

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Message to Young People

They tell me that this is a young people's meeting so that is why there are younger people sitting here. Is that true? There are a lot of younger people who are closer to the front so this must be a young people's meeting. I was wondering, "What should we share with young people?" If you are in this room and you are less than 21 years old, please raise your hand. I am not less than 20 but I was going to show you how to raise your hand. Could you please raise it higher? Wow, there are a lot of younger people. Here is a younger one that wants to come to the front. Those of you who are 21 and older, we are not excluding you, but don't raise your hand. (Sometimes you need to explain things more to the older people.) Those of you who just raised your hand, how many of you were in at least one of the two meetings of the conference last night or this morning? Please raise your hand. How many were here last night? How many were here this morning? How many were here for both? What was the topic that we were talking about? We were talking about a divine romance. We don't talk too often about romance in the young people's meeting. And then we were also talking about a spiritual warfare.

I was considering, "Could there be a person in the Bible, especially a young person, that shows us these two things? I thought of somebody that might be a good example to show us how these two things of having a personal relationship with the Lord and fighting for the Lord go together. I thought of king David. What do you know about David? We have Davids here; how many people here are named David? Only three. Sometimes we have a bunch. What do you know about David in the Bible. *He is a king*. Of course I already introduced him as a king. What else? What is famous about David? *He killed Goliath*. That is probably the thing that people know the most about David. Anything else? *He is a shepherd*. Yes, he is a shepherd. That is going to be very key in what we are going to talk about. What else? *He killed a lion*. What else? *He killed a bear*. Yes, he killed a lion, a bear, and a giant. Wow. He did this all when he was really young.

I would like to read a few verses that tell us some things about David that can show us that as a young person you can have an experience with the Lord that is very personal, that is very intimate, that you can have the assurance that the Lord is with you. I would say that David's experience is a kind of pattern that shows us how to talk to God. At the same time, David was used by the Lord at a very important time to fight for the Lord. When he fought Goliath, it was actually not something personal. This was something of God's people; it involved the whole nation of Israel. This little boy came and represented all of God's people. That is not a small thing. You said that he was a shepherd. Let's look at Psalm 23. I think that nearly everybody knows this verse; even unbelievers know it. Let's read verses 1 and 2: "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I will lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside waters of rest." David was a shepherd but did you know that he was also a sheep. Of course, he was a boy, a human being, not an actual sheep. But he considered that the Lord was his shepherd.

I think that when he was working there as a shepherd he may have lain down on the grass and looked up and realized how small he was in this big world. Have you ever realized how small you are? "Wow, I am so small. Why is God interested in me?" That is what David said. I think he was lying down out in the field shepherding the sheep and maybe considered, "Lord,

sometimes I am really helpless. I need You as my shepherd. I need You to protect me just like I protect these sheep. Lord, who is going to protect me? Lord, You are my shepherd. Then it says, "You make me lie down."

Psalm 8 is a wonderful Psalm that has a lot of rich meaning but I just want to touch one or two points. Verses 1 to 4 say, "O Jehovah our Lord, How excellent is Your name In all the earth, You who have set Your glory over the heavens! Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To stop the enemy and the avenger. When I see Your heavens, the works of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is mortal man, that You remember him, And the son of man, that You visit him?" When did David write this? What time of the day? It has to be night time because he talks about the moon and the stars, not the sun. I have a feeling that he was lying on the field looking up. "Look at all the stars." I grew up in New York City and there we do not see too many stars because there are too many lights in the city. I went to a Christian camp and we went out for a walk out in the country at night. From horizon to horizon we could see all the stars. To me it looked fake, as if it had been painted. I couldn't believe that this is the sky that we live under. I never saw anything so beautiful in my whole life. I think that all of us realized that night, "When I look at the stars what is mortal man? Who are we? Lord, You are so big and this universe is so big, why do You care about me?" But He does. I hope that you young people always have the realization that God cares about you. Yes, He is God and He is the administrator of the whole universe and He operates His purpose, His economy on the earth; He is building His church. But do you know that while He does all that He actually has the time to care about every single one of us.

I really like Psalm 55, verse 17. Many people use this verse to show that David prayed three times a day and encourage people to pray at least three times a day. But that is not what I want to point out in this verse. I don't know if you ever realized that there is such a verse in the Bible and what it implies. It says, "Evening and morning and at noontime I complain and moan, And He hears my voice." This verse does not say that David prayed three times a day; it says that David complained three times a day. Isn't that wonderful? Let me ask you, "How many of you probably complain about something at least once a day? To whom do you complain first? Do you complain to your mother? Do you complain to your brother? Do you complain to your teacher? Who do you complain to?" This is telling us that we can complain to God first. Actually when we complain to God first, it may not solve the situation, but it does make things better. David was someone who knew God so intimately that he realized, "I can complain to God all the time." Maybe we think, "Christians shouldn't complain. Christians should accept God's sovereignty. There is another verse that shows that David accepted God's sovereignty, but do you know what? David learned how to talk to God about everything.

I got saved when I was seven years old. My sister shared the gospel with me and I received the Lord into my heart. It was a long time ago but I remember that night as if it was last night. It was Friday the 13th. I got saved but I did not get baptized right away. My mom thought that I was too young. I got baptized right around my 12th birthday. Then in December that year when I was twelve and a half, I had an experience with the Lord where I really felt that God visited me. I was in a chapel in the denomination where we were meeting. In that little chapel the brothers and sisters were sharing some things and the Lord's love came to me. That night I told the Lord that I loved Him and wanted to serve Him for my whole life. I did not yet know the word *consecration*, but that is the word that describes what I did. I gave my life to the Lord. I only knew the word *dedication* so I would tell people that I dedicated my life to Christ that night.

When I got baptized my sister who helped me to get saved gave me my first ever new Bible—not this one. This is like my 5th Bible. I still have that Bible in my study at home, but it is kind of torn up and worn down. She gave me that Bible, and I don't know why, but I just had a desire—nobody told me, “From now on you should...” I just had a desire to read the Bible. So I started reading the Bible on my own pretty much every day. Mostly what I read were the Psalms. Then after that experience where I gave my life to the Lord, as I would read the Psalms it almost was as if the Lord was just right there sitting with me as I was reading. I really enjoyed the presence of the Lord when I read the Psalms. As I would read, I noticed that David complained a lot. Most of the Psalm, not all, were written by David. He was very honest with his feelings to God. In the New Testament the Lord said, “If someone hits you here, you should turn here that he can hit you there too.” There is a phrase that is well known not just by Christians: turn the other cheek. If something bad happens, you just turn so it can happen to you again. By the way, it is very hard to do that. The Bible even says that we should pray for our enemies; the Bible says that we should love our enemies. This is all true, but David said, “Lord, avenge me of my enemies. Lord, destroy the ones who are after me.” I liked that. When I was reading, I thought, “David, you are not supposed to talk that way. That is not very Christian like.” But I liked it, so David helped me learn how to talk to the Lord about everything and just tell Him.

One thing that I told you about my sister is that she is almost ten years older than I am. I have two brothers and they are older than she is. So my brothers are twelve and fourteen years older than me. So, even though I am not an only child, I felt like one. By the time I six or seven, my brothers and sister did not want to hang out with me; they were out with their friends. I was alone a lot; and I was not only alone, I was lonely. Some people are alone but do not feel lonely. I felt lonely. I actually prayed, “I really would like some brothers and sisters.” Of course, that was not going to happen because my mom and dad had me when they were older and I was it; I was even a mistake, but a sovereign mistake. Do you know how the Lord answered the prayer for brothers and sisters? By bringing me to the church; I came to the church when I was 14 years old and in the church life in New York there was a lot of other young people and they became my bothers and sisters. So, all through my high school years I had a lot of good companions—actually, companions for the rest of my life. Even some of those who were my companions in high school are still my companions today. But when I was in junior high I would feel lonely at times. Then I would just say, “Lord, I feel lonely. I wish...” Just tell Him how you feel. It does not mean that all of a sudden miraculously a brother appeared next to me. No, it is not like that, but through telling Him that, the Lord became my best friend. Through this book, the Bible, the Lord became my best friend. I hope that all of you can a kind of intimate relationship with the Lord, even so simple as to be able to tell Him everything, whatever is on your heart. David had this practice: “Evening and morning and at noontime I complain”; it doesn't say just complain. What does it say? “I moan.” When we moan it is really our inner feeling coming out. This is the key word that I want to bring out to you this afternoon. When you moan it is very genuine; your inner feeling comes out. Did your parents ever say to you, “We are going to such and such a place” and you moan? It is hard to moan and not make a face. You don't moan with a smile. Did you ever notice that when you moan something happens to your face? Do you know that you can do that to God and He never gets offended, He never gets bothered. You can complain to Him; you can even moan. David somehow learned to experience God this way.

Now we are going to go from the intimate relationship to warfare. In Psalm 18 is a kind of mingling of the intimate relationship with the Lord and fighting for and with the Lord. It starts,

“I love You, O Jehovah, my strength” (v. 1). That is the intimate relationship. “Jehovah is my crag and my fortress and my Deliverer; My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my high retreat. I called upon Jehovah, who is worthy of praise, And from my enemies I was saved” (vv. 2-3). David experienced the Lord even as his shield. Why do you need a shield? You only need a shield when you are in a battle. David experienced that in his daily life he was in a battle with God's enemy. Even before he met Goliath he experienced the Lord as his shield. So he experienced the Lord exactly the way we are talking this weekend. He developed an intimate relationship with the Lord and H also learned how to fight with and for the Lord.

Let's look at the story about the slaying of Goliath. I want to point out some things to you, maybe some things that you never realized before. I understand the young people in London are going through the *Journey through the Bible* and you are just starting Samuel. Isn't that sovereign? You are going to start studying the person Samuel and David's story is coming very soon. 1 Samuel 17:26 says, “ Then David spoke to the men who were standing with him, saying, What shall be done for the man who strikes down this Philistine and turns away reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the ranks of the living God?” I think that most of us know the story that David had seven older brothers; he was the youngest and was a shepherd. In this story the Philistines were fighting against Israel and some of David's brothers were in the army. David's father gave David some provisions to take to his brothers. The story tells us in detail how he made sure all the sheep were safe before he left. He was very detailed and very diligent. When he finds his brothers in the army and is approaching them, Goliath comes. Goliath used to come every day to defy the armies of Israel and blaspheme Jehovah. He says, “If anybody comes and fights against me and defeats me, then we will surrender to you all.” Of course, Goliath was pretty tall, so no one in Israel wanted to fight with him. But David, a teenager at this time, gets stirred up and he says, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine who dares defy the living God?” When they tell him, David gets so stirred up that someone told king Saul about him.

Then Saul said, “Bring him here.” Verses 31 to 37 record their conversation: “And when the words that David spoke were heard, they were reported to Saul; and he had him brought. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine. But Saul said to David, You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth and he has been a man of war since his youth. And David said to Saul, Your servant has been tending his father's sheep; and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I would go out after it and strike it and deliver the lamb from its mouth. And when it rose up against me, I would seize it by its beard and strike it and kill it. Both the lion and the bear did your servant strike; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the ranks of the living God. And David said, Jehovah, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go, and may Jehovah be with you.”

David just talked about his experience while taking care of the sheep. He was saying that his experience has prepared me to fight against Goliath, so king Saul said, “Go and may the Lord be with you.” Then look at what happens next: “And Saul put his own garment on David, and he placed a bronze helmet on his head and put his armor on him. And David girded his sword over his garment and tried to go, for he had not tried the armor. Then David said to Saul, I cannot go in these because I have not tried them. And David took them off. Then he took his staff in his

hand, and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook and put them into the shepherd's bag that he had, that is, in his pouch; and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine.... Then David said to the Philistine, You come to me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come to you in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the ranks of Israel, whom you have defied. On this day Jehovah will deliver you up into my hand, and I will strike you and remove your head from you" (vv. 38-40, 45-46a). David was saying, "You are coming with weapons. The only weapon I have is the Lord. I come with the name of the Lord."

I want you to take one thing away from this part of the story and this is also for the older ones. Saul tried to give David his armour to fight but David said, "I can't fight in your armour." Each of us must have our own personal experience of the Lord. We cannot wear somebody else's armour. I think that sometimes the serving ones really want the young people to enjoy the Lord, to experience the Lord. In essence, sometimes we try to give them our armour. We need to be careful; we want to encourage them but every one of us has to experience the Lord for ourselves personally. We can only fight the enemy with what we have experienced of the Lord. That is why I want to highlight the word *genuine* this afternoon. We need to be genuine in our fellowship with God. We need to have our own personal experience of the Lord. Only then will we be able to fight when the enemy comes to attack us.

There is one more point that I want to make from David's story that is in three short portions. Psalm 32, verses 1 and 2 say, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah does not impute iniquity And in whose spirit there is no deceit." David was someone who confessed his sin. The Bible is very fair; it does not just tell us the good side of everybody's story. The Bible exposes even some of their failures because as we are growing up, all of us will have failures; David had a very, very great failure, actually two times. The Bible tells us of them, but each time David failed, he confessed because he knew that God is someone who forgives. We don't have time to read Psalm 51 but actually the whole Psalm is a prayer of confession. Verses 1 to 4 read, "Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassions blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And from my sin cleanse me. For I do know my transgressions, And my sin is before me continually. Against You and You alone have I sinned, And I have done what is evil in Your sight." Actually, David sinned not only against God; he sinned against a person in murdering him. So, how could he say, "Against You and You alone have I sinned"? This shows us that any sin, even we lie to our parents or we do something where we cheat someone, is a sin against God. Every sin is against God and He sees every sin. But not only does He see every sin; if we confess He forgives every sin. David learned that. I want to encourage you young people. I hope that you are in the habit of confessing your sins every day.

We have a diagram that I know that you all are familiar with it. All our young people know what is coming as soon as they see one circle. It has three circles representing spirit, soul and body. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 mentions our body, our soul with three parts (mind, emotion and will), and our spirit with three functions. You can call them parts but actually it means that our spirit functions in these three ways. It is not that if you look at your spirit there are three parts. It is the same spirit but it functions in these ways: fellowship, intuition and conscience. These three functions work together. Do you realize that your conscience is your spirit? Your conscience is your spirit functioning. What does it mean if I say, "Saints, exercise your spirit!?" That means actually that I am telling you to use your conscience, use fellowship, and use intuition. When we say it in the meeting mostly we are talking about fellowship. We say, "Exercise your spirit" that

means sing from your inner being to enjoy the Lord.

What are ways to exercise your spirit? The most common one that we would say is calling the Lord's name, but calling on the Lord does not always work. Suppose that it is Friday night and you are on the way to the meeting and your mom says, "Did you make your bed?" or "Did you throw out the garbage?" I know that you wouldn't do this but what if you would say, "Mom! It's time to go to the meeting." Surely you should go to the meeting but that was a bad attitude. I am sure that you don't do this. I am saying, "Suppose you would do this." Suppose a young person would say, "Mom, come on. What? Do you want me to stay home and do my chores now?" Suppose you would have that kind of attitude, and then your mom says, "Fine, just go" and then on your way out, boom, you slam the door just for a little dramatic effect. Now you go to the meeting, and in the meeting the brothers say, "OK young people, let's exercise our spirits." In that meeting it doesn't matter how loud you call, your conscience would be bothering you: "You need to apologize to your mother." Do you know the way to exercise your spirit that night? To go home and say, "Mom, sorry." Sometimes it is very difficult to say, "I'm sorry" but that is exercise of your spirit.

When I first came to the church life, I remember being in a meeting in New York when I was a teenager in high school and in the course of the meeting we had a time for testimonies after the fellowship and someone was sharing "Well I really enjoyed what was shared" in a low voice without any feeling. Then one of the older brothers in the front interrupted the brother and said, "Brother, exercise your spirit!" Do you know what the young brother did? He said the same thing with a loud voice. He did two things: he spoke louder and he pumped his fist. I thought, "Oh, that's how I exercise my spirit." Then I was in another meeting and there was somebody sharing and another brother, not the same one, said, "Brother, exercise your spirit." Do you know what he did? He spoke louder and he pumped his fist up and down. I notice that in the meeting a lot of saints, even me, do this when we speak. Some of the sisters raise both fists. I noticed that so I thought, "Oh, so *Exercise your spirit* must mean speak louder and pump you fist." I was at a training one time in Anaheim. I was probably 15 or so, and we were meeting at the Anaheim convention centre; it may have been the Lord's table meeting. There was a brother who was praying, "Lord, we love You! We thank You!" and he didn't pump his fist. I thought, "Whats up with that guy?" because he was saying, "Oh Lord, we love You. Thank You for the process You went through. Thank you." He was praying with a loud voice but not moving his arms. Later I learned that that brother was blind. He never saw others pump their fist so he never learned to do that, but he was releasing his spirit. You don't have to move your arms like this.

I am not telling you not to pump your fist; it is OK if you do that. But what I am saying is that doing something in the meeting is not necessarily exercising your spirit if you didn't take care of your conscience before the meeting. If during the week you don't take care of your conscience, you don't use your conscience, you don't obey your conscience, then it is very difficult to exercise your spirit in the way of fellowship. Then in the meeting you are calling, you are reading the Bible, and singing; it could be that you are doing all the things that you are supposed to do but today it doesn't flow like it did last week. The meetings sometimes are different. What I found is that if you have an experience like this and you have not taken care of your conscience, you blame the meeting. You think that the meeting was not as good as last week. You think, "Why? Because that brother shared. He shared too long. I don't understand his sharing." Actually young people, don't blame the meeting. Don't blame the brother. Don't blame the church. Confess your sins. Exercise you conscience. When you exercise your conscience you

really are exercising your spirit. Sometimes it could be—this place is so nice and clean—oh, there is a little spot right there; it could be that you are just walking in the meeting hall and you see a little piece of paper on the floor, and the Lord tells you in your heart, “Pick it up” and you say, “I’m not on cleaning service this week. It’s not my team.” When you go into that meeting the Lord might not flow. So actually, exercising to pump you fist will not mean as much as picking up the paper and going to the garbage to throw it out. Do you know that that is exercising your spirit? I hope that you could learn this.

I have been guilty myself in the past of trying to stir up young people in a meeting: “Come on young people! Exercise your spirit!” because the singing was a little dragging. Later I realized my way was not so good. I am not saying, “Don’t do that” but I am saying that if you are going to do that, learn how to lead people with the genuine exercise of their spirit by their conscience. The exercise of fellowship needs to have the backup of the exercise of our conscience. David was such a person; he had failures. Exercising your conscience doesn’t mean that you don’t have failures, but when you exercise your conscience and obey your conscience, the Lord will cleanse you from all your sin.

Psalm 110, verse 3 reads, “Your people will offer themselves willingly In the day of Your warfare, In the splendor of their consecration. Your young men will be to You Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.” David was someone who experienced offering himself to the Lord for His satisfaction: “Your people will offer themselves willingly In the day of Your warfare.” He realized that we are in a warfare. “In the splendor of their consecration. Your young men will be to You Like the dew...” For young people to offer themselves to the Lord is a particular satisfaction to God. God is refreshed when young people, even children, give their lives to God. Look at the end; it says, “Your young men will be to You Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.” Dew in the morning is not rain; it is very quiet and very refreshing. Did you know that God wants to be refreshed by us? We think that only we can be strengthened by God but this verse says that we can be something very refreshing to Him. David was such a person who had an intimate relationship with the Lord and was also giving himself to the Lord for the spiritual warfare.

Let close by singing hymn 788 but using the tune of hymn 437.