

Hold Me Up, While I Hold it All Down

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[0 : 00] Say, I'm glad you're here. All right. Praise the Lord.

Amen. Good morning. So good to see new faces, familiar faces. Welcome to South Bay Church. And, yeah, we're just excited about what God is doing.

Yeah. We just love this church. We love this place. And I'm so glad you can be here this morning. Amen. Before I go any further, I do want to, and I'm going to dismiss the kids in a minute. But I want to give honor to some friends of ours, Nathaniel and Jen Lyons.

They've been wonderful friends of ours. And, you know, their dad connects with Pastor Sicarosco and the whole Acrosco family. So there's just so much history there.

But I want to give them honor this morning. Amen. And on this Friendsgiving, friends of mine. All right, kids, you can stand up and be dismissed.

[1 : 51] Go to Sunday school. Dan is waiting for you right there in the back. Praise God.

If you have your Bible, go ahead and turn to Exodus chapter 17. We're going to start at verse 6. Exodus 17.

I'm sorry, I'm going to begin at verse 8. Verse 8. Okay, let's read. Then came Amalek and fought with Israel and Rephidim, which means resting place.

Reprieved, a place to rest. And Moses said to Joshua, choose us out, men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand at the top of the hill of the rod of God, or with the rod of God, in mine hand.

So Joshua did as Moses said to him and fight with Amalek. And Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass when Moses held his hand, held up his hand, that Israel prevailed.

[3 : 23] And when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy. Everyone say heavy. And they took a stone and put it under him.

And he sat there on. And Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other one and the other on the other side.

And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited or defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. For I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek under heaven.

Verse 15. And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah Nisi. For he said, behold, the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

[4 : 25] Amen. And I want to just, I know food's getting cold, right? He said that for my sake. Just as a little reminder. I want to preach on this thought.

Hold me up while I hold it down. Hold me up while I hold it down. Praise God. Let's pray. Father, we love you. We praise you.

We thank you, God, for your goodness and your mercy. God, for your loving kindness, God. Your long-suffering. Lord, when I didn't deserve it, God, you loved me anyways. While we were yet sinners, you died for us.

Oh, God. And we thank you. This day, God, touch our minds, our ears, our hearts. God, minister to us, Lord, as we hear your word today. We love you. We praise you in Jesus' mighty name.

Everybody say it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Praise God. I was reading this study by Harvard Health, and it said this.

[5 : 27] Loneliness. Everyone say loneliness. Loneliness is as dangerous to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Loneliness is as dangerous to your health, your well-being as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

And he said, oh, 15 cigarettes? That's light work. Come on, somebody. 15. 15. 15. Every single day. Not because of tobacco.

Not because of nicotine. Not because of those things. But because of isolation. Our immune system suffers. Our stress, it spikes up.

The heart pays the price. But the study goes on to tell us that there is some hope. Remember to say hope. That there is hope in this.

[6 : 23] That strong, supportive relationships. Relationships that will be real with you and straight with you and honest with you. That will show up when everybody else just kind of, when it's convenient for them.

Those kinds of relationships actually heal the body. They bring healing to your body. They heal your mind. They heal the parts of your body where you just feel that's not well enough in your neck.

It reduces stress. It strengthens your immunity. But also the great thing is it lengthens your life. It also makes you better looking. No, I added that last part.

But here's the takeaway. Wrong people will break you down. Wrong people will break you down. And no people will kill you.

But the right people in your life. The right relationships. The right friends. The right confidants. The right ones you yoke up with in your life. Those are the ones that are going to build you up.

[7 : 30] Those are the ones that are going to heal your body. Heal your spirit. Your wounded spirit. Amen. And I know I'm not alone when I say that there's some wounds in our lives that affect our ability even to trust people.

There's wounds in our hearts and in our minds that affect our ability even to trust people. But I'm telling you, that's something that we have to overcome because isolation will kill us.

And God never meant for his church or his body or his people to live in isolation in a silo and by themselves. Amen. So now we transition to this text that we read in Exodus 17.

Talking about the children of Israel. Let's go into the wilderness with them, shall we? And this story kind of looks like some people's lives. This barrenness in the wilderness.

But also, they've been delivered. They've been brought out of this place of bondage and this place of oppression. Amen. In their lives. Does anybody know that feeling of God just bringing you out?

[8 : 38] And you felt depressed. You felt held down and in bondage. But God showed up. Amen. And God brought you out. Hallelujah. And he broke the chains of bondage in your life.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. But Israel just was delivered from 400 years. 400 years. That's a long time.

And they didn't walk out quietly. Ten plagues shook Egypt's knees. They walked out under bloodstained doorposts.

Through a split, wide open red sea. Pharaoh's army, the water came crashing down on them. Moses sings a song. Miriam sings a song.

All of victory. He brings them out. God heals bitter waters in Marah. Israel murmured after being delivered.

[9 : 38] But God sends food anyways. God sends manna and quail. Amen. God kept providing. God kept leading. God kept showing himself faithful.

Say faithful, please. Because God is a faithful God. Amen. And they're free. But they're not fully transformed. They're not fully transformed.

They're delivered. But they're still kind of detoxing Egypt. They're still detoxing what it's like to live there and have that mindset. They're detoxing this slavery mindset.

Because God can take people out of Egypt in a moment. But it takes a process to bring the Egypt out of those people. Amen. And that kind of is like us.

You know, we, God saves us. God delivers us. God removes us. And we escape out of the life of sin. Out of the life of Egypt, the world. He regenerates us.

[10 : 34] And, but then begins this long, long process. Of sanctification. This process of becoming like Jesus. Pulling the Egypt, the world out of our lives.

Amen. Amen. Hallelujah. God can deliver us from the addictions. And God can deliver us from those things. But there's still something in us sometimes. There's little appetites that we have that God is still working inside of us.

Amen. Till we become more like him. Praise God. That was just more of a side note. But this is where we meet Israel.

They're traveling through the wilderness in this place. And it's just like those hard times.

They just reveal more of who you are. Right? Stress. And hard times, difficult times, stress. They just reveal more of what's on the inside of us. They really do.

[11 : 33] And it reveals really what was on the inside of Israel. They were murmuring. They were complaining. They were tired. We remember sitting near the meat pots in Egypt. We remember.

They had this manna from heaven. But they remember the meat in Egypt still. But in this time where they're traveling. And this is, and listen, the scripture that we read.

This is just weeks after coming out of Egypt. It's not years. It's weeks from just being delivered out of Egypt. And so here they come. And they're thirsty. They're tired.

They're frustrated. Anybody know what that feels like? Maybe that's you this morning. Praise God. But God has a word for someone here today. Praise the Lord.

And they're wondering, is God really with us? Is God really going to move in our midst? Even after he had changed the water from bitter to sweet and the food was provided.

[12 : 33] And walking ahead of them is Moses. Not movie Moses. Not Charlton Heston. Okay. Some of you know.

I watched that and I thought, oh, wow. I can't believe that's all in the Bible. But in the Bible kind of Moses. The Moses who ran from Egypt.

The one who said, Lord, I can't speak. I got a speech impediment. The man God still chose. And he's now 80 years old. Say 80. He's 80 years old.

He's leading a nation through the desert. But nothing but obedience and a wooden staff. And beside him is his brother Aaron.

Faithful. Familiar. The one who speaks for him. And steadies him. And somewhere in the back we have Joshua. Joshua. Young. Loyal.

[13 : 32] Unproven. But he's going to be commanding. He's going to be leading and fighting. He's the kind of guy you want in your corner. He's the kind of guy you want on your team.

And then we have a man named Hur who's not flashy, not famous. But he's the friend who stays. Who's consistent. Who shows up. He's not the most popular.

He's not the most flashy. But he's the friend who stays. When all the other friends leave and all the others go. He's the one that's there and still with us. Or with Moses. He lifts quietly.

He doesn't seek the spotlight. But he's there to support his friend when he feels weakest. And feels the need for help at this time.

But these are the people in the story. These are the people that are coming out of Egypt. And they're moving to the promised land. They're moving to this future. This place that was promised to them.

[14 : 31] But this is the circle God assembled. Not flashy. Not, you know, popular. But this is the ragtag group that we have. And sometimes we may feel like that here.

You know, we're not the flashiest. You know, not the best preachers, speakers. Have the most. But this is who God assembled. This is who God brought together. Amen. This is who God said, you know what?

I want this person here. Amen. Hallelujah. I want Amanda here. I want Brian here. I want Hosea and Cecilia here. I want Ezekiel here. This is who I'm going to assemble for my work in the city of Gilroy and in the South Bay.

And then. And then. Right when they're exhausted and they're, you know, their kind of trust is trembling, wavering, they're thirsty.

Here comes the enemy. Right when they think they're going to have a reprieve and a rest and a siesta. Doesn't that sound nice? A little siesta.

[15 : 41] Boom. Amalek. Attacks. Unprovoked. You know, unwarranted. But these, they come out of nowhere and they attack. Verse 8 says, and then came Amalek and fought with Israel and Rephidim.

And Amalek comes to attack them. And, you know, Amalek is not just some people. They're actually related. Amalek is a descendant of Esau.

The nation of Israel is a descendant. It comes from the line of Jacob. And so they're related. And so they're related. They're family. And isn't that crazy that the tension, you know, it doesn't come from strangers.

The tension doesn't come from people that we may not know, although they might want to kick up some dust. You know, a lot of tension does come from family. A lot of tension comes from people you're related with.

From trauma. This is not trauma that just happened in a moment. This is trauma that happened years and years. Because Jacob took the birthright of Esau. Remember that?

[16 : 51] Esau represents kind of like the fleshly man. His cravings. His desires. And he sold his birthright for a pot of stew. He didn't revere that birthright or what that meant.

But these are the people that we're dealing with here. There's drama. There's tension. There's, you know, there. Sound familiar?

Come on, somebody. Sound familiar? Oh, that was my family on Thanksgiving. That was my family this last Thursday. I don't like white meat.

I like dark meat. I wanted the wishbone. Anyways. But this Amalek are attacking the children of Israel.

And, you know, they're not attacking like you would think from the front. In fact, they attack in a very specific way. In Deuteronomy 25, 17 and 18, it actually tells us how they attacked.

[17 : 54] Moses says, remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way when you were come forth out of Egypt. How he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee from the rear.

Even all that were feeble behind thee. When thou was faint and weary and he feared not God. He attacked the back of the line.

He attacked the weak. Doesn't that sound like the enemy? Attacking us right when we're the weakest. Attacking us when we are the most vulnerable. Attacking us.

You know, and not even just us. He'll attack the weak ones in the family. He'll attack the children. He'll attack the elderly. He'll attack those that maybe aren't strong in their faith.

But this is a revelation of the strategy of Satan in our lives. He will attack, not front, but he's going to attack the rear.

[18 : 52] Amen. He's going to attack those that are tired. He'll attack the families, the children, the elderly, those who are faint and weary. And he attacks the ones on their way to the promised land.

He attacks the ones who have promised on their life. Who are headed to promise. Who are headed, amen, to blessing. And he attacked Israel's future.

He attacks what they were going to and promised from the Lord. The enemy doesn't attack your past. He may bring it up.

He may bring it up somehow. But he's not going to attack your past. You know who he's going to attack? He's going to attack your future. He's going to attack your future.

Hear what I'm saying, church? That's the future right there. Very good. Praise the Lord. Daddy. Daddy. He attacks your future.

[20 : 03] He attacks the part of you that are still developing. He attacks your children. He attacks your potential. He attacks your calling. He attacks your next season.

Amen. The enemy wants to attack those areas of our lives. And if we don't take notice of what the word of the Lord is telling us. Hallelujah.

We're not going to be hearing stories of victory. We're not going to be hearing stories of, I didn't reach them. They just left. They just fell apart. I'm telling someone here today, that does not have to be your story.

That does not have to be your end. Praise God. Your end. Your future. Your promise. Amen. It will be victorious. Amen. It will be victorious. Amen. It will be victorious. Amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. If you put your trust in Jesus Christ.

If you show up to church. If you're faithful to God. Amen. Amen. Hallelujah. He will make your promises, your future sure.

[21 : 01] Amen. but why does he do this? why does he attack our future? because it intimidates him it scares him because he knows his end and it threatens him he does not want to see the kingdom advance he does not want to see your future advance he does not want to see your children serving God he does not want to see that but he wants to bring the battle and bring an end to your life but the battle is not about where Israel has been it's about where they're going and before the battle even begins God speaks to Joshua God brings Joshua and this is actually the first time that we Joshua is mentioned in the scripture he doesn't God doesn't introduce him in comfort or in flashiness but he comes in conflict hello somebody conflict conflict and for some they're like

I know what that's about I know what that's about this morning when I got up there was conflict already happening verse 9 says and Moses said to Joshua choose out choose us out men and go out and fight with Amalek tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill and the rod of God in mine hand and before Joshua fights he must choose this is important before Joshua fights he must choose before he swings a sword he's got to select you know he's got to select he's got to select a circle he's got to select some people to fight with him he's got to choose some people to go to battle with him and to go to war with him before he steps into this destiny this future he must choose his companions his comrades who he goes to war with who he's going to do battle with hallelujah can I tell you something not everyone belongs in your battle not everyone belongs in your battle not everyone should have access to your weakness not everyone belongs hear what I'm going to say because it does matter not everyone belongs at your table not every voice hello young people not every voice belongs or I guess it's speaking to your life but Joshua doesn't choose popularity he doesn't he doesn't choose flashiness he chooses character he chooses loyalty he chooses courage and he chooses covenant and this is you know this is a great demonstration or act of spiritual warfare choose wisely scripture tells us that two are better than one it tells us that a friend loves at all times says iron sharpens irons you don't choose people based on where you are you choose them based on where you're going can I hear an amen hallelujah

I don't know if this is changing some or messing with some mindsets about friends but we need to choose our friends wisely we need to choose our circle wisely we need to choose I don't know why I keep talking about this we need to choose who we allow to speak into our lives wisely hello somebody if you're new in the church we need to choose wisely who we allow into our circle and speak into our lives amen the church here's what I here's what I know from personal experience some of us are just exhausted some of us are here this morning and we are exhausted not because the battle is too great but because the circle around us is too small the friends in our lives the circle in our lives is too small or the circle is not right or the circle is wrong and some of you are some of us are fighting with people who don't lift you who don't pray with you who don't build you and don't walk in faith but it feels like they are sucking the life out of you the energy out of you hallelujah but God thanks be to God he's inviting us hallelujah he's inviting us and he's giving us permission to choose the right fighters to choose the right circles to choose the lifters in our lives hallelujah to choose those that will show up when it's inconvenient and lifting up our hands hallelujah choosing people who will point us to Jesus not pull us away from Jesus that matters and that's important so Joshua is in the valley but another battle is happening on the hill while Joshua's fight is the visible battle

Moses climbs on the hill and he fights this invisible battle Moses goes into intercession Moses goes to prayer for the people of God so Joshua did as Moses said to him and he fought with Amalek and Moses and Aaron and Hurl went up to the top of the hill and it came to pass when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed but when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed years ago in Sunday school I did a lesson it was on this story and I was reading the story I said okay kids you are Amalek and you are Israel I said when I say Israel prevails I want you to go to town on those guys Amalek when I say Amalek prevails I want you to go to town and so I was just going back and forth I was going Israel prevailed and they were just like oh Amalek prevailed and they go you know they go back and forth it was a lot of fun but he lifts his hands and Israel's prevailing against Amalek and then his hands start to come down and Amalek starts to prevail

I don't know maybe it's a sick twisted part of my brain but part of me is like that was me up there I go I'm sorry that's just sick twisted right I did have I had a brain injury so thank you I use it often but Moses is lifting the rod of God which is an another great great gem in that because Moses calls it the rod of God and God calls it the rod of Moses God gave what he had in his hands and gave it to the and God and God says you got this Moses I'm going to bless it I'm going to touch it whatever we church whatever we got in our hands let's give it to God whatever talents whatever gifts

[28 : 47] I know this is not really part of the but I'm telling you whatever gifts and talents you have in your life whatever you have to bring to the table I'm telling you if you will give that to God I'm talking about finances too your finances your stuff if we will give it to God God will turn back and bless it for the good of the kingdom hallelujah and the good of your family and your future but he lifts the rod of God and Israel's winning but when they drop they're losing and Joshua looking up at Moses it's like Moses please keep your arms up but Moses is human he's tired he's weary he's 80 years old are you going to be able to hold a heavy rod up at 80 years old I don't know I thought I was doing that but he's fighting gravity fighting fatigue holding up the destiny of a nation and this is where the story turns for good you know Aaron and her follow Moses up that hill and they see him shaking anybody ever lift weights everybody trying to lift heavy grab the corner what are you doing over there happened to us last night

I'm lifting up this bunk bed set and I'm going up the stairs and cash I don't know what happened but I'm like what are you doing back there and I almost dropped it but they see him shaking and struggling and they don't shame him then I go come on come on Moses man of God come on man I thought you still had it they don't judge him or tell him be stronger Moses stand firm in the Lord they step in they step into his life and in that situation verse 12 says but Moses his hands were heavy and they took a stone and put it under him and he sat there on and Aaron and her stayed up his hands one on the one side and the other on the other side and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun one on the right one on the left they lift his arms and put a rock under him and they stayed in him until the battle shifts church on this friend skin in this season in this message

I want to tell us real friends don't just sit at your table real friends stand on your hill they stand with you they lift you they hold you up praise God those are the real friends that we need around our lives hallelujah not one's always looking for a handout and looking for you to just give give give give give and what they can get out of you the friends that will fight with you real friends lift the weight you can carry no longer Aaron and her didn't make Moses stronger but they made Moses supportive they held him up and some battles are not won by stronger arms or more knowledge or by better friends that's what we need in our lives church better friends better confidants better people in our lives amen but hear what

I'm saying this morning we're talking about friendships and we're talking about all the relationships and that's good and they can lift us up and they can heal us and I believe God brings people into our lives but the true source of our strength and the true source of our victory comes from Jesus Jesus is the ultimate lifter he's the ultimate sustainer he's the ultimate encourager and strength in our lives and I fear that sometimes we try too much self-help and all this other stuff and we don't try enough Jesus we don't try enough Bible we don't try enough spirit of prayer and intercession hallelujah and if you're here this morning and you're struggling and you're having a hard time holding up those hands while you're holding it down I encourage you number one try Jesus turn to him call on his name read his word let it encourage your life hallelujah but the second thing is get some good friends in your corner get some good friends who will stand up at the table and go to the hill that you're battling on amen and when they see those arms shaking in your life they say

I'm gonna go I'm not gonna wait to be asked but I'm gonna go and I'm gonna help them if you are in isolation this morning on purpose you need to come out of that you're shoring your life your quality of life isn't better your health is suffering your mind is suffering amen and everybody else knows about it everybody else knows they can see they can feel they know they can sense it you don't gotta say it you don't have to say it but they know they know so come out of that place of isolation but here's the thing too while Moses had his hands up you're tempted to just go it's a mess with Moses a little bit Moses remember that one time remember that one time he took my bread

[34 : 38] I'm sorry oh man oh I wrote this down when Aaron and her and the more to pass this but when Aaron and her went home they went home eventually right but Jesus never leaves us he never forsakes us he never tires of us he never tires of hearing from us hallelujah he wants to hear from you hallelujah thank God for his goodness praise the Lord praise the Lord people can support our callers but Jesus is the one who saves us amen but I mentioned the future their future the future matters right we all agree we all understand this we but why all this why Joshua choosing why Moses lifting why Aaron and her standing why the battle why the community of people because

Israel had a future worth fighting for and on this Sunday morning I want to tell everybody in this place you have a future worth fighting for praise God you have a future that's worth going to work for worth fighting for rolling up your sleeves and battling for hallelujah your children's future is worth fighting for your marriages are worth fighting for your calling your ministry your purpose your legacy hallelujah it's all worth fighting for and the enemy wants to attack that not because you're weak but because you're dangerous turn to the neighbor and say I'm dangerous come on say it with some authority dangerous hallelujah because there's something in you there's something in your life that God is drawing out it's why we're going through this process of becoming more like him there's a gift and a calling and something inside of you that he's trying to draw out of you but the more we stay in isolation and we resist that future will be forfeited and it's not just your future it touches all parts of our lives our families our grandkids our children our loved ones our friends you don't choose your circle for where you are you choose it for where

God is taking you God is taking us somewhere church God is taking you your family he's taking this church hello God is taking this church hallelujah somewhere hallelujah he's taking your life somewhere our future and our future and what could be and what should be it's all worth fighting for it's worth fighting for it's worth showing up for even when you're tired and don't feel like it it's worth it hallelujah hallelujah sir i see you hallelujah god didn't give you strength praise god god's gonna lift you up a future that's worth believing worth fighting for you know what we need to do we need to build a wise table we need to build a wise table circle of friends a wise circle of friends because that circle matters it matters but what else we need to do you need to let people lift you that's all different you need to let people lift you people see people know they can see and perceive stuff people are smart people say kids are smart yeah people are smart too sometimes they have their moments we all have our moments some more than others me not so much but they can see your suffering they can see your anguish they can see your struggle and people try to come and lift you up but because of trauma because of the isolation we push we hold people at a distance in a way and that right there is God's grace trying to heal you by sending those people into your lives hallelujah don't be so independent

God never wanted that he wanted us to be interdependent I was going to say codependent but there's a lot of that going on but we need to let people lift us up and come into our lives and say I got you sister I got you brother I'm holding you up I'm in prayer hallelujah don't fight alone become a lifter lift people up you see a need lift them up encourage them say a word to them hold up their hands when they come to the altar and you see them like this come around and put your arm and hold up their hands I got you we're going to fight this together find someone who has tired arms and weary arms last thing that we need to do is we need to come to Jesus last but first thing we need to come to Jesus oh we need to come to

Jesus hallelujah hallelujah he is the lifter of our souls lifter of our lives lifter of our future let's all stand thanks God look I understand we have food waiting for us and we got to warm it up and get it going I wasn't thinking about it until you said that sorry we are going to take a few moments here this morning we're going to pray and this is our moment not just now it should continue on but this is our moment to really be vulnerable no one's going to judge you no one's going to we need each other if your arms are tired come to the

[41 : 55] Psalter if your heart is weary come to the Psalter if your hope is low come to the Psalter if you are alone feeling alone if you feel like your future is under attack I want to invite you to the Psalter if your family is suffering if your family is in need I invite you to come to the Psalter if you need lifters in your life I encourage you come to the Psalter if you want to be a lifter in someone's life come to the Psalter and if you want Jesus to save your life and lift you up I want to invite you to come to the Psalter you're not weak you're invited hello somebody you're not weak but you're invited that's who you are you're not forgotten but you're seen you're heard you're not alone but you're loved come to

Jesus come to Jesus he's your banner your rock your friend your strength your savior he's your future hallelujah this is so beautiful you know what this represents this morning people who need to be lifted but if you feel that in your heart and you feel God tugging on your heart why don't you come be a lifter of people and stand with them on their hill stand with them come off of your little hill your little thing and stand next to people and lift them and hold up their hands this morning hallelujah Jesus that's it that's beautiful hallelujah Jesus hallelujah that's it hallelujah come on that's it hallelujah let your circle lift you choose a circle let God lift you you are the source of my strength you are the strength of my life I lift my head for a gift