

## WHEN FEAR STRIKES

### INTRODUCTION

Earlier this week, I wrote an encouragement titled, "Our Anchor in uncertain times". It contained an encouragement to place our trust in God during 2019.

I began the message by stating this: As we look back on 2018, for many of us, it was a difficult year. It was difficult on a personal level, but we have also faced difficult financial, economic and political circumstances.

A few weeks ago, when Pastor Ryan preached, he reminded us that the amazing thing is that regardless of the difficulties we may have faced, God has brought us this far.

We would therefore do well to look back over 2018 and identify the breakthroughs, blessings, healings, protection and provision we have received from the Lord. It is good to remember what God has done, because it renews our faith and our trust in Him to help us in the future. The Psalmist wrote this: **Psalm 77:10-12** (NKJV) And I said, "This is my anguish; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds.

In this first Sunday message of 2019, I want to give you a key to victorious living this year regardless of our situations. We will look at a well-known example of a people who, when facing certain defeat, looked back to what God had previously done and promised. What becomes clear is a significant trend in their approach from the first time they sought God right through to what they did after God gave them the victory.

### MESSAGE

**2 Chronicles 20:1-30** (NKJV) It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). 3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. 5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, 6 and said: "O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9

'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' 10 And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them— 11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." 13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord. 14 Then the Spirit of the Lord came 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, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you." 18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. 19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high. 20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever." 22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. 24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. 25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the Lord; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. 27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice

over their enemies. 28 So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. 29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

## **WHEN FEAR STRIKES**

We like to tell people not to be afraid, but to trust God, but fear is quite normal. When Jehoshaphat heard the news about the approaching multitude it says, "And Jehoshaphat feared". Fear is a natural survival reaction to danger. It's built into our DNA. It's what we do when we fear that counts.

- Will we run when faced with fearful circumstances?
- Will we give up?
- Will we go to man for help?
- Jehoshaphat immediately "set himself to seek God!"

***Are you facing a situation that strikes fear into your heart? Set yourself to seek God!***

So you may ask, "how do I set myself to seek God"?

- If the situation is severe enough, declare a time of prayer and fasting! Definitely, ask the Lord for help!
- Remind yourself what God has already done for you – Ebenezer – Thus far God has been with us!
- Take time to align yourself with God's word. Jehoshaphat recounted what the Israelites had said to God when they dedicated the Temple, "we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save". That's exactly what Jehoshaphat and His people did.
- Last week Mark Uren told us that we must be aligned with God's plan to be safe in the year ahead.
- They acknowledged their own lack of strength and knowledge – They dealt with self and with pride and placed their trust in God alone.
- Then wait on the Lord for direction – God answered Israel through a prophetic word. He can answer you through His word, through someone, through a dream or a vision, He may even send an angel like He did for Daniel.

***How have we been responding to difficult circumstances. Have we followed our own solution, or have we followed the Bible model?***

## **PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE**

There is an old chorus we used to sing, "Praise is the power of heaven". When we praise God, we release the power of heaven, why? Because by praising, we are declaring that God reigns over us and over our circumstances.

When we teach people to praise in difficult situations, we always refer to Jehoshaphat and to Paul and Silas. God moves when His people praise!

Did you know that Jesus praised when He was facing His darkest hour?

**Matthew 26:30** (NKJV) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus and His disciples sang after having the last supper, after that they went out and a few hours later, Jesus was arrested!

We tend to focus on the Israelites praising on the battlefield, but this account identifies four separate times when Jehoshaphat and His people praised God.

1. **Jehoshaphat praised God when he made his first petition to the Lord: v6** O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?
2. **Jehoshaphat and the people worshipped and praised when the prophet gave God's promise of help: V18 & 19** "And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord". Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.
3. **Jehoshaphat and his people praised God as marched onto the battle ground: v21** as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.
4. **Jehoshaphat and his people blessed God as they returned to the battle ground to collect the spoils: v26** And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the Lord.
5. **Jehoshaphat and his people praised God as they returned to the sanctuary: v28** So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the Lord.

2 Chronicles outlines five separate times in challenging or difficult situations when we should be praising God. This outline also serves as a good example of how God progresses when we have a need:

1. We praise God when we make our requests known.
2. We praise God when He gives us direction.
3. We praise God when we stand facing the enemy.
4. We praise God when He gives us the victory.
5. We praise God in the sanctuary after we have collected the spoils of victory.

Praise was so prominent to God's people that there were seven Hebrew words for to describe it:

1. 1. **Halal** - **the** primary Hebrew root word for praise. Our word "hallelujah" comes from it. It means "to be clear, to shine, to boast, show, to rave, celebrate, to be clamorously foolish."
2. 2. **Yadah** - it means "the extended hand, to throw out the hand, therefore to worship with extended hand." According to the Lexicon, the opposite meaning is "to bemoan, the wringing of the hands." – The name **Judah** is derived from Yadah – Jesus is the Lion of Judah – the Loin of Praise!
3. 3. **Towdah** - Towdah means, "an extension of the hand in adoration, avowal, or acceptance." It is apparent in the Psalms and elsewhere that it is used for thanking God for "things not yet received" as well as things already at hand.
4. 4. **Shabach** - Shabach means, "to shout, to address in a loud tone, to command, to triumph."
5. 5. **Barak** - Barak means "to kneel down, to bless God as an act of adoration."
6. 6. **Zamar** - Zamar means "to pluck the strings of an instrument, to sing, to praise; a musical word which is largely involved with joyful expressions of music with musical instruments.
7. 7. **Tehillah** - Tehillah is derived from the word halal and means "the singing of halals, to sing or to laud; perceived to involve music, especially singing; hymns of the Spirit.

***When last did we stand up and praise God with a very loud voice?  
When last did we roar praises to the Lion of praise?  
Have we had a victory and forgotten to give God all the glory?***

***Did we come to church in the midst of our need but then drift off after  
God gave us the victory?***

## **CONCLUSION**

During the year that lays ahead, we don't know what we will need to deal with, what challenges we will face or what battles will need to be won, but this we do know, God remains the same! If He gave them the victory, He will give us the victory.

But God has given an example in His word for us to follow when facing difficulties:

1. When fear strikes, its time to set ourselves to seek God.
2. When seeking God, we must remember what He has already done for us.
3. When the enemy comes in, we must be aligned with God's word.
4. We must declare our total reliance on God.
5. We must praise God at all times, before, during and after.
6. Don't neglect returning to the sanctuary to offer up a sacrifice of praise.