

Stand Still

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[0:00] In 2 Chronicles 20 we meet Jehoshaphat.

It says in 1 Corinthians 10, 11, Now all these things happened unto them for examples, And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

So it's saying, listen up! You might learn something. You might learn something from these examples, from the Old Testament, this model for our learning. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

He was by and large a faithful, godly king. King of Judah. His heart took delight in the ways of the Lord. He sought the Lord with all his heart.

It says in 2 Chronicles 22, verse 9. And in 2 Chronicles 20, we see that Jehoshaphat faced a battle.

[1:01] It was a time of crisis. Three nations were allied against him. Everything looked hopeless. Maybe you've been there too.

The word of God says, stand still. 2 Chronicles 20, from verse 2. I'll read through and I'll comment in between.

2 Chronicles 20, verse 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 Hazaz-Ontumar, which is En-Gedi.

That's a practice, that one. Jehoshaphat's army was about one million strong. We read that in 2 Chronicles 17, 10-19.

Some one million men were with Jehoshaphat. Yet, this was a greater force. He was outnumbered. These gazillions of, these nations, these three nations were arrayed against him.

[2:12] How would you react if you were in Jehoshaphat's shoes on that day? What am I going to do? It drove him to his knees.

The pressure that was upon him drove him to his knees. And that's the best place to be. That's the best place to be, isn't it? That's the best place to be, on your knees.

When crisis comes, when you're confronted with a crisis. And we can learn from Jehoshaphat some of the things that he did. The things that you can do in such a situation.

You know, as a preacher, sometimes I've tried hard to motivate people. And I've got an interesting little quote of late.

And it says, it talks about flogging a dead horse. And sometimes we can flog a dead horse. We can try to motivate people. But like the Indians, the American Indians have a saying, if you're on a, if you try to flog a dead horse, it's the best thing to do is to dismount.

[3:15] The best thing is to dismount and leave it alone. And sometimes we can try to motivate people. We can try hard to stir up people to follow the Lord. But it's got to come from within, hasn't it? It's got to come from within.

That desire, that spark, that, yes, I want to be a Christian. I want to be an active Christian. And it's like someone said this, you can get the, you get the best effort from others, not by lighting a fire beneath them, but by building a fire within.

Building a fire within. I want you, I want you to catch the fire this morning, if it were possible. That you catch the fire. The motivation to serve God, to live for Him.

That it will be within you, not forced upon you. Sometimes the situations of life can make us wake up and realise where we truly am. And we see, the first thing we ought to do, the first thing that I would urge you to do, is set yourself to seek Him.

Set yourself to seek the Lord. We see that in verse 3. And Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judea.

[4:27] The best thing you can do when crisis comes, when you're confronted with something that's too hard, is to get hold of God. He knew that God had the answer for the situation.

He knew that God could take care of the problem and he gathered the people together to fast and to pray and to claim the promises of God.

Jehoshaphat feared. He feared, he realised his inadequacy. He realised perhaps his own guilt as he might have reflected back in chapter 18. Jehoshaphat had made some unwise choices, some foolish decisions.

He joined himself up with the ungodly king, Ahab, an idol worshipper, and he repented of that alliance. He set himself to seek the Lord, to worship, to discover God's will.

He set himself to seek the Lord. Now through this sermon, I've got to be a bit old-fashioned this morning. Even, dare I say it, a bit almost Anglican this morning.

[5:33] Almost Anglican. To have some responsive readings. I will say, praise the Lord, and you will say, for his mercy endureth forever.

Can you do that? So you can participate this morning, alright? So listen out for the praise the Lord. See if you're on your toes. Praise the Lord. For his mercy endureth forever.

You can do better than that. You can say that louder. You can get excited this morning in church. Let's see. Let's try that again. Praise the Lord. For his mercy endureth forever. Amen.

He set himself to seek the Lord. That's what we need to do, brothers and sisters. Seek the Lord. For strength. For faith. Not to be too self-reliant.

Let us learn instead to trust God. To trust God. Verse 4, it goes on. And to gather themselves together to ask help of the Lord. Even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

[6:35] When you are in trouble, pray. There was some good prayer this morning. There was some good praying and worshipping of God. The power of combined prayer. That's why we have a prayer chain that you can join in.

If you'd like to find out more, see me afterwards if you're not already part of the prayer chain. And I'm encouraged when I get people asking me, what's happening with so and so? It shows that they care. It shows that they're praying.

That's what we need to be. Praying for one another. The power of combined prayer. It is time to seek the Lord. How we need to seek the Lord like Jehoshaphat did.

To stop being man-centered and to be Christ-centered. To seek the Lord. And in verse 5 it goes on, And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord before the new court.

And Jehoshaphat prayed. It says, verse 6, His prayer started with praise. It says, verse 6, And he said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven?

[7:36] And rule us 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?

Art thou not our God who did drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel and gave us it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever?

And they dwelt therein and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, 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.

Interesting the prayer. The prayer started with praise. Art thou not our God in heaven? Art thou not our God who drove out the inhabitants of this land?

If, when evil cometh upon us, we pray and cry unto thee, thou wilt hear and help. It was a prayer of faith. Through Jehoshaphat's life, we see the power of faith, of believing prayer and of praise.

[8:58] He's an example to us. He set himself to seek the Lord. He was reliant upon the Lord. 2 Chronicles 20 verse 12, it says, We have no might against this great company that cometh against us.

Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. It's good to come to the end of ourselves, isn't it? It's good to realise we're totally inadequate. As a preacher, I get reminded of that all the time.

How inadequate, how much I am an unprofitable servant. And when I hear of criticism of myself, I realise it's valid. It's true. Yes, I can't live up to everyone's expectations of me.

But all I can do is seek to seek the Lord, to put my trust in Him. And I pray that I'll urge you the same. And that you'll look past my faults and see Christ.

We have no might, neither know we what to do, our eyes are upon thee. That must be our prayer. When we're in a spot, when we don't know what to do, when we're feeling weak and powerless, it's probably a good place to be.

[10:06] It's probably a good place to come. To set yourself to seek the Lord. Let us pray like Jehoshaphat did, our eyes are upon thee, not upon a man, not upon a church, not upon our feelings, but our eyes are upon thee.

It's not a claiming of self-esteem from Jehoshaphat, it's a humbling of himself and of relying upon the Lord. It's like D.L. Moody said, Be humble or you'll stumble.

We can all get proud. And God forbid that we would get proud. It's good when we're criticised because it keeps us humble. Realise your utter dependence upon the Lord.

I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. Nothing.

You can't do a thing without coming to that realisation. He is the vine, you're just a little twig.

Worship is an admission of dependence. There was a story told of a scientist who met with Teddy Roosevelt, the president of the USA at the time and they went out for an evening walk one night under the starry sky looking up at the wonder of the starry sky and Roosevelt recited to this scientist he said that is the spiral galaxy in Andromeda.

[11:33] It is as large as our Milky Way. It's one of a hundred million galaxies it consists of one hundred billion suns each larger than our own.

And then Roosevelt said to the other fellow now I think we are small enough let's call it a night.

We've got to realise how small we are how small we are we're just a speck in the context of the universe and even on this insignificant planet that we have a temporary place of dwelling.

Yet consider the wonder of it all and praise the Lord for his mercy endureth forever. Praise the Lord for his mercy endureth forever.

He's the maker of it all and he's the saviour of your soul if you'll trust him. Be still and know that I am God. It says in Psalm 46.10 there's a place of stillness there's a place of stopping and the word of God is our strength.

We see that from verse 14 what happened next is the word of God made an impact as it came through the Levite the prophet in 2 Chronicles 20 verse 14 then upon Jehaziel the son of Zechariah the son of Benaiah the son of Jeel the son of Matanoah a Levite of the sons of Asaph came the spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation.

[13:00] The spirit of the Lord came upon the Levite. That's what makes the difference. I pray that the spirit of the Lord will come upon me that I will utter the word of God that he wants you to hear.

Otherwise it's all in vain. The spirit of the Lord came upon the man and verse 15 and he said Hearken ye all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and thou king Jehoshaphat thus saith the Lord unto you be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude why?

For the battle is not yours but God's. We can take heart in that. Whatever faces you the battle is not yours. Set yourself to seek the Lord number one.

Secondly set yourself to stand still. Set yourself to stand still. We need men who will stand. Men who will stand for something.

Stand on the word. Stand in faith. They may consider themselves as having no might. That's a good place to be. God forbid that we should stand in our own strength and claim any quality of our own.

[14:12] Any ability of our own. May we come to that place where we consider we have no might. That's the best place to be. But the spirit of the Lord says be not afraid.

Be not dismayed. The word of the Lord for you is this. The battle is not yours. It is God's. Fear not. It does not matter what faces you.

We all face challenges. Some crumble quicker than others. But the strength we must rely upon is not our own. It must be his. It must be his.

The Lord will fight for you. It says in verse 16 it goes on. Tomorrow you go down against them.

Behold they come up by the cliff of Sears and you shall find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jeril.

You shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves. Stand ye still and sing the salvation of the Lord with you. Set yourselves.

[15:12] Stand ye still and sing the salvation of the Lord with you. O Judah and Jerusalem fear not nor be dismayed tomorrow. Go out against them for the Lord will be with you.

That's good news isn't it? We can take heart in that fact. The Lord will be with you. And verse 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.

Jehoshaphat and the people began to worship the Lord with a loud voice. They worshipped. They worshipped. Verse 19 And the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Kohathites stood up to praise the Lord.

Oh, you missed that one. Praise the Lord. They stood up to praise the Lord. God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

I think you can do better than that. Let's see if you can do it a bit louder next time. They praised and they rose up early in the morning it says. You know, there they were about to face the battle they didn't have a sleep in.

[16:22] That's interesting isn't it? You know, I think if you're facing a challenge be a good reason to maybe have a sleep in, wouldn't it? But no, they rose up early in the morning and they went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Believe in the Lord your God so shall you be established. Believe his prophets so shall you prosper. Now then it goes on. Verse 21 Here's a real pivotal scripture here.

When they went into this warfare they had a secret weapon. This army had a secret weapon. Praise power. They had praise power.

Verse 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 forever.

That's what they said. Praise the Lord for his mercy endureth forever. They began to sing. They began to praise. You know, what reason did they have? They just trusted in faith.

[17:34] They set themselves to praise the Lord. They set themselves to stand still to praise the Lord for his mercy endureth forever. Worship is the expression of lips that love him.

Let's praise him together. You know, I know some and they said to me they don't like singing. Well, if you're a Christian you'll want to sing. He'll put a song in your heart.

He'll put a song on your lips. He'll help you to praise him. Worship is from lips that love him is the expression of speaking the truth.

So set yourself to seek the Lord. Set yourself to stand still and set yourself thirdly to see the salvation of the Lord. set yourself to see his saving power.

Set yourself to see his deliverance, his victory. It's when we stand still and we see the cross. When we stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

[18:34] When we realise there's nothing of our own doing. We can praise the Lord. Why? For his mercy endureth forever. It still endures and it will endure in a million years from now and beyond.

Praise him for the victory of the cross. Praise him for the overcoming power of his shed blood. Praise him for his mercy, for his power. Worship.

Worship. Sometimes we might put worship in a box that it's certainly it's only when you come to a certain place or you get a certain feeling or a buzz or an excitement or when the song leader says to praise him.

But someone said this when we are in agreement with God's calling everything we do everything we do becomes a form of worship. So true isn't it? Even your day by day the humdrum can be a time of worship as you consider God's grace and mercy even through the everyday the ordinary times of life.

And verse 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 coming against Judah and they were smitten.

[19:48] God intervened when they praised. When they began to sing and to praise God destroyed the enemy.

Verse 23 it says that these folks stood up and I'll read it as it says verse 23 for the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir utterly to slay and destroy them. When they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir everyone helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch town in the wilderness they looked unto the multitude and behold they were dead bodies fallen to the earth and none escaped.

It was a total victory. A total victory and what did the people of God do? They began to sing and to praise. The enemy forces were so confused they laid into each other.

They turned upon themselves and when the battle was over no one had escaped. Praise brings victory. Stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you.

[20:53] We read in Job 37 verse 14 the Lord said to Job hearken unto this O Job stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.

Now it's a bit as was said earlier we can get rushing about fussing and fretting and not take time to be still to stand still and the Hebrews obeyed God without engaging in arms yet they won the battle. We can get all caught up with our religious activities rushing around we can be fighting fussing flustered frightened rushing into fighting our own battles but sometimes we need to just stand still stand still and trust in the Lord be still God's timing is perfect says in Psalm 27 14 wait on the Lord be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart wait I say on the Lord we can strive and struggle or we can stand still like Jehoshaphat did stand still and sing the salvation of the Lord with you as the Lord showed up also at the Red Sea was the same procedure in Exodus 14 verse 13 as they stood at the brink of the Red Sea there was no earthly way they could escape no human solution to their situation and in

Exodus 14 verse 13 Moses said unto the people as the Egyptians were there driving their chariots towards them as it was all doom and gloom and disaster he says fear ye not stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he shall show to you today for the Egyptians whom you have seen today you shall see them again no more forever the Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace it's good to know isn't it that whatever faces you whatever confronts you in life set yourself to seek the Lord like Jehoshaphat did set yourself to pray set yourself to worship set yourself to stand still to be still and to know that he is God to realise the universe will go on whatever happens to this little speck of dust right here that you aren't really at his entire mercy and thank God his mercy endureth forever forever his mercy endureth forever it was forever at the cross his mercy was there at the cross when the blood was dripping from his side from his wounds from his scalp as he looked with love even on those killing him his mercy endureth forever!

forever! forever! If you were in that crowd just as I was in that crowd I could picture myself in that crowd I could picture myself as one of the soldiers perhaps gambling for his clothes I could picture myself as perhaps one of those who plucked his beard I could consider myself as one who perhaps thrust the spear in his side I could consider myself as perhaps one who spat upon him maybe as one who shouted crucify crucify him his mercy endureth forever even to such as we even if I had been the thief on his side that cursed him and yet was converted even at the last breath almost of that man's life maybe it will happen for you don't leave it to the last breath though but I pray he will convert those who are not converted today stand still and see the salvation of the

[24:54] Lord see the mercy of the cross see the mercy in his eyes see his tender mercies that I knew every morning and they endure forever and he's still building a church today he's still building people he's still saving people he's still filling people with his spirit and friends I want you to catch the fire set yourself to seek him set yourself to seek him come to the end of yourself it's a good place to come realise your inadequacy realise the criticism of you is valid because there's nothing that gains you any merit or any favours with men we're all unprofitable servants we're all unworthy of that mercy that still endures and stand still and see the salvation of the Lord see the cross today and realise that his mercy endures forever seek him while he can be found friends there's people here are not saved let's be honest today there's people here today that will not see heaven you're lost and you're damned

I wouldn't want to be in your shoes but you can change those shoes you can step out of those shoes you can take those stinking shoes off take the shoes off please pray seek him set yourself to seek the Lord time is running out time is finite this is the day trust him trust him trust him set yourself to seek the Lord please and Christians you too let's be honest set yourself to seek the Lord take it seriously be honest stand still stop stop your striving and your struggling and your religious works and stand still and see the salvation of the Lord see Calvary see his mercy it still endures and it will forever see his mercy realise his great love for you and let it motivate you let it be a fire within that drives you not of works not of law but of love you cannot but love him his love compels you let us pray heavenly father we thank you that we can learn from the model of this man of this example of this frail and fallible man who at one time sought to fraternise with the idol worshippers who was weak and frail and very faulty

Lord that we can learn to praise you Lord that your mercy endures forever we can learn to stand still we can learn to rest in your grace and realize the wonder of calvary to see the salvation that you have wrought and we can place our trust entirely in your blood Lord help us to step out of those shoes of the lost and to walk the walk that you have called us help us Lord to praise you help us to pray help us to have faith help us to not fear whatever faces us that we can have that faith that can overcome we can see that salvation that you have wrought at the cross for us in Jesus name Amen Amen