

“Where are You Standing and Looking?” (2 Chronicles 20:1–21)(8.1.21)

Scripture Intro:

We have before us this morning an amazingly rich portion of scripture. In fact, I have decided that we will need two weeks to cover it. Because it is an historical story, it is a little surprising to find so much theology embedded within it.

Considering that, there really have not been a lot of preachers willing to tackle it. Maybe because there are a lot of tricky Old Testament names. God is the central character, but the primary human actor is King Jehoshaphat. His name is kinda of fun to say, Jehoshaphat.

You may remember that the Israelites had clamored for a king so they could be like other nations. Saul was the first with King David to follow. David’s son, Solomon, was the one that had the privilege of building God’s holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Sadly, strife and conflict are already commonplace in Israel. In the next generation, Israel splits into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The kings lead the nations astray, away from God. There is a lesson for another day. But, King Jehoshaphat, like his ancestor David, had a heart for the Lord. Nevertheless, he finds the nation under a great threat.

2 Chronicles 20:1–21 (NIV84)

20 After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to make war on Jehoshaphat.

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

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

“O Lord, God of our fathers, 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. ⁷O 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? ⁸They 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.

¹¹See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. ¹²O 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 upon you.”

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

¹⁴Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon 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.

¹⁵He 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.

¹⁶Tomorrow 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. ¹⁷You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.’ ”

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

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"Where are You Standing and Looking?"**

INTRODUCTION:

American evangelist R. A. Torrey said, "The reason many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came. ...Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory."

The natural human behavior is to wait until we have a health crisis before we look at our habits. Then we consider what we are feeding our bodies. Then we embrace an active lifestyle over a sedentary lifestyle. We wait until we are surrounded by the enemy to cry out to God. We wait until evil abounds; when evil is called good and good is called evil, before we look to the cross of Christ in humility and faith.

Reverend Hugh Hughes preached, "the Bishop of Durham said, "The Churches of [England] were indebted to the Salvation Army, because they had revived the consciousness of the fact that the Church of God was an army, and that our great business as a country is war — not with one another, but with all human misery. What must we do? Praise the beauty of holiness. If we go forth to war, we must do as Jehoshaphat — we must be clothed with the Spirit of holiness."

2 Chronicles 17:3–4, ff (NIV84)

The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed. He did not consult the Baals but sought the God of his father and followed his commands rather than the practices of Israel. His heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord; He sent his officials to teach in the towns of Judah from the Book of the Law of the LORD. The fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah.

John Wesley and those with him at Oxford saw, after reading the Bible, that holiness comes by faith. Our great mission is to spread Scriptural holiness. If we march forth to war with confidence in the Spirit of holiness, we shall triumph even without fighting.

BODY:

So, I ask you, "Where are you standing?"

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.

- With the Chosen People
- In God's holy place

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.'

- Stand in God's presence
- Before God's Temple that He designed in detail
- God's Name encompasses so much: including presence

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

- ALL
- Men, as the leaders of their families
- Stood before the Lord

¹⁴ Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon 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.

- The Spirit of the Lord – OT vs Pentecost
- Jahaziel stood in the assembly (God works in the assembly)

¹⁷ You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. **Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.** Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.’ ”

- Take up your positions
- Stand firm
- See the deliverance the Lord will give you
- Do not be afraid or discouraged (repeated)
- The Lord will be with you

¹⁹ Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with very loud voice.

- Stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel
- With 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.”

- Jehoshaphat stood
- Have faith in the Lord your God
- Have faith in His prophets

1 Chronicles 16:11 (NIV84) Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Now, we must consider how we come to God. What is the proper mindset and heartset in which we come before the Lord? Deuteronomy 4:29 (NIV84) [...even in exile] if you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with **all your heart** and with **all your soul**. We are to come to our God in humility and in faith.

³ Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.

- Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord
- He proclaimed a fast for all Judah

¹² 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 upon you.”

- We have no power
- We do not know what to do
- Our eyes are upon the Lord our God

Alexander Maclaren preached, “The meaning of all circumstances that force our helplessness on us is to open to us Jehoshaphat's refuge in his -- 'our eyes are upon Thee.' We need to be driven by the crowds of foes and dangers around to look upwards. Our props are struck away that we may cling to God. The tree has its lateral branches hewed off that it may shoot up heavenward. When the valley is filled with mist and swathed in evening gloom, it is the time to lift our gaze to the peaks that glow in perpetual sunshine. Wise and happy shall we be if the sense of helplessness begets in us the energy of a desperate faith. For these two, distrust of self and glad confidence in God, are not opposites, as naked distrust and trust are, but are complementary. He does not turn his eyes to God who has not turned them on himself, and seen there nothing to which to cling, nothing on which to lean.”

¹⁸ Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the LORD.

- Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground
- All the people
- Fell down in worship before the Lord

²⁰ Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful.

- Faith in the LORD your God builds faith in the prophets
- Faith in His prophets builds faith in the Lord our God

Psalm 105:3 (NIV84) Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

CONCLUSION:

Reflection Questions

1. Have you prepared your heart to seek God? How, specifically?
2. Do you have any commitments to the world that keep you from seeking God? If so, what are they? Talk to God about these now.
3. Are you experiencing any opposition or crisis right now? If so, what? How could God be using these to get you to seek Him?
4. We are called to seek God with diligence. What would diligence in your crisis look like?
5. Seeking God will transform your prayer life. What evidence is there that your prayer life is being transformed?

Amen and Let us pray.

Scriptural Prayer for Revival

Gracious Father, to the degree I seek You will be the degree I experience You. Send revival. I need You, and I seek You with all my strength and might. Let me be constantly aware of a world that opposes You and Your people (2 Chronicles 20:1). Amidst all the challenges of the world, show me the importance of seeking You (v. 2). Father, let me understand when fear rises in my heart, it is a call to seek You. Thank You for Your promises, protection, and provision.

Teach me dependency on You. In the face of adversity, teach me to seek You first and always. Drive me to my knees. Just as Jehoshaphat called a fast, Father, allow me to know when to fast individually and when to call a corporate fast (v. 3).

Father, I volunteer for Your Word to judge me. Show me myself in light of Your Word. Use Your preacher, whomever You choose, to proclaim Your Word to me. Let meekness be my attitude, so I can receive Your Word. Let me yield to Your Word. I ask Your help (vv. 4, 14).

Lord, teach me to ask You for help, but do not let pride prevent me from allowing people to help me if You choose to work through them (v. 4). Show me those things that distract me from You, and allow me by faith to yield them to You. You are a mighty God. You are all powerful. You are sovereign. You are in control of everything. Thank You for Your mighty acts on my behalf and on behalf of Your people.

Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the Holy Spirit. Thank You for Your deliverance (vv. 6–7). Oh, Lord, teach me to fear You. Even in a disaster, let me seek You; let me not forsake the church, the body of Christ (v. 9). Let Your church stand before You, just as Jehoshaphat did. Let us stand before You, so we also can hear You and know Your truth (v. 13). Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, as I yield myself to You. Keep me sensitive to Your Spirit, for Your glory, not mine. Increase my faith and understanding of Your Word. Amidst opposition and turmoil, let me be still so I can hear Your voice (vv. 14–15). Teach me, Lord, what it means to position myself in You, and let me claim Your promise (v. 17). I bless Your name. I praise You. Lord, I seek You. I bow before You, not just at church, but throughout the day. Let me bow before You, even in front of others, because You are my God. Let me worship You (v. 18). Send revival, and let it begin in me.

In Jesus' name, amen.