

Humble Yourself and Seek Me

Today's Treasure

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

James 4:6

I love that King Jehoshaphat recognizes that he is in over his head and his first steps are to humbly seek God and to call the people of Judah to fast and pray. Jehoshaphat steps up in the courtyard and begins to pray, I imagine in a loud, urgent voice.

And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In Your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand You. Did You not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham Your friend?

2 Chronicles 20:5-7

The king does not begin with the need, instead he starts with worship that includes a walk down memory lane when God supernaturally drove out the enemies of His people. He describes God's covenant promise to give His people land and how God's people settled in and built a life on that promised land.

Jehoshaphat's prayer reminds the people of the scene where Solomon heard the Lord extend grace for those times when His people sinned. Compare God's instructions to Solomon and Jehoshaphat's prayer.

To Solomon:

When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

1 Chronicles 7:11-14 ESV

Jehoshaphat's Prayer:

If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You—for Your name is in this house—and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.

2 Chronicles 20:5-9

Though the words are not exactly the same, they are similar enough for us to conclude that when Jehoshaphat repented of his sinful alliance with King Ahab, he turned to God's Word for wisdom. The story of Solomon became a roadmap for his own repentance journey. Jehoshaphat prays Scripture!

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Jehoshaphat's prayer reminds me of times when friends have asked for prayer for excruciatingly painful crises. When there seems to be no way out or it is highly unlikely that the circumstances will have a good ending, I don't know how to pray. So I start with a declaration of the goodness of God, praise for His character, reminding myself of His past faithfulness and a reminder of the promises these friends have clung to all of their lives. I'm not sure if my prayer is for God's sake or my own, as a means to process the circumstances in a way that leads me to humbly surrender to God's sovereignty. I suspect that Jehoshaphat is praying in this way for himself and as a means to help lead the people of Judah to trust God in this terrifying place. Not only have my own personal prayer times helped soothe me by reminding me of God's presence and promises, but when I hear others pray in this way, my faith deepens and my heart rests in Him.

When confronted with enemies too big for you to defeat on your own, whether it is the result of personal sin or circumstances beyond your control, humble yourself before the Lord in recognition that without Him you are lost. Seek Him through prayer and His Word, as well as the covenant community. Start your prayers with reminders of God's past faithfulness and pray Scripture, including the promises of God.

STORE UP MORE TREASURES

At some point in our lives, we or someone we know will go through great suffering. I encourage you to go to the MARKINC website and listen to the interview "[Waiting with Purpose When Dreams Are Delayed](#)" so that you can store up treasures of encouragement for the next rainy day in your life or someone else's. Here is a summary of this resource:

We're all waiting for something. It might be a spouse or a baby. It might be healing or a home. Regardless of what we're waiting for, it's easy to feel discontent when things aren't going as planned and our dreams are delayed—especially when questions of 'Why?' and 'How long?' remain unanswered. In her conversation with Sharon Betters, Betsy Childs Howard reminds us that God uses seasons of waiting to teach us patience and make us more like Himself. Yet there is an even greater treasure to be found in our waiting rooms. Sanctification is not the only purpose God has in mind. When we wait faithfully with unmet longings, we become a powerful picture of the bride of Christ waiting for the day when He returns and God's kingdom reigns.

