

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Praise in the Promise

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE 2 Chronicles 20

SYNOPSIS God has a way of turning a problem into a provision.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ From Problem to Provision (2 Chronicles 20)

☞ The Problem

Last week we talked about “when you don’t know what to do,” looking at King Jehoshaphat, who had a vast army coming against him and was **overwhelmed**. He admitted that he **didn’t know what to do**, but he turned to the Lord, prayed, and waited until God gave clear instructions. Perhaps you’re facing a problem that seems overwhelming with no way to handle it. Well, hang in there because God can turn that around. After he prayed, God spoke through the prophet Jahaziel with a promise.

☞ The Promise

2 Chronicles 20:15, 17

This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For **the battle is not yours, but God's...** 17 **You will not have to fight this battle.**

The promise is God is fighting for us...

Exodus 14:14 says, “**The Lord will fight for you**; you need only to be still.” This was when the Egyptian army was chasing the Israelis and had them cornered. In the very next verse, God basically tells Moses, “don’t just stand there, get moving.” So, this does not mean we do absolutely nothing when the enemy attacks. Rather, we are to resist him (James 4:7) and God will fight on our behalf. God is with us.

Proverbs 20:22 says, “Do not say, ‘I’ll pay you back for this wrong!’ **Wait for the Lord, and he will avenge you.**” Here’s one that is very tempting for most of us. When someone treats us badly and unfairly, we *so* want to get even. But the Lord tells us to let him handle it. He will do much better than we ever could.

Psalm 34:17 says, “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; **he delivers them from all their troubles.**” We are to call on the Lord when troubles come our way. That was the message from this passage last week. Our natural tendency is to panic or to retaliate in those circumstances, but we are encouraged to call on the Lord and trust him to handle it.

☞ **Romans 8:31** says, “**If God is for us, who can be against us?**” In context this verse reminds us that when we are in right relationship with God, he is always working on our behalf. He defends us against the enemy, and by his grace we can overcome. **1 Corinthians 15:57** says, “**But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**” Because of the sacrifice of Christ, we ultimately overcome death and then live eternally.

These are his promises to us. Possibly, God has given you a personal promise. His promises never ☞ fail. **Psalm 145:13** says, “**The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises** and faithful in all he does.” And, **2 Corinthians 1:20** says, “For no matter how many promises God has made, **they are “Yes” in Christ.**”

☞ The Plan

2 Chronicles 20:16-17

16 Tomorrow march down against them... Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. **Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'**



“March.” Do what you know to do; do what God has already spoken; obey the Word. Even though God promises to fight this battle, he instructs them (and us) to go out and face the enemy. Again, **☞ James 4:7** tells us to **resist the enemy**. Ephesians 6 tells us to suit up and take our stand against the enemy’s schemes. And 1 Peter 5 combines those thoughts when it says, “Resist him, standing firm in the faith.”

“Take your positions.” A continuation of the thought, “do what you already know to do, and stand firm.” But, I think it also suggests, know the Word and hold to the promises.

“Stand firm.” Let nothing move you; be strong. There are many temptations, pressures, and fears trying to get us to fall back. But God wants us to stand firm. **Isaiah 7:9** says, “If you do not stand firm in your **☞ faith**, you will not stand at all.” **1 Corinthians 16:13** says, **“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.”** All of these together emphasize our part to face the enemy and stand firm in the faith.

☞ It actually takes a lot of faith to just **keep on keeping on** when you’re in the midst of troubles; when it looks like there’s no way to overcome; when it seems the promise can’t be real. Just stand firm; keep on trusting; keep on doing what the Word says.

“See.” Keep your eyes on the Lord. Keep on looking to God. Keep your focus. God will deliver. Perhaps not today or tomorrow, but ultimately, God wins.

Then, after hearing the promise and the plan, the response of Jehoshaphat and the people was praise and gratitude, even in advance of the victory.

☞ **The Praise**

2 Chronicles 20:18-19

18 Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the Lord. 19 Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with very loud voice.

So, there’s a promise that the Lord will fight the battle, and there’s a plan that the people will take position and stand firm. Then, immediately upon hearing the promise and the plan, Jehoshaphat bowed down in worship and some of the priests began praising the Lord very loudly. These particular priests were carriers of the Ark of the Covenant, which was always associated with the presence of the Lord.

If you’re a believer, you are now a priest in God’s kingdom (1 Peter 2:5) and you carry his presence within you (1 Corinthians 6:19). So, this response of praise and worship should come naturally to you as well. In fact, when Peter calls us a royal priesthood, he says that we are called in order to declare God’s praises. (1 Peter 2:9)

☞ As I said last week, there’s power in praising the Lord. **He inhabits our praises. (Psalm 22:3) He silences the enemy when we praise. (Psalm 8:2) He fights the enemy to the music of tambourines and harps. (Isaiah 30:32)** And, here, with singers at the front of the army, God set ambushes for the enemies as his people began to sing and praise. In the New Testament, Acts 16, Paul and Silas were in prison,



but chose to sing God's praises which seems to have led to an earthquake which then caused the prison doors to fly open and loose their chains, delivering them from bondage.

Here, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing and praise the Lord at the head of the army. They gave thanks to the Lord, and as they *just began* to sing and praise, God set ambushes against their enemies and they were defeated. They actually ended up destroying each other. Some believe the original language suggests that the ambushes were actually angelic warriors sent among the enemy to attack and confuse them. In any case, it was God's power connected with the people's praises.

*David Guzik... We might say that it was not their praise that won the battle, rather it was their faith, yet their praise was sure evidence of their faith. **When one really believes the words and promises of God, they cannot but help to praise Him.***

Jehoshaphat prioritized prayer and praise and it was powerful. Too often, when we are facing trouble we want to just react and jump into action, but this is a good reminder to pray and praise. **There is power in praise.** We don't just sing a few songs to set the stage for the sermon. That is part of what happens, but there's so much more. There are spiritual battles being fought and won while we sing and praise the Lord. Singing God's praises is spiritual warfare and **the Lord fights for us when we praise.** Don't underestimate the power of praise.

☞ **The Plunder**

2 Chronicles 20:23

So Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off their plunder, and they found among them a great amount of equipment and clothing and also articles of value — more than they could take away. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it.

Three days! That's a lot of plunder. This plunder was a variety of supplies which would be useful to ☞ God's people. **God has a way of turning a problem into a provision.** This all began with an alarming problem, but ultimately, God turned it into an abundant plunder. That's what God can do. Have you ever gone through a difficult situation which then enabled you to minister to someone else later because of your experience?

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, **so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.**

So, I wonder, what's your problem? Could it be a set-up for God's provision? Are you waiting on God to fulfill a promise to you? How's your faith holding up? And, what are you doing in the middle of it ☞ all? Are you praying and praising? **There's power when we keep the faith and praise the Lord even in the midst of our problems.** God can suddenly turn things around.