

Second Chronicles 20.12

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • July 20, In the year of our Lord, 2014

Prelude:

I. If I titled my sermon, John 3.16 or Genesis 1.1, you would know the topic.

A. Scripture titles like those say it all, because

B. we know those passages.

1. However, as I contemplated a title for this sermon,

2. I just could not get out of my mind,

a) my main Scripture reference.

b) Therefore, I used it as the title, and

(1) I hope that it makes a deep impression upon you, because

(2) we all need to know what this magnificent passage says.

II. I want to talk to you tonight about the ending of a prayer, because

A. the Holy Spirit knows that sometimes situations overwhelm us, and

B. we do not know what to do.

1. A king in Judah faced just such a situation.

2. He feared annihilation for his nation, city, and people.

a) He spoke a great prayer, but

b) he did not make his request and

(1) explanation for the request

(2) until the end.

C. King Jehoshaphat of Judah ended a prayer with these words,

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” (2Ch 20.12).

III. What prompted such words?

A. Second Chronicles 20 shows

1. that an overwhelming alliance formed to attack the king, and
2. imagine yourself in Jerusalem, or even our city and this happening,

1 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) (2Ch 20.1–2).

B. The narrator shows what the king and nation did,

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 (2Ch 20.3–4).

1. Truly, saying that the king and his people feared,
2. almost seems to be an understatement.
 - a) What terror would strike our hearts,
 - b) if we saw a massive army heading our way.

C. Finally, King Jehoshaphat offered a God-glorifying prayer,

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 (2Ch 20.5–13).

1. Verse 6 shows that King Jehoshaphat knew God well.
 - a) He was the God of their fathers.
 - b) He was in heaven.
 - c) He does rule over all the kingdoms of the nations.
 - d) He does have power and might, preventing anyone from withstanding Him.
2. Verse 7–9 show that King Jehoshaphat knew the Scriptures well.
 - a) He knew the history of Israel in the Land of Canaan.
 - b) He knew the purpose of the sanctuary; it was for God’s name.
 - c) He knew what the sanctuary meant for Israel.
 - d) He acted upon what he knew.
3. Verses 10–11 show the king presenting the exact situation before God.
 - a) God had prevented Israel from
 - (1) invading Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, and
 - (2) had Israel go elsewhere.
 - b) Here those peoples rewarded Israel
 - (1) by seeking to throw them out of the Land of Canaan.
 - (2) Yet, God had given that land to Israel.
4. Before we get to the actual request in verse 12,
 - a) think of how Jehoshaphat’s words affected God.
 - b) The king
 - (1) magnified God (v. 6), and

- (2) credited God (v. 7).
 - c) The king reminded the Lord
 - (1) that Israel glorified God (v. 8),
 - (2) that Israel cried out to God (v. 9), and
 - (3) that Israel obeyed God (v. 10).
 - d) The king presented Israel's enemies as God's enemies (v. 11).
5. At that point King Jehoshaphat still had not made a request.
- a) Sometimes we begin prayer with a request.
 - b) Why not speak to God about you and God?
 - (1) We need to give Him good reasons for answering our requests,
 - (2) rather than simply because we make demands of Him.
6. Finally, verse 12 shows his request.

Persuasion:

I. The King Called God to Action

“O our God, will You not judge them?”

A. Jehoshaphat knew that God settles all matters.

- 1. He is the Judge, as Abraham once said to God Himself,

25 “Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen 18.25).

- a) That passage meant something to the Founding Fathers of America,
- b) who alluded to it in *The Declaration of Independence*.
 - (1) The last paragraph of *The Declaration* begins in this manner,

“We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge

of the world for the rectitude of our intentions...”

(2) Therefore,

(a) even as God listened to Abraham, and

(b) even as God listened to Jehoshaphat, so

i) God listened to America’s Founders and

ii) here we are today.

2. When we pray, let us recognize that God settles all matters.

B. Jehoshaphat knew that God is greater than all our problems.

1. If He is not greater than our problems, why pray to Him?

2. If He is greater than our problems, why do we fail to pray to Him?

C. Jehoshaphat knew that judgment belongs to God.

1. Repeatedly, in Scripture, both Old and New Testaments,

2. the Holy Spirit affirms that judgment belongs to God.

a) Therefore, the Day approaches rapidly

b) when we shall all appear before the Judgment seat of God.

3. He created

a) all things,

b) all people, and

c) all nations.

(1) Therefore, He will judge all, and

(2) we can ask Him to judge for us now when we are overwhelmed.

D. Jehoshaphat knew that God responds to such requests.

1. Otherwise, why speak such lofty words as we find in this prayer?

a) Did King Jehoshaphat just like to hear the sound of his voice, and

b) how holy and religious he could sound?

2. Remember what is probably the key text in the Book of Revelation,

9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed (Rev 6.9–11).

- a) Our brethren under the altar asked the Lord to do the same thing
- b) that King Jehoshaphat asked the Lord to do.

II. The King Gave Reasons for the Call to Action

"For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do"

A. Why look to the Lord?

- 1. Why appeal to Him as the Judge of all the Earth?
- 2. Why ask Him to judge a powerful enemy?
 - a) Why ask Him to help us when life overwhelm us?
 - b) Can He truly help?

(1) The answer to those questions

(2) are explained with the two parts of King Jehoshaphat's reasons.

B. First, listen again to what the king prayed,

"For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us"

- 1. We lack the power.
- 2. We lack the resources.
- 3. We lack the funds.

4. We lack the numbers.

5. We lack the skill.

a) Brethren, I believe we can say the same things today.

b) How often has life, difficulties, troubles, suffering, overwhelmed you?

(1) Often we do not have what it takes to overcome life's challenges.

(a) We lack the power.

(b) We lack the resources.

(c) We lack the funds.

(d) We lack the numbers.

(e) We lack the skill.

(2) Romans 8 says it all,

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us (Rom 8.31–34).

(3) Isaiah 50 also says it all,

**9 Surely the Lord God will help Me;
Who is he who will condemn Me?
Indeed they will all grow old like a garment;
The moth will eat them up.
(Isa 50.9)**

6. Even as Israel found themselves trapped between

a) the mountains,

b) the Egyptian army, and

c) the Red Sea,

- (1) so we find ourselves surrounded by
 - (a) secularists,
 - (b) atheists,
 - (c) evolutionists,
 - (d) humanists,
 - (e) government,
 - (f) sodomites, and
 - i) our own personal problems, and
 - ii) issues that drive us to our wit's end.
- (1) However, we are in cahoots with
- (2) the One who created the universe and runs it!

C. Second, the king prayed,

“Nor do we know what to do”

- 1. We lack the knowledge.
- 2. We just do not have the skill.
 - a) It is beyond us, but
 - b) it is not beyond you, God.
 - (1) We are at our wit's end, but
 - (2) He who created our wits has enough wits to outwit the twits!
 - (a) I do not know how many times
 - (b) that I had no idea how to solve a bad situation, but
 - i) the Holy Spirit promises
 - (1) that if we seek wisdom from God,
 - (2) if we ask God for wisdom,

(a) He will give it,

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him (Jam 1.5).

(b) Try it, pray as James instructed and

(c) as Jehoshaphat did.

III. The King Declared His Confidence in God's Action

"But our eyes are upon You"

A. That says it all.

1. What more could the king have said?
2. How do you think those words affected the God of heaven?

B. It sounds as though Jehoshaphat could have written Psalm 123,

- 1 Unto You I lift up my eyes,
O You who dwell in the heavens.**
- 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters,
As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
So our eyes look to the Lord our God,
Until He has mercy on us.**
- 3 Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us!
For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.**
- 4 Our soul is exceedingly filled
With the scorn of those who are at ease,
With the contempt of the proud.
(Psa 123.0–4)**

C. Is not prayer a looking of our eyes to the Lord?

1. We had a brother in Klamath Falls,
2. who when he would lead the congregation in prayer,
 - a) began by telling us, "Let us look to the Lord," and then
 - b) he would pray.

D. Upon whom should we look?

1. I fear that we look everywhere but the Lord when life overwhelms us.
2. Do we think such stories in the Bible just will not work in our lives?

E. Then again, sometimes we do call out to Him, but

1. we do so as though we are the Masters, and
2. He is our slave and we wonder when He will do as we demand!

F. Listen to yourself in prayer.

1. Do your words show that you look to Him, or
2. do your words show
 - a) that you expect Him to be waiting
 - b) to hear instruction from you?
 - (1) Does He stand there ready to fulfill our every bidding?
 - (2) Or should we be ready to fulfill His every bidding?

Exhortation:

I. What then overwhelms you at the present?

- A. How have you been doing trying to solve it on your own?
- B. Have you reached your wit's end yet?

II. God, as a patient Father, waits to see whether we understand

- A. what life is about.
- B. He wants us to do whatever we have the ability to do, but
 1. He also knows that life throws things at us
 2. that go beyond our ingenuity.

III. Are you embarrassed to pray and ask Him for help?

- A. Brother, sister, we can do that for you!
- B. Please let us function as family and help one another.