

August 24, 2008

“The Lord Who Breaks Through” (Based on *The Church God Blesses* by Jim Cymbala)

1 Chron 14:8-17 NLT

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him. But David was told they were coming, so he and his men marched out to meet them. 9 The Philistines had arrived in the valley of Rephaim and raided it. 10 So David asked God, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

The LORD replied, "Yes, go ahead. I will give you the victory."

11 So David and his troops went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. "God has done it!" [NCV - God has broken through] David exclaimed. "He used me to burst through my enemies like a raging flood!" So that place was named Baal-perazim (which means "the Lord who bursts through"). [AMP - Lord of breaking through]. 12 The Philistines had abandoned their idols there, so David gave orders to burn them up.

13 But after a while, the Philistines returned and raided the valley again. 14 And once again David asked God what to do. "Do not attack them straight on," God replied. "Instead, circle around behind them and attack them near the balsam trees. 15 When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the balsam trees, attack! That will be the signal that God is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistines." 16 So David did what God commanded, and he struck down the Philistine army all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

17 So David's fame spread everywhere, and the LORD caused all the nations to fear David.

Here, in 1 Chron 14, we find an obscure story in the life of David. One that can be easily overlooked. David has been hunted down by the jealous King Saul for over 10 years. God has watched over David and protected him, so that David has survived King Saul who is now dead. And as promised David has just become the King of Israel. David's popularity is high. He has the support of the whole nation of Israel, and there is much excitement in Jerusalem. However...

A Lesson On Attacks

(v8), "When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him."

Ever notice that when you are feeling blessed, and things are going well, your doing well (especially, spiritually) that's when an attack comes upon your life? No matter how the Lord has worked in your life, there is a spiritual enemy who mobilizes his force against you. It was that way during the time of David, it was that way during the time of the New Testament, it is like that today, and it will be like that until Jesus comes again. It

would be wise to keep in mind that just when you have had some victories and are on a “spiritual high” is when you are most vulnerable to attack.

But there is more to this event that I want you to see.

A Lesson on Asking

In verse 10a we read, So David *asked God*, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

Let me explain why that is such an interesting verse. Remember what we have been saying. David is at the height of popularity, he has an army that is willing and more than capable of defend him, emotions are running high among the people because God's anointed, David, has finally taken his rightful place on the throne as king, something promised by God since David was a teenager. The Philistines were the enemy that the Israelites had defeated in the past when David, as a teenager, killed the Philistine giant, Goliath. God is blessing. So, when David hears that the Philistines were coming to capture him he should have just went out with his army and fought. But, that's not what he does. Instead he prays and asks God, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" He not only asks God what he should do, but asks if God would go with him to give him power and victory.

Here is another lesson for us. We must not assume anything, but we should pray about everything. We must not assume that God will bless what we choose to do. We constantly need the Lord's direction for every decision we make in life. Our prayer is not, "Here's what I'm doing, Lord, bless it!" Our prayer is, "what are you blessing, Lord, that's what I will do." Do not make any decisions without praying first.

Now look at the rest of verse 10 for...

A Lesson On Answers

(v10b) "The LORD replied..." David prayed and the Lord replied. Can we expect anything less from a loving Heavenly Father? If we pray the Lord will reply. Do you wait upon the Lord for His answers before you set out to do something? Do you know that prayer is not just talking to God, it is also listening? Imagine if you came to me and said, "Pastor, I'm having trouble with my child. I know he / she is involved with drugs. I'm so afraid he / she is going to be arrested, or beat up, or die from an overdose. I don't know what to do. I need some advice. Please help me. Ok, I have to go, bye." We need to wait upon God in prayer. We need to listen in silence, we need to search His Word for direction. We may need to get the advice of others. But, God will reply. Don't do a thing until you have some direction. Sometimes you may not know exactly what to do, but God wants to make sure your motive is love rather than selfishness. If your motive is selfishness, don't do a thing until that is dealt with first. If you come to God with a humble spirit He will not turn you away. He wants to direct your paths. And some how, some way, He will guide your steps in the way you should go.

A Lesson On Breaking Through

(v11) So David and his troops went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. "God has done it!" [NCV - God has broken through] David exclaimed. "He used me to burst through my enemies like a raging flood!" So that place was named ... "the Lord who bursts (breaks) through"

David prayed, the Lord replied, David obeyed the Lord's direction, and David had victory over his enemies. David testifies that, "God has done it!" Yet also admits, God used him. When we pray for God's will, and when we desire above all else the presence of God to be with us God will break through with power, and He will work through us. What an awesome and humbling thing it is to be able to say, "God has done it!" and, "He used me..."

I am desperate for God to break through whatever is blocking us. To burst through our enemies like a raging flood and to use us to accomplish His will. God is ready to make some changes in you, and no obstacle is too difficult for the God who burst through.

Perhaps today you are facing some difficulty. It may be related to your marriage, or a child not serving God, a physical ailment, an emotional problem, a spiritual lukewarmness, dryness or some other spiritual trial. We have a God who breaks through to help us. And it all begins when we stop to humble ourselves in prayer, want what He wants, and desire His presence more than anything else.

One more lesson needs to be learned.

A Lesson On Future Battles

The conflict was not over for David. The victory in one battle doesn't mean their wouldn't be more attacks. David defeated the Philistines...But (v13) after a while, the Philistines returned and raided the valley again. [The enemy didn't give up just because they lost a battle in the past. Our enemy will not give up either, but is relentless, and we will face further opposition.]

(v14) And once again David asked God what to do. [You would think David would just follow his instincts, rush out to do what he did in the past, after all it was successful before. But, no, he prays again for direction in this new situation, before he makes a single move, and look what God tells him...]

"Do not attack them straight on," God replied. "Instead, circle around behind them and attack them near the balsam trees. 15 When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the balsam trees, attack! That will be the signal that God is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistines." 16 So David did what God commanded, and he struck down the Philistine army all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

Here, God gives David specific directions, for David to attack in a different way than he did the first time. We also must learn that just because God has worked in our lives in a certain way in the past, doesn't mean He will always work that way in our lives in the future. We must always seek God for fresh guidance.

The Main Lesson for us today is that we must always stay in close communication with our God, we must wait upon God, and want Him to be with us in all we do.