

**Steady Hands** – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2015

***“Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. <sup>9</sup> So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose men for us and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” <sup>10</sup> Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup> So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup> But Moses’ hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword” (Exodus 17:8-13).***

Beloved in The Lord,

No man is an island. This well known phrase reminds us that our life is not meant to be lived in isolation, apart from other people. We are created to live in fellowship, in friendship with other people. Right in the very beginning when God had created Adam, He said:

***“It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18).***

God then proceeded to put Adam into a deep sleep, He removed a rib and then formed woman from the rib. It is not good for a man to be alone. There are many and varied reasons, why it is not good to be alone. For example there is much more strength where people work together. Over and over again we find Jesus teaching about unity. He said that where two or three gather together in His name, there He is amongst them in a special way. He also taught that where two agree on a matter in prayer, it will be answered. There are many reasons that we could give for why it is not good to be alone, but today I would like to focus on the importance of the congregation and our common mission.

Our mission is given to us by Jesus Himself: ***“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).***

Our mission is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people and to educate people in their walk with Christ Jesus. There are many who think and believe that this is solely the job of the pastor. Many in congregations are spectators and not participants. There are many who are members, but do little or nothing to fulfill the Great Commission. This is neither good nor healthy.

A pastor who is not supported by his congregation is ineffective. A pastor cannot do the work by himself. That is neither his calling, nor his duty.

Our text today is an interesting event in the life of the Israeli people. They have just come out of Egypt and are en route to the Promised Land. At Rephidim, Amalek comes out to war

against Moses and his people. Moses commands Joshua, his aid, to rally the troops and to go out and defend them. For his part, Moses said that he would take the staff of God in his hand and climb up the mountain where he could see the battle. This staff had become a mighty symbol of God's presence and power. Moses knew that without the presence of God and His power, the battle would be lost. Moses climbed up the mountain and he confidently held the staff above his head. We read in verse 11: ***"So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed."***

So then we see, as long as Moses was strong and held up the staff, they were prevailing, but when he tired and let down his arms then the enemy prevailed. Thankfully Moses didn't go it alone. He had Aaron and Hur there with him. We read: ***"<sup>12</sup> But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (12-13).***

Had Moses not had the support of Aaron and Hur, then more than likely the battle would have been lost. There was no way that Moses could hold the staff on his own. What does this mean for us today? Clearly, the lesson to be learned is that the pastor cannot hold the staff on his own. Support is needed. That is how God has ordained it to be. We could say that the staff is The Word of God – The Holy Bible. Amalek is Satan, who is constantly fighting against God and His Kingdom. In order for God's Kingdom to prevail, and for Satan not to get the upper hand over you, I must hold God's Word above you. I cannot do it alone. Like Moses, I am human and I grow tired and the arms get weary. If God's Word is not elevated to the top position over all, then very quickly the battle can and will be lost. The forces of evil and darkness are rallying powerful in the world today. Many Churches are going down, because they no longer hold up and adhere to God's Word. The hands have been lowered.

Today, more than ever before, it is vital that we stand strong and keep God's Word raised up. We need to understand that we need to work together, that we need to support one another in anyway possible.

The main way that each one of you can provide support, and help me to be strong and to not lower my arms, is to hold me up in prayer. Pray for me every day. I know that there are some who do and for that I am very grateful to God. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: ***"Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; <sup>2</sup> and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith" (2.Thes.3:1-2).***

See Paul is asking the congregation to pray for him, that the Word of God will spread rapidly and that God would be glorified. Here you have a clear indication of what you should pray for when you pray for me and other pastors. Pray that the Word of God would take hold in people's hearts, that God may be glorified. Pray that those who labour in God's Kingdom would be protected from evil and perverse persons. Elsewhere Paul writes: ***"Brethren, pray for us" (1.Thes.5:25).***

And yet another example:

***“Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,<sup>31</sup> that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;<sup>32</sup> so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company” (Romans 15:30-32).***

Paul is asking that the congregation would strive together with him in prayer. That is something that each one of us can do every day. It doesn't ask much of us, just commitment and the results will be amazing.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians: ***“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.<sup>18</sup> With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,<sup>19</sup> and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel” (Eph.6:17-19).***

Beloved, pray for me, that I may boldly and unwaveringly preach the truth of God's Word. That I may make known to you the mystery of the Gospel. Not only Paul, but Jesus Himself asked for prayer support. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus asked His disciples to pray with Him.

Prayer is very powerful. It cannot be adequately described by mere words. When we pray we release God's power into a person or situation.

May we become a praying congregation. Let us pray for one another. I pray for you and ask you to pray for me. As we do, we will see greater blessing come upon us as we glorify God in our lives and service for Him.

There is a great model prayer in Colossians that I will close with today:

***“We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,<sup>10</sup> so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;<sup>11</sup> strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously<sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.<sup>13</sup> For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,<sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:9-14).***

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.