

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

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THE BATTLE AND THE BAGGAGE

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I Samuel 30:24, "...As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike..."

Introduction: While in exile, to escape the wrath of Saul, king of Israel, David and his men lived in Ziklag, a city of the Philistines. When they were dismissed from the army of the Philistines and returned to their homes here is what they found: I Samuel 30:1-24, "And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives." Verse 6, "And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." David was not only a worshiper, he was a fighter for the Lord when need be. Verse 8, "And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all."

Wearied already with their long march, they set off at once in pursuit of the spoilers, who had a long start on them. "So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor."

There are never any useless soldiers in the army of the Lord - that is, unless they make themselves useless by downright indifference. There is something all can do; there is something all ought to do. So two hundred men were left in charge of the baggage and heavy equipment while the four hundred marched more swiftly because they were lighter.

"And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and

we burned Ziklag with fire. And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company. And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil. And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will

not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."

It is interesting and might be profitable to follow through the Bible the tragedies that have come upon men in their reveling and feasting. *"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away..."* It was during Belshazzar's feast that part of a hand was seen writing on the wall of the palace, the downfall of the king, and his kingdom. Daniel 5:1-6, *"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."* Verse 13, *"Then was Daniel brought in before the king..."* And Daniel rehearsed the things that had happened to Nebuchadnezzar, his father. Verses 22-28, 30, *"And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the LORD*

of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians...In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

And our Lord compared the people of a future day to the people of Noe's day and said, Matthew 24:37, *"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."* The wicked never believe they are in danger until it is too late to act.

My lost friends will believe me about most things I say, but they won't believe me when I speak God's truth and warn them of the day of wrath. They won't believe me when I tell them Jesus Christ is their only hope of escape from hell. Oh, how terrible is the senseless infatuation of sinners! With the dirt crumbling beneath their feet and the fire of hell raging they will not believe until they feel the heat for themselves. Luke 16:19-31, *"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his fin-*

ger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Poor silly man - he made riches his god and these failed him. All dressed up for hell and fattening himself for the slaughter of Divine Justice; but he would not believe until too late. He despised gospel mercies and had his good time; then landed where there would never again be any offer of mercy. I tell you brothers and sisters, the human mind is deranged; it is bound to be for it is enmity against God; and to be against God means eternal ruin.

I would not whip you into any outward demonstration of concern over the lost, but I have prayed and do pray that there may be such concern over the lost that we might lose our appetite for food while we give ourselves to prayer and fasting. I would have you filled with such concern that at every service and in the homes as well there might be a pitiable cry to God for that long column of men and women who are making their way unconsciously to hell; the place of utter and eternal despair. I would have all of you, every member, in a huddle at every service striving together in prayer for a gracious and mighty visit from God, that the people may be turned to Him and the Saviour.

Oh, blessed Spirit of God, our words are lifeless unless thou dost vitalize them. Our words fall on cold, deaf ears unless thou dost open them.

Our words of warning will go unheeded unless Thou, O Spirit of God, dost blow upon these slain and make them to live.

Back to the story: when the victory over the Amalekites had been won, there came a quarrel. The four hundred who had done the fighting insisted that the booty was theirs, and that the two hundred who had no hand in the actual fighting should have no share in the distribution.

Our text tells us what David did. He ruled and laid it down as a principle of distribution which was adopted as the standing law of Israel; that the soldiers who were actually in the fight and those who stayed behind guarding the baggage, looking after the base of operations should share alike. I Samuel 30:24, 25, *"...but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."* Jesus Christ endorsed this principle in Matthew 10:41, *"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward..."*

God's work always requires two forms of service, which finds illustration and exemplification in warfare. There are those who do the fighting and there are those who stay by the stuff.

There is the battle front and there is also the base of operations. Was it David Livingstone? It was some great missionary who said to his comrade in Christian warfare, "I will go down in eonism if you will hold the rope."

Cooperation is the secret of success in every undertaking. The effect of the whole orchestra may depend on the coming in of the flute at the right place.

Cooperation is God's law and way, for He makes all things cooperate; work together, for good to His people.

So in the work God has given the church to do, there are two forms of service, the direct and the indirect. There are the fighters and the guards of the baggage. There are the preachers and the members who stay by the stuff and support them while they give themselves to prayer and ministry of the

word. When Luther came out from the Diet of Worms, and a knight clapped him on the shoulder and said, "Well done, little monk" he had a share in the work of that day. Worms was the city in Germany where Luther defended his doctrines before emperor Charles and an august assemblage. The man who gave Luther a cup of refreshment when his lips were dry as he spake before that crowd of officials was included in the promise of our Lord. Matthew 10:42, *"And whosoever shall give a drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."*

There has always been that division of labor. Our Lord Himself had need of many humble instruments as helpers. There were the women who ministered to His wants, the faithful few whose presence and sympathy were joyful to Him even on the mount of transfiguration, and longed for in the awful solitude of Gethsemane; there were the sisters of Bethany whose humble home was His last resting place before the Cross; there was the goodman of the house of the upper room where he ate his last supper with his disciples; there were the sad women who prepared the spices and the ruler who donated his new sepulchre for the Lord to be laid in. But He did not need it for long, for He could not be holden of death.

Paul had his helpers, on whose names he lovingly lingers and has made immortal; there was Gaius, mine host and of the whole church of which Gaius was a member; there was Epaphroditus, my fellow soldier, who ministered to my wants; there was Onesiphorus, who oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.

Conclusion: I wish all our members would read Dr. Cox's sermon on the "Seat in the Balcony." And I wish those who read it would read it again. It is full of sacred sarcasm. It describes a condition in every church. By a Seat in the Balcony, he refers to members who neither go to battle nor stay by the stuff. The Balcony is the high place of self-importance; nobody sits there except the proud and self-important. Dr. Cox visited the balcony of every church and marked the benches. There

was the pouter benches, a whole section of the balcony. Filled up with folks whose feelings have been hurt; they are the only folks who are supposed to have any feelings, you know. Then there was the section filled with tired folks, too tired to fight or stay by the stuff. They began to serve but soon got tired and took a seat in the balcony.

Then Dr. Cox described the part-timers, who serve the Lord when convenient and give a little change when they have the surplus.

Other pews in the Balcony were marked for Perpetual Loafers. We all know them, the preacher said. Too lazy to be of any service to the Lord. Just good for nothing sort of people who might drop in occasionally and make you think they were going to join the army and either fight or stay by the stuff. But we soon learned not to be too expectant and encouraged. It was just a way they had of leaving their card on the door of the Almighty; just a little respect they meant to show religion.

We have too many people in the balcony, and too few at the front and too few staying by the stuff. It takes battle and baggage to win a war, but the critical spectators in the balcony are the people that act as a weight around our necks and our souls.