

The LORD is my Banner

Exodus 17:8-16

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When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they traveled through the desert where they endured hunger and thirst. However, Yahweh continually provided for them. Just in the previous chapter we read about an incident in which they came to a place where there was no water. People grumbled against Moses; God provided water to drink from a rock. These people were on their way to the land the LORD promised to them as their inheritance. This land would be their future; however, an enemy came against them and threatened their lives, their future. This is the first war Israel had to fight after coming out of Egypt.

Ex.17:8-16

The Amalekites came to fight with the Israelites. When a nation threatens another, the leaders move into action to defend and protect the safety of the people. Moses is the leader God appointed to lead these people. Thus, Moses moved into action. **Look at the strategy used to face the Amalekites. (v.9)**

-Joshua (He was the general of the army of Israel) He will choose men and go engage in combat against the Amalekites army.

-Moses would stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in his hand.

The staff of God: this is the staff Moses had when God appeared to him; the staff God told him to use in Egypt to be able to perform signs and wonders. ***The staff was a sign that God was with Moses.*** This is the staff Moses lifted up and the sea was divided; the staff he used to strike the rock, so water would gush forth for the people to drink. ***The staff symbolized God's presence in their midst.*** Moses would stand on a hill lifting God's staff. Whenever he lifted it, God would intervene on their behalf. God was the one leading them on their journey; war broke out and they will not face this or any other challenge without God in their midst.

Joshua did what Moses commanded and Moses went on the hill with his brother Aaron and Hur. (v.10)

-As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites prevailed, and when Moses lowered his hands Israel started experienced defeat.

In a community, you can have the greatest ministry, and you can plan and strategize, but all these things would not matter if God is not in your midst. Joshua was a warrior and the men he chose were men of war, but your strength and your strategy may not be enough; we must always remember that any battle we face is the LORD's. We must face it with God; his way to have victory.

Moses got tired (v,12); when his hands came down Israel was at a disadvantage.

Aaron and Hur moved into action, they too played their part in this battle. (v.12)

They sat Moses on a rock and they held Moses' hands up. They steadied his hands till sunset and Joshua overcame the army with the sword.

Every leader needs people who come alongside them to help him carry the load.

Aaron and Hur understood that if Moses failed, they too would fail. They supported him until victory was theirs.

Can you identify men in your lives like Aaron and Hur who would help you during those times when you don't have strength? *Men upon whom you can lean on?*

We need men like these who understand that if his leader fails, they fail. They understand what it means to be part of a team, or community.

Joshua won the battle because on the hill we have Moses, Aaron and Hur holding Moses hands before God.

When a community is threatened, everyone in it must do their part in the fight. Fighting together, not against each other and most importantly. We should always battle with our hands lifted up to the one who gives us victory or on our knees.

God pronounced judgment on the Amalekites (v.14) God wanted Moses to make sure Joshua heard it. *"I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."*

Moses built an altar to the LORD and called it. Yahweh Nissi (the LORD is my banner) *"For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD (v.15)*

Hebrew word **nissi** comes from nis, meaning "banner." Ancient armies often attached a banner or a flag to a pole as a focal point and a rallying sign for their troops engaged in battle. For Moses and the Israelites, their first battle on the way to the promised land showed that God was their banner. He called his people to rally to him. The Lord went before his people, protecting them and triumphing over their enemies.

Whatever challenges you will face in this life, don't face it without raising your banner. The LORD is my banner. He is the one who brings me the security and hope, even when we may feel too tired to stand. The LORD is our banner and he will give us victory over any challenges we face.