

## Introduction

If you have your Bible, go ahead and get that out and open it up with me at this time. We're going to be reading from the Book of Exodus, chapter 17. We did not complete the Book of Exodus, I know, but we're actually going to take a break after this Sunday. We'll come back to Exodus, not too far in the distant future, and we will pick up here again. We're going to take a break and look at some other things in the coming weeks. Exodus chapter 17 is where we will be this morning. If you don't have a Bible, that's alright. We'll have the Scriptures up on the screens here in just a few moments, and you're certainly welcomed to follow along on your tablet, Smart Phone, or anything like that. I'm going to pray over us, and then we're going to jump into Exodus chapter 17 together. Let's pray together.

"Lord God... The brokenness of the world has been on full display this week. It has pained me to watch. Lord, I've grappled... 'What would I say?' Father, thank you for the fact that I don't have to come up with what to say... that You have already spoken it. You have spoken it in Your Scripture, and Father You have lived it, as You became flesh in Jesus Christ. God, thank you for that truth. Father, I need to hear from You today. I would bet that just about every person in this room is in that same needful place. God, I would bet that most every person here is stressed or struggling and that today they desperately need to hear from You. God I pray that You would indeed speak, Lord, that we would hear from You, and God that we would, as faithfully as possible, listen. God, I pray the words that come from my mouth would not be from me, Lord, but they would originate from your Holy Spirit and from Your Word. Lord, we pray that that Spirit and that same Word would speak directly to us, that it would divide among us. Lord, we ask this, believing and trusting that even those who are not yet believers will hear today because of the power of Your Word. God, we ask this in the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

Exodus chapter 17, starting in verse 8: *"Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.'* So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

*"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.'* And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, *The Lord Is My Banner, saying, 'A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.'"*

This is one of those weeks where it felt like the world was spinning out of control. Every night I would turn on my television and I would watch the news, and I would see strife taking place just about, it seemed, everywhere. I saw a humanitarian convoy heading from Russia toward the Ukraine and fears that it was actually a military invasion that was hidden as a humanitarian convoy and actually was then attacked and destroyed by Ukrainian troops. I saw continued strife between Israel and Gaza. I saw the terrible tragic slaying of an unarmed eighteen-year-old boy in Ferguson, Missouri, and then the riots that ensued in its wake after that. There reached a point this week where, on Twitter, people in Gaza were tweeting how to breathe in tear gas toward people in Missouri. I thought, "When people in Gaza are giving survival advice to people in Missouri, we have certainly reached the twilight zone of existence in our world."

We are a broken people, and we are in need of a great Gospel that is big enough to not only speak to those who live in a peaceful suburb but also those who are in the most danger-ridden and war-torn zones on our planet. I wondered, "God, is my theology big enough to speak to people that are hurting that desperately? ...Because if you are in an emotional or spiritual warzone, you do not need empty words of comfort. You need words of power and deliverance. So, today, I want to let you know that I spent a lot of time praying and asking God, "What is it that You would have me to say?" I was so grateful when I turned to this week's passage and it was Exodus chapter 17 because this passage is all about how to fight with the Lord at your side. Church, we cannot sit idly by, but we must now engage because it is true... there are indeed powers and principalities. There is darkness and it must be engaged, and it must happen in the power of Jesus Christ. If our theology is not big enough to take on the largest problems in the world, then we truly do not serve the God of the Bible, because the God of the Bible is big enough to take on any issue that is at hand. So, I want to share with you today some things that I saw in Exodus 17 and why I believe that these are things that are important for us as we engage in Kingdom-fighting in our world.

### **1. We Enter The Battle (v.10)**

First of all, how do you engage in a Kingdom fight? Verse 10: *"So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill."* The first thing that Moses did was he deployed the troops. Now why is that significant? It's significant because just a few chapters earlier, in Exodus chapter 14, the Israelites were being hotly pursued by the most powerful military force in the world... the Egyptians... who had chariots and horses and were chasing them directly into a dead end in the Red Sea. And in that place, the Lord spoke to Moses who then relayed the message to his people, in Exodus 14:14, and he said this: *"The Lord will fight for you; you have only to remain silent."* And so the Israelites did nothing. They did not draw a weapon from its scabbard. They simply stood by, as the Spirit of God created a path for them through the sea, and then the waters crushed the Egyptian army, and they were completely rescued in that place. But now this is different. They choose to deploy troops. Why not simply wait and let The Lord deliver them? ...Because things now are different.

In Exodus chapter 17, I think we best understand why troops are deployed by reading the great words of Charles Spurgeon who says this: "The children of Israel were not under the power of Amalek. They were free men, and so we are not under the power of sin any longer. The yoke of sin has been broken by God's grace from off of our necks, and now we have to fight, not as slaves against a master but as free men against a foe. Moses never said to the children of Israel while they were in Egypt, 'Go, fight with Pharaoh.' Not at all; it is God's work to bring us out of Egypt and make us His people, but when we are delivered from bondage, although it is God's work to help us, we must be active in our cause. Now that we are alive from the dead, we must wrestle with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness if we are to overcome." We must now wrestle. We cannot sit idly by but instead, with the grace and the power of God, we enter into the battle. You see, when you are saved, it happens through the power of the cross and the cross alone. You are justified by what God did in Jesus Christ. You cannot lift a finger to do anything to save yourself... God does it all. But once you are saved, you then must engage in the battle, for instance, in personal holiness. You fight with sin every day, and I know that I do as well. Every day I must turn to the Word of God and turn to the Holy Spirit, given to me by the cross of Christ, and every day in that power from the Word and from the Spirit, I engage in a battle with the enemy and I fight. And just as Spurgeon said, once you have been delivered, you've got to go in there now and fight. We are no longer slaves.

But it's not only enemies that come from within. It's not just fighting against our own sinful nature, our own sinful desire, because here the Israelites are fighting against the Amalekites, an outside enemy, and this is

the case for us as well. It's not only fighting for our personal holiness, but it's also fighting against those enemies that are out there in the world. You see, there is an enemy and there is principality and there is power and there is darkness and we must engage; we must deploy the troops.

A cliché that's been attributed to C.S. Lewis... I don't know if he actually said it... It was this: "Sometimes Christians are so heavenly minded that they're no earthly good." What he means by that is this: "Sometimes we sit around and we love to have Bible study and we love to pray, but when it comes time to act, they don't do anything." Listen to me. Christians don't just sit by, but when it's time to engage in the battle, they get up off their duff, and they go into the fight because it's time, sometimes, to engage the broken places of the world. We must, if this makes sense, enter the fray and fight yet in a way that is totally different. In this passage, the goal is the destruction of the Amalekites. However, as God further reveals Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, we soon discover that God's ultimate goal is not the destruction of humans who believe differently, but it is instead their redemption. We must engage those who are, in many ways, different than us... antagonistic toward us... They want to destroy us, but we must engage them not on their terms but in the terms laid out for us in Scripture, and we must do so in a way with the goal of their redemption.

Pastor Dwight talked about Operation Backpack: 2300 backpacks were given away yesterday and in the coming days. Most of the people who received those will have a different-colored skin than mine. I want to tell you what. Do you want fight racism in this world? Let me tell you... You sit down and you give a gift to someone who looks different than you... but do you know what we did yesterday as well? We shared the Gospel with people who look different than me and then we said, "You are welcomed to worship in this church." Otis, who was up here just a few minutes ago... he was doing the nuts-and-bolts for Operation Backpack. He called some of the people who were here last year, and he talked to them on the phone. He said, "Did you decide to ever visit Houston Northwest?" They said, "No." This is why. A lot of the people that we talked to, even though they were gracious for the gift that they received, they didn't understand that they were invited to be part of our church. I said, "We're going to fix that this year." We stood up multiple times, and we said, "You are welcome here." If you're someone who received a backpack yesterday, I want you to know... that wasn't just lip-service. You are welcome here because the way that you engage the brokenness of racism in the world is that you go and you engage with love. I like to think of Operation Backpack as a good body blow followed by an uppercut to racism in our neighborhood because the way that you attack it is you go right into those broken places.

KidsHope USA, where we mentor children that are 'at-risk' in local schools is a way that you engage the brokenness of the world on the terms of the Kingdom. You go to kids who they say don't have a chance, and you sit down with them and you love them. Do we get to preach to them in their school? No... because it's against the law. But you do what? We love on them and we keep coming back. Finally, people say, "Why are you doing this?" Do you know what happens? Eventually we get to tell them about our Jesus. The reason that we do that isn't because we want to preach to them... although we do... but we just do it because it's the Kingdom thing to do. The only way that the world will ever be set right and its crooked places made straight, is if we engage the world in the love and the passion of Jesus Christ.

I was loving this story that I heard. I don't know if you have heard of the Willow Creek Leadership Summit. Twenty-five years ago, Bill Hybels, the pastor at Willow Creek Church, had a passion for leaders, and he wanted to start a conference that would speak to leaders of global organizations. It started at just his church. They had it this past week. It's now simulcast to over 2000 locations around the world. Leaders of organizations pay hundreds of dollars to hear CEOs and presidents give leadership tips so that they can

hear how to better lead and engage in the world. That is Kingdom-minded and that is beautiful. But do you know what made me even more excited? I heard that this year their newest simulcast location... the Louisiana State Prison... because they said, prisoners and convicts will not be redeemed if we simply believe that punishment will change their heart, because punishment does not change their heart. The idea is that redemption, as a goal in giving skill to make it in life, will... now that might get somewhere. Guess what? Every year at the leadership summit, Bill Hybels stands up as part of that simulcast, and he preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Do you want to know how to engage the darkest and most broken places in the world? You get off your tail and you get in the battle... in your office, in your family, in your neighborhood... You find that broken, dark place ... the thing that makes you upset inside... the thing that raises up your hackles and turns them red... the thing that really gets under your skin. That is not there just so that you can have an annoying thing in your life. That is God giving you a Holy discontent and He is saying, "Go; engage in the battle. You've been set free. Now go and make the crooked places straight."

## 2. In Prayer (v. 11)

But He doesn't just say, "Go into the battle." Look at verse 11: *"Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed."* I always thought this was the weirdest passage in the world. "So you're telling me we only win if we've got our hands up? What is happening?" It's like "Hands up, we win; hands down, we lose." What is going on with that? I don't understand that. A lot of commentators have speculated and made conjecture about what was taking place there on that mountain. Some people have said, "Moses... his staff was magic and so he raised it up and it was magical." Come on, man! (Laughter) If you need help reading grownup books, just ask... we'll help you, alright? Here's the deal. He's not casting a spell. This is the thing that's taking place. There is great textual evidence to declare that what Moses was doing in that place was he was praying and interceding for the army down below. He went up on a hill and he was lifting his hands toward heaven in an act of prayer to show the army down below that they don't just engage in the battle, but they do so under the power of God. They have to do so in the power of prayer.

Let me show you why. First of all, he is standing. It is very common in Scripture to see people stand to pray. In 1 Samuel 1:9, Hannah goes into the temple and she rises to pray... to pray that the Lord will give her a son. It was a very common. Jehoshaphat, in 2 Chronicles 20:5... he stands before he utters a blessing... Ezra stands. All kinds of times through the Bible, people stand in order to pray. It was the common posture. The next part, the raising of hands... I know; you're nervous. It's alright. Don't freak out; it's going to be okay. I mean, the church where I grew up... if somebody would have raised their hand, five people would have fainted right there; it would have been over. (Laughter) If somebody cleared their throat extra loud, we thought revival was breaking out; it was that kind of a thing. But listen; I want to explain to you why raising your hands in prayer is actually a very scriptural thing. In Exodus 9:29, someone no less than Moses says, *"I will spread out my hands in prayer to the Lord."* In Psalm 63:4, David writes, *"In Your Name, I will lift up my hands."* 1 Timothy 2:8: Paul, the greatest church planter of all time, says: *"I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling."* Why are they lifting their hands? Are they doing it to draw attention to themselves? No. Look back at verse 16 at the end of this passage. The reason that the posture was standing and raising up their hands is explained in verse 16: Moses says, *"A hand upon the throne of the Lord."* Different versions translate it differently, but the word there is "throne." What's the point? It's the posture of a man, raising his hands up and grabbing the foot of the throne of the King and supplicating and saying, "Have mercy, King; give me power, King. I can't do it without You, King. I need You." When you stand in prayer and you raise your hands, when you sing and you raise your hands... it is like, not that you're reaching out for a hug, but that you are grabbing onto the

footstool of the King and saying, "I can't win this battle unless I've got You at my side and fighting for me at this time. Right now. Psalm 20:7 says, *"Some trust in chariots and some trust in horses, but we trust in the Name of the Lord our God."* It is not about military might, Joshua. I'm glad that you deployed and you went into the battle. Going into the battle matters. If you sit on your duff, nothing is going to happen, but if you go into the battle believing that your tactics and your strategy are enough, you will lose. You need to grab hold of the throne of God and say, "I'm engaged in battle but I'm only engaged in battle in the way that You want me Lord."

Edward Bulwer-Lytton said this: "The pen is mightier than the sword." I like that but this week I read Philip Ryken in his commentary on the Book of Exodus. Do you know what he said? I'm going to steal this and I'm going to use it forever: "Petition is mightier than the sword." Do you want to win battles? Petition is what wins battles. Get on your face before God and say, "God, before I go in to engage the brokenness in the world, give me the power of Your Holy Spirit. God, I'm only going to win when You give me that power."

### **3. Together. (v. 12)**

In verse 12, *"But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side."* Now this is confusing to me. I mean, he's praying so why is it if his arms start to get tired and they droop down, that then the Amalekites start to win? Is that because we only have power in prayer when our hands are up? No...no, no. This is why: It's because the Lord is teaching those soldiers down below, "You are not winning because you are really good swordsmen. You are not winning because Joshua, your leader, is a great tactician. You are winning because as long as Moses' hands are raised, the power of the Lord is your source and your comfort. He is your strength." He starts to get tired. I don't know how long they were in battle... a couple of hours. How long could you hold your hands like this before your hands got tired? A little while... but eventually they would kind of start to droop. And he's holding up a staff as well. What's taking place in that moment? I think it's a beautiful thing because it shows us that not only Joshua going into battle is enough and it's not just Moses praying, but it's also Aaron and Hur holding up the arms of Moses in that place and saying, "I'm going to help you continue to pray and continue to do the work that God has called you to do."

On September 24, 1994, I was licensed to the Gospel ministry. It's almost been 20 years. Wow... I suddenly feel old... (Laughter) That day Dr. Jack Riddlehoover preached that service for those of us who were being licensed and ordained to the ministry, and it was the first time I had ever heard this passage preached. He talked about this passage and he implored the Church. He said, "Church, listen to me. There will come a time when these people you are licensing to the ministry will begin to grow weary in ministry, and let me implore you to do something." And he looked out at the congregation and he held up his arms like this and he said, "Hold them up! HOLD THEM UP!" He yelled it so loud it made me so uncomfortable whenever he did that. He did it ten times. He just kept looking at them, "HOLD THEM UP! HOLD THEM UP!" Why is that? Why did he keep saying that? ...Because it took Moses. It took Joshua. It took Aaron. It took Hur. It took all of them to be able to win the battle... every soldier on the field, in order to win on that day, in addition to the power of the Lord.

We live in the day of the celebrity Church and the celebrity pastor. People say, "Why doesn't my pastor write books?" "Why doesn't my pastor go on a speaking tour?" Let me tell you what. The problem with the celebrity Church and the celebrity pastor is that people come in and they listen and they hear a great

sermon and they get up and they leave and there is no change in their life and there's no service in their life and participation in a body or a community. Let me tell you what. That's not a church; it's an amusement park. Do you want to be part of a body? Guess what? "HOLD THEM UP!"

Yesterday, we distributed 1700 backpacks and guess what? There were people doing immunizations. There were people doing eye exams. There were people that were welcoming... people registering... people that were giving out things... people that were teaching the Word of God... people who were doing face-to-face evangelism... people that were handing out food... people that were giving out the backpacks themselves... people that were just talking to other people. Guess what? We do our greatest ministry when we all work together... when we're all doing those things. Whenever we have promotion Sunday... that's actually next Sunday... we need every person helping... every person serving. Why? ... Because great ministry happens in a church, not when we all just hear things, but when we enter into the battle and we work together. I'm not just talking here at this church. Where ever God has put you, do the work of the Kingdom with the gifts that have been given you... in your office, in your family. If you are an incredible accountant, you go into your office and you do accounting for the glory of God. Then on top of that, you are there to do things in an ethical way so that people say, "That guy is different." "That lady has standards that are high."

We sent a mission team into Brazil, into the jungle. One of the ladies in our church, Michelle Bennett, is an artist, and she drew a coloring book so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ could be proclaimed to people across a language barrier. We've got a picture of it up here that we're going to put up. It's a coloring book so that people could understand the Gospel of Jesus. Maybe you can draw. Maybe you can cook. Maybe you can clean. Maybe you're a teacher. Maybe you're a singer. Maybe you're somebody who's just a great neighbor. I don't know what it is that God has called you to do, but I do know this. You have a gift and that gift is intended to bring glory to God, and we win our best battles when we do so together. Church... "HOLD THEM UP!" "HOLD THEM UP!!" Grab onto the arms of ministry, and do not let your church down... do not let the Gospel down but find a place where God has put you in together and enter into the battle together. Ephesians 4:11-12 says, *"And He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building of the body of Christ."* You are a minister on behalf of the Gospel. We need you to do these great things because the greatest ministry of the Church happens when every person... not just a few people, not just a couple of leaders, not just deacons, not just elders, not just teachers, not just pastors... but every person understands that once they have received the Gospel, they are a minister and they engage together.

#### **4. Under The Banner of Christ. (v. 15)**

Then in verse 15, *"And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner..."* Every time I always read this verse, do you know what I thought the banner was? It was like we went to a banquet and there's a head table and there's this banner that says "Congratulations" over it. That is not what it is. Jehovah Nissi, The Lord is My Banner... do you want to know what the banner is? It's a military standard. You've seen those movies. People going into battle and they're carrying the standard on a pole. Why do you have the banner? The banner is there as a rallying point. If there is a need to regroup or to fall back, the banner was the place where you would go back and you would gather. Whenever you'd go into battle, you follow your banner, and you know that's the place that you're supposed to go. It tells you where your unit or your battalion is supposed to head in the next wave of the attack. The banner is lifted high because as long as the banner is up, the soldier can look and see the banner off in the distance; as long as the banner is there, they know the battle continues on. We have not been defeated yet. What was Moses

saying? "We won this battle, not because we deployed the troops but because God gave us power." "The Lord is our banner." He's the One that we lift high in this place. He's the One that gives us the things that we need.

So let me tell you why this matters. Dante's "Inferno"... I don't know if you had to read that whenever you were in high school or college, but in describing hell, Dante describes a man who's chasing a military banner from situation to situation and point to point within hell but never is able to reach his banner. Now that's hell. Chasing after something but never getting there... moving from place to place. You see, this idea of the banner is actually pretty prevalent in Scripture. Numbers, chapter 21... maybe you've read this story: A bunch of snakes get into the Israelite camp, and they are bitten because the Lord is punishing them. In order to be saved, Moses makes this snake out of bronze, and he lifts it up high. The Scripture says, in verse 8, that every person who looks at the snake is saved suddenly; they're healed. In John 3:14, Jesus is talking to Nicodemus; it's two verses before the most famous verse in the Bible: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* Two verses before that, He tells Nicodemus, "Just as Moses lifted high in the desert, the snake, so the Son of Man must be lifted high as well." There is one banner that is lifted high in battle for the Kingdom of God... and guess what? It is the cross of Jesus Christ. If you want to know how to engage the world, you engage the world in power by first engaging it through the terms given by the cross. Too many people are chasing after too many banners that are not the cross. If you are frustrated in your life and you believe that you'll never find happiness in life, a great possibility is that you are chasing a banner that is not the banner that has been given to you by the Gospel.

This week we heard about Robin Williams taking his own life... an incredible actor and comedian. A lot of conjecture about why it is that he decided to take his life. Some people said depression; other people said financial troubles. Some people said that he just was unhappy in his career. I couldn't even begin to know the reason. I talked to a friend this week who said that his son was in New York City some time back and attended Redeemer Presbyterian Church which is Tim Keller's church there in New York City. As he attended there, he looked over to his left as worship was beginning, and he was sitting next to Robin Williams. I don't know if Robin Williams ever decided to respond to the Gospel of grace, but he at least heard it. I wonder... what was happening in his heart? Why was he there? I couldn't know. I was listening to the radio this week, and I heard an excerpt from one of his comedy routines. In this comedy routine, at some point apparently a woman got up, I guess, to go to the bathroom or whatever, and as she was getting up to leave, he started to focus all of the attention on her leaving. As a pastor, kind of doing my drive-by spiritual diagnosis, I heard that and I went, "Wow... that's a guy who can't stand to not have every eye in the room on him. He's hungry for the attention of every person that he comes into contact with. He's hungry for the approval of every person that he comes into contact with." I don't know if that's what his banner was, but I ask you today, "Are you hungry for the approval or the attention of others?" Let me tell you what. The only banner that's going to save is the cross of Christ. You only need to be approved by Jesus Christ. A lot of you are chasing after fame and fortune; you're trying to one day have a bunch of money or a big house or whatever. Let me tell you what. You can get all that stuff and you can still be exceptionally unhappy and unsatisfied because what you need is the approval and the redemption and forgiveness that's given you only under the banner of Jesus Christ. You see, the way forward in the midst of the world that we live in is only through the banner of the cross.

You see, I think we can all agree. You turn on the TV and you look at all the brokenness in the world. You look at Ferguson, Missouri... You look at Gaza... You look at Ukraine... You know what? We could all agree that the secular world experiment is a pretty big failure because without the power of the Gospel, we

just go into chaos and we descend. The problem with that is that I turn on my television and I begin to look at this... I start to say, "The only way that this would have been different would have been if the Kingdom of God would have been the real change in this place: Gaza, Ferguson, Ukraine." Those things are only changed if the ethic of Jesus is the one that is employed. Only if people had been transformed, as Anthony Bradley professor at the King's College said this week: "When social justice is reduced to structural solutions and doesn't call people to moral virtue, it is neither properly social or just." I was thinking about this as I'm watching all of this stuff play out on the news this week. Do you know what's funny? It's that I begin to well up within myself, and I begin to notice that I'm judging the people on the TV. It's kind of weird; I just noticed it. I look at them and I'm like, "I can't believe that guy is busting into that store and taking that stuff. I can't believe that that person shot that kid. I can't believe..." I just start to cast judgement in my heart upon it and do you know what? You've probably done the same thing and do you know what's funny? This is the place that we have to reach... You're just like them. I'm just like them too.

Let me prove it to you. On Monday I picked up Ben from church at noon. He'd had an event called "Super Week," and he had band camp at one. I asked him, "What do you want for lunch?" He said, "I'd like some Chik-fil-A." I said, "Okay." So I drive him to Chik-fil-A. I don't know if you've ever been to Chik-fil-A... at noon... (Laughter) ... on a Monday. The Lord puts in the hearts of every human the desire to crave Chik-fil-A on Sunday, so Monday is their day. Right? (Laughter) If you've never been to the drive-through at noon, it's kind of like Lord of the Flies. I showed up there and I pull into the drive-through. The line goes all the way around the building, out into the feeder road... it's like four-deep. I was like, "Okay... They'll move this thing along pretty quick," so I get into the feeder line. We move up a couple or three cars and this guy... apparently he's like an anarchist or something... he goes down the side road... He doesn't go on the feeder road, and he goes around the building. You know how you kind of have to leave a little gap for people to get out of the drive-through there... he just cuts in front of the car that's there and blocks the drive-through. My son saw this happen. He was not pleased with this individual. He said, "That guy can't do that." I said, "Buddy, he's already done it. It's over; I'm sorry." So now when this happened, it causes all these problems, cars are backing up and this kind of stuff. Finally, it kind of unwinds and we get to pull up a couple of cars. The next thing you know, we are now the car that is guarding the space in front of the drive-through. Wouldn't you know it, another anarchist came along. This car pulls around the building and makes no eye-contact with me, and just... (whistles)... slides right in front of me and blocks the drive-through and cuts in front of me in line. Now... I'm just going to confess to you guys right now. I have really basically in this world only one irrational pet peeve: It is people who cut in line in front of me. (Laughter) When that happens, the flesh inside of me wells up and I discovered... I watched my hand in that moment as it started to go toward the horn on my steering wheel... (Laughter) ...and then it just kept going and then it pressed the horn. It didn't give a little toot. I mean... it just stayed there... (Laughter) ...for about ten seconds. (Laughter) I was loving her well. I was correcting this woman, showing her, "You know, you can't do this. We have a society here." I just held my hand there for about ten seconds. As soon as I pulled my hand off, my son was like, "Yeah, Dad! We got her!!" (Laughter) She never made eye contact with me. Finally the cars are able to pull forward and she looks at me, kind of out of disgust, "Well fine... just go ahead." "Well thank you, I will. I'm glad that you've learned your lesson. Alright!" I pulled in front of her there. I get in line at that place. Wouldn't you know it... half of Houston Northwest was eating lunch at Chik-fil-A on Monday! (Clapping) (Laughter) I'm in the drive-through lane. People are coming up to my car... (Loudly) "Pastor Steve!!! How are you doing??" I'm rolling down my window and I'm talking. Four families... Four! Walk up to me while I'm in line at Chik-fil-A. We pull around and we get into the window. They have that runner out there to try and speed things along. It's a girl who's in our youth group, "Pastor Steve! How are you doing?" I'm now envisioning the conversation that is taking place as she is delivering

the grilled chicken salad to the woman behind me. "Who's that guy in that car up there who everybody keeps talking to?" "Oh, that's the pastor at Houston Northwest!" (Clapping) (Laughter) Now, before you start to say, "You're an evil, broken, wicked man..." Guess what? So are you! You're the guy who loots the store; you're the guy who pulls the gun on the unarmed kid; you're the guy who does whatever has to be done to get things done your way because we believe that the world's tactics are better than the Kingdom-of-God tactics. Guess what? That's not the way that the world is ever going to be changed. (Clapping) If you want to see transformation in the world then you engage the world with one thing lifted high: The banner of the cross. If I don't want to be embarrassed in that day, guess what? I don't honk the horn because... guess what? I want to engage with redemption not destruction but I failed in that moment. Thank God I got another day. This is my call to you: What is the banner that you're raising to engage the world every single day that you go into your workplace... into your family?

The ancient church had a symbol. It was called the Agnus Dei... You may have heard of this. It was a song that was very popular. It talks about the Lamb of God. That's what Agnus Dei is... It's Latin for "Lamb of God," referring back to John saying, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." It looks something like this... (pointing to the screen) You see there... the lamb... it's holding a military banner, and what is on the banner? The cross... because the way that the Church engages the world and changes the world and fights the Kingdom fight, is by standing up and declaring "The way that we win this battle is on the terms that Jesus gave, bringing redemption and forgiveness and love and grace and peace and hope. If you want to see this world transformed, you engage not out of anger or retribution or revenge but instead you bring to the table the cross of Jesus Christ. (Clapping)

How do we win? Exodus... every week, as you've seen, it's a foreshadowing... a pointing forward... a looking ahead to the great gift that was going to come in Jesus in the Gospel. Listen to me. If you... right now, today... are chasing after another banner, you're finding your worth somewhere else, your identity in something else. The only way you will ever find peace... the only place you'll ever find forgiveness is in Jesus Christ. I know what you're saying today, "I don't deserve the grace of God." Guess what? You'll never deserve it but He gives it anyway. Come and take it today.

Secondly, if you're someone who is already a believer but you're engaging the world on its own broken, sinful, vengeful terms then guess what? You're time today is to repent of that and say, "I'm going to engage my world on the Kingdom-of-God terms. I'm going to hold high the cross of Jesus Christ." That is going to be the way that the world is changed and transformed. I'm the guy who robs the store... I'm the guy who shoots the kid, but thank God I can repent of that and forgive and then God will use me anyway.

Church, today... will we be the people of God, or will we instead fall prey to the seduction of using the methods of the world? I pray that we say "Yes" to the cross. Let's pray.

"God, I am a broken, sinful, man. 'I am a man of unclean lips,' as Isaiah said. God, I need today for You to engage my broken heart and to repair me. God, I need to fight... I need to engage in that battle, but Lord I need to cling tight to the throne of the Father and to know that my power only comes from You. God, I know that there are people in this place... they say, 'I don't know if this stuff is real,' but you're feeling it in your heart right now; it's real. Father, there are people that are not willing to say 'Yes' to Your Son Jesus. God, I pray that they would say 'Yes'. Father, there are people who are saying, 'I don't want to engage that hateful person, that terrible boss, that rebellious child on the terms of the cross,' but God I pray that You would give them the power to do so. God, I pray that You would use the forgiveness and the grace that's given in the cross to bring transformation to this world and God that it would be only be

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By Dr. Steven Bezner. Part 10 in the series "Out Of Egypt."

through the power of the cross that we see things changed. God, we love you, we praise You, and we say 'Thank you' because of the fact that You haven't abandoned us. You've pursued us in the cross. We love You, Father. In the Name of Your Son Jesus, we pray. Amen."