

Oh, Army of God, Remember this Mountain

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[0:00] 2 Samuel chapter 1, starting at verse 17. I'll read this trusting that it's God's inspired, inerrant, clear, sufficient, powerful word for you and me, his people.

2 Samuel chapter 1, starting at verse 17. Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan, his son, and he told them to teach the children of Judah, the song of the bow. Indeed, it is written in the book of Jashur.

The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places. How the mighty have fallen. Tell it not to Gath. Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon.

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice. Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, nor rain upon you, nor fields of offerings.

For the shield of the mighty is cast away there. The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, and the sword of Saul did not return empty.

[1:23] Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with luxury, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle. Jonathan was slain in your high places. I am distressed for you.

My brother Jonathan, you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women. How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished. The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. Please pray with me. Oh Lord, we ask that your Holy Spirit will make clear, illuminate your word to your people today.

[2:40] Lord, we pray that Christ will be lifted up and exalted, and that your Holy Spirit will apply Christ to your people today through faith. Lord, we pray that Christ will nourish your people with those spiritual nutrients that we need.

You know where we're deficient, Lord. Please take these ordinary words and use it in an extraordinary way by your power for your glory. Please help the preacher to preach Christ with the freedom of a friend and with the affection of a brother.

For your glory and for Christ's sake we pray. Amen. Memory is a powerful thing.

Memory, according to Webster's Dictionary of 1828, is the faculty of the mind by which we retain knowledge of past events.

And similar to that is our recollection of a memory. Recollection is the operation by which ideas are recalled to the memory or revived in the mind. how we process a significant event in our lives will shape the way we remember it hasn't that been true in your experience as well what's fascinating that i learned this week is that modern neurology studying the brain it tells us that every time a person recalls a memory you are editing and rewriting it think how powerful our memories are because we are fallen creatures our emotions and our memory can distort our perceptions of past events well leading up to our sermon passage today saul and all of his sons the princes all died and there's israel it's a picture a shadow of the kingdom of heaven come onto earth but this kingdom is kingless the nation got its front teeth punched out what is the whole kingdom feeling right now how will god's people process this event how will they look back on this horrible defeat and how how will they store these memories of saul's entire reign as their king david has been anointed king but he's not yet ruling completely i believe what we have in our sermon passage for today is god by the holy spirit working how he worked mysteriously in the old covenant using david to shepherd the emotions and the memory of the kingdom he's shepherding their emotions and their national memory of god's people look at verse 17 we read that david lamented with this song it's it's a dirge

which is a song you sing in the time of sadness and mourning he's sad over the loss of the nation but especially saw and jonathan are the two subjects verse 18 is very interesting on the purpose of this song look at verse 18 david commands that it be taught to the children of judah and he called it the song of the bow that's the title why judah well judah is the tribe that david's from and it's the land where he's been traveling been closest to where he's beginning to consolidate an army people following him he'll soon begin acting as king of judah before he becomes the king of the whole nation and he wants the children the next generation in judah to remember this event in this way so he's very careful with how he does it in the order that this be written in the book of jasher do you see that word jasher in verse 18 that hebrew word means upright the book of the upright you're supposed to read this book it's been lost to history we don't know much about it or or anything too specific but it's mentioned also in the book of joshua after the lord did something mighty write it in the book of jasher and it's a book for the the upright the men of valor for the army to be inspired and remembered and that's how david wants this death of saul and jonathan to be remembered as an inspiration for the army in the future before we walk through this song itself some of us are united to christ we're saved we know god has declared us to be righteous but many of us at least if you're like [7:50] me we are still tormented by our own broken flesh first john 3:20 admits this our hearts condemn us still he's writing to the christians to the church our hearts still condemn us but god is greater than our heart brothers and sisters we need christ to shepherd our hearts to shepherd our emotions and maybe even to heal our memories so the title of today's sermon is this oh army of god remember this mountain here's four reasons that david gives us number one oh army of god remember this mountain where the glory of god's people was slain remember this mountain where the glory of god's people was slain that's what he says in verse 19 the beauty or glory of israel is slain in your high places how the mighty have fallen and that's the refrain he says it three times how the mighty have fallen in verse 20 he says tell it not in gath proclaim it not in the streets of ashkelon why these two places well these are our mighty hubs for the army of the enemy the philistines don't don't let them know what happened he says lest the daughters of the philistines rejoice lest the daughters of the uncircumcised those people that are outside of god's covenant will triumph what we have going on is david calling the people of god the army to to sing and remember this how the mighty have fallen but don't let them hear what we're saying we need to process this emotion we need to grieve it but don't let them know because we're at war still the war is not over it's a worship war it's a fight over what will be sung and to whom it will be proclaimed this is so so fascinating to me because it's david's response to the last actions we saw the philistines take you can flip back probably one leaf in your bible to first samuel chapter 31 the last chapter of first samuel and look at verses nine and ten here's the last action of the philistines here's what they did and now what we get now is david's response his counteraction what the philistines did was go to saul's dead body cut off his head strip off his armor and then sent word throughout the land of the philistines to gospel it to declare it in the temple of their idols and among the people and they put his armor in the temple of their ashteraths and they fastened his body to a city wall the philistines are singing their own songs they're proclaiming their own good news and they're worshiping in their temples about this great victory over god's people david's calling the army of god to grieve over the loss of this battle but the war is not over don't let the enemy rejoice over us he's shepherding their emotions and how they're going to process this event instead he's calling the people lament with me he says don't let the daughters of the philistines hear it but now there's a contrasting line later on in this poem in this song look at verse 24 of our sermon passage he speaks directly to another set of daughters in verse 24 oh daughters of israel weep for saul see they're cheering about saul's death but we are honoring saul he's calling the next generation of israel to keep the fifth commandment to honor the authorities god has put over us even though saul was not worthy of honor this office that he filled the office of an earthly king over god's people

is worthy of honor so weep with me oh daughters of israel and he reminds them very specifically of god's providence through king saul look at verse 24 he clothed you in scarlet with luxury who put ornaments of gold on your apparel see even from the hand of saul the lord delivered blessings for his people i love calvin's comment on this quote even if our enemies are the most evil in the world david could have felt that about saul god still does not want his grace to be overlooked that's the end of calvin's quote so the first reason david gives the nation is this army of god remember this mountain where the glory of god's people was slain we're going to lament it but we're not going to let the enemy rejoice over us we'll weep together we'll sing together we're going to go through this

crisis together but the war is not over here's the second reason oh army of god remember this mountain where god's anointed cast away his shield remember this mountain where god's anointed cast away his shield i'm not a literary expert but those that i've read who who are and have studied hebrew poetry which this is a wonderful example of hebrew poetry they they have been blown away at the level of complexity and beauty and the structure of this song the song did not make it into the psalter but it did make it into holy scripture it's part of the inspired word of god and one of the literary devices that david uses is called apostrophe it's when a speaker breaks off from addressing the audience or the narrative and directs his speech to an absent person or a personified object this is what david does he later on is going to speak to the daughters of israel like we just saw he's going to speak to jonathan even though jonathan is dead his body's buried and his soul is with the lord he's speaking to him as an apostrophe but in verse 21 who does david speak to look in your own copy of god's word verse 21 oh mountains of gilboa remember the word he in hebrew gilboa is springs of living water so it's it's a mountain or a hill from which comes bubbling up these springs that flow into the valley and david's speaking directly to that mountain now let there be no dew nor rain upon you nor fields nor offerings he's cursing this mountain this is a cursed mountain now it was supposed to be springs of life may you get no rain no water no more life from you you are now a mountain of death so may you be dried up lifeless for the shield of the mighty is cast away there when is it that a soldier casts away his shield when does his his shield drop off to his side it's when the soldier goes lifeless it's the last thing to go in a battle when you're being overrun by the enemy the last thing to drop will be the shield more specifically he says the shield of saul he's associating king saul his tormentor his persecutor with a a piece of the armor and if you think of saul you probably think of a different piece from his arsenal right you probably think of saul who always had what in his right hand he always had that spear and he's always throwing the spear trying to kill david trying to kill his own son jonathan and david's still honoring king saul not associating him with the spear but saul is the shield nowhere is saul's evil family rival seeking spear mentioned in this entire song saul is being honored as the commander in chief of the nation's department of defense the shield but he says something interesting in verse 21 this shield is not anointed with oil verse 22 from the blood of the slain from the fat of the mighty he never retreated so the image we have of saul is withstanding this onslaught this rushing of the army and now the the shield which is his symbol is is dry it's not anointed with oil and it's dropped to his side he never retreated he got run over and he's lifeless soldiers would take oil and they would rub oil onto a shield if it's a bronze or copper or iron shield or something like that the oil would help to deflect an arrow or a sword help it to glance off of it if you didn't have very much money and your shield was made of leather you would still put oil on it to keep it from getting stiff and so that it would serve its purpose better and saul was the very first national human king over israel their first shield and david's also using a layered symbolism the shield of the nation is no longer anointed he loves using this word no longer messiahed remember that civil magistrates are appointed by god to wield the sword pray for rulers pray for the government pray for local and national defense and trust that god preserves the nation through them no matter how evil or wicked they are we still praise the lord for it but it also leaves us wanting a shield for the nation for the kingdom that will be anointed that will have the the oil of the holy spirit lifting up the defender of god's people and it's foreshadowing david coming in as the next anointed king the next anointed shield but even beyond that it's pointing to the great true shield the true defender of god's people so remember this mountain where god's anointed cast away his shield the third reason he gives them is this oh army of god remember this mountain where the valiant did not turn back remember this mountain where the valiant did not turn back now we're going to find out why david titled this song the way he did remember it's called the song of the bow but we're all the way down to verse 22 and we still haven't heard of the bow and now he finally says it in the end of verse 22 if saul was the shield it was the bow of jonathan that did not turn back he's lifting up now the hero of this whole song which is jonathan never became a king but he is the one that the the mighty soldiers in future generations that are going to read about and they need to look to him as their pattern he says of jonathan he did not retreat we need to picture this scene a little bit better and if we turn back again to the last chapter of first samuel we'll find some help look at first samuel chapter 31 verse 1 verse 1 of the last chapter of first samuel and here's the scene as it would be with any battle that's using hand-to-hand combat one side mounts up on one hill or one mountain another side on the other mountain another hill and in the middle is the valley where they're all going to rush in and fight whoever wins in the valley is going to continue to push up until they overtake the hill of the enemy and if we look at the very first verse of first

samuel 31 we get this wonderful insight

the philistines fought against israel and the men of israel fled from before the philistines and fell slain on mount gilboa so they go down into the valley and they fight but then israel retreats and they run well where do they run they run behind their shield back into the top of mount gilboa where king saul would still be so here they are retreating past their king trying to hide behind him and though the progression in a hand-to-hand combat would be the poorest soldiers that are the foot soldiers go down into the valley first and then the archers send their arrows the artillery and then the the wealthier class that has land and can afford to have grass on which a horse could feed that's the equestrian class so then the cavalry could come charging in after and the chariots of the philistines if the terrain would allow it and then finally would be the nobility the the king of each one just like a chess match when you get the king it's over so doesn't that make sense now as we read verse one there's jonathan to the right hand of king saul waiting up on top of mount gilboa and here come the philistines army overrunning them and david says if you go back to our sermon passage verse 22 the sword of saul did not return empty and the bow of jonathan did not turn back there they are jonathan still firing off arrows as they charge at him and and saul with the sword drawn not going to run away saul and jonathan he says in verse 23 were beloved and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided they were swifter than eagles they were stronger than lions if you look at first samuel 31 verse 3 we read it was the archers that hit saul and he was severely wounded by the archers and that might be another reason why david named this song the song of the bow david is reclaiming the very weapon that defeated king saul the lord loves to turn a symbol of defeat into a memorial of his might doesn't he yes jonathan died but jonathan did not retreat write this down in the book so that the next generation of the army can be inspired david used loves to use the term men of valor these valiant men and he has this mighty man that will soon join him and they'll go around and by the power of the spirit god will give them great victories but he holds up jonathan he points to his his good friend jonathan even though he's probably 40 years older than him as a valiant man even though he died he's the one we try to remember and fight with a fight like when we're in battle remember his valor learn from him upright soldiers fight to the end so army of god david says remember this valley this mountain where valiant men did not turn back well the fourth reason david gives the army is this army of god remember this mountain where the beloved prince was slain remember this mountain where the beloved prince was slain look at verse 27 how the mighty have fallen he says the weapons of war perished weapons of war perish who was the philistines greatest weapon of war we joked about how goliath was a weapon of mass destruction undefeated and who was israel's goliath a head and shoulders above taller than anyone else in all of israel it was saul saul was israel's giant and now he has perished perished just like goliath has both ended up being decapitated and both heads were carried around

as a trophy of war for the other side god teaches that the weapons of this world metal swords shields spearheads remember it was all the the philistines that had a monopoly on metal and blacksmith and that israelites had to get all their weapons from the philistines and david is just saying the weapons of war have perished they've they've gone away they've faded away there's nothing to put our hope in anymore if we're going to have to fight in the way of the world and even though it's subtle i believe he's he's calling to mind to the israelites what they already know from other parts of scripture but have forgotten and it's this that god's people don't fight using the weapons or tactics of this world and the rest of scripture makes it very clear including the old testament may those ways of the world perish second corinth chronicles 20:15 says thus says the lord to you do not be afraid or dismayed because of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but god's proverbs 21:31 david's son will write this the horse is prepared for the day of battle but deliverance is of the lord psalm 20 verse 7 this is a psalm of david some trust in chariots and some in horses but we will remember the name of the lord our god psalm 46:9 god is the one like we sang today this powerful song god makes wars cease to the ends of the earth god breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two he burns the chariot with fire well the chariot is the it's the tank of the philistine army i mean this is made of metal is pulled by horses and if you get in the way of a philistine chariot you are done with don't worry about the the weapons of this world the lord burns the chariots of the philistines with fire the lord is the one who will fight for us but in this final movement these last few verses david brings that refrain to light one more time in verse 25 how the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle notice what he says next jonathan was slain in your high places by repeating the refrain here one last time and using a literary device called parallelism david is saying what i said initially was correct i had said how the mighty have fallen the glory of god in the high places and

now he's interpreting what he had said in verse 19 by repeating it and saying what's more and telling us how to understand the glory of god the beauty of god and what he says here is that jonathan is exactly that the glory of god that was slain is jonathan jonathan is the glory of israel prince jonathan jonathan is the one that the upright should weep over and never forget and strive to be like and when you fight fight remembering jonathan and he weaves into this shepherding of a nation's emotions a nation's memory forming and memory writing he weaves in his own personal lament he's a transparent worshiper of god grieving and letting the whole nation see his grief in verse 26 i am distressed for you my brother jonathan you have been very pleasant to me your love to me was wonderful surpassing the love of women

[28 : 09] he's declaring for the whole nation to hear that somehow there was a ministry david received through this prince that's almost beyond what words or comparisons in this life can communicate jonathan is to be remembered as the bow and we're to sing the song of the bow that bow would draw to david's memory that last second to the last encounter but that last great act of kindness where jonathan had his dad pressuring him king saw to become the next king and making david his enemy don't you see david's going to get everything that should be yours and jonathan took his bow with him he said david hide behind that rock of escape i'll use my bow and i'll signal to you how god's going to preserve your life and he said david flee it's not going to be safe under anywhere that my my dad king saw has jurisdiction remember first samuel 18 4 jonathan then took off the royal princely robe he had his other you know garments i'm sure but the the symbol of being a prince he gave to david and he also gave david his armor listen to the details of first samuel 18 4 even to his sword and his bow and his belt the song of the bow david had kept the head of saul everywhere he went i'm sure he would cherish this gift from prince jonathan the bow jonathan brothers and sisters i hope you see was for david who we now know in the light of all revelation our lord jesus is for us who he saved jonathan is a shadow of christ it's christ in his self-sacrifice his covenant faithfulness giving us his robes of righteousness proving his trusting obedience to his father to the very end ultimately by his death so church of god we can't be done today until we remember together another place and i pray that it's more than just our our memory being formed the way god designed i pray that it's the spirit rewriting the memory of the work of christ for you who know him oh church of god remember this place where a much greater pivotal battle took place it was a rock in the shape of a skull in hebrew it's golgotha in latin it's calvaria that's where we get the word calvary and as worshipers traveled to the place where god would meet them the temple in jerusalem on a hill called zion they would travel and pilgrimage there singing special songs called the songs of ascent climbing up because they had to go up this mountain range toward jerusalem to the temple and our lord jesus christ met the forces of darkness and the power of death at this place at the top of this mountain the gospels say that the crucifixion site was near the city but outside the walls and it was visible from a distance as ridge lines are you can see the cross as you're climbing up toward the place where god will meet his people oh army of god remember this mountain where our beloved prince the ultimate glory of god's people was slain philippians 2 7 and 8

he made himself of no reputation taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even the death of the cross oh army of god remember this mountain where god's anointed cast away his shield our lord could have shielded himself in any way he wanted and he knew this even in his final moments in matthew 26 jesus said i could pray to my father and he will provide me with more than 12 legions of angels we read in john 10 that our lord jesus laid down his life willingly he did not shield himself from the cross he says i lay down my life that i may take it again no one takes it from me but i lay it down of myself i have power to lay it down and i have power to take it up again this command i have received from my father and he was a valiant man to the very end oh army of god remember this mountain where the valiant did not turn back isaiah 50 verse 5 gives the words that jesus fulfilled i was obedient i did not turn away i set my face like flint luke 9 51 confirms jesus steadfastly set his face to do it oh army of god remember this mountain where the weapons of war perished our lord disarmed the devil and the host of demons they have no power over him or his kingdom second corinthians 10 the verses we read a moment ago for though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in god for pulling down strongholds so army of god remember this mountain that's what all of the new testament writers by the inspiration of the spirit call us to do think of hebrews 12 to look to our beloved prince who climbed that mountain we can say the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the

cross despising the shame and our lord jesus didn't stay on that mountain the lord loves to turn a symbol of defeat into a memorial of his might once again we remember the cross empty now don't we he climbed high above the cross to a greater mountain the kingdom of heaven and he arose he lives he ascended to the highest heaven and he sat down at the right hand of the throne of god almighty and from there he reigns as the true king isaiah 43 25 i even i am he who blots out your transgressions for my own namesake i will not remember your sins because of his work jesus christ fulfilled what god has promised all along and even though god is omniscient he's all-knowing he promises that the work of christ it erases our sin from god's memory so to speak it's the words of scripture hebrews 10 17 god promises your sins brothers and sisters in christ your sins and lawless deeds god says i will remember

no more this is how great was christ's victory and his victory transforms our memory if god doesn't remember your sins and mine you cannot let those sins and those past faults continue to accuse you and torment you god says i will not let those sins for which christ died be counted against you be imputed against you anymore your conscience in christ is now freed from the legal weight of these past sins our memory is to be renewed in christ let christ rewrite your own memory of what he has done and what that means for you who are in him we are now freed to focus our memory on god's faithfulness rather than our failures some of you have testified how this is a work god has done in your life recently in the last few years and it's it's such a gift isn't it we don't approach god being accused of all of our failures we approach god to fix our thoughts our memories and remembrance on his great work and his great faithfulness that's why we love that all of our hymns but one of them comes to mind especially it's when satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within our hearts condemning upward i look and see him there who made an end of all my sin because my sinless savior died jesus christ my soul is now counted free for god the just has satisfied to look on him and pardon me psalm 77 i will remember the works of the lord surely i will remember your wonders of old i will also meditate on all your work and talk of your deeds psalm 111 for he has made his wonderful works to be remembered the lord is gracious and full of compassion this is what we remember this is what we meditate on this is what we put our eyes upon over and over again as long as our flesh continues to accuse us so army of god i pray that by the power of the spirit we will be stirred up with love for god as we remember the valor of king jesus on that mountain where he did not retreat for you and me and his kingdom is coming it's coming spiritually now but it's coming consummately one day and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess and the host of angels armies will follow him the lord of hosts and he will rule and his glory will cover the new heavens the new earth like the waters cover the sea let's pray longing for this great day and trusting him by faith every day until then oh lord mighty are your works and they're to be remembered you've preserved them in scripture for us they prove lord again and again and again you are gracious and full of compassion please cause us lord to run to the cross of jesus the mount of calvary and find refreshing again for our souls today father we ask this for your glory for christ's sake alone amen