

# The Lord is a Man of War

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] We'll dismiss our kids to children's ministry, and if you'll open your Bibles to the book of Exodus, we are going to be in Exodus chapter 13 through 15 this morning.
- I saw a quote today. I'm not going to give you the attribution or the context. I'm going to just give you the quote. Not today. I saw it this week. Oh, my goodness, it's blue. Oh, my goodness, it's blue.
- That's not a reference to the Smurf guy in the Olympic ceremony. It's actually the very first thing that is reported to have been said by the first man in space, Uri Garin, in 1961.
- He saw the planet and said, oh, my goodness, it's blue. Now, the blueness of Earth had been known for quite some time.
- It's relatively, you know, inferable that we know that when water or when sunlight refracts over water, it makes it look blue, and we know the Earth is covered in water, and so it should have come to no surprise to him.
- [ 1 : 1 0 ] In fact, it probably did not come as an intellectual surprise to him that the Earth was blue. What was going on there was the difference between knowing a thing and seeing it, right?
- That's what was going on there. And that's, honestly, friends, we are a relatively theologically meaty church, and the great concern for us is that we would always understand that there is a difference between reading theology, knowing theology, and seeing God as he really is.
- Let me ask you this fact. In fact, let me ask you this question. Where would you say you have gotten your theology from? I mean, some of it would have come from your parents and from Sunday school teachers and the various pastors that you've had over the years.
- Some of it's come directly from the Word of God, and some of it's come from good books and podcasts and all that kind of stuff. So it's interesting to think about where you've gotten your theology from, but I also want to suggest to you this morning that some of the greatest theological breakthroughs, the highest visions of God that you can have as an individual must come through risk, suffering, and adventure.
- There are only certain things you can learn about God while pursuing a life of comfort. There are only certain things you can learn about God from the safety of your own home.
- [ 2 : 4 8 ] Edwin Friedman, in his book *Failure of Nerve*, says this, We are on our way to becoming a nation of skimmers, living off the risks of previous generations, and constantly taking from the top without adding significantly to its essence.
- Everything we enjoy as part of our advanced civilization, including the discovery, exploration, and development of our country, came about because previous generations made adventure more important than safety.
- So the Church of Jesus Christ is routinely at risk of losing grip on its view of God and its holding firm to sound theology.
- There are always going to be false teachers and cults and liberalizing forces that come in and try to distort a church's commitment and possession of faithful doctrine.

But there's another way we can lose a true view of God, and that is by pursuing safety over an adventure. There really are only so many things you can learn about God as long as we insist on playing it safe.

[ 4 : 02 ] That's what we're going to see today in chapters 13 through 15. We're just going to see the story of Israel fleeing Egypt, getting to the Red Sea, crossing the Red Sea, thanks to the miraculous intervention of the Lord.

And then at the end of all that, we see a psalm of praise in chapter 15 that is just full of rich theological insight into the nature of God.

I want to use Tolkien as an example of this. I don't know how many of you are aware that when Tolkien wrote *The Lord of the Rings*, when he invented Middle Earth, if you will, he did that from one particular place, and that was in a trench as a soldier in World War I.

His whole view of Middle Earth, his whole invention of this marvelous story that's inspired so many, I don't think it could have been written from the safe confines of his home.

He had to get into the trenches to see these particular things. There's been plenty of books written about Tolkien and his relationship with the Great War. John Garth wrote one called *Tolkien and the Great War*.

[ 5 : 23 ] Here's how he describes it. The war imposed urgency and gravity, took Tolkien through terror, sorrow, and unexpected joy, and reinvented the real world in a strange and extreme form.

Without the war, it is arguable whether his fictions would have ever focused on a conflict between good and evil, or if they had, whether good and evil would have taken a similar shape.

C.S. Lewis actually wrote reviews of his friends' Middle Earth books, and he says this, speaking as someone who was also a veteran of World War I, he says this, this war, describing the war in the *Two Towers* book, this war has the very quality of the war my generation knew.

It's all here. The endless, unintelligible movement. The sinister quiet on the front when everything is now ready. The fleeing of civilians, the lively, vivid friendships, the background of something like despair, and the merry foreground, had such heaven-sent windfalls as a cache of tobacco salvaged from a ruin.

I know many of you read your fair share of Tolkien, and if you've ever wondered, well, how do you exactly go about inventing all these languages and developing all of this insight into the nature of human beings and the fundamental structures of story and the glories of camaraderie and the horrors of war, you don't get that view.

[ 6 : 56 ] From your cottage in Oxford. You get that view from a muddy trench in the Somme. So over the next two weeks, we're going to be dealing primarily with this idea, this one theological insight that is included at the beginning of Exodus 15, and that is, the Lord is a man of war.

Not something you'd know unless you were caught up in one of his great battles. Not something you'd really know or believe unless you had joined and found God in the trenches.

Listen to just the first three verses of Exodus 15. This is immediately after Pharaoh has been destroyed in the Red Sea. Moses says, Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my salvation and my song. He has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him.

My Father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Moses didn't gain these insights because he attended a good Jewish parochial school.

[ 8 : 15 ]     Shortly after he was done breastfeeding, he was taken away from all Hebrew connections and placed in the Egyptian world and received a fine Egyptian education, I'm sure.

But his whole understanding of God wasn't handed to him through a theological textbook. It came directly from the revelation of the Lord, which for us would be akin to Scripture. And it also came from him having to walk with God hand in hand through the plagues and all of the combat he did with Pharaoh and his magicians.

And so that's the basic idea today. Now let's go ahead and go all the way back into chapter 13 and walk through the story this morning. In chapter 13, we see verse 17, the first phrase, when Pharaoh led you to this series and don't know the Exodus story, God had dropped 10 plagues on the Egyptians for their refusal to let the slaves, the Hebrew slaves go.

The final plague was the killing of all the firstborn sons in Egypt. And it was at this point that Pharaoh was finally convinced that he must let the people go.

And so he calls Moses into his throne room and says, get out of here now, all of you, ASAP. And so that's what 17 is referencing, Exodus 13, 17, when Pharaoh let the people go.

[ 9 : 40 ]     Now listen to the next part. God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.

But God led the people around the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

Now, we're going to talk about joining God in adventure, not shrinking back from difficulty when the Lord has called you to walk through it. But I want to add a qualifier that we see in this particular text, and that is the Lord knows our frame.

He had in mind a particular difficulty for the Jews to go through, and that was to be pressed up against the Red Sea and see Pharaoh coming with his armies and assume that they were about to be annihilated.

He had a trial for them, but he did not have all trials for them at once. God has said to Moses, I'm not going to lead them directly into the promised land, because in the promised land, they will fight war after war after war, and they're just not ready for that.

[ 10 : 49 ]     This is an important reminder as we talk about trusting God in the trenches, right? And that's that God knows how to dispense trials to us in a way that is compatible with his fatherly kindness.

Charles Spurgeon once said, It would be a very sharp and trying experience to me to think that I have an affliction which God never sent me, that the bitter cup was never filled by his hand, that my trials were never measured out by him nor sent to me by his arrangement of their weight and quantity.

And that's what we're seeing in this particular section of Exodus 13. God is mindful of them. He knows what they can and cannot take. And so he arranges providentially for them to face one kind of trial and not another.

And friends, if perhaps you're in a trial now, I want you to know that God's in charge and that he has, in giving you this trial, kept you from others. And all of this is proceeding according to his careful measurement because, as Psalm 103 says, As the father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. And so, yes, we're going to see that the Lord is a man of war, but he is also, as a man of war, at the same time, a tender father who knows our frame.

[ 12 : 19 ]     And he directs us in one particular trial to avoid another, all of this according to his fatherly wisdom and care and his sovereign power.

Now, that's the struggle that God's withholding. He's not going to make them face the war immediately. He's not going to make them face all of the battles they must face in the future.

He sees that they're just not ready for that. But he does have a particular trial in mind for them, a particular place where they must trust him, where they will feel real dread and real fear because of the circumstances.

And that's found in chapter 14. Look at verse 1 of Exodus 14. Then the Lord said to Moses, Tell the people of Israel to turn back. Oh, my goodness, I forgot about all these names.

Oh, boy. I usually try to practice these beforehand, and I just, oh, my goodness. All right, let me try. You know, there was an old drummer, an old jazz drummer named Buddy Rich, and he used to say that if you don't know what you're playing, just play it louder.

[ 13 : 25 ] So maybe that's what I'll do here. Then the Lord said to Moses, Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp up. These just look so hard. But, Fahirath and Migdal at the sea, and Baal-Zephon, you shall encamp facing it by the sea.

For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, They are wandering in the land. The wilderness has shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them.

And I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts. And so the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so. So in verses 5 through 9, we see, well, in the verses we just read, we see that God has essentially placed his people out as bait for the serpent to strike at, the serpent Pharaoh.

In verses 5 through 9, which I won't read, we see that Pharaoh takes the bait. His addiction, as we talked about last week, his addiction to free labor was just too much for him to keep his word and his commitment.

So as soon as they fled, Pharaoh thought, what have I done letting these free labor sources, these slaves go? And so he repents of his repentance, I guess you could say.

[ 14 : 38 ] He rouses his army and chases them and sees the people pressed up against the Red Sea and thinks, oh my goodness, they've been delivered into my hand. Finally, the Egyptian gods are, you know, pulling some of the weight that I've been having to carry this whole time.

And he probably thought he literally just had everything set up perfectly. Now look at verse 10. When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them and they feared greatly.

And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?

Is not this what we said to you in Egypt? Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians. For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

Now let's just make a couple of observations from what we've read so far. And the first one just has to do with how perfectly God sees everything. He predicts two essential things.

[ 15 : 47 ] One, he predicts that the people are very timid. They're very weak. They've been beaten down for a very long time. And they do not have the faith to face all of the battles they would face in the promised land.

Well, and their reaction to this crisis proves that he was right about that, of course. But God also saw that Pharaoh would find them an irresistible target and he would pursue them to the Red Sea.

And once again, God sees perfectly and he knows exactly what Pharaoh is going to do. He knows exactly what the Hebrews are going to do. Now, that's the first thing we see.

The second thing we see is just how poorly man sees everything. We see how well God sees everything, how perfectly he sees everything. And now we see how poorly man sees everything.

And in many respects, the Hebrews and Pharaoh are both struggling with the same problem. Have you ever heard at the end of those investment commercials?

[ 16 : 43 ] Past performance does not predict future results. This is the trouble that both the Hebrews and Pharaoh are having. They had just gone through 40 days of plagues.

They had just seen the shock and awe of God's glory, you know, hammering the land. And yet neither of them could infer the proper lesson that they needed to from that experience.

For the Hebrews, as God's people, their call was to infer, based on God's past faithfulness, faithfulness, that he would be faithful in this present trial. And for Pharaoh, he was to infer, I shouldn't mess with this Yahweh.

So we see God seeing perfectly. We see people seeing poorly. Now, putting this all together, we just say that there's this huge gap between the way that we see things and the way that God sees things.

I think we read earlier this week in one of the podcasts, Isaiah 55, 8 through 9. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, the Lord says. Neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

[ 17 : 44 ] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. Now, keeping on in Exodus 14, we look at verse 13, and this is what Moses tells the people.

Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never see again.

The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. Jumping back to Tolkien for a moment, one of the things he's best known for is a phrase he developed called the eucatastrophe.

The eucatastrophe. A catastrophe of goodness, a catastrophe of grace. One article on this describes it as, in essence, a eucatastrophe is a massive turn of fortune from seemingly unconquerable situations to an unforeseen victory, usually caused by grace rather than heroic effort.

Such a turn is catastrophic in the sense of its breath and its surprise and positive and that a great evil or misfortune is averted.

[ 19 : 01 ] Tolkien called eucatastrophe a sudden and miraculous grace. Well, this is who God is, but you won't know that until you're pressed up against the Red Sea.

You can know that in a concept of, I know the earth is going to be blue when I get up there, but you won't know it, know it, until your back is pressed against the Red Sea, until you're in a situation that is seemingly unconquerable and where all hope has essentially been lost.

You won't know this thing about God that he breaks through at the last second with a surprising glory and grace to rescue his people. You won't know that until you're in a situation that requires that.

That is why I said at the beginning, if you really do just want to know God and that's your primary aim, then you will be willing to go places with him that look extremely sketchy because you will know that there are things I can learn about God in that trench with my back up against the Red Sea that I can't learn anywhere else.

And that's what we see in this passage. Go on to verse 16 of Exodus 14. And so God tells Moses to lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground and I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts, his chariots and his horsemen.

[ 20 : 42 ] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, that I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots and the horsemen. That's verses 16 through 18. Now look at verses 24 through 25.

People pass safely through the Red Sea. That's the part I'm not reading you. And then in verse 24, and in the morning, watch the Lord and the pillar of fire and the cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so they drove heavily.

And the Egyptians said, Let us flee before the God of Israel for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians. Now listen in the very next verse what Moses does.

with all the army of Pharaoh at the bottom on the seafloor of the Red Sea, the waters being miraculously suspended from them. Then the Lord says to Moses in verse 26, Stretch out your hand over the sea that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and upon their horsemen.

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared and as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.

[ 22 : 02 ] The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea. Not one of them remained, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power of the Lord that the Lord used against the Egyptians.

So the people feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. So that's the story. Next week we'll hit this first song in the Old Testament, Exodus chapter 15.

Let's think through some applications that we could make about this particular story. And we'll get these applications by asking a simple question. Why does God allow us to experience trials?

Why does God in various ways to various degrees allow our backs to be up against the wall? Why does he allow us, why does he put us in these particular situations like the one he put the Hebrews in as he led them to the sea?

[ 23 : 20 ] Well, we've already provided one answer but let's just make sure we understand it clearly. Look back at verse 31 of chapter 14. Here's one answer to this question.

Why does God do this? Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

This is the information they could only learn through the trial, through the trenches, on the adventure and we or they like Uri Gagarin may have some theoretical knowledge of God but until we are in a particular position in which that power of God must display itself for us we really don't know what we think we know.

Not entirely. There are a lot of verses that talk about this. One I immediately thought of as I was thinking about this subject is at the end of Job we're going to talk a little bit about Job next week but at the end of Job I feel like this is sort of this is sort of just the sweetest thing Job says in the whole book.

He says this to God. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear but now my eye sees you. I had heard of you by the hearing of my ear but now my eye sees you.

[ 24 : 48 ] This is one of the things God is doing in your trials. He is relocating head information into heart information. He's moving these theological truths from mere abstractions into bedrock principles that you can build your life on.

Proverbs 23 23 this is actually the first text I ever preached back when I was 20 years old I suppose. Proverbs 23 23 I think I was 19 actually. It says buy the truth and sell it not get also wisdom and understanding.

Buy the truth and sell it not get also wisdom and understanding. There's certain truth that costs more because it's better. And these truths about God and his heroic deliverance his trustworthiness his steadfast love his power over all the enemies that's a very precious truth.

It costs something friends. You're going to have to pay for this one. It costs risk. It costs difficulty. It costs being in a situation where your back's up against the wall.

It costs being in a difficult trial. That's how you get that truth. There's another passage in Proverbs that came to mind in this section and that is where in 27 I believe it is it says only one who is full loads honey but to one who is hungry everything bitter is sweet.

[ 26 : 20 ] This is a key clue on how you can endure trials not merely endure them but rejoice in them and that is to understand that this trial is here to teach you something about God and if you're hungry for God even the bitter trial will be sweet to one degree or another.

How do you know you're not hungry for God when the trial comes and you're just fussy? When you see no redeeming quality to it when you aren't leaning into the truth that God's teaching you some things and these are precious truths and why should I assume that they would come for cheap because they're precious and yeah I'm hungry for God and so even this bitter trial in some respects tastes sweet to me.

So that's one answer to the question why does God let us get our backs up against the wall so that we can learn something which quickly here's a second one I think I'm not telling you anything you don't know I'm just reminding you because we're leaky buckets!

Like the Hebrews were and the second idea the second answer to this question is not only are we going to learn some things about God but God's going to tell other people things through our story.

That's another thing God is doing through the Hebrews hardship he's going to let them go through this story so that he can then give this story to millions billions of believers throughout millennia so that not only they can see certain things about God but also the rest of the world remember try to remember the next time you're in the trenches try to understand that just like Tolkien was in the trenches and produced a story that blessed millions you being in the trenches will wind up being a blessing to others down the road you'll have a story to tell about God's care about God's power and your story can be a blessing to many others Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1 16 if we are afflicted it's for your comfort and salvation this is one of the things God is doing for you in your trials now I want to hit pause just real quickly and I want to speak about a very particular kind of trial and that is when you find yourself not threatened by some external enemy but by the internal enemy of your own sin because one of the hardest things we'll go through in life is not being chased up against the Red Sea by the external Pharaohs of the world but being chased right up to the edge of our very spiritual existence by our own sin and this is this is a real deal it's a real problem one of one of in fact

[ 29 : 05 ] I'm confident my greatest enemy is not somewhere out there building a pyramid right now my greatest enemy is in here and you wind up going through these seasons of life where you just become explicitly aware of this and you join with Paul in Romans 7 who will save me from this body of death it's the exact same need to be redeemed to be saved to be delivered from that as it is to be from saved and delivered from Pharaoh so I want to talk for a minute about like let's forget about the external enemies for a moment or the external hardships and just say you find a sin that has cornered you up against your very spiritual existence existence like it could end you what's going on there again I want to tell you that what's going on there in the end is that you need to see in a way you cannot see in any other way that God's steadfast love endures forever that he is a mighty deliverer and he's a man of war not only to external foes but to internal ones not only to flesh and blood but also to principalities and powers so one of the things

God's doing is he's showing you who he is in this season but also this that you feel ashamed and confused and like worthless as you repent God is going to do for you what he did for David last week we talked about how David has this weird parallel with Pharaoh they're both kings they're both sinned they've both sinned they've both treated other people as disposable and they're both confronted by prophets and while Pharaoh falsely repents David truly repents and thanks be to God we have the record of his repentance in Psalm 51 in Psalm 51 we see David's repentance explicitly laid out as he is delivered not from an external enemy but from an internal enemy from his own sin God has given him the gift of repentance and it is delivering him in every same way that the Egyptians or the Hebrews were delivered for the Egyptians but I want you to listen to like one little section of Psalm 51 verse 10 he prays create in me a clean heart

O God and renew a right spirit within me cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me restore me to the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit this is all very vertical this is David and God talking about David and God but watch the horizontal move then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you see that in the end what's the ultimate result of your struggle with sin you'll learn some things about God things you couldn't have learned any other way but you will also wind up having a story to tell to others and your story of deliverance will inform their expectation and hope for deliverance so even in our struggle with sin God is a fatherly man of war he's teaching you some things but he also has things to teach others through your story now the third answer to the question why does God let this stuff happen why do we wind up in trials why are we sometimes placed in the trenches it's probably the least intuitive and the least talked about at least in certain churches and that is that you've always got to keep something in mind

God is yes a savior but he's also a destroyer God is a man of war he isn't only a redeemer of the humble he's also a defeater of the proud and one of the things God will do through your trial is he will use your trial in some respect or another to put to shame the proud the evil and the wicked yes God has his saving purposes but he also has his destroying purposes why is God doing it all this way why let the Hebrews go through the steps they're going through because in the end in addition to saving Israel God has determined to execute Pharaoh and put an end to the wicked and friends this is just something you need to understand as you try to make sense of whatever situation you're going through



God is going to take care of you if you're humble and trust in him he'll take care of you but he's not just the Savior he's also the great judge and executor of justice look at verse 26 Exodus 14 verse 26 then the Lord said to Moses stretch out your hand over the sea that the water may come back upon the Egyptians upon their chariots upon their horsemen so Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared and as the Egyptians fled into it the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea not one of them remained but the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea the waters being a wall to them on their right and to their left verse 30 thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore we attribute both of those actions to God's wise intention and an expression of his sovereign will

[ 35 : 06 ] God is both the savior and the judge he executes both salvation and vengeance often in the very same story now this is something we're going to expand upon in much more detail next week but for now I just simply want to say you won't ever be able to make total sense of your struggles especially the dark dark dark ones until you realize that God might be for you and against somebody else in the same story the word says this over and over again God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble as I was thinking about this particular idea I was reminded of Mary the mother of Jesus and her song that she sang to Elizabeth after discovering that she was going to be the mother of the Christ listen to this in verse 46 listen for the saving and the judging in this particular section from Mary the mother of Jesus

Luke 1 46 and Mary said my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant for behold from now on all generations will call me blessed for he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name and his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation he has shown strength with his arm he has scattered the proud and the thoughts of their hearts he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate he has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty the one thing coming of the Lord Jesus results in two things as Simeon would later tell Mary in the temple the rising of many and the downfall of many what is God doing in my trials one of the things he's doing is he is becoming the aroma of life to those who are being saved and the aroma of death to those who are perishing why does

God have us in the trenches if you're in a trench right now this is good to know if you're not in a trench right now I expect you to call me three months from now and ask what you should do with the trench and I'll say listen to the sermon again no we'll get coffee what is God doing with my back against the wall number one he is giving you insight into his glory and goodness insight that can only be gained he is using your struggle to tell the world a story about his faithfulness and care and your affliction friend will lead to the comfort of others even if your affliction has to do with your own stupidity and sin when God redeems you with his outstretched arm he will restore the joy of your salvation and he will use you to teach other sinners the way of repentance and number three what is God doing when my back's up against the wall well he's saving you if you're in Christ but he's also sentencing and executing the sentence of judgment on the proud as God is both a savior and a destroyer listen to

Colossians 2 13 you'll hear these themes resound in this particular passage Colossians 2 13 and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them the Lord is a man of war let's pray Lord God we just ask that you would bless anyone who is sitting here this morning and thinking I'm in a trench I back up against the wall I feel hopeless despair is setting in I'm doubting God's goodness Lord would you please through your

Holy Spirit make the truth of your word true to them so true that it fills them and gives them a peace beyond all understanding Lord would you please stir up their hunger for you help them Lord prefer insight into the holiness of God over comfort in this life alone so Lord please I genuinely ask you Lord that you would bless those who are trembling and tired and feel as if they are in the midst of a trial they are in the midst of a trial whether self imposed or coming from the outside Lord please help them to know you are God you are good you know what you're doing and we'll get it done we praise your holy name for your faithfulness dear God this morning in Jesus name amen