

Victory through Praise

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Pastor E. Keith Hassell

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

There comes a time in every believer's life when they find themselves confronted with a situation that threatens to take them down. They find themselves facing insurmountable odds with no feasible way out. The enemy threatens on the outside. Fear and panic threaten on the inside. What we do at that moment will determine the outcome.

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the people of Judah found themselves in such a situation. King Jehoshaphat brought Judah back to God after a period of spiritual unfaithfulness. He removed the wooden idols from the land, prepared his heart to seek the LORD, and made many reforms.¹ It would seem that his efforts toward revival in the land would mean that the LORD would remove all threats. But that was not the case. Neither is it the case when we seek to live for Christ. The enemy will always seek to overthrow the people of God.

2 Chronicles chapter 20 records a specific threat to King Jehoshaphat and to the people of Judah. A great multitude of the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the people of Mount Seir gathered to battle against them. The Moabites and the Ammonites were the descendants of Lot. The people of Mount Seir were the descendants of Ishmael.

King Jehoshaphat's first *reaction* was to panic with fear. But rather than let panic rule, King Jehoshaphat chose to *respond* in faith to the threat by seeking the Lord. He proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. Fasting was a way to set aside the pursuit of every other priority and need in order to focus on the LORD. The people gathered to Jerusalem to seek the LORD and to ask for His help against this imminent threat. King Jehoshaphat brought his case in prayer before the LORD as Judge just as a person would bring a case before a judge in a court of law.

First King Jehoshaphat enters the courtroom of prayer with proper protocol toward the Judge. He exalts the LORD as God of heaven and the ruler over all the kingdoms of the earth. He acknowledged that no one is able to withstand Him. In this way he put the threat into its proper perspective under the Sovereignty of God. Rather than magnify the problem, he magnifies the LORD as the One whose judgment will stand.

Next King Jehoshaphat presents his case by reminding the LORD of two things. First he reminds the LORD that He is their God and of what He had done for His people in former times. He reminds the LORD that they have built a temple in Jerusalem for His worship. He reminds the LORD of their former kindness toward the Moabites, Ammonites, and Mount Seir who are now gathered against them.

After presenting his case, He asks the LORD as Judge to make a judgment against Moab, Ammon, and Seir. His sovereign judgment was their only hope for Judah because they in their own ability were unable to withstand this great multitude that has come against them. After presenting His case, King Jehoshaphat and the people wait for the Judge to answer with His verdict.

The LORD answered King Jehoshaphat and Judah through His prophet Jahaziel. First the LORD comforts them with the exhortation to not be afraid or dismayed because of the great multitude. The battle with Moab, Ammon, and Seir was not their battle but the LORD's battle.

Next the LORD gave to Judah steps of action which amounted to steps of faith. He told them to go out the following day against the enemy. He revealed the route by which the enemy would advance toward them. Although they would go out against them, they would not need to fight this battle. Their instruction was to simply position themselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD. He assured them that He was with them. Following these instructions would require faith on their part to face rather than flee from their enemy.

¹ 2 Chronicles 19

King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah responded in faith to the word of the LORD through worship. At the end of their assembly, the Levites and the children of the Korathites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and strong. It was indeed a celebration of faith for the battle would come the next day. In obedience to the word of the LORD, King Jehoshaphat and the people prepare to go out to face their enemy. As their leader, King Jehoshaphat exhorted the people to *“Believe in the LORD your God and you shall be established. Believe in His prophets, and you shall prosper.”*² Their well-being would be found as they exercised faith in what the LORD had said. The LORD had told them that they were to go face their enemy but that they would not have to fight this battle. They were to simply stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.

Being assured by faith in the word of God that they would not have to fight, King Jehoshaphat appointed worshipers rather than warriors to lead the army toward the enemy. He appointed singers to lead the army who would praise the beauty of His holiness. As the singers went forth they declared, “Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever!”

Something happened when the singing began. Something happened when the singers praised the LORD for His mercy. In response the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. Scripture does not explain what these ambushes were, but it does reveal the result of the ambushes. These ambushes caused confusion and panic to arise among the armies Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir. No longer did they trust one another. The warriors of Moab and Ammon rose up to fight against Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. Afterward Moab and Ammon destroyed one another. No one among their armies escaped. The LORD accomplished a complete rout of this alliance without Judah lifting a sword! In fact, it wasn't until Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness that they saw a multitude of dead bodies. As the LORD had declared, Judah did not have to fight in this battle. The battle was the LORD's battle. When the battle is the LORD's there is no contest!

Although Judah did not have to fight, they did get to take away the spoil. The spoil was so abundant that it took three days to gather it all. It was more than they could carry. The situation that once threatened to kill, steal, and destroy was turned around for Judah's good. What seemed to bring a curse brought a blessing instead.

On the fourth day the army of Judah assembled in the valley to bless the LORD who had won this battle for them. Therefore the valley was called the Valley of Berachah, i.e. the Valley of Blessing. Not only did they bless the LORD, but the valley which could have become their valley of defeat became their Valley of Blessing instead.

From there the army of Judah returned to Jerusalem with King Jehoshaphat leading the way. They came with great joy because the LORD had caused them to rejoice over their enemies. They came to the house of the LORD with the sound of stringed instruments, harps, and trumpets. It was a day of great celebration. Not only had the LORD wrought a great victory for Judah, but the fear of the LORD came upon all the surrounding nations when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Judah. Through this victory the LORD also brought quietness and rest to the realm of King Jehoshaphat.

This account is a story of how God snatched victory out of the jaws of defeat. It is a compelling tribute to what God can do when people do not allow panic and fear to grip their heart but choose to seek the LORD instead. It is important for God's people to lay out their covenant case before the LORD, the righteous Judge and wait for His instructions. In this case, all they had to do was to go face their fear, position themselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD. Then they praised their way to victory. They magnified the LORD who would fight the battle for them.

The next time you come face to face against insurmountable odds, choose not to panic. Choose not to trust in the arm of the flesh. Choose to seek the LORD and to trust in Him. Do what He says and allow Him to fight the battle for you. Then praise Him until the victory comes. He will give you the victory as you determine to give Him the glory! Victory comes through praise!

² 2 Chronicles 20:20 (NKJV)