

Battles for Life

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[0 : 0 0] Now in this passage that we read this evening There are two or three things I'd like us to recognise The first one is at the opening verse That we read at verse 17 of chapter 5 When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David King over Israel All the Philistines came up to seek David And David heard of it and went down to the hold Now the context of this is that David has previously Having been crowned king over just Judah in Hebron That is his own personal tribe Abner who had been Saul's general of old After Saul's death at the battle in Gibeah He himself then became if you like the strong man For one of Saul's sons Ish-bosheth Whom he made king over the rest of Israel And there was a kind of civil war going on in Israel All of that time for a period of two or three years Until finally Abner was killed

And then Ish-bosheth was killed And David was the last man standing So then all of Israel As we see at the beginning of chapter 5 All the tribes of Israel came to David Unto Hebron and spake saying Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh And basically they wanted to anoint king David As the king over now the whole of Israel All this time the Philistines had left David in peace But now when he becomes king over the whole of Israel Now they act And just as it is for David when he becomes king over a united Israel Just as it is for the Israelites when they finally are united In a king of their own choosing In a king of power and of the Lord's anointing They don't get any time to enjoy it They don't get any time to enjoy the peace And enjoy the fact they're not at civil war anymore But rather what we find for them Is what we find for us

Evil comes looking for you As soon as you have a new king over your life As soon as you begin to unite your heart Around the kingship of his true anointed David is the anointed king of Judah and Israel But the word that we translate as anointed Is the Hebrew word Messiah And as we are united If we are united in our heart Around our Messiah Our true anointed king Any sign of personal spiritual progress Any recognition of deliverance And evil will come looking for you And the attacks will begin The Philistines left David alone All through the years of civil war And strife with Abner and Ish-bosheth But once the heart of Israel is united In their recognition of the Lord's anointed The Philistines come seeking to attack Twice in this short passage At the end of chapter 5 here We see David having to fight the Philistines Who had once been his friends And for as long as he himself Was at enmity with Saul The previous king of Israel The Philistines were happy to have him They didn't quite trust him enough To go into battle with them against Saul But still they were happy to have him on their side The Lord enables David to win Both of these battles Against the Philistines As we see at the end of chapter 5 In the closing verses Once and then again But throughout his reign They, the Philistines And a host of other enemies Will just keep coming back Whether it's the Ammonites Or the Moabites Or the Syrians Or the Philistines again Or whatever Some of you will be old enough To remember When in the early 90s

The IRA made the first And then the second Of their initially short-lived ceasefires And at the time When their great spokesman Was Jerry Adams And he was often on the news And at the time When some hardline Republicans Were expressing disquiet At the fact that the IRA Hadn't been killing anyone For quite a while And he spoke at a rally And said Well they haven't gone away You know And this was greeted By great cheers By the hardline Republicans But it was taken As a token Of the IRA's bad faith They haven't gone away They just stopped killing For now But such is the nature Of David's enemies And such is the nature Of the enemies Of every child of God They haven't gone away You know And even though For a while We may have a victory Over them And even though The Lord may grant us Victory To keep them At arm's length The nature of our Relationship with Christ In this fallen world

[5 : 0 6] Which is alien territory Which is not our home Our citizenship Is not here The nature of our Relationship with Christ Is that evil Will come looking for you You don't have to go And pick a fight It

will come looking For you As soon As you unite your heart Around this new King Jesus And David will have To keep on fighting Whether they're Philistines Or a host of other enemies Each one Watching over his shoulder Each one Watching the other one As they campaign Against David And he beats one And then he beats another And he beats the next one And each time They're watching As the others attack Waiting for any sign Of weakness Waiting for him To lose even one battle So they can pass Waiting for him To be drained By a lot of bloodshed Or a lot of losses So that they can then attack They're like wolves Circling around him The whole time David will have to Keep on fighting that

All through his reign And each one Biding their time Waiting for any Hint or weakness Now once you remain Dead in trespasses And sins The devil will leave you In them Wouldn't be quite true To say he'll leave you In peace Because it's not any Real peace To be simply dead In trespasses And sins But as we were reminded This morning Romans chapter 6 Verse 20 When you were the Servants of sin You were free From righteousness Yes you didn't have to Worry about the attacks Of the devil You didn't have to worry About having to do right And obey the Lord You were dead And so you were a measure Free from these things But you know But the end of these things Is death What good does it do To have that kind of Freedom From the cares of life But when the corpse Begins to stir When it shows Signs of coming to life When the soul Takes Jesus For its king And the heart Is united around him

You won't need To go hunting For a conflict Evil will come Looking for you But the good news is You can win Over evil You can win If you take it To the Lord And ask for his help And wait upon his word This is what David does When the Philistines Come against him David inquired of the Lord Shall I go up To the Philistines And one time The Lord says Yes go up And the next time The Lord says No don't go up Because I want you To do it differently This time Go around behind him Wait in the mulberry trees I'll send a Going in the top Of the mulberry trees There'll be wind In the trees And you'll hear And you'll know That's my spirit Breathing through And I'll give you The victory that way One time the Lord Says go now Another time he says No don't go yet David waits Upon the Lord But each time The Lord gives him victory You can win If you take The Lord

As your guide As your helper If you take Your problems Your battles Your difficulties To the Lord If you ask For his help And wait Upon his word The enemy Will not go away But you will be Inable to keep On beating him If you keep On trusting In the Lord And asking for his help And waiting Upon his word Then we might say Well everybody Loves to have a victory Everybody loves to think Yeah we've won the victory Over our enemies We're victorious And it's great To be in triumph But if you think about it Victories mean battles And battles mean fear And danger And wounding And suffering Because the devil Hates what you have done In taking Christ The son of David For your king And evil Will come Looking for you And there will be battles Whether you want them Or not But as Paul wrote To the Corinthians 1 Corinthians 15

Verse 57 A thanks be to God Which giveth us The victory Through our Lord Jesus Christ You can't avoid The battles If you take Christ As your king You can't make The devil Leave you alone But you can Ensure victory Over him If you take it To the Lord And you trust In him And in his strength And in his protection And in his power Evil will come Looking for you There is going to be No such thing As an easy Free Cheap relationship With Christ And we have to be Prepared for that fact When we take Christ As our king The devil Will attack Because of it Evil Will come Looking for you But the Lord Gives the victory Through our Lord Jesus Christ If we take it To him The second thing We see In this passage As we move on Into chapter 6 Is David's Statement of Priorities After his [10:12] Initial victories He desires To move the Ark of the Covenant Into Jerusalem Because he Wants to make A symbolic Statement That the Lord God Jehovah Is at the Centre now Of Israel's Life And at the Heart Of David's Kingship That's all Great But of course David's enthusiasm Gets ahead of him As we see in this Passage He goes about it The wrong way He thinks any Old mode of Transport will do Stick it in a Car And as long as You drive it With the Oxen or Whatever Then it Doesn't matter If it Shuggles a Bit And we Might think And I Imagine Everybody Reading this Passage Just as David At the Time He thinks Oh come On It's a Bit rough As he Puts out His hand To steady The ark And the Lord Spikes him For it There Because he Shouldn't Be Handling The ark Of God Well What about The Guys Cutting It Out Put it On The Cart In The First Place What about Abinadab Whose house It was In We must

Presume That Abinadab Himself Treated the Ark With all Due Reverence And respect For the God Whose Symbolic Presence It was But Because it Was Shugly He put Out His Hand To Study It

What Else Should He Have Done Supposing He Just Let It Fall Would That Be Respecting The Lord Or Maybe They Should Have Tied It Down More Securely No That's Not What They Should Have Done The Problem Was That Utsa Was Bad The Problem Was That What David Was Doing Was According To His Own Heart Thinking God Should Be Pleased With Whatever I Do Rather Than According To God's Own Word One Of The Things That The Bible Enables Us To Do Is It Enables Us To Take Sometimes Differing Accounts Of The Counts In The New Testament God Like Why Some Passages In Kings And Some Parts Of Isaiah Are Literally Identical And Here We Have This Incident Recounted In

Chapter 15 Of First Chronicles Where We Read That After David Made Him Houses In The City Of David He Prepared A Place For The Ark Of God And Pitched For It A Tent And David Said None Ought To Carry The Ark Of God But The Levites For Them Hath The Lord Chosen To Carry The Ark Of God And To Minister Unto Him Forever And There He Was Right You See That Was The Problem The Lord Had Already Said When He Got The Ark Of The Covenant To Be Made Under Moses And The Israelites Then He Said Who Should Carry It The Levites Should Carry And The Sons Should Be Priests Around It When The Tabernacle Was Set Up Everybody Was Given Their Specific Pats You Carried It On Poles On The Shoulders Of The Levites And Then When You Set It Down In Its Place The Poles Stuck Out At The Sides And They Could Be Seed Sticking Out At The Sides And Because David We'll Just Pick It On The Car We'll Carry It Any Old How God Should Be Please That We Want To Do This God

Is Not Going To Accept The Crumbs And Leftovers Of Our Devotion If We Are Going To Worship Him And Honor Him We Do It His Way And Not What We May Consider To Be Our Way It's Not Just Any Old Thing We'll Do For The Lord And In First Chronicles Here Chapter 15 We See David Said None Ought To Carry The Ark Of God But The Levites For Them The Lord Chosen To Carry The Ark Of God And To Minister On For Verse 13 Of That Same Chapter He Said For Because He Did It Not At The First The Lord Our God Made A Breach Upon Us For That We Sought Him Not After The Order So The Priests And The Levites Sanctify Bear The Ark Of God Upon Their Shoulders With The Staves Thereon As Moses Commanded According To The Word Of The Lord And Then At Verse 25 So David And The Elders

Of Israel And The Captains Over Thousands Went To Bring Up The Ark Of The Covenant Of The Lord Out Of The Of The Of The And It Came To Pass When God Helped The Levites That Bear The Is Not Some Kind Of Party Parade For All Tootling On Flutes And Playing Harps And Symbols And Having A Great Old Party Time As It Comes Out Chugging Along On Its Cart Now We Have It Carried With All Due Reverence By The Right And Appropriate People The Levites And We Have David And His Officers Making Sacrifice As They Do So Recognizing That The Very Fact This Mode Of Sacrifice This Mode Of Worship Because It Is According To His Word It Is According To Faith It Is According To Obedience To What The Lord

[15 : 13] Has Given In His Written Word Through Moses In That Instance Now We See Instances Of This Throughout Scripture If We See With The Prophet Amos And Malachi And So On When The Israelites And The Children Of Judah Thought God Should Just Be Bland With Any Old Stuff We Do For Him If We're Meant To Bring The Best Of Our Flock We've Got A Lamb And It's Blind And It's Lame So It's Not Much Use In Our Flock So We'll Put That On The Altar It's Going To Be Burned Up Anyway So It Doesn't Really Matter God Should Be Pleased That We're Going Through This Worship Most People Aren't Even Bothering So God Should Be Pleased With What Little We Give Him God Will Have What Is Right According To His Word Even From The Beginning With Cain And Abel God Had Respect To Abel Sacrifice But Not To Cain You That's A bit Rough Isn't It If He Just Accepted Cain He Wouldn't Have Got Provoked To Kill His Brother No We Read Because

He Offered It With Faith He Offered In Obedience And Rebellion To The Lord Not Just Going Through The Outward Motions And This Is Where David Failed In The First Instance And There Was A Cost And There Was A Consequence And There Is A Cost And A Consequence If We Under The Pretext Of Worshipping The Lord Seek To Do It Simply According To The Desires And Devices Of Our Own Hearts Rather Than According To His Word Which He Himself Has Revealed We Looked This Morning Remember At Liberty Of Conscience In The Headings Of The Confession Of Faith And The Liberty Of Conscience That We Have Is With Regard To Things Where God Has Not Been Specific About Particular Details Of His Worship God Has Not Laid Down Set Times When We Must For Example Administer The Lord's Supper That's Why It's It's Fine We Are Doing It This Week We Are Doing A Few Weeks Later We Are Free To

Do That At Any Particular Time Of The Year Because God Has Not Specified A Time We Required To Do It We Can Meet At 12 Noons Somebody Else Meets At 11 O'clock We Get Six And Somebody Else At We Gather For Worship Or The Lord's Supper Whatever What He Has Specified Are Some Of The Details And The Content Of What That Worship Should Involve And David Here Is At Not Because He's Left It So Long Before He Brings The Ark Of The Covenant Up Into Jerusalem But Because When He Seeks To Do It He Neglects Or He Ignores What God Himself Has Specified In His Word Now For The Reformers At The Time Of The Reformation In Scotland This Was What Was Understood As The Regulated Principle It Is What The Lord Has Regulated The Rule He Has Given In His Word

Is How He Is To Be Worshipped And If We Depart From That Then We Run The Danger Of Error But David Now Desires Then To Bring The Ark Up In The Right Way And God Accepts It And Blesses It As We See Later On In Chapter 6 You See In Samuel We Don't Have The Specifications About The Levites Carrying Out And All The Difference That Was Made But We've Got It In Chronicles And When One Bit Of God's Word Doesn't Speak So Clearly Or So Fully We Go To Another Bit That Does So Just As Iron Sharp And Iron So One Passage Sheds Light On Another Passage This Is How We Are To Use The Word Of God So We Have Here In This Chapter Six The Statement Of David's Intent This Statement Of Priorities That After His Initial Victories He Wants To Move The Ark Of The Covenant Into Jerusalem Because He Wants To Make This Symbolic Statement That The Lord Is At The Center Of Israel's

Life Now And At The Heart As We Said Of David's Kingship Now Of Course We Cannot Ourselves Change Or Alter What God In His Sovereignty May Decide To Do About Anything At Any Time We Can't Dictate To God We Can't Force His Hand To Do Anything In Particular But We Can Make Our Own Statement Of Priorities In Our Own Lives God Is Not More Present In Israel Just Because The Ark Now Rests In David's Purpose Built Tabernacle But He Will Be More Present To A King Or To A Commoner Who Seeks To Have The Lord At His Heart And In Respect Of Which These Outward Symbols These Visible Statements Of Priority Are Expressions Of An Inward Reality

[20 : 18] And An Invisible Relationship Of The Heart And Soul With The Lord You See None Of Us Can See What Any Of Our Fellow Worshipers Are Like At Home Or The Time We Spend With The Lord Or Time In Prayer Or Bible Reading Or Whatever We Can't See What Our Fellow Worshipers Do At Home But What We Can Sense Sometimes Is That Somebody May Be Particularly More Filled With The Spirit Or More Filled With God's Grace Or Patience Or Kindness Or Whatever The More They Reflect The Values And The Characteristics Of Jesus Which Few Of Us Will Ever Think That We Do Ourselves But The More That We See It In Others We Can Say That Is A Person Who Must Spend Time With The Lord They Must Be Drinking In God's Presence His Spirit They Must Be Studying His Word They Must

Be Reading It Day By Day They Must Be Feeding Their Souls And That Relationship Because Nobody By Nature Becomes Christ Like It Is The Opposite Of Our Nature Because We By Nature Are Fallen Creatures We Sinners Christ By His Very Nature Is Sinless And If We Are To Become More And More Like Him If Sin Is To Be More And More Put To Death It Will Only Be Because Our Relationship With Him Grows And Is Fed And Is Nurtured That Is An Invisible Relationship To The Rest Of The World The Outward Expressions Of It In Church And Public Worship People See That But You Can Through All These Outward Motions David Can Bring The Ark Into Jerusalem And He Can Go Through All The Outward Motions That He Likes But If His Relationship With The Lord Is Not As It Should Be As We Saw With The Case Of The When David Does Things The Wrong Way When His Relationship With The Lord Is Not As It Should Be There Are Consequences However Good The Outward Intentions The Lord Is Not More Present In Judah Or Israel Simply Because The Ark Is Now There In Jerusalem As We Said A Minute Ago He Will Be More Present Whether To An Ordinary Person Or To A King Or A Priest Or Whatever Who Seeks To Have The Lord At His Or Her Heart And In Respect Of Which These Outward Things These Outward Symbols These Visible Statements Of Priority Are Expressions Of An Inward Reality And An Invisible Relationship Of The Heart Of The Soul With The Lord The Living God Now Just As God Is Not More Present In Israel Just Because The Ark Is There So Likewise God Is Not More Present In Church Just Because You And I May Be There But He Will Be More Present He Will Draw The Closer To Those Who Desire To Have Him And To Seek Him With All Their Hearts Of Which Heartfelt Desire Such Outward Attendance Outward To Outward Statements Of Love And Of Loyalty And Worship In Public And At Home And Our Private Worship And Devotions Are An Expression They

They They A Symptom Of Something Deeper Some Greater Reality A Token Of The Reality Of Our Own Priorities Of Course It Is Possible To Have These Outward Expressions Without The Inward Reality And So Often Of Course Those Who Don't Want To Have To Challenge Their Own Indifference Or Their Unbelief Will Go To One Extreme Or The Other And Say Oh You Don't Have To Go To Church To Be A True Christian Or On The Other Hand Look At Those Who Do Go To To The

The They're Just Hypocrites And That Makes Them Feel Better About Them Because They Don't Go Anywhere Near Either Because They Don't Have Any Relationship With The Lord But If We Do Have That Inner Relationship With The Lord We Will Want To Make That Outward Statement Just As David Is Making This Statement Of His Priorities He Is Bringing The Ark The Symbolic Presence Of The God Of Israel Right Into The Heart Of His Capital He Is Saying To The World This Is What Is Most Important To Me King David I May Be King Over A Nation But I Am Nothing If I Am Not A Servant Of The Lord God Jehovah So Once God Is Not More Present In Church Just Because We May Be There Yet This Outward Expression Of Our Love Of Our Loyalty Of Our Worship Ought To Reflect An Inward Reality And The Lord Is

[25 : 19] More Present Where He Is Sought Where He Is Loved Where He Is Looked For Where He Is Worshipped Not Only Outwardly In The Body But In Spirit And In Truth The The The The The The The More You Have That Reality Within Of Which These Outward Tokens Are An Expression Of Our Own Priorities The The We Love New Times you'll be more afraid of me because I'll be so filled with the Spirit.

Nobody was ever more anointed with the Spirit than Jesus. And the devil went for him time and again and again. Forty days and forty nights in the wilderness. And it is after his victory over the devil and the temptation in the wilderness that we read that Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. He had had his victory there for the moment. But if there is a victory there must have been a battle. And we love the victories but we don't quite relish the battles quite so much.

The more you seek the Lord as your King the greater and more frequent will be the attacks of the evil one. He attacked Jesus right to the end.

Don't you think it was through the devil speaking through the mouths of his accusers that said to Jesus as he hung there on the cross come on if you're the King of Israel come down from the cross then we'll believe you. Oh yeah we'll believe you then.

[27 : 13] And don't you think there must have been an element in Jesus as he hung there in all reverence I would say this and was tempted to think that would just really shine.

I could just force the nails out of my hands and feet. I could just come down from the cross and pounce. Say look I am the Messiah. I did come down from the cross. You bow before me now. And now it just felt so good. But it would have completely defeated the purpose for which he was born to die upon the cross.

The forgiveness of the sins of lost sinners who now would have no sacrifice because it couldn't be done twice. If he comes down from the cross it is all for nothing.

But because he doesn't he endures all the way through to death and beyond. The victory is his because the battle has endured right to the end.

[28 : 14] But the temptation would be there. The attack of the evil one would be there even while he hangs on the cross. The temptation is there in Gethsemane.

The temptation is there before the sun heaven. The temptation must have been there before Pilate when Jesus says you would have no power over me except it would be given you from above. He could so easily have wiped the floor with them all.

He could so easily have called down twelve legions of angels. He could have come down from the cross himself. He could have done it all differently. And the temptation would have been there right through to the end.

So it is not the case that if we grow enough in the spirit and if we grow enough in the grace and knowledge of Christ that the devil will somehow back off terrified.

No. He will see you more clearly. He will hate you more viciously. He will attack you more consistently. There is never an escape from that kind of battle here in this world.

[29 : 16] That will be hereafter. But for now the battle is ongoing. It just means that as you go on with the Lord as you increase in strength and experience and the knowledge of your enemy and his tactics and of your own potential weaknesses but of the source of all strength you become stronger.

And you win more victories and you lose less often. But the attacks will keep coming. David endured endless years of attacks from without and plots and rebellions from within. And we don't think of that instantly. We think oh yeah the later kings of Israel and Judah what a shadow of dross they were but you know the golden age that was King David. You read through some of the Psalms.

You read through the anguish there in David as he tells of how people are backbiting and plotting against him and trying to remove him from power and trying to stab him in the back and trying to delight in his downfall if only they could gnash upon him with their teeth.

And all these things oh they are oh David pours these things out to the Lord his distress his anxieties his fears his constant attackers but through them all the Lord gave him victory.

[30 : 35] The attacks kept coming so the victories kept stacking up. Now as we have already mentioned victories mean battles and battles mean hardship and no doubt most of us would prefer simply not to have such attacks.

The dead feel no such pressure only the living but appeasement of sin and wickedness is always a false economy.

It is supposed to have been Winston Churchill who said that the appeaser is one who keeps on feeding a crocodile hoping that it will eat him last.

Appeasement may perhaps succeed in delaying an unpleasant outcome. If he eats everybody else first then yes okay you have delayed the unpleasantness of him attempting to eat you last.

But it will never save you from the unpleasant outcome of reality. The fact of the matter is if there's a crocodile who's eating everyone the crocodile needs to be dealt with.

[31 : 44] You don't appease it you don't just put off the evil day you have the devil who desires to destroy you. That's who must be dealt with. Not all how can I find ways to dodge it and duck and die and hope he deals with other people first.

The devil's appetite for evil and destruction is incisional. You will never appease him with anything less than your own eternal death.

The loss of your own immortal soul. And all that he will do then is take you off the list and move on to the next victim. He is not satiated with your blood or with your soul.

He just knocks you off the list and moves to the next one. His appetite for destruction is insatiable. Christ by contrast desires not to take from you but to give.

To give life in all its fullness. He desires to set free and not to enslave. We look at what the Lord himself says when he comes not to the temple of Jerusalem but rather to his own hometown.

[33 : 02] sometimes we think that oh if I could have some great encounter with the Lord it must be in some special spiritual environment or some unique location or whatever.

When Jesus speaks the words of about the read he's in his own hometown. He's in his own home synagogue and he speaks them to his own neighbors and people he's known all his life round about him.

That is where the Lord desires to deal with us. He may deal with you on the far side of the world.

One of my brothers-in-law was converted when he was serving in his country's forces on the opposite side of the world from where they grew up.

He was converted there and he came back a Christian. Fine, great. But often the Lord will deal with us exactly where we are in our own backyard. We read in Luke chapter 4 verse 16 verse 16 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel good news to the poor.

He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

[34 : 39] And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

If you are encouraged, if you are to be his, there will come a day when that scripture is fulfilled in your ears. And likely as not, it will be in your own home environment, in your own community, perhaps in your own church, in your own meeting place for prayer, where the word of God suddenly strikes home, the spirit of the Lord speaking through his word.

Christ desires to give and not to take. He desires to set free and not to enslave. Yet certainly, Jesus said, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance, freedom to the captives, recovering of sight

to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

This is what the Lord desires. And if you desire the Lord, and if you take Christ for your king, evil will come looking for you.

Let it come. Make your statement of priorities. Let your heart know where you stand. Let your heart know.

[36 : 08] Let the world see. Let the devil tremble. When this Israel has their anointed king, and the ark of God is set in the midst, and the Lord is here, and the victory is secure through Christ Jesus, our Lord, make your priorities.

No. Make your outward statement of inward reality, and let the devil come. For Christ is here already, way ahead of him, seeking to set up those who were cast down, preparing them for the battle.

Let the devil come. For Christ is way ahead of him, here already, waiting. Let us pray.