors and denominations have decided it isn’t a sin because they don’t feel in their heart that it’s wrong.

They have made a judgment on this issue based on what they *feel* is right and now have determined that homosexuality and gay marriage are good and moral—even though God in His Word has said just the opposite. (Lev. 18 & 20; Rom.1, 1Cor.6:9-10 etc.)

Please fight the urge to think with your feelings instead of with God’s word as the absolute authority for what is right and wrong.

And don’t fall into the error of many gay activists and their supporters who try to tell us that David and Jonathan had a homosexual relationship—even pointing to our passage this morning to prove it—“**I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me; Your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.**” (v.26)

It is very sad that some people are so sick and demented in their thinking that they can't imagine two men loving each other in a deep brotherly non-sexual way.

The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart.

If David engaged in the same kind of homosexual activity with Jonathan that brought God's judgment down on Sodom and Gomorrah—God would never have called him a man after His own heart.

This idea that David and Jonathan were gay has only recently been put forth by the gay community in an attempt to justify homosexuality by claiming some of the Bible characters were gay.

This comes from perverted minds, destitute of the truth that can't understand the bond of love, camaraderie and mutual admiration two men can have for each other without it being homosexual in nature.

There are many other 'mighty' men and women of God who have fallen from their commitment to the truth of God's Word in the name of love and unity—even if it means we partner with groups that hold to unbiblical beliefs about the nature of salvation—because today unity trumps truth—it's called 'ecumenism'.

I'm not sure that all of you have heard of an upcoming event called "Together 2016?"

"Together 2016" is an event to be held on July 16 at the National Mall in Washington, and seeks to unite those of various backgrounds to "*stand together for Jesus.*" Both Christians and Catholics alike will be featured at the prayer and worship event.

"*Together 2016 is about laying aside what divides us to lift up Jesus who unites us,*" organizer Nick Hall of PULSE told Christian News Network. "*We are coming together in historic unity to pray for a reset for our nation.*"

“Jesus said that His followers are family. We believe that it is time for a family gathering,” he also said in an official statement. *“It’s not about what divides us, but about the one who unites us—Jesus. The world sees division. We can change that.”*

This week, Hall announced that Jorge Bergoglio, also known as Pope Francis, will be delivering a video message to those in attendance.

“We are humbled and honored by his involvement and are eager to share his message with the crowd that gathers at Together 2016,” he told the Christian Post. *“That His Holiness would choose to speak into this historic day is a testament to the urgency and the need for followers of Jesus to unite in prayer for our nation and our world.”*

Hall traveled to Rome on Thursday to meet with the Roman Catholic leader and other Vatican officials ahead of the event.

(The Pope shared that he and a close aid had been discussing how they could work to bring Roman Catholics and other Christian groups and denominations together in unity.)

Hall also noted that he and Bergoglio would be praying together on Friday.

Supporters of the event include The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the Luis Palau Association, CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ), InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Premiere Productions, the National Day of Prayer, YWAM, the American Bible Society and other organizations.

Confirmed speakers include Francis Chan, Ravi Zacharias, Josh McDowell, Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd and National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference President Samuel Rodriguez.

Music will be provided by Michael W. Smith, Hillsong United, Lecrae, Kari Jobe, Jeremy Camp, Lauren Daigle, Casting Crowns, Kirk Franklin, Andy Mineo and Matt Maher, among others.

How the mighty have fallen? —(Comment)

Worship leader, Matt Maher, who identifies as a Roman Catholic...believes it is his calling to work toward to the unification of Christians and Catholics.

“We’ve never seen a unified church before in the history of the church since the Reformation. We don’t even know what it looks like...I think what the work of unity starts with [is]: It starts with us praying together. It starts with us fellowshiping together. It starts with us having a common respect for each other, a love for each other.”

However, not everyone believes that Christians should link arms with Roman Catholics and set aside major differences that go to the heart of the gospel.

“Nick Hall either does not know the exclusivity of the gospel of God or he does not know the Roman Catholic plan of salvation because they are diametrically opposed,” Mike Gendron of Proclaiming the Gospel Ministries told Christian News Network. Gendron is a former Roman Catholic who now teaches evangelicals how to share the gospel with Catholics.

“We’re divided on how one is born again: Rome says water baptism; the Bible says the work of the Spirit. We’re divided on how one is justified: Rome says faith plus works, the Bible says faith [alone]. We’re divided on how one is purified of sin: Rome says purgatory; the Bible says the blood of Jesus. We’re divided on the essentials of the gospel: Rome has other mediators, the Bible says it’s Christ alone,” he explained.

Gendron said that Jesus himself came to divide with truth, and prayed that His Church would be sanctified with that truth.

“It was the Lord Jesus Christ who came to divide: He divides with His word and His gospel. He divides mother against daughter, father against son—and we must remain sanctified and not united with any who are not born again,” he explained. *“More than ever, we must maintain the exclusivity of the gospel of Christ. What hope does an unbelieving world have unless we maintain the purity of the gospel?”*

Gendron also stated that he is concerned about the message that it will send when Christians see evangelical leaders involved with an event that validates Roman Catholicism, and therefore does not view those in the religion as a mission field.

“This is going to put the gospel off limits to many Roman Catholics who are there, so it will also confuse the evangelical Church,” he said.

A few months ago Mike Gendron wrote an article that he hoped would call Christians back to the authority of the Bible (I’ll only read you part of it).

The Disappearing Doctrine of the Evangelical Church—Mike Gendron

“...Many professing Christians now think it doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you label it Christianity. Their only test for becoming a Christian is a simple acceptance of Jesus as a historical figure. In our post-modern church, doctrine is out and tolerance is in. We are told that for the sake of unity, doctrine should not be tested or contested. We are not supposed to draw any definitive lines or declare any absolutes. Doctrinal and moral issues which were once painted black and white, are now seen as gray. The state of the church is now in a state of confusion.

Paul forewarned us that this would happen when he wrote: *"The time will come when they [the people in the church] will not endure [tolerate] sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths"* (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

When "Christians" turn to popular teachers who tickle their ears with messages on self-esteem and self-improvement, they are also turning away from God's word.

Without a steady diet of Scripture, they will not hear sound doctrine and therefore be unable to discern truth from error. Ultimately, they will not know if they are following Jesus Christ or his adversary.

Without discernment, the 21st century church is headed for serious trouble because the enemies of the Gospel are more shrewd and cunning than we are. What the Body of Christ needs now are soldiers of the Lord who are committed to battle for truth! Let us look at some of the cause for the lack of discernment in the evangelical church.

Decline of Biblical Preaching

What has happened to pastors who preach the whole counsel of God? Churches that once taught the Bible verse-by-verse are on the endangered species list. We receive letters from our subscribers all over the world who cannot find them. We have also witnessed this first hand as we listen to sermons on church web sites. It appears pastors today are more concerned with popularity, church growth, methodology, psychology and meeting felt needs than biblical doctrine. Pastors are teaching less and less from the Bible which ultimately calls people to trust in the words of men, instead of the word of God...

The decline of doctrine (and ultimately the ability to discern) occurs in our churches when anyone of three things take place. **First**, when drama and entertainment become more important than preaching the word. **Secondly**, when the pastor's goal becomes *"making people happy instead of holy."* You know this is taking place when he shifts his sermons from *"this is what God says"* to *"this is what I think people want to hear."* **Thirdly**, when the pastor spends more time addressing *"felt needs"* over *"spiritual needs."* Eventually these churches become filled with gullible people who believe their lovable pastor is speaking for God.

Might they consider a quote from A. W. Tozer who said: *"Gullibility is not synonymous with spirituality. Faith keeps its heart open to whatever is of God, and rejects everything that is not of God"...*

In closing (we'll put the full article on our website and Facebook page) we must recognize that all truth sets itself against error. Sound doctrine divides and confronts, it judges and separates, it reproves and rebukes and it exposes and refutes error. It leads us from the broad way to the narrow way (Matt. 7:13-14). It commands us to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7). It exhorts us to discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (I John 4:6). It demands that we turn away from evil and do good (I Peter 3:11). It tells us that our ways are not God's ways, nor are our thoughts His thoughts (Isa. 55:8).

It warns us against exchanging the truth of God for a lie (Rom. 1:25). It guarantees that the righteous shall be blessed and the wicked shall perish.

True Christians cannot continue to tolerate or ignore Satan's wicked schemes to weaken the Church. We must stand firmly on sound doctrine, heed the biblical warnings and live passionately for the truth so that Jesus Christ will be glorified and His church will grow in holiness and strength.

We are losing the culture war because so many Christians no longer think of themselves as soldiers—and because of it they are AWOL.

They aren't fighting the good fight of faith—because Christianity to them isn't about serving the Lord—it's about the Lord serving them.

In other words, they're not soldiers—they're consumers!

And church is not where they go to be trained to fight spiritual warfare—it's a place they come to, to be blessed, to socialize, make business contacts, be entertained through skits and high-powered Christian performers, maybe grab a Starbucks and lunch in the food court...etc.

And while I'm not saying any of that is evil—it's definitely a distraction from what church is supposed to be.

1 Timothy 3:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; ¹⁵ but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The Church of Jesus Christ is—“...**the pillar and ground of the truth**”.

This is an architectural image which would mean much to Timothy living in Ephesus—for the great temple of Diana was there which had 127 pillars.

A pillar, of course, was used to support or hold up a structure—but, in those days, a pillar was often set up ‘free standing’ in a public marketplace and notices were posted on it—in that context it became a ‘proclaimer’.

And so the first thing that we Christians are to do as ‘pillars’ is hold up and proclaim God’s truth to the people of this world (the Great Commission).

But also Paul says that we, as the church of the living God, are not just the pillars but also the ‘ground of the truth’.

The word ground suggests a *bulwark*—the dictionary defines ‘bulwark’ as: “*a solid wall-like structure raised for defense*”.

As Christians we are not only to proclaim the Word of God but we are also to defend it against the attacks of the enemy—“*earnestly defending the faith*” as Jude admonished us.

In Jude 3 “the faith” is a reference to N.T. truth and in particular *the gospel*—that we are to proclaim and defend with every ounce of strength within us as soldiers of Christ.

Warren Wiersbe—

“As a *bulwark*, the church protects the truth and makes sure it does not fall...When local churches turn away from the truth or compromise it in their ministry—then the enemy makes progress. Sometimes church leaders must take a militant stand against sin and apostasy. This does not make them popular, but it does please the Lord”.

Jesus promised that against His Church—“*the gates of hell would not be victorious*” because God’s truth would keep us safe from Satan’s lies.

But if churches are no longer feeding God's people the whole counsel of God—verse by verse from Genesis through Revelation—then they will be vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy.

"How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" (v.27)

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NKJV)

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

Those weapons are simply the Word of God and prayer—and when the church allows those to be taken from us in the name of tolerance and political correctness or liberalism or whatever—we will not win our war with the devil.

Hosea 4:6-10 (NASB)

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. ⁷ The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame. ⁸ They feed on the sin of My people And direct their desire toward their iniquity. ⁹ And it will be, like people, like priest; So I will punish them for their ways And repay them for their deeds. ¹⁰ They will eat, but not have enough; They will play the harlot, but not increase, Because they have stopped giving heed to the LORD.

Of course the solution is to return to the Lord—repent!

Feed on His Word faithfully—and do it!

Start seeing yourself as a soldier and start proclaiming and defending God's truth (social media is a great place to start).

And by God's grace the cry of the church will be *"How the mighty have risen up and are victorious!"*