

Silence Isn't Always Golden Exodus 17: 8-16

I. War is inevitable on the Israelites' journey.

- A. Part of their calling was to wage "holy war."
 - 1. (Genesis 15:13,16, 18-21)
- B. "Holy war" is only an Old Testament concept.
 - (a) Their spiritual battle was against flesh and blood.
 - (b) God was using them as an instrument of judgment.
- 2. Spiritual warfare is inevitable for us also.
 - (a) But our adversaries are not people (Eph.6:10-12).
 - (b) People we disagree with politically are not Amalekites.
 - (c) The non-believers around us are not Amalekites.
 - (d) They are made in God's image, but still held captive.
- 3. Our enemies are demonic.
 - (a) Their primary weapons are lies and deceptions.
- 4. They oppose anything or anyone who honors God.
 - (a) They oppose the advancement of God's rule and reign.
 - (b) They seek to bring disunity to God's people.
 - (c) They want us to be at war with each other.
- C. Moses is the most important human warrior that day.
 - 1. The weapons he wields are the most powerful in the battle.
 - (a) He has the authority of God Almighty (the staff).
 - 2. His hands are raised in the typical Hebrew posture for prayer.
 - (a) When his hands are raised, the Israelites prevail.
 - (b) But when his arms tire and his hands fall the enemy wins.
 - 3. Moses is engaging in the ministry of intercession.
- D. Who does Moses represent in our context?
 - 1. Although he is an individual, I think he represents all of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ, the Church.
 - 2. In a sermon entitled, "A Ministry for Every Person," Tim Keller spoke of how ministry has been flattened out in NT.
 - (a) In OT, the prophets, priests and kings did the ministry.
 - (b) The people were, for the most part, spectators.
 - (c) Now, we are a "priesthood of believers."
 - (d) God has distributed gifts related to speaking, worship, and leadership, throughout the body of Christ.
 - 3. Ministry of intercessory prayer has been given to all of us.
 - (a) You don't see too many prayer meetings in the OT.
 - (b) But that immediately changes in Acts (Acts 2:42).
 - (c) How do they respond to trouble? (Acts 4:23-24,29-31)
 - (d) "they raised their voices together in prayer."
 - 4. What had changed?
 - (a) Maybe it was the way Jesus had modeled prayer to them.
 - (b) Maybe it's related to all being indwelt and filled by the Spirit!

- (c) But corporate prayer became a common practice.
- 5. Notice what they were praying about in Acts 4.
 - (a) They are being persecuted but they don't pray for deliverance or personal safety.
 - (b) They pray for the Gospel to go forth with power.
 - (c) Their prayers are Kingdom-minded, Gospel motivated.

II. The Church's intercessory role is founded upon Jesus' intercessory role.

- A. Moses is given a stone to sit on.
 - 1. The word translated "stone" is a word related to building material.
 - 2. It is the same word used for cornerstone.
 - (a) Jesus is the cornerstone of his Church.
- B. What is intercession?
 - 1. Intercession is a conversation, a petition; also a meeting.
 - 2. Speaking about the cross, Isaiah 53 says that Jesus "made intercession for the transgressors."
 - (a) The cross is Jesus' primary intercessory role.
 - (b) The intercession of the Church is founded upon that.
 - (c) Our intercession is founded upon the Gospel!
 - (d) It is Gospel driven and Gospel motivated.
- C. We lift our hands up to God over the battle so that the cause of the Gospel will advance.
 - 1. We need one another to fulfill this crucial calling.
 - (a) Like Aaron and Hur supported Moses, we encourage each other!
 - (b) We are stronger when we are together.

III. When Moses' hands fell down, the enemy prevailed.

- A. What does that represent? A prayerless Church.
 - 1. A church that is weak in prayer is a church that is weak.
 - 2. Could this be related to the secular mess of our culture?
- B. Corporate prayer used to be a weekly event.
 - 1. Little League and other activity have taken over Wednesdays.
 - 2. The culture of busyness has pushed prayer out of the church.
 - 3. What have we replaced it with?
 - (a) Prayer chain requests are all about personal needs.
 - (b) Those are important, but where is prayer for the mission?
 - (c) Where is the prayer for the making of disciples?
 - (d) Where is prayer for the spiritual health of the congregation?
 - (e) Where is the prayer for our nation?
- C. Perhaps the thing the Church needs to repent of most is prayerlessness!
 - 1. You have to put gas in the engine if you want to get where you want to go!