

# **Prevailing Through Prayer**

## **Exodus 17:8-15 - Pastor Guy Gray**

### **God's "wilderness school" for spiritual growth**

Between Egypt and Mt. Sinai, the Lord has enrolled His people in a special "wilderness school" for spiritual growth! He intentionally guides them in such a way that they encounter various difficulties along the way. In this way He does two things. First, He exposes their own spiritual character (or lack thereof), so that they can clearly see their own need for spiritual growth. And secondly, He teaches them lessons of trust and dependence on the Lord. In a sense, it is these wilderness challenges and lessons that reveal both who THEY really are, in and of themselves, and who GOD really is in their lives. This is an experience that is shared by all believers in Christ as we learn to walk with Him in our broken world.

### **The conflict that never seems to end**

Having left Egypt behind, they might have expected that all the battles were going to be behind them now. But now they learn the truth that conflict is ever going to be a part of their lives as they move forward into God's purpose for them. The Amalekites are ancient foes that first opposed Abraham in the Book of Genesis (Genesis 21:25) and now they are back at it (also see Deuteronomy 25:17-18). This passage tells us that this conflict is one that is going to continue, seemingly without end (Exodus 17:15). We know that the conflict we experience as believers is absolutely going to end, through the victory of Christ! But we also know that that final victory will not come until Christ returns, and until that time we will be engaged in a spiritual conflict in this world.

### **This time you actually have to fight**

At the Red Sea, the Israelites didn't have to do much of anything—God did it all! That event was symbolic of the work of Christ for our salvation. Through His death and resurrection He accomplished the absolute miracle of our redemption from sin and Satan. Purchased by God through the blood of Christ and the victory of the resurrection, we now belong to Him by faith. But the "skirmishes" continue, and now we learn that God's people are never to be passive in the conflict. The life of faith in Christ is going to take our best efforts! And so we must be pro-active—we have to actually DO something. And as we do, we must learn to surround all that we do in earnest prayer. In this way we become pro-active as believers, but never self reliant.

### **Prevailing through prayer**

The lifted up hands of Moses represent earnest prayer. It is this prayer that brings victory in the conflict. Or perhaps it's better to say—it is prayer that allows their pro-active efforts to find success! Prayer is the key. Here God's people learn that prayer is the vital link between the reality of who they are in and of themselves and who God is FOR them. This is the way forward!

That is why Jesus taught His disciples more about prayer than any other practice of the Christian life. This is why we are told to pray at all times, with all kinds of prayers (Ephesians 6:18). Here we are also taught to help one another in prayer. Aaron and Hur lifted up Moses' hands. Who do you pray for and with? Who prays for or with you? Don't forget to stay at it! This battle called for ongoing prayer—patient prayer—persistent prayer. This is the lesson that God wants His people carefully to learn in this "wilderness school" of spiritual growth. And is key to movement into His purpose and plan.

### **The power of God in your life through prayer**

Read Exodus 17: 8-15. What role do we play as believers in the conflicts of the life of faith? What role does the LORD play? What is the significance of Moses, with "the staff of God" in hand, lifting his hands? What practical applications can you make in your life today?

#### **Who we are, Who God is**

A major theme in the book of Exodus involves the LORD guiding us through events in our lives that expose our spiritual character so that we see our need for spiritual growth. Respond to this. What is the status of your spiritual character right now? What is God doing in your life today to work on this? What are some ways God is revealing Himself through this?

#### **A deeper look at prayer in the Word**

Read the following scriptures; Ephesians 6:18, Luke 18:1-8, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 1 Corinthians 10: 1-5.

How do these passages contribute to what we are learning in Exodus?

## **Upcoming:**

**SUNDAY 01/14**

Financial Peace University  
Sign-ups after all services

Community Group, Women's Bible Study  
Sign-ups after all services

El Salvador Mission Trip  
Info Meeting RWCC, 7pm

**SATURDAY 01/20**

Ministry Prayer Time  
RWLG, 8am

Community Group Leader  
Meeting, RWCC, 9:30am

Children's Ministry Training  
RWGT, 10am

**SUNDAY 01/21**

El Salvador Trip  
Applications are due

**THURSDAY 01/25**

Financial Peace University  
Begins, RWCC, 6:30pm

**FRIDAY 01/26**

Family Fellowship Event  
Movie Night  
RWLG, 6:30pm

High School Youth Group Parent Meeting  
RWCC, 7pm

**FEBRUARY 9-11**

Junior High Retreat  
Canby Grove