

# KEEP YOUR HANDS LIFTED

EXODUS 17:8-17

When we read Psalms 23:4, David says “even though I walk through the darkest valley, I shall fear no evil”. The valley represents the lowest places of our lives and the darkness represents the situations that we feel that there’s no way out. We often find ourselves in such situations and it feels like we will never get out. David’s attitude is one of; regardless, even though, even if what I’m facing looks bad, I will not be overwhelmed. It’s so easy to get overwhelmed by the darkness of the valley that we can lose sight that the Shepherd is with us and we are with Him.

It doesn’t matter what’s surrounding you, what matters is who are your eyes on. Getting overwhelmed will only push you a step closer to being defeated by the situation.

The valley isn’t meant to be a dwelling place, but a place of transit. However, so we see people defeated in the valley of a certain situation and they remain there to accept it as their reality.

Exodus 17: 8-17 has such a situation, where the people of Israel finds themselves in a dark valley situation. For them, it looks as if there won’t be a way out. They are faced with a surprise attack, and the thing is that we are not always ready for every attack that is launched against us.



If you knew that something was coming against you, you’d prepare for it. But here the Amalekites launched a surprise attack on the children of Israel. The Israelites were never ready for war, they just came out of slavery and war was the last thing on their mind. If Moses allowed the situation to overwhelm him, this story would have been different. Most of the times, the blow that knocks you out is the one that you don’t see coming. It’s these surprises of life that derail us because they aren’t factored in.



There's so much that we can pick up from this story as life lessons because life isn't always smooth sailing but one with oppositions and challenges. However, we always win. Here are a few of the lessons that can be drawn from the passage in Exodus:

1. You don't always get the privilege of choosing your battles, but your reaction to the opposition will determine a lot of things. Israel didn't provoke the Amalekites, but the fight came to them anyways.
2. Some battles are lost because we don't put up a fight. If we don't stay and fight, we might lose. There are promises or instructions from God over our lives, but if we run when things get challenging, we might never live in those promises (see Nehemiah Chapter 4).

3. Those that have a standing in the spirit will stand in the realm of man. So before you confront things physically, go on your knees first. Moses represents the spiritual aspect of the fight, and Joshua represents the physical manifestation of Moses' actions.

Daniel 11:3b "but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits".

4. There's a posture that guarantees victory. That posture is one of having your hands lifted high. Every time Moses' hands were raised they were winning, and when he dropped them, they would start losing. Even in life when we put down our armor, we become victims and easy preys.

Having your hands lifted as a Christian represents a couple of things. For one it represents a surrendered life, it's saying, Lord this is not my battle, but it's yours. Surrender is to give up completely and join in agreement with God, and not surrendering to God is a default surrender to what you're facing.

As a result of surrender, you find satisfaction in Jesus. True worship is birthed from a place of surrender.

Having your hands lifted is a sign of praise. Praise is an expression of respect and gratitude and the kind of praise where your hands are lifted is called Yadah. It's easy to praise when life is perfect, but it costs you more when everything isn't going well. When you praise in the valley of darkness, it's sacrificial praise, and God honours sacrifice. God being God is a reason enough to praise Him in the valley.

2 Chronicles 20:1-22 narrates the story of how King Jehoshaphat defeated 3 armies. It made no sense to praise God when there are 3 nations coming against you, but he did it anyway. The king wasn't instructed to praise, but he praised because he had the word of God that guaranteed victory. The promises of God should birth praise from within because His word is enough as a guarantee.

As Christians, we have the assurance of victory, so whenever we face a challenge, it should feel like a movie that we have watched, because we know how it ends. We don't need to see to praise, God's track record of not failing is enough to assure us that the valley will not swallow us, nor will we be forgotten in the darkness.

Our praise silences the enemy (see Psalms 8:2), our praises also announce victory and set the atmosphere for miracles. In John 11:41; the prayer that Jesus made before the tomb of Lazarus was that of praise and thankfulness, when He multiplied bread, all He did was praise the Father. Our praises are powerful, so never let situations dictate when and how you praise.

Having your hands lifted is a gesture of celebration. No champion celebrates a victory they wanted so badly with their hands in their pockets. This is because it's a declaration and affirmation of the victory we have in Christ (see 1 John 5:4). Hands lifted is a gesture of receiving, It is saying amen to the finished work of the Good Shepherd.

Notice that Moses got tired at some point? We also get tired, some things in life are just too tiring and we have no strength to go on or keep our hands raised. It was Aaron and Hur who kept Moses' hands up until the battle was completely over. Aaron and Hur represent the entities that keep you standing even when we feel like we are about to call it quits. The Holy Spirit keeps us from stumbling, He is the strength that comes from within. In all that we face, the Holy Spirit is our advantage (see John 14:15-20, John 15:26, John 16:7-15). We win, not by might or power, but by the Spirit of God (see Zechariah 4:6)



The grace of God also keeps us from buckling, grace is not only there when you sin, but it's that enabling power from God that keeps you going when nothing is going your way. Look at 2 Corinthians 12:9, it says: And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Another thing that keeps us from buckling is our brothers and sisters that the Lord has put in our lives, they will pray with us and for us.

Having your hands lifted is not only a physical gesture but a position that we assume from a spiritual standing. We lift our hands as an act of faith, and God responds to faith. If we as a generation can learn to persevere and endure over the promises of God, we will see more victories (see Hebrews 6:12). Having your hands lifted is about consistency so that the blows that you don't see coming won't knock you out. Because the victory is ours, we will raise our hands in praise, surrender, declaration and reception.