

Greater Works Christian Church

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Praise, Worship and Warfare

2 Chronicles 20:1-24

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).

The ones that brought the information to Jehoshaphat did just that, they brought the news of the approaching army. They did not add anything to the facts, but only brought the information needed.

Unlike the spies Moses sent to spy out the Promised Land.

Numbers 13:31-33

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."
32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.
33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

These spies didn't bring the facts only but interjected their own fears into the message, while the ones that brought the message to Jehoshaphat brought only facts.

This shows us how we are to communicate in times of trouble. We cannot afford to have information (including bad news) mixed with fear and flesh. We must give the information needed only so it can be processed with a clear mind.

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.
5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

After receiving the news of the armies heading towards Judah, Jehoshaphat feared. In this time of fear Jehoshaphat did the best thing he could do. Jehoshaphat "set himself to seek the Lord". This type of prayer was accompanied with a fast for himself and a fast called throughout Judah.

In v.4 we find all of Judah responding to this call to fast and pray. All of Judah gathered to king Jehoshaphat to seek God together.

I find it interesting and refreshing that a king assembles himself with the people in a time of crisis, seeking the Lord together. Jehoshaphat could have separated himself from the people and prayed in the palace, but instead he humbled himself before the Lord, fasting and praying with the people. ***This is a sign of true leadership.***

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."

Upon reading Jehoshaphat's prayer several things stuck out.

1. Not once did Jehoshaphat bring his fear into this prayer. Even though Jehoshaphat was afraid, he didn't allow his fear to shape his prayer.
2. Jehoshaphat seems to counter his fear with faith. He prays with assurance that God will deliver His people. In v.9 Jehoshaphat prays, *"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."* Jehoshaphat gives the emphatic, ***"You will hear and save."***
3. Jehoshaphat prays in humility. Throughout this prayer he speaks of God's strength, not his own. Jehoshaphat understands his inability to win this battle (v.10), but understands the strength and ability of God to overcome their enemies.

v.13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.

4. All this was done while Jehoshaphat was among the people, not hidden away in the palace, but with the people of Judah.

14 Then the Spirit of the LORD came 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, in the midst of the assembly.

15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel.

17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you."

Jehoshaphat was a king that sought after the Prophets and the Prophetic word of the Lord. Jehoshaphat was not intimidated by the Prophets, but instead pursued their input and direction.

The King step aside and gave the Prophet a platform (so to speak) to address the people. Even though the king did not have to do this Jehoshaphat was humble enough to give Jahaziel room to give the people prophetic direction.

The humility that Jehoshaphat shows is refreshing. Many leaders then (and today) would not give up their platform so easily, regardless of the situation. Jehoshaphat showed great humility and trust in God by trusting those God put around him. Even in crisis Jehoshaphat display great leadership qualities.

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.

19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

At this point, after fasting and praying; after the Prophetic word from Jahaziel, the people begin to Praise and Worship. Praise and Worship came after things were settled in Prayer and Prophecy. After God spoke the people had something tangible to Praise Him for. This does not mean Praise and Worship was nonexistent, since we find Praise and Worship in Jehoshaphat's prayer, but now they have a sure word from the Lord that gives their Praise and Worship clear direction.

Keep in mind, we can always Praise and Worship God no matter what we face, but when we have a word of the Lord of victory we can Praise and Worship the Lord in a targeted manner.

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of

Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

Jehoshaphat again shows great humility by pointing to God first, then the Prophets. He did not try to lift himself up or put every ones focus on him but he directed attention to God and the Prophets.

Again, this an extraordinary display of humility for a king.

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever."

On the day of the battle Jehoshaphat sent those who would sing Praises to God. In a more modern context, the Worship Team went before the army, singing and praise God. By this time Jehoshaphat knew this was the best strategy because God had already spoken to them about the victory, He would give them.

Jehoshaphat simply believed God by believing those whom God sent to him (the prophets).

22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.

23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

Praise and Worship to God caused the enemy to destroy themselves. We can see this clearly in these three verses. However, there was more to the story than the Praise and Worship.

All these things led to Victory on the Battlefield:

- Prayer
- Fasting
- Humility (especially in the leadership)
- The Prophetic (Prophets and the Prophetic word of the Lord)
- Righteous Leadership
- Rejecting false worship (idolatry)
- Praise and Worship with Thankfulness
- A Unified response from the people to the above

Not a complete list

All these things were needed to bring about the great victory the people received on that day. Imagine all your battles (spiritual and otherwise) ending like this. Imagine walking onto the battlefield to find your enemy already destroyed. Imagine the only work you must do in a battle is pick up the spoils of war. Can this happen today? I believe it will happen more often when we do it God's way.

With all these ingredients of success there is one most important ingredient we haven't talked about.

The Hidden Ingredients of Victory

2 Chronicles 17:3-9

3 Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals,
4 but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel.

This is the true beginning of the story of victory. Victory on the battlefield in 2 Chronicles began long before the enemy's advance. Jehoshaphat had set himself up through his humility for God's blessing and intervention in his life.

Verse 3 tells us, *"the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David"*. This is the first step Jehoshaphat took to securing blessings and victory, he followed the example of David. Jehoshaphat rejected Baal and Baal worship and rejected following the example of Israel (v.4). Verse 4 also tells us, *"but sought the God of his father"*.

Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat and king of Judah before Jehoshaphat. King Asa was given a prophetic word about how God would bless him and the kingdom as long as Asa followed after God. He took the word to heart and followed after the Lord (2 Chronicles 15).

Jehoshaphat did as his father before him which led to a prosperous kingdom. God was able to bless Jehoshaphat and Judah because he followed the good examples of those who were before him.

5 Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance.

6 And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah.

Jehoshaphat developed a heart after God. The NKJV translates this as "delight" (v.6).

Delight (Heb. 1361) *gabbah*

1) to be high, be exalted

1a) (Qal)

- 1a1) to be high, lofty, tall
- 1a2) to be exalted
- 1a3) to be lofty
 - 1a3a) to be lofty (of Jehovah's ways - good sense)
 - 1a3b) to be haughty, be arrogant (bad sense)
- 1b) (Hiphil) to make high, exalt

Gabbah has the idea of haughtiness (pride). It is interesting that Jehoshaphat showed great humility before the Lord because he was proud of God not himself. Jehoshaphat had pride in God and what He did not in himself.

2 Chronicles 17:6 (NASB)

He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

Jehoshaphat had great pride in the ways of the Lord, which caused him to remove the places of pagan worship. As the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat cleansed the land of false worship. He did what he could do to purify and dedicate the land to God.

The Foundation of ALL Victory

7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

8 And with them he sent Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests.

9 So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people.

Jehoshaphat had a heart of love for God causing him to make a powerful exchange in Judah. This exchange was from pagan worship to the worship of the One true God. As Jehoshaphat removed the places of pagan worship, he sent out his leaders along with the Levites to teach the people the Law of the Lord.

As false worship was being removed, true worship was being restored. It wasn't enough to remove the paganism that infiltrated the land, but he taught the Law of the Lord causing the people to know how to worship and serve their God.

The teaching and training of the Word of God was the foundation of every other thing that led to victory on the battlefield and prosperity for the nation.

This is often the missing ingredient in many churches. We have an abundance of preaching but very little teaching, and even less training (teaching with action). Jehoshaphat showed us the power of teaching the word. When it came time for a miracle the people knew how to respond

to God, the king, those around them and the enemy. It was the teaching of the word that brought about every other righteous attribute.

All these things led to Victory on the Battlefield:

- Prayer
- Fasting
- Humility (especially in the leadership)
- The Prophetic (Prophets and the Prophetic word of the Lord)
- Righteous Leadership
 - ✓ Leaders that delight and have pride in the Lord
- Rejecting false worship (idolatry)
- Being taught and standing upon the word of God
- A Unified response from the people to the above
- Praise and Worship with Thankfulness

When these things are in us, we will have victory over our enemies. When we are taught the Word of God and we live it out, our Praise and Worship will destroy powers of darkness. Our Praise and Worship will cause such confusion in the Camp of the Enemy that they will turn on themselves. After this we can go in and collect the spoils of a war we didn't have to fight.