

I have a thought for the Children's Message for this coming Sunday – and it is only Wednesday! And I want to preview the idea with you right now!

I am going to invite all the kids on Sunday to come up here and have them lay on their backs. We are going to spend some time looking up to God and his name.

I am so excited about doing that! I just had to tell you tonight. We are going to look up to God's name.

The Message translation of Psalm 75 says: *"We thank you, God, we thank you— your Name is our favorite word...."* I love that translation of that verse – *"Your name is our favorite word."*

Tonight we are looking at this name of God: *Yahweh Nissi – the Lord Is My Banner*. There are 63 names for God in the OT. We cannot look at all 63 names during this Sermon Series, so I had to pick and choose.

I purposefully chose one name that I had no real connection with. That is this name: *The Lord is My Banner*.

My only connection with this name for God is the Children's song we just sang. A fun and neat song, but – what does it mean? God is my banner?

I found out that this name has to do with two crisis in the wilderness. **Crisis #1:** Moses and the Children of Israel were rescued by God out of Egypt, and led by God into the wilderness. They came to their first major rest stop in the wilderness, a place called Rephidim.

Exodus says about that stop in that place: *"There wasn't a drop of water for the people to drink."* [Exodus 17:1]

Now, there is a tendency for humans to do what when they are led into the wilderness and they are thirsty and there is no water? There is a tendency to ...

Yes, the word I was looking for is “complain.” There is a tendency to complain. Not that any of us would ever do that. But, you know, other people complain! That is why this story is in the Bible: to remind us that other people are complainers. [I am being – facetious.]

God handles that situation – he is a banner for them – by having Moses strike a rock, out of which water flowed. Crisis #1 is handled by the Lord our Banner.

Crisis # 2: The Warriors of Amalek. The Bible says: “*While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim, the warriors of Amalek attacked them.*” [Exodus 17:8]

The Amalek were a desert people who were very warlike. Sooner or later the Children of Israel were going to cross swords with the Amalek. And it happened sooner, at the very first rest stop in the wilderness.

Bible scholars for generations have seen the Amalek warriors as a symbol for the battles we face. The battles you and I face might be illness or unruly emotions or conflicts with job or neighbors or any number of things.

God provided protection for his people in the wilderness. When the arms of Moses were up the people were safe. When the arms of Moses were down the people were under the power of the Amalek.

[Move over to the cross...]

- When the arms of Jesus are over us, we are protected.
- When we move away from those arms of mercy, we fall under the power of sin, death, and the power of the devil.

This Lent we remember that Jesus is the banner over us. When we stay under his arms that were lifted for us on the cross, when we stay under his arms over us every day, we are sustained and protected.

A banner is that to which we look to let us know that the battle is still being fought and won. American soldiers look to the flag to see if it is still flying. As long as that banner was flying the battle was still being won.

[Find one volunteer ... Get balloon ... Finish Message ... Sing Song, "His Banner Over Me Is Love."