

Our preparation for battle each week.

"But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow." Psalm 60:4

NUGGET – Today in looking at battle preparation we're on a subject that is both familiar and foreign. Oh we know what it is to battle traffic, battle deadlines and battle shopping lines, but few of us know what it means to battle to the death on the field of combat. In this psalm of King David we have God speaking to us through one who is very familiar with combat and battlefield tactics. David would never have considered going into battle without his banner. A banner was used in two ways:

- a. It provides your troops with a location, a way of getting their bearings on the field of battle so they know which direction to strike out from
- b. It provides a sort of protection by means of encouragement. As long as the banner flies, your leader is pressing forward with the battle

In the week ahead you will have battles of different types to face. Some of those battles may loom large. But when they do, stop and think of David's words, ***but for those who fear you, (God) you have raised a banner!***

What has this to do with preparation? Well you need to be prepared to fight the battles that are before you. And like King David you need to have the battle banners ready and prepared before you step out. God has done that preparation for you. He has raised the ultimate Banner, Jesus Christ. Jesus has been raised up on the cross and has provided us all with our bearings on our battlefield. He has also made us aware that we are under His protection in our daily battles.

That's our reason for doing this study, to be prepared for the battles we face through having nuggets of scripture to hold on to so we can be reminded that God's Banner of Truth is flying no matter where we are or what battles we're engaged in. As we face off against the powers of darkness, sin and hell we do not fight on our own or in our own strength. It is the Lord's victory over these powers that gives us the power to face them with assurance. (Psalm 60:11-12) We will not be defeated because Jesus our leader and banner has Himself won the ultimate battle over death and the devil.

APPLICATION – Next week consider these ways to keep the Banner of Truth before your eyes.

1. Like we talked about in worship a few weeks ago, begin each morning, even before rising from bed, by making the sign of the cross and repeating the words, " I've been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". It's under His banner, the cross, that we live each day.
2. Post the scripture readings from Sunday's bulletin on your bathroom mirror or where you usually eat breakfast.
3. Make one phone call to someone to let them know that whatever circumstance they are in, by God's Holy Spirit, Jesus is with them.

PRAY – take time right now on your own and give thanks for God's provision for the Banner of Truth to be flying in your life. By grace through faith you have been given the banner of protection *and* direction in and under the cross of Christ.

GOING DEEPER

In our nugget today we have King David talking of the banner that God raises as a protection against the bow of the enemy. We talked about how a banner was important in battle because it gives us the location of the leader, who is the source of protection, and where the troops are in relation to the leader and the direction of battle. Those banners didn't just happen to be there. Banners had to be prepared ahead of time and their meanings had to be communicated among the troops so they could be used effectively.

In the same way, God has raised up a variety of "banners" that He had prepared for His people. God prepared such "banners" ahead of time so that they could be employed in the battles His people had to engage. Let's look at some of the banners that God has raised that have given His people protection and direction.

[Exodus 4:1-5](#) & [17-20](#); [7:14-20](#); [17:8-16](#) (What is it that brings victory? In what other places and ways do we see that used?)

[Exodus 13:17-22](#) (what do the words of Joseph mean for the people?)

[Numbers 9:15-23](#), [Numbers 10:11-12](#) & [33-36](#)

In these verses above, God prepared the "banner" of staff and cloud. Both were used for a long period of time. Moses came to depend on God to use His staff and the people depended on God to lead them in the cloud. But in both instances God prepared the use of these things as "banners" that He would use in guiding His people.

Looking now at [Exodus 12:1-13](#). Here is yet another "banner" that guides the people of Israel. Here what is used as a banner of protection? And what did it take for that banner to be effective?

Now read [Numbers 21:4-9](#). Moses raised the snake on the pole to give relief from the battle with the snakes. What made this banner necessary? What was required for the snake-banner to be effective? This was preparation for yet another Banner.

Read now [John 3:10-15](#). It is the lifting up of the banner of the Name of Jesus that gives us both our position and protection on the battlefield of life. God has taken great care in His preparation of His people for the use of the banner of Jesus Christ. He has given much history to the raising up of banners so that when Jesus, His victorious banner over the great enemy death was lifted up it would be understood.

We don't often see banners used much these days, but we do use them in church. We raise them up to help us focus on what God has accomplished throughout various seasons of the church year. But they must be planned for and prepared ahead of time to be used well. It takes time to plan them, gather the materials for them, assemble them and instruct the congregation in their use. Banners must be prepared if they are to be used.

So, what *about* the banners in church? What would you put on a banner for use in church? This isn't a trick to get you to volunteer to make new banners. But it is meant to help us see the banners we use in a new light - to remember that they had to be prepared in order to be used. These banners are meant to help point us to the protection and direction that is ours through of the Banner of Truth that is Jesus Christ.

God's peace on the week ahead, Pastor Rhodes