

Prayer Cast: Week of April 18
When you face troubles
2 Chronicles 20:2-23

This spring my husband and I faced some challenges with our taxes. Our previous bookkeeper was no longer available, and upon handing them off to another tax agency, errors were discovered. Suddenly, it looked like the bonus my husband had received that was going to help us get started on the remodel of our kitchen water damage mess, was going to get handed over to the IRS instead.

I found myself worrying. The damage to our sink, and our cabinets, the ongoing issues with our drawers---all of the repairs were within arm's reach, and then yanked away. I started to talk myself into trying to be content with just jerry-rigging the sink. Again.

How do you deal when you face challenges? Financial challenges. Relational challenges. Worries about family, friends, jobs. I have some dear friends who are fighting a defeating culture in their workplace that just zaps the life right out of them. What challenges or troubles are you currently facing? What would the Lord have us do?

Today we're going to read part of the story of Jehoshaphat, from 2 Chronicles. Jehoshaphat was a king of Judah, of the lineage of David. The kingdom of Judah was known for its faithfulness. Jehoshaphat's story is right in line with that faithfulness. We begin in 2 Chronicles 20.

² Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom,¹ from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazzon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). ³ Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. ⁴ The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.

⁵ Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the LORD in the front of the new courtyard ⁶ and said:

"LORD, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. ⁷ Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? ⁸ They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, ⁹ 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.'

¹⁰ "But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. ¹¹ See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. ¹² Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

¹³ All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD.

¹⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly.

¹⁵ He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. ¹⁶ Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you.'"

¹⁸ Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the LORD. ¹⁹ Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

²⁰ Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." ²¹ After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying:

"Give thanks to the LORD,
for his love endures forever."

²² As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. ²³ The Ammonites and Moabites rose up against the men from Mount

Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

There are so many fantastic take-aways for us as we look at how Jehosaphat faced these armies!

- First, I love this phrase: “Lord, we don’t know what to do, but our eyes are on you” Jehoshaphat was literally beset on every side. Take a moment right now to reflect on what you feel overwhelmed by. PAUSE.
- As you consider what you are facing, repeat the phrase to yourself several times....Lord, I don’t know what to do, but my eyes are on you. PAUSE.
- The prophet told King Jehosaphat and all that were there—Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. Again consider the struggle you are facing. Repeat this phrase to yourself several times...The battle is not mine, but Gods. The battle is not mine, but Gods. PAUSE.
- The prophet also told them to Take up their positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD would give them you. Look again at your challenge. Repeat this phrase—take up your position, stand firm, see the deliverance the Lord will give you. Take your position, stand firm, see the deliverance the Lord will give you. PAUSE.
- Jehosaphat entered the situation encouraging his armies to have faith, and to praise. What song of praise can you sing to God today, as you face this challenge? In the middle of a challenging situation, I try to look back at other times in my life that looked difficult or impossible—and yet God delivered me. I meditate on those times. Do you have a time like this, a time when you can remember how He came through? Reflect on this. PAUSE.
- In addition, our focus on our God, and his greatness, will also put our concerns into perspective. Spend a few moments tell Him, and reminding yourself, of how mighty He is to save. PAUSE.

A few weeks ago, we were able to get through to the IRS and were instructed to just continue filing as we had been. The bonus was safe. Now this story of God's faithfulness gets added to my mental file of all the times God has been faithful to deliver me, when it felt very hopeless to me. Nothing is ever hopeless when God is involved.

From the book of James:

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

I think of all these experiences stored up in my heart as fuel for my perseverance. I look back, and I remember every good thing He has done for me. If He is with me, whom shall I fear?

Lord, we lay down our fretting. Our troubles, or concerns, or worries our struggles. Whatever we face, today we lay it down, we trust you with it, and we draw on the strength of the times before when you have delivered us. You have done it before, you will do it again. Amen.