

A God Who Cares

1Peter 5:7, 2Ch 20: 1-30

The Secret Service, a part of the Treasury Dept., employs upwards of about 4,000 people to protect the president and to safeguard the nation's money supply. In order to give the president constant protection, these agents stick extremely close to him wherever he goes.

When he's walking, when he's riding in his limousine, when he's on vacation at a ski slope or a lake, the Secret Service is there — surrounding him, jogging by his car, skiing or fishing right beside him. If the president goes scuba diving, agents put on masks and tanks and go with him under the water.

- Wouldn't it be nice to have someone who would always be with you, protect you, and help you — not out of duty, but because they loved you?
- Wouldn't it be great if we had someone we could bring all of our anxiety to, and the burden would be lifted from our shoulders?

The good news is, that God says that He wants to do exactly that for each and every one of us. The Bible says to give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

1Pe 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Are you able to do that? Do you find yourself giving your worries and cares to God on a regular basis?

God says that He will gladly take your burden, “for He cares about what happens to you.”

Everybody I know has some type of problem that they are dealing with. Some of our problems are health-related, some financial, marital, parental, you name it — everybody is dealing with some type of problem at some level. And when it comes to praying about the problem we have, most of us really don't know how to approach God in a way that both honors Him and brings relief to us.

Today I want to try to change that by looking at an example of a man who had a huge problem on his hands, and who dealt with it in a God-honoring way. His experience is a historical expression of our text today. His name was Jehoshaphat—he was a King who loved God, and he reigned in Judah for 25 years.

One day he had a real dilemma on his hands — a vast army that greatly outnumbered his own, was heading his way to destroy his people. I want to read his story to you, and what I want you to notice is the way that Jehoshaphat relied upon God.

2Ch 20:1 It came to pass after this also, *that* the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them *other* beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

2Ch 20:2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi.

2Ch 20:3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

2Ch 20:4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

2Ch 20:5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

2Ch 20:6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, *art* not thou God in heaven? and rulest *not* thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand *is there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

2Ch 20:7 *Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?

2Ch 20:8 And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

2Ch 20:9 If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name *is* in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

2Ch 20:10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

2Ch 20:11 Behold, *I say*, *how* they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

2Ch 20:12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee.

2Ch 20:13 And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

2Ch 20:14 Then 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, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

2Ch 20:15 And he said, Harken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's.

2Ch 20:16 Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

2Ch 20:17 Ye shall not *need* to fight in this *battle*: set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD *will be* with you.

2Ch 20:18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

2Ch 20:19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

2Ch 20:20 And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye

inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

2Ch 20:21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2Ch 20:22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

2Ch 20:23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy *them*: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

2Ch 20:24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they *were* dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.

2Ch 20:25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

2Ch 20:26 And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day.

2Ch 20:27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

2Ch 20:28 And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD.

2Ch 20:29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

2Ch 20:30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.

From Jehosphaphat we learn two important things that we need to recognize concerning our own problems, and also four steps to take in dealing with them.

RECOGNIZE THAT...

1. GOD CARES ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM

God cares about the problem you're dealing with right now at least as much as you do –He cares deeply about what you're going through. Jehoshaphat was well aware of this simple truth, and that's why he could pray the way that he did.

2Ch 20:12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee.

He said, “*we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.*”

In other words, “God, I don’t have a clue how to deal with this situation, but I know that You do and that you care about us, and so I’m coming to you for help.”

- Do you ever feel that way? Do you ever get to the point where there are really no answers, no solutions, no way out of your situation?

Psa 55:22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

And the text we began with:

1Pe 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

The reason I’m stressing this is because I know that until you accept the fact that God cares about you and your situation, you won’t go to Him in prayer, and your problem will remain unresolved.

God cares about you – Go to Him like Jehoshaphat did and say “God I don’t know what to do, but my eyes are upon you, I trust you for a solution.”

2. GOD IS BIGGER THAN YOUR PROBLEM

2Ch 20:6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, *art* not thou God in heaven? and rulest *not* thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand *is there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

- Is God all powerful? He is!
- Is He all knowing? He is!
- Is He merciful? Yes, He is.
- Has He come into a covenant relationship with us? Yes, He has.

Can you think about anything today, any problem, any challenge, any battle, any suffering, or any circumstance under any condition that is too large for God?

- Is the Creator of heaven and earth too weak to deal with the situation I am facing today?
- Is the One who parted the Red Sea unable to handle my struggles?
- Is the God who fulfills prophecy, that gives sight to the blind, that stops the storm on the raging sea, that makes the lame leap for joy, is this God so feeble that He looks the other way when I ask Him for help?
- Is this One who has conquered death by the power of the resurrection shaking in His boots when faced with my situation?

Of course not! God is greater than any circumstances we might find ourselves in today.

What does that mean for us? It means that when we face problems, we face them on the principle that not only is God interested in my problems, but He is powerful enough to handle them. I need to be reminded that if God is powerful enough to rule the heavens and the earth and nothing or no one can withstand Him, then my problems are not beyond His ability to solve.

The way we pray indicates whether or not we believe that God is greater than our problems. Do you believe today that God is greater than your problems, or do you see Him confused and perplexed by what you're facing?

Once you've established the fact that the God you're serving is greater than your problems, your problems are close to being solved.

TAKE THESE STEPS:

I want us to go back to Jehoshaphat's story, because he is a prime example of a person that knows how to pray in a troubling situation.

1. COME TO GOD FIRST

I heard a story recently about a lady that went to the doctor for a problem. The doctor told her that the only thing left to do was pray.

With that the woman grabbed her chest and cried out, "O My, Has It Come Down To That?"

What is our first response to a problem? Is it doubt, fear or unbelief? Do we throw our arms above our head and like Chicken Little, run around in circles screaming at the top of our lungs about how the sky is falling?

Or is our first response to pray?

2Ch 20:3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

2Ch 20:4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

Now, let's put this in perspective – Jehoshaphat has just been warned that there is a huge army that is coming into town that could totally wipe him and his people out.

And how does he immediately respond? He doesn't call his commanding generals together and say, "OK men, we must devise a strategy to defeat the Moabite and the Ammonite armies."

The Bible says the first thing Jehoshaphat did was to seek the Lord. He says, "I've got to seek the Lord on this – everybody, fast and pray and seek God's face!"

We've got to quit looking to God as our last resort, and start approaching Him as our first line of defense.

2. ENLIST OTHERS TO PRAY FOR YOU

2Ch 20:4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

Jehoshaphat says "pray" and the people prayed – the people stepped out en masse to petition the Lord's favor on their behalf.

- Were they embarrassed to pray for each other?
- Were they afraid to declare their need?

No, they understood that they were in this thing together. They were in the kind of situation, where there was no hiding the fact that they all needed God's help.

One of the biggest problems in the church today is that too many people are walking around wearing masks trying to make everyone else think that they've got it all together.

I know that you know what I'm talking about church – you could be sitting here today with a smile on your face, and a "Praise the Lord" on your lips, while deep inside you're falling apart.

Do you know that there are other people sitting here today that feel the same way as you do today? Let's just stop the pretense—let's all just take off our masks and admit that we all deal with some problems on some level and start to let each other know that we need the prayer power of the whole church crying out to God on our behalf.

It's nothing to be embarrassed about – we're a family here, and a family that can't unite in prayer when one of our brothers or sisters is in need, isn't much of a family at all.

3. TRUST GOD FOR THE SOLUTION

We need to understand that God's solution may not be the solution we expected. Most of us, when we come to God with a problem, have a solution in mind. But many times the solution God has in mind is a total surprise to us.

The best way to bring your problem to God is not to assist Him with a solution. We need to bring Him the problem believing that He has a solution.

- God's solution may come to you in a way you're not expecting.
- God may choose to speak to you directly in some fashion.
- God may choose to give you a solution through another person.

Why didn't God speak directly to Jehoshaphat and give him the solution? He was the King, He was a righteous man, He was seeking to lead the people of God in the right way. But God didn't choose to speak to him directly – He used a man by the name of Jahaziel to give Jehoshaphat His counsel.

2Ch 20:14 Then 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, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

It was through him the people of God received the solution.

Look at verse 15 with me:

2Ch 20:15 And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Mark this down, plain straight and true. If you don't get anything else out of this sermon this morning, understand this, "The problem is not mine but God's."

This is a lesson every Christian needs to learn. When you invited Christ into your life, God entered into a covenant relationship with you. We were promised that we would see our fair share of trouble.

But He promised to work in your life to bring about a solution to these problems and to make you successful in the Christian walk.

2Ch 20:17 Ye shall not *need* to fight in this *battle*: set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD *will be* with you.

Now if the God who cares about our every need is willing to face the problem with us, why on earth do we continue to insist on facing our problems in our own strength?

It just doesn't make sense friends.

God is willing to walk with you and He has the power and ability to give you a solution. We all have a tendency to try and help God – but mark this down – **God doesn't need our help.**

I know we all like to roll up our sleeves and proclaim our blue collar theology – you know – that God helps those who help themselves. But, I just haven't found that in the Bible anywhere,.

He told Jehoshaphat to let the choir lead the way into battle. And when the people of God went into battle praising and trusting Him for the victory, they gained a victory they never had to fight for.

Who are you trusting with your problems today?

Notice the response of Jehoshaphat and the people to Jahaziel's prophecy:

2Ch 20:18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

2Ch 20:19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

Why are they worshipping God? He hasn't done anything yet!
They are falling down in worship in anticipation of what God will do – that is what I mean by trust.

4. REST IN GOD'S PEACE

Well what did God do in response to the prayers and worship of His people? He not only saved the people from their enemies, he caused the enemy to fight amongst themselves until every single one of them were wiped out.

2Ch 20:24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they *were* dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.

Without ever lifting a finger, the victory was won – through the prayer, supplication, and praise of God's people, He utterly and completely removed the problem from their midst.

2Ch 20:29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

2Ch 20:30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.

When God solves your problem, it's solved. There is no need for you to continue to struggle with it any longer. He will give you peace concerning your problem.

I want you to notice that God did not remove the problem, God conquered the problem, God defeated the problem.

That's the way it is with salvation.

We don't save ourselves; God saves us as we trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we get saved God doesn't remove the sinful nature that you have, He conquers it. He forgives and cleanses us of our sin. And we lift up our hands and sing praises to Him for the wonderful work He has done on our behalf.

God will handle your problem if you let Him. Don't you think it is time to let go and let God deal with it?

Let God give you peace and rest from your problems today.