

☞ Engaging the Enemy

There really is an enemy! It's not people, but it's a spiritual enemy. Let's not be naïve or ignorant! The enemy **will** attempt to disrupt God's plans amongst us. He wants us to live in **defeat and fear; sin & wickedness**. He wants us to **settle** for less than God's best and yet be filled with **pride**, thinking you "have arrived." He wants us to be **bitter** or **rebellious** & to **grumble** & **gossip**. The enemy wants us to become so **defeated** that we **give up**. However, God defeats the enemy. Our part is to resist the enemy's manipulations. Instead, focus on obeying God's directions and follow him as he leads. Don't listen to the enemy. Listen to God! Our part is simple: Follow and obey! God does the rest.

☞ 2 Chronicles 20

v. 1 After this:

19:3 Got rid of Asherah poles; set heart to seek God

19:4 He turned them back to the Lord

19:5 Appointed judges to administer God's law

They decided to follow God wholeheartedly and shortly thereafter, the enemy attacked. Perhaps you are a relatively new believer. Or you may be one who has recently rededicated their life to Lord. In either case, this passage of scripture is fitting for you.

☞ **When you are making forward progress with the Lord, the enemy will attack.** It also applies to us as a congregation since we are committed to following God's lead.

It happened in Ezra and Nehemiah's day when they led the Israelites to rebuild Jerusalem. Enemies came out of various places to try and stop them. We have seen it happen with new believers, especially after getting baptized. The enemy attacks. He always wants to discourage forward progress in the faith. So, as we've already discussed in previous weeks, be aware of the enemy and be alert to his attacks.

You may be through with the devil, but the devil is never through with you.

Three enemies came to make war:

Moabites = of his father... Lot was the father of Moab; Lot = hidden, covered...

☞ **The enemy comes in disguise.** Remember his weapons and tactics: deception, division, distraction, doubt, and discouragement. Very often, we experience these things and perceive them as normal life. We think nothing of it to be divided against one another. We think discouragement is just a normal reaction to circumstances. It may be a typical reaction, but it is still motivated by the enemy. He attacks us, and often does so while disguised as something very subtle.

Ammonites = tribal; a group of people...

☞ **The enemy often uses more than one issue when attacking.** How often have you experience doubt and discouragement concurrently? How often is division prompted by deception, being at odds with brothers and sisters over misinformation? That's the nature of the enemy. He attacks on multiple fronts simultaneously. When you seem to be getting hit from every side, it is very likely that the enemy is involved to bring you down and make you give up.

Meunites = afflicted... v. 10 adds Mt. Seir = tempest; rough; hairy...

☞ **The enemy uses affliction and adversity.** Things could get "rough" or "hairy" along the way. Remember, God gives us peace, and the Holy Spirit is the spirit of peace. The enemy brings a tempest, the storms of life. We've talked before about letting peace be the umpire in your heart. (Colossians 3:15). When your heart feels like a storm and is not at peace, then you are not being led by the Spirit. Pray and seek his peace.

v. 2 A vast army from Edom = earthy...

☞ **The enemy uses earthly troubles and temptations.** This world surely has plenty of problems to go around. We live in a fallen world and deal with all the fallout from sin, but Satan will capitalize on that to attack us. Remember, God doesn't tempt anyone. We get ourselves into trouble and the Devil tempts us in order to ruin us.

So, again we see the nature of our true enemy. It's not people or politics, but it's a spiritual enemy that wants to divide and discourage us. He wants us to give up in our walk with the Lord and he loves it when we think of other people as our enemy. So, now let's see how Jehoshaphat dealt with this situation...

☞ **v. 3 Jehoshaphat resolved** = gave himself; set his mind – **decided with determination.**

v. 3 to inquire of the Lord = to seek; to tread frequently...

He wasn't just going to ask God once and then let it be. He was going to **pursue the Lord** ☞ **for guidance and protection.** We need to keep this in mind. Too often, we face a troubling situation or an attack of the enemy and we just briefly mention it to the Lord, if at all. We need to resolve like Jehoshaphat to diligently seek the Lord in these matters. In these confusing times, we need discernment, wisdom, and strength. We have to pursue those from the Lord.

v. 3 He proclaimed a fast = self-denial combined with prayer...

Fasting is always associated with taking matters seriously. You may want to try it. **Give** ☞ **something up in order to seek the Lord more diligently.** Food; television; internet, etc.

v. 4 people came together = unity

v. 4 to seek = to ask; to search out the Lord...

☞ You don't have to face the enemy by yourself. **Ask for others to pray with you.** Make an effort to be unified, especially when there is so much pressure today to be divided.

v. 5-12 Jehoshaphat's prayer

☞ **v. 6 Recognized God's authority**

God is in heaven – that's over and above this world.
God rules over the nations – he is ultimately in charge.
God is powerful and mighty – he is capable and strong enough to defeat any enemy.

☞ **v. 7-9 Reminded God of his promises**

God promised to be with Abraham & his descendants – as believers we are grafted in.
God promised to hear his people – so pray and seek the Lord.
God promised to save us – be confident that God is for you.

☞ **v. 10-12 Requested God's deliverance**

God, deal with our enemy!
We don't know what to do – feel familiar?
Our eyes are on you – get focused on God instead of the enemy. That's the problem for so many today. People are easily distracted, focusing on all the problems and troubles in life, rather than focusing on God. I'm convinced that if more people would simply turn to God and align with him, many problems would simply go away.

v. 14 Spirit came on Jahaziel = seeing God

son of **Zechariah** = memory of the Lord
son of **Benaiah** = son of the Lord
son of **Jeiel** = treasured of God
son of **Mattaniah** = hope
of **Asaph** = one who gathers together

☞ **Keep your eyes on God; remember who God is and who you are – you're a child of God; you are his treasure; put your hope in him; hang together with like-minded people.**

v. 15 Don't be afraid or discouraged = don't break down; don't be confused. Don't let the enemy overwhelm you. God is greater!

☞ **v. 15 The battle is not yours, but God's**

The day you resign as General Manager of the Universe, you're going to find that it doesn't fall apart.

--Rick Warren... Has God ever lost a battle? God has a reputation for winning. That's the good news. When I know I have given my life completely to Jesus and I'm trying to live for him to the best of my ability, I don't have to sweat the small stuff. Ultimately, I'm on the winning side.

v. 17 Take your positions = find your place; be constant

☞ **v. 17 Stand firm** = unmoved; an attitude of quiet confidence...

Have you ever watched those nature shows where a predator stalks his prey? I've noticed that sometimes the prey can avoid death by standing their ground. The predator backs

down. But if they run, they almost certainly will be pursued by the predator. So, when troubles come and the enemy attacks, stand your ground; don't panic. And remember, unlike the prey in the wild who is often defenseless, we are watched over by the Lord of Angel Armies. It's a bit like the Lion King when Simba is being pursued by the hyenas, but then Mufasa shows up and roars sending the hyenas running in fear. Our God is roaring like a lion, and unlike the enemy it's more than just noise. He backs it up with unlimited power.

Ephesians 6:11-18 describes the armor of God and emphasizes standing your ground.

v. 11 take your stand

v. 13 stand your ground

v. 14 stand firm then

James 1 says that an unstable person is often doubting and lacking faith. So, stand firm, trust the Lord, and bolster your faith. Romans 10:17 says faith comes from the Word of God, so read your bible and keep it in your heart and mind. This will help you stand firm. In fact, most of our conflicts with the enemy take place in our minds. We *think* someone is against us. We *think* we are defeated. We *think* God has given up on us. We *think* this ☞ and we *think* that. So, we need to get control of our thoughts. **Think about what you think about!**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **4** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we ***take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.***

We must agree with Christ and obey and follow him.

Doubts aren't in agreement with Christ

Discouragement isn't in agreement with Christ

Division isn't in agreement with Christ

Distraction isn't in agreement with Christ

v. 21-22 Sang and praised at the head of the army = boast; celebrate; rave about God...

Here again, get your focus on God instead of your problems. When you **sing and praise ☞ the Lord**, you realign yourself and remember who he really is. He's got this!

☞ v. 21-22 Give thanks

Has God been there for you in the past? Remember, and express gratitude for those times. There is power in thanksgiving. It changes something in your spirit.

v. 21-22 The Lord set ambushes = God surprised the enemy...

☞ The situation seemed overwhelming, but **God suddenly turned the tide**. That is in God's nature. When all looks hopeless he comes to the rescue. (*"Here I am to save the day..."*) Ultimately, the enemy defeated himself. The enemy is so full of pride and envy that his followers almost always end up turning against each other. So, stick with God and let the enemy ruin himself.

v. 26 Three days to collect the plunder

Remember, this started with Israel in a losing situation, but in the end, they came out the winners. And they didn't just barely win, they overwhelmingly won and the spoils of their victory were profound!

v. 27 Returned to Jerusalem = possession of peace...

Here's the end result when you trust in the Lord and engage the enemy – you get peace. This world is in turmoil, but God can suddenly change everything and bring peace. So,

☞ **Go with God and Engage the Enemy.**

☞ **Make up your mind to seek the Lord.**

Get serious about going after God.

Keep unity and ask for help from others.

Call on God for deliverance.

Stand firm.

Praise the Lord and give thanks.

Go with God and Engage the Enemy.