

Connecting Through the Word
Facing Life's Battles With Victorious Faith
Praise Your Way to Victory
1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 17-20

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

2 Chronicles 20:10-15; 17; 20-22

10 And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy—

11 behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit.

12 O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”

13 Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.
14 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

15 And he said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God’s.

17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.”

20 And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.”

21 And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went

before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."

22 And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.

Many here today are facing tremendous pressures and trials in their lives. No one is exempt from the temptations and trials, the pains and sorrows, the problems and disasters of life.

You have either just come out of a trial, or you're right now in the midst of a trial, or you will face one just around the corner.

You want victory. God did not cause us and call us to fail, but to be victorious. And I love the New Testament that says that our Lord Jesus causes us always to triumph. Not sometimes. Always to triumph.

Notice what happened to good king Jehoshaphat. It's one of the greatest blessings in all of the Bible. This is a magnificent chapter. You will be incredibly blessed and instructed if you will open your Bible now and follow along with me and find out what happened to good king Jehoshaphat and what he

did about it, and what you can do when similar things happened to you.

Let's go back for a minute or two to chapters 18 and 19.

In chapter 18, Jehoshaphat makes a marriage alliance with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel.

2 Chronicles 18:1

Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor, and he made a marriage alliance with Ahab.

Ahab then asked Jehoshaphat to go to battle with him and Jehoshaphat agrees.

2 Chronicles 18:3

Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" He answered him, "I am as you are, my people as your people. We will be with you in the war."

In this battle against the king of Syria, Ahab is killed and Jehoshaphat is divinely and providentially protected and escapes back to Jerusalem.

In Chapter 19, Jehoshaphat is rebuked by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani and he repents.

2 Chronicles 19:2-3

But Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from the LORD. Nevertheless, some good is found in you, for you destroyed the Asheroth out of the land, and have set your heart to seek God."

The rest of the chapter Jehoshaphat becomes a traveling evangelist and leads the people to believe and trust in the Lord.

A national revival takes place!!!!

He appoints honest judges and priest to lead the people and the chapter ends with these words of his:

2 Chronicles 19:11

".... Deal courageously, and may the LORD be with the upright!"

That was a promise and that was true. But it certainly did not mean that they would not have any trouble. Because we're going to see right after this revival and right after this injunction to live courageously and to be good, there comes incredible problems. And when an enemy comes against you that does not mean that God has forsaken you or that God is not with you. The

enemy may come against you because God is with you. And when God opens the windows of heaven to bless you, the devil will open the doors of hell to blast you, and you're going to know trouble if you serve the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "All these things happened to them for examples to us."

Now Chapter 20!

In this chapter we learn how to face our problems and challenges and battles in life with victorious faith and how to praise our way to victory.

Notice what Jehoshaphat did as he faced a major battle in life!

1. Jehoshaphat Encountered a Problem

No sooner than Jehoshaphat and Judah experience this revival, they are attacked.

2 Chronicles 20:1-2

After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, Engedi).

A problem is a blessing in disguise. James said,

James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

That's a very hard thing for me to do.

Like I already said, if you don't have a problem, you will have one soon!

2. Jehoshaphat Established a Purpose

2 Chronicles 20:3-4

Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

It's very important that you establish your purpose when a problem comes.

Have you ever, really, one time in your life, ever just set yourself to seek the Lord, to say, "With all of my might, every inch, every nerve, every fiber, with my total being I am set to seek the Lord?"
"....and he proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord." Would to God that America would do the same thing. Out of all of our cities just come to seek the Lord.

Now this man's first thought was not his last resort. He didn't turn to the Lord after he'd tried everything else like so many of us do. The very first thing he did when trouble came—he set himself to seek the Lord. That's what Jesus told us to do. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...."

Now a lot of us want to be counselors, and some of us fancy ourselves as counselors. If you're a counselor, you may do a bad job if you solve a problem for the individual that you're counseling with. Did you know that that problem may be God's way to bring that individual to the Lord? And rather than trying to solve his or her problem, the best thing you could ever do as a counselor is to encourage that individual and his or her problems to seek the Lord.

Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* said:

It takes a long time to realize the danger of being an amateur providence, that is, interfering with God's order for others. (November 15)

Are we playing the spiritual amateur providence in other lives? Are we so noisy in our instruction of others that God cannot get anywhere near them? (August 1)

We disobey God by becoming amateur providences—I must shield "Eli" the best people we know. (January 30)

Over and over again, we become amateur providences, we come in and prevent God; and say—"This and that must not be." (March 24)

Instead of being friends of the Bridegroom, we may become amateur providences, and may work against Him whilst we use His weapons. (March 25)

When a problem comes, that is an opportunity to seek God in time of trouble.

Hebrews 4:16

"Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We have times of need. We can come boldly to the Lord like Jehoshaphat did and establish our purpose to seek Him.

3. Jehoshaphat Examined the Past

2 Chronicles 20:6-7

Jehoshaphat said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?"

Jehoshaphat is saying, "O God, You gave us this land. It's the Promised Land. God, You brought us here, and this bunch has come to try to take away from us what You have given us, dear God, the promise that You have given to us."

You're not going to embarrass God by standing on His promises. When trouble comes do like old King Jehoshaphat did and set yourself to seek the Lord. Look back in the, your past and see what God has done, how God has brought you thus far.

4. Jehoshaphat Embraced the Promise

2 Chronicles 20:8-9

And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this

house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.'

Find a promise in the Word of God and stand on it.

Hebrews 13:5, 6

"Let your conversation [that means your behavior] be without covetousness, be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Either that's true or it's not true.

These are promises in the Word of God. They are great promises. And they're not mottoes to be hung on the wall; they're checks to be carried to the bank and cashed. You can stand on the Word of God.

And what Jehoshaphat is saying is, "Look, God, this crowd has come to take away the possessions that You've given us."

I want to tell you that Satan wants to drive you out of the land of victory. Satan wants to keep you from possessing the land that he has given you, your spiritual Canaan, and you don't have to let him do it.

When Satan comes, like these people come, and when problems come, and they are originated of the devil, you can boldly say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man shall do to me." And

you can say, "Satan, I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. I am His purchased possession. My sins are under the blood. You have no right, no authority in my life. You're trespassing on my Father's property, and in the name of Jesus be gone." You say, "Well, that's like praying to the devil." I'm not praying to a cat when I say, "Scat."

You get a promise and you stand on that promise. Find a promise in the Word of God. He embraced his promise.

If you have a hard time finding one, get C.H. Spurgeon's "Faith's Check Book".

5. Jehoshaphat Exposed His Powerlessness

2 Chronicles 20:12-13

O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

Can you see them? "God, we don't have any strength. Lord, we don't know what to do." They take their little children and they look up and say, "God, our eyes are on You."

Do you think God is going to forsake a people like that? Do you think God is going to let a people like that suffer when, God's, they say, "God, if they kill us, our eyes are on You?"

Lord, no matter what they do to us, O God, our eyes are upon You. We're trusting You and You alone. Our eyes are not on ourselves. Our eyes are not on our enemies. Our eyes are not on our circumstances. Our eyes are upon You."

6. Jehoshaphat Enlisted His Protection **2 Chronicles 20:14-15**

And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.

Here Jehoshaphat got a promise from God. I've been there, and if you've been a Christian very long, you've been there.

How wonderful when the Holy Spirit of God takes some promise from the Word and makes it real to you, and God says, "Look, Mike, just trust Me. It's not your battle. It's My battle. Mike, you don't have

to pray for victory; you pray from victory. I have already won the victory."

Do you know what your victory depends upon? Not your ability. That's not your responsibility. It is your response to God's ability, which is your greatest ability. You just simply say, "Lord God, our eyes are upon You," and God says, "That's right, my child, the battle is not yours; it is Mine."

And so here is Jehoshaphat. He enlists his protection.

7. Jehoshaphat Engaged His Preparation

2 Chronicles 20:18-19

Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

Notice how he prepared now for this strange battle.

He's getting ready just to praise the Lord. He just falls on his face. Now he's going into battle, but nothing will prepare you for the battle like

worship. The man who can kneel before God, truly kneel before God, can stand before any problem.

It will be a great day when we learn that worship comes before either work or warfare, when we worship the Lord. So many times we just want to get at it without worshipping God.

That's how Jehoshaphat prepared himself and the people of Judah for the battle.

8. Jehoshaphat Expressed His Praise

2 Chronicles 20:20-22

And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."

And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."

And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.

Now, the battle is the Lord's, but God says you're going to have a part.

Well, what is your part, Jehoshaphat? You are going to praise. The battle is mine, but I'm not going to do one solitary thing until you praise. So get a choir out there and start marching and start singing.

I would imagine that some would say, perhaps, "Well, now, Lord, as soon as You give us the victory, we're going to sing."

But God says, "No, I'm not going to give you any victory until you start singing."

"Well, Lord, I don't see the victory cause I can't praise You, I, I can't praise You yet because I can't see the victory."

Then you will just have to go and live with the problem.

Are you willing to praise God in the midst of your problems? I mean, in the face of your enemy, when you don't have anything but the promise of God, who says, "I will not leave you nor forsake you. The battle is not yours; it's mine.

Get out there and praise the Lord." You see, your lack of praise is really unbelief, and the Bible teaches that when we praise the Lord, when the praise the Lord, we're really expressing our faith in God. Prayer and praise go together.

Colossians 4:2

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

Prayer and praise are the two wings of spiritual power. Prayer infuses us with the energy of God, and prayer confuses the enemies of God.

The devil is allergic to praise. If there's any kind of a problem and you know it is satanically caused, then praise the Lord!

If the problem is because of your sin, don't go around praising the Lord. Just repent, but if you know this is obviously an attack from the enemy, then you just begin to praise God.

And do you know what will happen when you praise God? I've seen it happen so many times in the Bible and in my own life. God sends confusion into the camp of the enemies.

2 Chronicles 20:23

For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.

9. Jehoshaphat Enjoyed His Provisions

2 Chronicles 20:25-26

When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much. On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Beracah to this day.

If the devil attacks you, you praise God and you're going to find out that the devil is just going to be God's messenger boy to bring you riches. God will make Satan your servant when you begin to praise the Lord in the midst of great difficulty.

They enjoyed a great spoil.... Not just material riches, but spiritual and emotional maturity and fulfillment!!!!

To summarize all this:

1. You learn to see all satanic opposition as an opportunity to be blessed.
2. You seek the face of God before you take any action whatsoever.
3. You remind yourselves of those times when God has already been faithful to you.
4. You go to the Word of God, look for a promise to stand on it.
5. You let the Holy Spirit of God make that promise a burning reality in your heart.
6. You refuse any confidence in the flesh, none whatsoever.
7. You give yourself to praise, to worship.
8. You begin to praise the Lord in the face of that opposition.
9. You expect God to send confusion to the enemy.
10. You get ready for a blessing. We serve a mighty God.

As we prepare for the Lord's Supper one more story from the life of Jehoshaphat.

In 2 Kings 3

Years later, Jehoshaphat joins with Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and with the king of Edom to go to battle against the Moabites.

Elisha the prophet is called to give them advise.

2 Kings 3:15-17

But now bring me a musician." Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.' For thus says the LORD: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.'

The people dug the ditches and the Lord sent the water to fill the ditches and when the sun rose the Moabites saw the water and it looked like blood to them and they thought the three kings had got in a battle with each other and came down unprepared to fight and were soundly defeated by Israel.

Remember our first verse today?

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life

leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

The blood of Jesus is to us who are saved, the aroma of life!

But to the lost, it is the aroma of death.

Jesus sang His way to the victory in the Garden of Gethsemane after the Passover Supper with His disciples.

Matthew 26:30

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.