

Lord's Prayer Application sermon

6/9/2019

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

For the past 6 weeks, we've been spending time studying the model prayer of Jesus, which we most often call, "The Lord's Prayer". J.J. and I have been taking turns preaching through it and last week we wrapped it up by co-preaching it. At the end of it we offered people an opportunity to sign their name to a type of covenant to apply the principles of The Lord's Prayer to their life. It's currently sitting on the back table and I'm aware that several of you weren't here or were here but didn't have an opportunity to sign it last week. So, if you'd like to have your name on that document, I'm giving you the chance right now, to go back and sign it and towards the close of our service this morning, J.J. is going to quick go over and make several copies of this covenant and have available as you leave this morning. And please feel free to take one, whether you've signed it or not. My hope is that by putting something tangible in your hands and in your house, it will serve as a helpful reminder to make praying the principles of the Lord's Prayer an effective tool in your participation with God in deepening your faith.

I've been spending quite a bit of time meditating on the principles of the Lord's prayer and how to go about applying them to my life and hopefully for you to apply to your life. And so, this morning I'd like to look at an individual that I think provides us with a great model of someone who essentially applied the principles during a specific incident in his own life. The person I'm referring to this morning is a king of Judah from the Old Testament by the name of **Jehoshaphat**.

Before we jump into a specific incident in Jehoshaphat's life I want to provide you a bit of his back story. And for the sake of pronunciation, I'm from here on out going to refer to Jehoshaphat as **King J.** **King J's father, was Asa**, and he was a relatively good king who sought the Lord and turned the nation's heart to the Lord in the early years of his life and reign. But later in life he strayed away from the Lord. After Asa died, King J became king of Judah. And, like his father, he was a man who was faithful to God personally and led the nation in following God. One of the impressive things King J did was to appoint several of his officials throughout the nation to teach God's word. And interestingly, it says that the as a result of God's Word being honored nation wide, *"The fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah, so that they did not make war with King J."* (2 Chronicles 17:10)

In the next phase of King J's life, it says that he aligned himself with a not so good king, King Ahab, king of Israel. And at one point, King Ahab asks King J to join him in waging war against a neighboring city, Ramoth Gilead, which had been taken from him by the Syrians. King J asked if king Ahab had consulted the Lord on this. He replied that he had summoned 400 prophets and they'd all said that it was good idea. But they were apparently the kings YES men and would agree with the king on everything. So, King J asked if there was anyone other prophet they could trust to tell them the truth. King Ahab says there is this one another prophet, Micaiah, but he hates him because he never tells him anything good. But King J insists they hear from him first and when he comes he tells them that the Lord told him that if they go to war they will be defeated and King Ahab will be killed. King Ahab is extremely angry and confines Micaiah to house arrest until he returns. Micaiah, says, that if indeed he returns from war, then he hasn't accurately heard from the Lord. But King J agrees to go to war anyway and interestingly, King Ahab must have had some sort of belief in Micaiah's prophecy because he has King J dress up in his royal kingly clothes as they go into battle, while he wears inconspicuous street clothes. As they go into battle the Syrian warriors notice King J all dressed up and specifically target him.

"Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel." When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, "This is the king of Israel." So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him. God drew them away from him, for when the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they stopped pursuing him.

*But someone drew his bow at **random** and hit the king of Israel between the breastplate and the scale armor. The king told the chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded." All day long the battle raged, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. Then at sunset he died."* 2 Chronicles 18:30-34 (NIV)

I'd venture to say that this "random drawing of the bow" was not really "random".

When King J returns to his palace, one of his officials is there to confront him and warns him that going to war with King Ahab was not the right thing to do and God was not pleased with his actions.

King J's reaction to this is to renew his obedience to the Lord and lead the nation closer to the Lord as well.

With that backdrop, we come to the incident in King J's life that I want to look at this morning. It begins in 2 Chronicles 20:1

2 Chronicles 20:1-2 (NIV) *After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat. Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi).*

King J wakes up one morning to the news that a vast army is coming against you and it's only about 30 miles away. Yikes!!! How would you react? My guess is that many of you this morning have been in King J's situation. The army may have looked different: it may have been a medical diagnosis, or a pink slip at work, or a spouse informing you that they no longer want to be in a relationship with you, or the betrayal of a friend, or the death of a loved one. One of the common experiences of life is that life is unpredictable, and the storms of life often come without advance warning.

When Jesus closed his Sermon on the Mount he told a story to illustrate the difference between those who merely know and hear about God and those who actually hear and put Jesus' teaching into practice. He compared two builders. The first builder built the foundation of his house deep into the rocks. The second builder built his house upon the sand. When the wind and rains came the first man's house stood firm while the second man's house collapsed. But Jesus didn't say, "*If the wind and the rains come*". No, he said, "*When the wind and the rain came...*" It's not a matter of "*if*" the storms of life come against you, it's only a matter of "*when*" will they come. And the important thing is to prepare for their coming in advance, so that when they come you're ready. And the best way to prepare for the storms of life is to constantly be drawing deeper into a relationship with Him and depending upon Him. **Pray daily the Lord's Prayer which teaches us dependency upon Him**, trusting in His power and presence to bring me through every storm that comes my way. Recognizing that God is bigger than any storm that can come your way and to keep your sights set on Him.

Let's see how King J responded to this storm that was dropped into his life with no advance warning.

2 Chronicles 20:3-4 (NIV) *Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.*

What you see here is that turning to the Lord in the midst of a crisis is **King J's first response and not his last resort**. That's a key for you to write down on your outline and apply to your life. Way too often I go to God for help, but after I've already tried and failed at several other attempts to solve the crisis. And when nothing else works I reach out to God. King J's immediate response was to seek the Lord. This response had been developed over a lifetime of seeking Lord and learning from his mistakes when he didn't.

James 4:6b-8 (NIV) *Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

1 Peter 5:5-9 (NIV) *"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."*

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

The difference between the proud person and the humble person is that the proud person is self-sufficiency. They figure they can figure out a way out of this crisis with their cleverness and strength. The humble person realizes that this crisis/storm is way more than they can figure out or solve on their own and they must get help from God.

That's why Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount describing the people who make up his kingdom as: **Matthew 5:3 (NIV)** *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* When J.J. preached on the first part of the Lord's Prayer he taught us that the kingdom of heaven is not just something up there in outer space somewhere but "heaven" actually comes from the word for "breath" and implies that God is as close as our very breath. He's right here in our face, walking with us through every crisis in our lives, wanting to be our strength and wisdom and our peace in the midst of things that shake us to our very core – God is right there with us and the poor in spirit realize that they can't make it on their own. That's King J in the midst of this situation and might be you right now and sometime in the future. How will you respond? King J immediately goes to God and the people of the kingdom follow his lead.

2 Chronicles 20:5-9 (NIV) *Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard 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. 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? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, '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.'

Notice the three things King J does:

1. He recognizes the greatness, power and might of God.
2. He remembers God's actions in the past (this builds your faith and builds a reservoir you can use when you don't feel the presence of God or see His hand in action in your current crisis)
3. He recalls God's promises (*you will hear us and save us*)

That's a great model for prayer.

2 Chronicles 20:10-12 (NIV) *"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."*

Notice how King J, puts some of the responsibility for these armies coming against him on God. In Deuteronomy 2 you read that God would not allow the Israelites to conquer these countries because God had given them to the descendants of Esau and Lot. But King J also reminds God that this land of Judah had been given to them as an inheritance. And a principle strong in Scripture is that God will protect the inheritance He has given to his children.

Jude 1:24-25 (NIV) *To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.*

God has invested in your salvation through Jesus' death on the cross and He's committed to protecting His investments. He will fight for you and with you through the various storms that come into your life. And a key part to how you do in those crisis of life is what you focus on. Do you become consumed with the crisis or do you become consumed with the God who promises to walk with you through the crisis? If you focus primarily on the crisis, then you'll become more and more consumed by it and it will steal your joy and run you ragged. But instead focus on the God who is bigger than any crisis you go through.

Remember when I preached on the Lord's Prayer about the difference between "tests" and "temptations" and a key piece in every crisis is how you choose to respond. You can make a crisis into a temptation, which causes you to draw away from God, or you can cause the crisis to be a "test" which has the possibility to draw you deeper in your relationship with God. But a large piece is your focus.

King J didn't ignore the impending crisis but He set his eyes and the eyes of the nation on God.

That last sentence would be a great call to God to use in the midst of any of your crisis.

I do not know what to do, but my eyes are on you Repeat that with me a couple of times, just to get used to saying it. And maybe some of you need to keep repeating that in your own life, in your own crisis, until it becomes true. That you really are focusing on God in the midst of your crisis and allowing Him to take charge and to replace your anxiety with His peace.

2 Chronicles 20:14-15 (NIV) *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.

How many storms in your life do you struggle and struggle with and it's actually not your battle but God's. How many times is God waiting for you to call out to Him so that He can show you His power and glory? How many times are we like Jesus' disciples who when they encountered the storm and thought they were going to capsize and all die, and in desperation they called out to Jesus, who was sleeping in the back of the boat, and Jesus comes out and yells at the wind and the waves to stop it and immediately they did?

So many times we need to recognize our severe limitations and trust on the greatness of God to fight our battles.

2 Chronicles 20:16-22 (NIV) *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.*

Did you notice when God began fighting against these massive armies? *"As they began to sing and praise."* Worship is a powerful weapon in waging war against Satan and the various crisis that come into your life. Remember, Satan was one of the worship leaders of the angelic choir in heaven but he wanted to be worshipped instead of God, so he rebelled. So, every time you break out into worship, it redirects your mind and heart on God and it reminds Satan what he so desperately wants but can never have.

You can read the rest of the story if you want. It's pretty amazing what God does in response to King J and the nation focusing their minds and hearts on God and trusting in Him.

God calls each of us to trust in Him as well. And this begins by accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and turning your life over to Him. Hymn of Invitation.

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King J's Backstory:

King Jehoshaphat's father was _____

Was King Jehoshaphat a good king or a bad king?

What's the crisis King J is facing?

What's the most severe "life storm" you've dealt with?

How did you deal with it?

What lesson did Jesus teach about storms in life?

Turning to the Lord in the midst of his storm was King J's
_____ response and not his _____.

What's your typical first response to a crisis in your life?

A proud person is _____.

2 Chronicles 20:5-9 the responses of King J.

1. He r_____ the greatness, power and might of God.
2. He r_____ God's actions in the past
3. He r_____ God's _____

What's often the result of becoming consumed with the crisis?

What's often the result of becoming consumed with God in the crisis?

"I do not know what to do, but my eyes _____"

When did God begin to fight for the Israelites?

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