

GUIDED BY GOD

God's Guidance Through a Crisis

2 Chronicles 20:1-4

The Crisis

2 Chronicles 20:1-2 (KJV) *It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. [2] Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be Hazazon-tamar, which is En-gedi.*

- King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah find themselves in a crisis
- Jehoshaphat and Judah were about to be attacked at the by three different armies at once: the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites
- They were all enemies of “each other” but formed an *alliance* or coalition to defeat their common enemy, Judah
- Jehoshaphat was told that these armies were already on the move and were approaching from behind the mountains to have a surprise attack on Judah
- Jehoshaphat and Judah had done nothing to provoke this attack
- Crises in life don’t always give us “advance notice”
- You’re wondering how you going to make it
- Like Jehoshaphat you feel like your world is closing in on all at once, with no way out, no option, no relief
- And if you allow it, a crisis can not only rock your world, a crisis can shake your faith

Seek the Lord; Fast and Pray

[3] And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. [4] 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.

- Jehoshaphat’s first reaction was fear
- Fear can be your *enemy* or your *ally*, depending on how you handle it
- If fear is your *enemy*, it will work against you by paralyzing you with fear that you do nothing, or causing you to make hasty decisions, or causing “you” to “rely only on you” to fix things and not seeking help
- If fear is your *ally*, you don’t fear to overtake you, you do what Jehoshaphat did; he feared *and* set himself to seek the Lord
 - To *set oneself seek the Lord* means to turn and inquire of God
 - Jehoshaphat “feared” the enemy, but he also *feared* the Lord in the sense that he was more in awe of the power and might of God than of his enemies
- He *turned* his attention to seek the Lord, he *prayed* and *fasted*
- Jehoshaphat’s *fear* drove him to *pray*, not fuss, not complain, not withdraw from church, not get mad with God, he prayed
- Prayer was Jehoshaphat’s *1st response*
 - Prayer is *privilege*, an *opportunity*, and most importantly a *personal responsibility*
- Jehoshaphat did not merely pray, he also *fasted*, but he did not pray and fast alone; he proclaimed a national time of prayer and fasting through all of Judah
- In a time of crisis, you want to mobilize a team of *like-minded people* you join you in prayer and fasting

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- Jehoshaphat and all of Judah fasted because they needed direction and deliverance from God more than they needed food
- He also gathered all of Judah together to ask God for help
- There is great power when we unite to seek God in prayer and fasting
- We can't always avoid the crisis; therefore, we must know how to act when a crisis comes

Pray in Faith

[5] And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, [6] And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? [7] Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? [8] And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, [9] If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. [10] And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; [11] Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. [12] O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. [13] And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

- In addition to calling the fast, Jehoshaphat gathered Judah together and lead them in corporate prayer:
 - He gave the situation to the Lord
 - God is still the ruler over all
 - He reminded God of their covenant relationship with them
 - He recognized God's sovereignty over the situation
 - He acknowledged to God that they were:
 - Powerless – No power to fight 3 armies
 - We don't know what to do – God we have no answers
 - But our eyes are on You
 - Although they didn't know what to do, their eyes would be focused on God
- He is professing his complete dependence on God

God's Responds to Prayer and Fasting

[14] Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation; [15] And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. [16] To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. [17] Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor

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be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you. [18] And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. [19] And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

- When you pray, God will answer
- Jehoshaphat and Judah were silently waiting for an answer from God
- God answers in many ways
- When Jehoshaphat completed praying, Jahaziel, a prophet began to speak under power, unction and guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Jahaziel spoke four prophetic pronouncements to Jehoshaphat and Judah:
 - **A Word of Encouragement**
 - Do not fear Don't be afraid or discouraged because of the great army
 - The battle is not yours, it's the Lord's
 - **A Word of Instruction**
 - Move forward and march out and face the enemy
 - **A Word of Information (Intelligence)**
 - Tomorrow you will go after them
 - Take your positions
 - You won't need to fight
 - **A Word of Assurance**
 - You won't have to fight this battle
 - Set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord
 - The Lord will be with you
- Jahaziel's words brought peace and comfort to Jehoshaphat and all of Judah
- Jehoshaphat and all of Judah fell to the ground and began to worship the Lord for the answer
- The Levites stood and began to praise God for the answer

Follow God's Guidance

*[21] And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, **Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.** [22] And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. [23] For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. [24] And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.*

- Then next day Jehoshaphat and Judah got up and were marching into the wilderness of Tekoa
- Jehoshaphat spoke to the people and said, "Believe in God and you will be established and believe in the prophet and you will prosper"
 - Believe what God has said through the prophet and you see your breakthrough
- Jehoshaphat was conditional on them following God's instructions from the prophet

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- Our victory over our crisis is *contingent* on our *following* God's guidance
- Before going into the battle Jehoshaphat appointed singers that would go out in front of the army
 - ***They would sing Praise the Lord for His mercy endureth forever!***
- The choir began to sing, and the Lord caused the armies of Moab, Ammon, and Mt. Seir to attack each other
- The praise of the choir confused the enemy
- ***The devil can't understand how you can praise God during a crisis***
- The armies were so confused not only did they attack each other, they killed each other
- Praise breaks the stronghold of the enemy
- When Jehoshaphat and the rest of Judah arrived, there was no need to fight only collect the spoils of the enemy
- When armies would go into battle, they would take their wealth with them to prevent theft if they left it at home while at war
 - ***It literally took them three days to gather all the spoils***
- The enemy came to *attack* you and God used the enemy to come and *bless* you!

Bless the Lord for the Victory!

[26] *And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day.* [27] *Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies.* [28] *And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord.* [29] *And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.* [30] *So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.*

- On the fourth day after the victory, Jehoshaphat gathered Judah together to bless the Lord
- As a memorial to the Lord, Jehoshaphat renamed the site of the battle, the Valley of Berachah
- You don't normally associate *blessings* with "valleys"
- Their greatest blessing came at the lowest possible point
- Your most difficult crisis can also be the place of your greatest blessing
- After their worship service to celebrate their victory, Jehoshaphat lead them back to Jerusalem with great joy
- When the surrounding nations heard how God had defeated Judah's enemies, they greatly feared the God of Jehoshaphat and Judah
- And Jehoshaphat heard from them no more and there was *peace and rest* for as long as Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah
- God not only gave the victory, but God *permanently ended* the crisis
- It happened this way because Jehoshaphat knew what to do in a crisis and relied on God's *guidance* to get him through it
 - What God did for Jehoshaphat; God *will do* for you!