

The Bread of Life



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LOSING Your Grip

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II Samuel 21:15

Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.

You may wonder how a man like King David could have waxed faint in the battle. How could he have felt as faint as he felt that particular day?

II Samuel 21:16

And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.

David faced a big one! David faced a tough one!

**You know, the adversary of your soul is also a big one!
He's a tough one!**

Now, David had faced another big one earlier in his life: we're well versed in the story of David and Goliath.

In the account we're looking at today, we find David waxing faint - but a lot of time has gone by since the day he had faced Goliath.

David is facing another big one here, another giant, a giant who towered over most anybody. **AND DAVID WAXED FAINT!**

Things don't look good, do they! Where's the boy with the slingshot? we find him waxing faint at this time in his life.

II Samuel 21:17

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

Do you understand what this means? This was informing David that it was all over - the days of his warring. In this battle David had waxed faint. He would have been slain if it had not been for a young man who rose up to slay that giant. David couldn't slay the giant. He had waxed faint!

Is there a giant you can't slay? Is there a giant you haven't slain and gotten out of the way?

This young man saw that the king couldn't handle it any longer.

Imagine what it would be like to be holding a sword in the heat of battle - all day long! and you've got to hang on. You can't lost your grip - or you'll lose the battle! You've got to bear down on that handle, and hold on for dear life.

But David lost his grip. He lost his grip on the sword!

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Have you lost your grip on the sword? Are you waxing faint in the battle? Are you finding yourself in the place where you can't seem to handle things any more?

Are you in the place where you don't even care if you handle things any more?

Are you so faint that you don't even care if you go on? you're ready to just give up and quit!

David waxed faint. And oftentimes God's people wax faint. If we're not careful, it's easy to wax faint in the battle.

I'm tired! I know it's church time - but I don't think I'll go to church tonight. It's too cold outside. I'm too weary.

God warns His people not to be weary in well doing. He knows the weariness of men in the battles - but He encourages us to wax strong.

I'm tired of this constant warfare!

It would have been sad to find the account in God's Word where a Philistine smote David and took off his head! I wouldn't want to read where a giant came along and took vengeance for the slaughter of Goliath.

It looked that way for a season; but there was a brave young man who waxed valiant in battle. He put that Philistine in his place - in a prone position, stretched out on the ground, out of the way.

WAXING VALIANT

OR

WAXING FAINT

If you give serious consideration to past battles, you'll see where there are many experiences where you waxed faint in battle. You'll see where there are those times when you lost your grip, where you didn't hold on tightly.

May we realize that anytime we're in conflict it's not time to have a down time - a time when we're dragging our feet, while our mind is off some place else.

In this life we find the need to stop every now and then to evaluate where we are. And don't we determine where we stand by what we note?

We look at the gauges in our car to determine when we need to get some gas, or when we need more oil. When the gas gauge is on **E**, don't we do something about it? And don't you sense something is wrong with your walk when you're waxing faint, and you're not pressing in? when you're not fighting a good fight?

II Timothy 4:7

**I have fought a good fight,
I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith.**

Paul had fought a good fight from the day he got saved right down to the end. He finished his course, and he kept the faith.

Are you going to finish your course?

Now, there are some symptoms that we need to look for to see if we are losing our grip.

I'm losing my interest in attending church. Face the real issue: you're not losing interest in church - you're losing interest in your Saviour, Jesus Christ!

The Lilly of the Valley in your life is fading. The Rose of Sharon is wilting. Something is wrong!

There's nothing wrong with the Lord: but there is something wrong with you if you're losing interest in the things of God and you no longer look at the Lord in love.

When a husband and wife aren't on speaking terms, something is wrong! If we're going to keep our marriage together in love, we've got to keep talking, keep showing our love and respect for each other. We've got to stay sweet, stay in love, stay close to one another.

What about your relationship with Jesus? Are you waxing faint in the battle? are you in a situation where Jesus isn't so important to you any more?

Know that that old enemy is ever out there to put you down. You can't afford to wax faint in the battle. You can't afford to give in for any reason.

Now, there are other signs of faintness in the battle.

WATCH AND PRAY!

I don't feel like praying! Why go to prayer meeting when I don't feel like praying? I don't have any mind to pray. It's just not in me to pray.

Waxing faint in the battle.

It's not necessary. I don't see any necessity to pray. What does God want, anyhow? God wants you to wax strong in battle - that's what He wants!

I'm going to ask you point-blank: are you made strong by prayerlessness? are you made strong by missing church?

Or, are you made strong by having a consistent prayer life? are you made strong by getting into the house of God and having your soul fed?

You're kidding yourself if you think you're made strong by neglecting prayer, or by staying away from God's house.

Let me ask you another question: are you made strong by getting involved in the affairs of this world? Does that get you ready for the coming of the Lord?

Listen! you can't afford to lose your grip in these days! You've got to get hold! You'd best squeeze up those fingers. Lay hold of spiritual things. Don't let them slip.

It's so easy to get into one of those ruts. It's so easy to slide into an "I don't care" attitude. But, just remember Who it is that you're not caring about!

Well, that's the way I feel! Listen, you need a change of heart if that's the way you feel. Something's wrong within if you no longer have that deep desire for the Lord.

What is the matter with Him? What has He done to vex you to where you no longer want Him close any more?

Or, could it be the other way around?

Could it be **YOU** that has done something? Could it be you that has drawn back and put a lot of things between you and the Lord?

Are you going to be like David was here, waxing faint in the battle?

I'll have to say this for David - though he was getting up there in years, he was out on the battlefield. He may have waxed faint at this time in his life, but he wasn't playing church! He wasn't out on a pleasure binge. No, he was out in the battle, even though he waxed faint.

As I watch David losing his grip here, I can also see where God's people do this very thing so many times. They don't hang on to their sword. They lose their grip.

Once you start letting down, you begin to lose ground fast. It's just a little at first: a little, a little, a little more. Then it's a lot, a lot more . . .

When you start to count, even if you don't count fast, you're gaining ground. You're up to 5 in no time, and soon you're up to 10, and then to 15, and then . . .

We can see a picture of how God's people lose their grip. They just can't hang on. They don't have a firm hold on that sword out there in the battle.

And when you let down, slacking off because you're tired and faint, the devil doesn't let down - he doesn't get tired and faint - he doesn't back off.

HIS AIM IS TO PUT YOU DOWN!

In this account we find this giant thought he had the victory. He thought he could slay King David, and put a big feather in his cap. What honors would have been bestowed upon him that day: **this is the man that brought that great warrior David down!**

And what honors the devil would have if he succeeded in putting you down! succeeded in sifting you as wheat! That's what he did to Peter.

His aim was to keep that which he brought up through that sifting. When he sifts you, he intends to sift you out that he might keep you. He wants you.

Why would he want you? Why did he want Peter?

Peter was chosen of God - and, thus, Satan desired to destroy him. Satan sought for an opportunity - and he found his chance while Peter was sleeping, instead of watching and praying.

Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

- SLEEPY HOLLOW -



Sleepy

Hollow is

where you can get caught in the snare. Christians' aren't supposed to sleep at Sleepy Hollow - it's a trap! You get down in that hollow, and find a big giant standing before the entrance to prevent you from getting out again. *I've got you now - keep sleeping!*

A NEW PROBLEM!

It's not easy to stand in that battle time after time. You think you just about have the enemy defeated, when he breaks out on the other side, coming against you in another way.

You think you have the victory over that problem in your life - when a new problem rises. Often, that new problem is that you don't want to go to church any more.

When that new problem rises, you feel it's best for you to stay home during church. There's better things to do at home. It's the truth! When one loses grip on the spiritual sword, spiritual things take a back seat.

Did you ever faint? I fainted once. I got hurt and blacked right out. Strange things happen when you faint. Your eyesight is gone. You can hear. You know what's going on around you - but you black out.

Some people just get their feelings hurt, and faint. Oh, I don't mean they fall down physically: but they decide they're not going back to church - just because their feelings were hurt. Some little thing comes against them, and they faint, ready to give it all up over a little offense.

But, listen, when we feel faint in the battle it's a danger signal. It's time to get hold of things - not a time to let them go!

When we find we're not wanting to pray, not wanting to attend church, not wanting to get into the Word - it's time to tighten our grip - not time to let go!

LOSING YOUR MIND TO

Many of God's people lose their **mind to**.

When you're on fire for God, you have **a mind to** go to church. You wouldn't miss church for anything. Even during a blizzard you'll try to find a way to get there.

When we first got saved we lived in the hills of Pennsylvania. There were times when we'd drive 30 or 40 miles in a raging snowstorm - because we wanted to go to church.

Why bother? because I love to drive in snowstorms? No, I don't love to drive in snowstorms - but I do love to go to church! I have **a mind to** go to church. Before I was ever a pastor, I had **a mind to** go to church.

You have to have **a mind to**. When you lose that, you'll slip away and get **a mind to** do something else. You'll lose your **mind to** draw closer to the Lord - and get **a mind to** do something new.

Some slip away from church because they now have **a mind to** sleep. Others now have **a mind to** shop, or **a mind to** do this, or **a mind to** do that.

No matter what it is that lures them away, the issue is that they lost their **mind to** go to church. Church no longer seems important to them.

DECEPTION

Oftentimes, that's what people do. They deceive themselves by making up excuses because they've lost their **mind to**.

One excuse that often pops up when one is faint is - *God doesn't expect me to! He's not asking that much of me!*

Those words are from people who have lost their **mind to**. What they're really saying is that they enjoy some other interest much more than they do Jesus.

Now, it's not just a matter of attending church. Many are still in church, but have lost their **mind to** serve the Lord. If you're going to church while doing your own thing when you leave, you're not doing anything worthwhile.

If you go to church just for the sake of going to church, you're not accomplishing anything. But if you go to church to meet with Jesus, to worship Him - then church is meaningful to you.

If you go to get prepared for the battle, to prepare yourself to stand in this last day - that's worthwhile.

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.



Are you weary? Are you faint? Is your hand slipping? Are you losing your grip on the sword? **Stop - and consider where you are in the battle.**

Realize that you can renew your mind. You can have a mind that's fixed on the Lord. You can have a mind that's set on going to church, a mind that's set on serving the Lord. You can - and you should.

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I find oftentimes in talking with those who need to get back to church - that they've lost their **mind to**. They no longer want to go to church. They don't **feel** like going. They have left their first love.

If you hang around with the wrong crowd, you'll fall in love with the wrong things - and you'll leave your first love.

A FIRST LOVE

Do you remember the joy you had when you first got saved? You couldn't wait to get into the house of God. The Lord was on your mind night and day.

That's a first love! The Ephesian believers had that first love - at one time. They started off on the right foot, but down the road (where you might be today) they left their first love. They lost their grip. They waxed faint.

Oh, they were doing so well! God was pleased with them. He talked about all the good things they had done. He commended them for their good works, even after they left their first love.

Revelation 2:1-5

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

YOUR FIRST LOVE - CHERISH IT!

The Lord is looking for more than a few good things about us. He's looking for more than service. He's looking for our love and for our fellowship.

We can't afford to lose sight of the Lord. We can't afford to leave our first love.

What has happened to many is that their first love has been put away. It's not there any longer. It's almost like a marriage where the distance between the couple is great - where the relationship has become one of arguments and bickering - or of silence. The sweetness is no longer there.

Realize, now, the danger of waxing faint in the battle. The next thing you know, you've left your first love. And when you do that, church is no longer pleasant. It suddenly becomes a drag because you're no longer interested in the things of God.

When the rapture takes place, are you going to decide to get interested in Jesus, then? Hey, it will be too late then!

Now, the Ephesians left their first love. It doesn't say they lost it - it says they left it. And, if they left it, they left it for something else. They left it because they fell in love with something else. They left their first love they had for Jesus because they fell in love with something else.

A STALE EXPERIENCE

II Samuel 21:15-17

Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought

against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbubenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

We may get older, but our experience with the Lord doesn't have to grow stale. The Lord isn't any older than He ever was.

When you get older it's tempting to get a bit weary. It may seem quite natural to come to the place where David had come to - the place where you wax faint.

I've waxed faint! I've lost my grip! I can't hold on to the sword any longer! The day is too long for me!

We're going to have to cut these battle times down. We'll have to make some type of an agreement with our adversary to shorten the fight.

We'll have to fight from 9 to 11 - and then take a break until the next day. We've just got to cut down the fighting time!

If you shorten the services, Pastor, I'll come to church. If you cut down the fighting time, I'll come. I'm getting old. I'm waxing faint. I can't hang on to the sword for too long. Cut down the songs and the times of praise. Cut that fighting time down.

Pastor, if you could only learn to cut your sermons down into four parts for the month, that will be enough for me.

I wonder what David had for breakfast that day. I wonder if he knew the day would be rough - so he took some time to seek the Lord that he might have enough strength to hold on to the sword all day long:

I'm going to take time before anything else today, and pray my strength in the Lord.

I'm going to pray that I'll have a lot of grip in my hand today. I'm going to pray that I might be enabled to stand out there in the battle all day long - and if the battle rages from morning till night, with no time to stop and grab a sandwich, I'm going to be able to stand in the battle with the strength of the Lord.

What do you have for breakfast when you're out on the battlefield? Usually they have such things as K-rations - because a soldier has to have something to eat out there. If he stays in battle all day without something to eat - that's a sure way to be faint!

Look, if we can't get into church to get something to feed our soul, we'll find ourselves getting faint in the battle. And there certainly is a battle raging these days:

*** Gross darkness is creeping in on the face of the whole earth**

*** The time of the end is at hand**

* The great falling away has set in

* People are growing lukewarm



There's such a lack of love for God's Word in the church world of our day. So many are backing down, backing away - not wanting to stand for the Truth. The Truth has been thrown in the streets.

We don't want that! Pastor, if you didn't preaching about that, I'd come to church.

Look, we're in a war! Do you understand that? We're in a war! The church is being invaded from within. It is losing its love for truth. The church, as a whole, has left its first love and heaped unto itself teachers having itchy ears - who have turned their hearts away from the truth. And the church is waxing faint in the battle.

Look, David, you can't go out to face those giants with a small glass of juice and a bowl of cereal! You'll need more than that! You can't go that route without being overcome.

Would it help you get stronger if we cut the sermons? **Well, we'd have more time for other things.**

But what does God say, in His wisdom? He knows this day. He knows what it will take to stand in the battle.

Why preach the Word? Why not just preach **little** sermons, & have **little** services, & sing **little** songs, & have **little** power, & **little** victory, & **little** strength?

Get it into your heart that we are in a war. We're in the battle of the last days. We're at the end of the age! We'll just wax weaker and weaker, and lose more if we slack our hands now.

We each need to check our experience - and be **sure** that we're ready!

SATAN HAS A SHORT TIME - AND HE KNOWS IT!

Revelation 12:12

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Knowing he has but a short time, Satan is doing all he can to hinder and to stop God's people.

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching!

A church that keeps its doors open, more than just on Sundays, to preach the Word of God is not out of touch with the Holy Spirit. The pastor of such a church is concerned to help the flock stand and maintain the victory.

Just because a pastor faithfully feeds the Word to the flock doesn't mean the flock is always willing to eat. It's up to the people to eat what is fed them over the pulpit.

We live in a diet-conscious society: **I ate my three cornflakes for breakfast, four grains of sugar, and diluted milk. That's enough for me - I want to be thin!**

Well, that's your business - but are you also on a diet spiritually? Do you just want to nibble at God's Word, avoiding the meat?

We don't need a spiritual diet like that. We don't need old wives' fables, nor a diet void of the truth, nor a diet of oppositions of science - neither should we pick and choose what we want to hear from the Word. What we need is a healthy balanced diet of the Word of God.

I can't imagine David going out to battle with just a small salad in his stomach!

RIISING UP TO HELP

David waxed faint. Now, was it just because of his age? or because he just had a bad day? What actually brought all this on?

The Word doesn't tell us what brought it on, but it does tell us what would have happened if someone hadn't risen up to help David:

II Samuel 21:16-17a

And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him.

I'm trying, in this message, to do what that young man did. I'm trying to rise up and help those of you who are faint, ready to pass out.

You're going to lose the victory if you're pulling away from Jesus. And, if you do, who is going to rescue you? Somebody had best rise up to help you now, or the devil will get you off alone someplace and do you in.

THE MORE SO - I don't know of any better place to be when we're having a struggle than in the house of God.

Have you lost your grip? Picture that sword in your hand. Squeeze that hand tightly - don't loosen up, but hold it firmly for the entire day.

You're in the battle. And, as soon as you knock one of the enemy down there will be another to take its place. Be on the lookout! because there may be two coming at the same time - and someone may not be standing nearby to jump in and help you.

You can't afford to allow yourself to wax faint in the battle.

Now, if you're not one who is waxing faint - then who are you standing in the gap for? Are you trying to help anyone who seems to be waxing faint?

One can chase a thousand, and two can chase 10,000 - if they're living for God: but we can't be losing our grip, and chase the enemy.

A STEADY MILK DIET - Babies can grow on a steady milk diet - but they eventually they require something stronger. Would you want to be on a steady milk diet? nothing but milk day after day?

If you're not going to wax faint in the battle, you need some meat in your diet. Your soul needs to be nourished and fed: and when you don't have a mind to feed it, you are only deceiving yourself - and you begin to walk by feelings, rather than walking by faith.

Listen, in this battle you'd best walk by faith! You can't go by feelings. If you do, you'll be defeated.

When I was in the Navy they had this call every morning: **SICK! LAME! and LAZY!** It was for those who woke up in the morning - and didn't feel like doing anything that day. They'd go over to sick bay and report in with an excuse to get off duty.

What would you do if you were a soldier in a war - and you woke up with a sore throat? a sore arm? What would you do? If you didn't rise up and fight, regardless of how you felt, you'd be overcome by the enemy.

EXCUSES - About five or six I'm going to feel sick tonight - until it's too late to go to church! Then I'll begin to feel fine. And then I'm going to wonder why I have lost my grip!

Did you ever go to the work in the morning and hate being there? You begin to think of looking for another job - if you could only get another job you'd feel like going to work!

Some people are always looking for a new job, because they hate the one they have. They need a change - until they work awhile at the new job, and then it's time to change again!

I need a change - I'm sick of going to church! If you're faint, you certainly do need a change! You need a change in your soul. You can't afford to get taken over by feelings. Remember, this is a faith battle.

II Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight!

You've got to conquer and defeat the enemy - in the Name of the Lord.

I Samuel 17:45

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

Did David conquer Goliath with a sling shot? Why did he only need to use one of those little stones he had picked up? Why? because he came out against that giant in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.

What was he using? Did he lose his grip that day? What was he gripping? What did he grip hold of that day?

David got a stone and put it in the sling - but he never brought that giant down with that little stone. He brought that giant down in the name of the Lord.

Yes, David was strong that day in the power of the Lord. He wasn't a mighty warrior back then. He was merely a youth - a youth with a lot of faith.

Are you waxing faint? Are you losing your grip? Is the giant there to do you in?

Is there someone who would rise up and intercede for you to help keep you from falling?

It's time to shake yourself and realize that you need to get with it - while it's day. Make a fresh commitment to the Lord, and grip your sword.

Ephesians 6:17

**And take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

Get a good grip on the Sword. Get your soul fed with the Word of God - and wax strong in battle. **Recognize that it's not time to get weary in the battle.** You're in a war - and you've got to fight if you're going to stand.

Are you losing your grip? It's either yes, or it's no.

Are you losing ground? It's either yes, or it's no.

Are you faint? Have you lose your mind to attend church? Are you in the battle of your soul, in the battle for the kingdom of God - or have you pulled away?

There's no in-between - **it's either yes, or it's no.**

Have you left your first love? Is Jesus slipping out of your life? Have you put distance between yourself and Him?

REPENT! There's only one way to get that first love back again: repent, and do your first works over. That's the Bible way. God wants to forgive you - but you have to repent, you have to ask His forgiveness.

David didn't fall that day. God kept him. Oh, he may have lost his grip on the natural sword - but he still had a grip on the Lord.

II Samuel 22:32-33

For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God? God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.

What about you? Have you lost your grip in your spiritual walk? Are you growing faint in this warfare?

Grasp hold of the Sword of the Spirit - and keep a firm grip in these closing days of apostasy.

WATCH AND PRAY!

