

“Providential Prayer?” (2 Chronicles 20:1–21)(8.1.21)

2 Chronicles 20:1–21 (NIV84)

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

² Some 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). 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:

“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. ⁷ O 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 O 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.”

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 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.

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, 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.’ ”

¹⁸ Jehoshaphat bowed 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 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: **“Providential Prayer”**

INTRODUCTION:

D. L. Moody said, “We ought to see the face of God every morning before we see the face of man.” Prayer is a popular subject. Many books have been written about prayer. Many sermons have been preached about prayer. Pastors are always telling us that we should pray more. It seems that praying

should be easy, but even Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Lord teach us to pray." We pray that prayer every week here, the Lord's Prayer; but, it also serves as a model for other prayers.

Stanley Hauerwas wrote, "I confess, dear God, that the most difficult problem I have when I pray is how to begin. What do we do when we call on "God?" You have graciously given us your name, but "I am who I am" is, if you don't mind me saying so, vague. That name, if it is a name, invited us to address you by piling one big adjective on top of another big adjective—Most Holy, Most Gracious, Awesome, Omnipotent. Those adjectives give us the impression, when everything is said and done, that you are the "biggest thing around." **But the biggest thing around will not fit in a manger.**

So, I pray, we pray, that you will send your Spirit to us to give us fresh tongues, so that when we pray, we will not be praying to our idea of you, but to you. How odd is it that you have made us praying animals through your gift of prayer. So, thank you, gracious Lord, for receiving our stuttering prayers. Transform them and us into your prayer for the world."

BODY:

As we look at King Jehoshaphat's prayer, do not forget that he and his officials have been instructing the people from the Book of God's Law for several years. Now, they are under a severe threat from a vast army. A fast has been proclaimed and the people are gathered in God's holy presence at the Temple courtyard. The people are there to worship and inquire of the Lord, "What are they to do in these dire circumstances?" We find King Jehoshaphat's prayer starting in the sixth verse.

TYPES OF PRAYING SHOWN HERE

- Inquiry – seeking God's guidance
- Seeking help
- Seeking God Himself
- Crying out to God
- Worshipful prayer

ELEMENTS OF THIS PRAYER (compare to Lord's Prayer)

- Adoration
- Remembering what God had done
- Confidence in God
- Petitioning God

Covenanting with God (vs. 9: they promise to come to God in times of trial; vs. 20: they set out as instructed to face the enemy)

- Placing trust/faith in God

This scripture reveals Who is the God of Israel. It reveals the God in whom Jehoshaphat and the people place their faith.

God's Attributes addressed in this scripture:

- God of our fathers

Luke quotes God in Acts 7:32 (NIV84) 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

- God who is in heaven:

Deuteronomy 4:39 (NIV84) Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

- You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations

Daniel 4:17 (NIV84) " 'The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.'

- Power and might are in your hand

Jeremiah 27:5 (NIV84) With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please.

- Abraham your friend

Isaiah 41:8 (NIV84) "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend,

- you will hear us and save us.

Psalms 34:17 (NIV84) The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

- whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade

1 Chronicles 29:12 (NIV84) Wealth and honor come from you; **you are the ruler of all things**. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

- will you not judge them?

Hebrews 12:29 (NIV84) for our "God is a consuming fire."

- the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel

John 3:34 (NIV84) For the one whom God has sent [Jesus] speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

- the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged

Jesus also tells us many times not to be afraid. John 14:27 (NIV84) "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

- the battle is not yours, but God's (review the results in the rest of this story)

Exodus 15:3 (NIV84) The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name.

- the deliverance the LORD will give you

2 Samuel 22:2 (NIV84) [David] said: "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

- the LORD will be with you

- Splendor

Psalms 104:1 (NIV84) Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty.

- Holiness

Revelation 4:8 (NIV84) Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

- His love endures forever. We must turn to Psalm 136 on page # .

- But, God is to be feared

Proverbs 14:27 (NIV84) The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.

- GOD IS PRESENT

- a sanctuary for your Name

- this temple that bears your Name

- Here, I will refer you back to our Call to Worship. We are filled with God's presence, God the Holy Spirit. As people of God, we are to BE His presence wherever we go in this world.

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?

Sweet Hour of Prayer

1. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne
make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief,
my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

2. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
the joys I feel, the bliss I share
of those whose anxious spirits burn
with strong desires for thy return!
With such I hasten to the place
where God my Savior shows his face,
and gladly take my station there,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

3. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
thy wings shall my petition bear
to him whose truth and faithfulness
engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

Amen and Let us pray.

Scriptural Prayer for Revival from Praying with Fire

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.