

**We are powerless! We do not know what to do. But our eyes are upon You!
They stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a very loud voice**

2 Chronicles 20; Acts 16:24-26

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2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable **for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**, so that the man of God may be **competent, equipped for every good work**.

Acts 17:11: They **received the Word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures every day** to see if these things were true.

James 1:22: Don't merely listen to the Word.... **Do what it says!**

John 3:16 **For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son [the Lord Jesus Christ], that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

Introduction: 2020 has been an especially difficult year for Hope Church. You all have gone through painful changes and you are in a far different place today than you were a year ago / 13 months ago. Voting to accept David's resignation / retirement was a difficult time in part as you watched your pastor and his wife deal with a debilitating disease. Voting to accept Phil's resignation was a difficult time in part because of the apparent suddenness to many and you watched your pastor and his wife grieve over what they thought would be a long-term pastorate... and it was suddenly over. In every instance there are friends and others in the church family who need to grieve the loss of relationships and guidance from a spiritual mentor and pastor. Twice within 13 months.

These things, combined with the devastating impact of COVID 19 on emotional, spiritual and physical health. And then add on the acrimony of this past week's election.... And all the campaigning that led up to it. All in all, this has unquestionably been the worst set of circumstances that have ever surrounded me in my 45 years as a pastor. This is the place of the most unpleasant providence I've ever witnessed. Many of you may possibly be under great stress in addition to your church family stress, and upsets from physical pain, family relationships, the loss of jobs, concerns about finances, fears over your health, fear about the impact of COVID-19 in your life, the education of students, and continual bombardment over news media of the horrendous pain nationally and internationally.

In the midst of stress, where did I (do I go) this week? Where did you go? Where can you go? The first place I went was to the Bible where I find truth, comfort, and perspective on what is going on. And I also went to prayer: prayers of praise, confession, repentance, thanksgiving, petition and submission. Another place I go to at times like this is to listen to one of my favorite books: A. W. Pink's "*The Sovereignty of God*." Another place I went was to fill my life / head / heart with music that speaks of the wonders of our God. We can also go this morning to a passage that has been so influential in my life 2 Chronicles 20.

I. Jehoshaphat's Resolution

- A. Jehoshaphat's need was very, very great. vv. 1-2 Our physical & spiritual need is obviously very great.
- B. Jehoshaphat had been doing many things "right" but was also quite the sinner in need of a savior. *Chapters 17 and 19* For many of us the same is true, although our nation and the world have corporately been shaking their fists of rebellion at God.
- C. Unpleasant (disastrous) things happen to people doing things the right way. COVID-19 is equal opportunity. Lord willing, we will see more about this truth next week. As Brenda mentioned last week, the persecuted church has generally been "doing things right."
- D. Jehoshaphat was facing a vast army. We are facing invading forces in our country. You are facing....
- E. Jehoshaphat was afraid **AND** he set his face to seek the Lord. Vv. 3-4 This godly man was afraid. Are you?

II. What are you going to pray? What did Jehoshaphat pray?

- A. Recount the Glory of God! v. 6
 - 1. O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven? Our Father Who is in Heaven. V.6.
 - 2. You rule over all kingdoms of the nations. In Your hand are power and might so that none is able to withstand You. vs. 6.
 - 3. If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand...before you ... -- and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save. V.9
 - 4. Our Father Who is in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name Your will be done....
- B. Ask God to judge. v. 12 (Jehoshaphat = Yahweh has judged.)

- C. *For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. **We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You!*** v.12 This is a call to keep a Biblical God centered perspective. Always remember the Creator / Creature distinction.
- III. How does God respond? vs. 15 and 17
- A. Do not fear or be afraid. This is not a glib statement. It simply points us to truth. *2 Thessalonians 3.3*
 - B. *For the battle is not yours but God's.*
 - C. For the LORD is with you. *Psalm 23*. The LORD is not with everyone *John 8; John 10 (esp. v.26)*
 - D. *Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.*
 - E. God does NOT always provide physical / emotional deliverance. This is a historical account with a context
- IV. The people worshipped God! vv. 18, 21, 22, 27-28
- A. *Jehoshaphat bowed his head ... and all fell down before the LORD worshipping the LORD.* V.18
 - B. Paul and Silas (*Acts 16:24-26*) had been doing what was right, proclaiming the Gospel, obeying God and seeing conversions... and they were thrown in jail where they sang hymns in the middle of the night and God used all of that for the conversion of the Philippian jailor. *"What must I do to be saved?"* (Saved from the wrath of God!) *"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*
 - C. Will you sing to God in the dark night of your soul and the dark night of despair in our land? Fill your head, heart, home with music of praise to God. *Give thanks to the LORD for His steadfast love endures...*
- V. We worship God through King Jesus who Prays (*Romans 8:34*)
- A. King Jesus had obviously been doing things "right." He was righteous and perfect in obedience.
 - B. King Jesus faced a great enemy in Satan and Death.
 - C. King Jesus prays to His Father Who is in Heaven and prays describing the Fatherhood and Power of God. *Mark 14:36*
 - D. King Jesus submitted to the rule & judgment of His Father.
 1. *"Not my will, but Yours be done."* *Luke 22:42*
 2. *"this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."* *Acts 2:23*
 - E. We worship and adore King Jesus! He is still King. Are you worshipping and adoring King Jesus? Have you come in faith and repentance to Him? If not, cry out to Him for mercy to you the sinner. *"My sins they are many, His mercy is more."* Keith Getty

And though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet. Maltbie D. Babcock, 1901

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace. Helen H. Lemmel 1922

Amid the fears that oppress our day, across the clouds that obscure our way, one golden truth sheds its shining ray – Our God is sovereign still. Refrain: His holy purpose unchanging stands, the stars still turn at their Lord's commands; He holds the world in His mighty hands – our God is sovereign still! Our God is sovereign still! Margaret Clarkson 1966

PRAYING WITH YOUR BIBLES AND EYES OPEN: PRAISE AND THANK GOD

That He is the One Who rules over all the kingdoms and nations.

That power and might are in His hand. v. 6

That no one can withstand Him. v. 6

That He is faithful to keep all of His promises in the Scripture. v. 7 (We must always understand context.)

That He hears and delivers His people in the day of distress. v. 9 We must not think this means healing for all.

That is not in the promise. He provides ultimate deliverance upon our death and being present with Him.

That He is the One who judges over all the peoples of the earth

(including those in authority over you, your boss, recently elected government officials, etc....)

That we do not have to be afraid because the LORD is with us even in a pandemic and a pastoral change. 17

That *the LORD is my Shepherd, and I shall not want.* *Psalm 23*

That even *though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I do not have to fear any evil* because He is *with me. Psalm 23:4*

That the battles are ultimately not ours, but God's! v. 15 (But we are still to wash hands, keep distance, etc.)

For His love endures forever! v. 21

That He does all things for His own glory. Q1. Who made you? God. Q2. What else did God make? God made all things. Q3 Why did God make you and all things? For His own glory! All things? All things! *Romans 9*
For the splendor of His holiness! v. 21

That He is "faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one." *II Thessalonians 3:3*

CONFESS TO GOD

That I have often spent too much time alarmed and in fear, and not enough time in seeking God during difficulties. That sometimes my fears over the pandemic have led me to forget that God is in control.

That I am too often filled with discouragement because of the "vast armies" that seem to surround me.

That too often I fail to even figuratively "bow my face to the ground" when I come before God, exalting myself and my own ideas and agendas. This includes exalting my own fears and my solutions.

That I have often not had faith in the Lord that He would do as He has said He would in His Word. (Always in context -- no promise of deliverance.)

That I have often been presumptuous & expected that God would do something I thought He should do for me, but which I had no Biblical warrant for **expecting** Him to do even though it might be a good & Biblical desire.

That I have not often enough sang praise to God and remembered *His steadfast love that endures forever* in the midst of very painful and difficult and sometimes disastrous and deadly providence.

OFFER PETITIONS TO GOD

That He would enable me to "take up my position and stand firm" to be the person He wants me to be. v. 17

That all of God's family would be more committed to participating in corporate worship and not forsake the gathering together of the saints. Pray that this would be true especially after Covid-19 isolation is over.

That we would grow to not worry, but trust God to "*set the ambushes*" against our enemies as we spend time praising Him. Pray that God would use the means of people & research to end the pandemic. Pray that God would give wisdom, unity, peace to this congregation during this time without a pastor.

That when the difficulties and distresses of life come against me, that I would take my fears to the LORD and seek Him. We do not have to know what He is doing or why He is doing it, but we can still trust Him.

That I would learn to cry to the Lord "*I do not know what to do, but my eyes are upon you.*" *2 Chronicles 20:12*

That the people of Hope Church would learn to pray to the Lord "*We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.*"

That I (we) would be comforted by the fact that no trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness or danger can separate me (if I am His child) from the love of Christ! *Romans 8:35*

That He would mercifully end the pandemic, and use it to bring repentance, renewal, reformation and revival.

That He would mercifully provide pastoral care and oversight in the short term and that He would mercifully provide a new pastor in His time.

That our praising God "in prison" would lead to comfort for us and the salvation of others. *Acts 16:24-26*

As I preach from Chronicles and Acts and every other book, in addition to studying and wrestling with the text personally and directly, I am in great debt to the thoughts and words of the following commentators: Eric Alexander, Robert Bell, James Boice, John Calvin, William Hendriksen, Kent Hughes, Keil and Delitzsch, Simon Kistemaker, R. Lenski, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John MacArthur, J. I. Packer, John Piper, John Stott (as well as many others). Many of their actual words and thought patterns will be incorporated into my preaching. Longer quotations will be identified. Short sentences and common ideas will most likely not be identified. I hold myself (obviously not them) accountable for any errors that I bring to the preaching. If this statement does not appear on an outline it is nevertheless true, all the time.