

ROMANS CHAPTER 8

MERVIN SUNDBO

When we read the scriptures with a view to what comes first and then what is to follow, we realize where we are and then what to expect. I will refer to them as first the temporary and then the permanent. Here are some examples:

1. First the natural and then the spiritual.
2. First the man of dust (Adam), the living soul, and then the Lord from heaven, the quickening Spirit.
3. First the kingdoms of men and then the kingdom of God.
4. First the curse was due to Adam's sin and then the removal of the curse was because of the obedience and sacrifice of Christ for the restoration of the entire creation.

All of the firsts that I have referred to are absolutely true. There is no refuting the impact and limitations of the natural/carnal nature. There is no question about the man of dust (Adam) having left a legacy of the sinful nature to all of mankind. There is no doubt about the crumbling kingdoms of men in the earth today and down through the centuries. It is obvious that the pervasive curse that covered the earth as a result of the fall of Adam is real and we deal with its consequences on a daily basis.

However, the "firsts" are followed by the "and thens." With that bit of an introduction, I would like to make a few comments on the 8th chapter of Romans.

We sometimes refer to 1 Corinthians 13 as the "love chapter" because it is the best description of love that has ever been written. I was thinking that Roman 8 could be called the "life chapter" because it is all about life. Not the life of the natural, but the life of the spiritual. It is about the transformed life. We know much about natural life, for we have been experiencing it for however many years we have lived – it is the Adamic nature; the living soul (the first Adam).

However, this chapter dwells on the last Adam (Christ), the life-giving or quickening Spirit. Romans 8:1-2 from the Phillips says, *"No condemnation now hangs over the head of those who are in Christ Jesus. For the new spiritual principle of life in Christ Jesus lifts me out of the vicious circle of sin and death."* The Adamic nature was nailed to the cross in the ultimate sacrifice that Christ made for the entire creation and by His resurrection, we can partake of His life-giving Spirit.

I don't know at what stage we are in the metamorphosis from the caterpillar to the butterfly, but there is a transformation

taking place that will eventually result in completeness. Christ's salvation is for the whole man – spirit, soul and body. For just as surely *“as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly”* (1 Corinthians 15:49, KJV). For it is first the natural and then the spiritual. We are in the transition stage, which is a process of time and daily walking faithfully in the gifts and ministries which God Himself has imparted to every member of the body of Christ. The transformation will take place, not by the works of man, but by the power of the Holy Spirit working within yielded vessels.

This life that Paul describes in this chapter is resurrection life, for notice in verse 11, it says, *“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to (quicken) your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you”* (NKJV). The Phillips says, *“Nevertheless once the Spirit of Him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead lives within you He will, by that same Spirit, bring to your whole being new strength and vitality.”* Notice how these scriptures deal with the here and now with the words, *“give life to your mortal bodies”* and *“bring to your whole being new strength and vitality.”* This is resurrection life, available in the realm we now live in and the bodies we now dwell in.

This is the vision that we must never lose sight of regardless of our personal circumstances. In a nutshell, it is Christ working within, bringing about progressive and life-changing transformation – from the earthy to the heavenly;

from what we are in the image of dust to what we will be in the image and likeness of Christ.

The songwriter penned the lines, “Transformed by grace divine, the glory shall be thine; to thy most holy will, O Lord, we now our all resign.” 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”* (NKJV).

As I was thinking about the topic of transformation, a few lines of poetry came to me that I will quote as I close this message.

Butterflies Will Soon Be Free

Cocoons are only for a season,
As they lie dormant for a reason.
New life is stirring in the spring.
Butterflies will soon be on the wing.

We are much like those cocoon creatures,
As new life lies dormant in our natures.
But the life of Christ is stirring within,
And when He's revealed, we'll be without sin.

Come forth Lord Jesus, your life to bestow,
For it's by Your Spirit, we'll live and grow.
The scripture says that we must decrease,
For the nature of Christ to daily increase. †

WHEN SATAN ATTACKS

DAVID HANSEN

The scriptural basis for this article is 2 Chronicles 32 (New Living Translation).

What first drew me to this passage was the latter half of verse 8 where it states, *“We have the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles for us!”* Amen! How wonderful that the

King of kings and Lord of lords is here to fight our battles. This came as quite a relief to me as I had been fighting some difficult spiritual battles of my own for some time. With God on my side, I could let Him do all the fighting, and I could sit back and relax. This was wonderful for a day or two as I took solace in the fact that God is always fighting for me.

I was so moved by the scripture that I later went back to look for it so that I could meditate on the passage. When I read the passage again, I came to another, more sobering revelation. We need to prepare for the battle. God asks us to take action before His intervention. When we take action to seek Him or put our faith in Him, our trust in Him, then He will be there to fight our battles. What types of actions can we take to be ready for the battle? This passage shows several ways to prepare for battle so that God will be with us when the fight arrives at our doorstep.

Assyria Invades Judah

“After Hezekiah had faithfully carried out this work, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified towns, giving orders for his army to break through their walls. When Hezekiah realized that Sennacherib also intended to attack Jerusalem, he consulted with his officials and military advisers, and they decided to stop the flow of the springs outside the city. They organized a huge work crew to stop the flow of the springs, cutting off the brook that ran through the fields. For they said, ‘Why should the kings of Assyria come here and find plenty of water?’

Then Hezekiah worked hard at repairing all the broken sections of the wall, erecting towers, and constructing a second wall outside the first. He also reinforced the supporting terraces in the City of David and manufactured large numbers of weapons and shields. He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate. Then Hezekiah encouraged them by saying: ‘Be strong and courageous! Don’t be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria or his mighty army, for there is a power far greater on our side! He may have a great army, but they are merely men. We have the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles for us!’ Hezekiah’s words greatly encouraged the people” (2 Chronicles 32:1-8).

Acknowledgment

In verse 2, Hezekiah realized that he was under attack from the Assyrian army. We must also realize that we are under attack from the enemy of our souls, Satan. He is attacking our

bodies, minds, and spirits. If we do not acknowledge that there is an attack going on, then we will not take appropriate action to fend off the attack. We must acknowledge that Satan is working every angle to turn us away from seeking the kingdom of God and pursuing sonship. By acknowledging we are under attack, we will be able to take action in an appropriate way. What is Satan attacking you with right now?

Consultation

After realizing he was under attack, Hezekiah *“consulted with his officials and military advisers.”* We too should

consult others on how to fend off the devil. We need not go it alone. Our God is a God of relationships, and we need to reach out to others for support. We should look to our wives or husbands. Look to the elders of our assemblies. God has set the elders in place to be shepherds to the flock. We must put aside our personal opinions of our elders and share our struggles with them.

Look to other Christians, especially those of your own assembly. If they are walking with the Lord, look to your family. You will learn how to fight the fight by consulting others. You will receive wisdom from others. Someone may have a testimony that will encourage you in your fight. Evaluate with whom you are consulting and discussing life’s challenges. Look for positive people who will encourage you and lift you up in prayer. Are you consulting with people that are lifting you up and encouraging you?

Make A Decision

After the consultation, a decision was made. In this instance, Hezekiah made a decision with the advisers to stop the flow of water. You may make a decision with your wife or elder or in consultation with a doctor. Ultimately, YOU will need to make a decision on how to deal with whatever you are going through. Indecision will cause confusion and doubt. Pray about the decision. Seek the Lord for guidance and listen to His voice. If you are struggling to make a decision I encourage you to take a moment to review who you have consulted with. There are some great Sharon Star articles about making decisions that can help.

Starve The Devil

In this scripture passage, they decided to take action by stopping the flow of water. Verse 4 says, *“Why should the kings of Assyria come here and find plenty of water?”* This was a military strategy that was used to defend the kingdom. They wanted to make it hard for their enemy to find the basic needs of life so that the enemy would be weakened by either dehydration or by the effort expended finding the water they needed.

Make it hard for the devil. Don’t seek temptation. Do your best to resist temptation. Don’t put yourself in harm’s or sin’s way. Remove the fuel Satan thrives on. Don’t let Satan win. What can you do to starve the devil of what he thrives on?

Prepare For Battle

In verse 5, we find that Hezekiah began building up the strongholds and stockpiling weapons. If you are fighting a battle with the devil, then make ready for the fight. Devotions, prayer, praise, speaking in tongues, and fasting are as much preparing for battle as they are fighting against the devil. Make your own home a spiritual fortress for the Lord. Joshua 24:15, *“...But as for me and my family, we will*

serve the Lord.” Put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11). What are you doing to prepare for the battle?

Take Your Place

King Hezekiah set the right people in place. He appointed military officers over the people. God has set the travelling ministries, local elders, deacons, and fathers and mothers of the home all in place so that the church can be strong against the devil. Take your place in the home and in the church. Accept the place in which God has placed you. We are a church that is made strong by body ministry. It is of vital importance that you come to the service prepared to do your part. Yes, there will be Sundays when you may not be in the right place mentally or spiritually to participate. We all go through times like this, but this should not be the norm. If you are finding week after week that you are not able to participate in the meetings, seek the Lord with all your heart. Consult with someone as suggested above. Are you accepting the place God has brought you to at this point in your life?

Put Your Faith In The Lord

Now that Hezekiah has done all that he can to prepare for the attack from the Assyrian army, he then puts his faith in the Lord, believing that God will be with him during the battle. Verse 7 says, *“Be strong and courageous! Don’t be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria or his mighty army, for there is a power far greater on our side!”* AMEN! What a wonderful word of encouragement for us as we face our enemy day-to-day.

Hezekiah continues his word of encouragement to the people in Verse 8, *“He (King Sennacherib of Assyria) may have a great army, but they are merely men. We have the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles for us!”* How wonderful it is to know that God is here to fight our battles for us.

Pray

Verse 20 says, *“Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, cried out in prayer to God in heaven.”* The importance of prayer cannot be overstated. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 sums it up very nicely, *“Pray without ceasing.”* Prayer should take place throughout our preparations for, and during our fight with the devil.

God Will Fight The Battle

God will fight the battle for us. In verse 21 we read, *“And the Lord sent an angel who destroyed the Assyrian army with all its commanders and officers.”*

There will be times in your life when you are aware that the very real hand of God is fighting the battle on your behalf. At other times you may not be aware, but know that He is fighting. There is a song that repeats, over and over, in my mind, *“This is how I fight my battles; This is how I fight my battles: This is how I fight my battles.”* The song speaks of how we, as Christians, fight our battles by putting our faith in God, getting on our knees in prayer and reaching out to one another for encouragement and help.

The song continues, *“You may think that I’m surrounded, but I’m surrounded by You.”* Surrounded by the devil, NO, surrounded by GOD! This is how we can fight our battles. Prepare for the inevitable attack from the enemy, surround yourselves with GOD, and let Him do the fighting for you.

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SHARON STAR

The Sharon Star is a monthly publication and mailed as a free-will offering plan. The articles within are intended for inspiration and information to those who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by:
Global Missions Inc. in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The Sharon Star is found online at:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/sharon-star

Publications Mail Agreement 40012206

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