

2 Chronicles 19-20

As we slide back into the scene here we remember that there has been some radical things going on/taking place. Jehoshaphat king of Judah had gone outside the will of God for his life in aligning himself with Ahab king of Israel both by allowing his son to marry Ahab's daughter and also in joining himself with Ahab in war against Ramoth Gilead. Generally speaking Jehoshaphat was an incredibly godly individual, he *loved* the Lord, he *sought after* the Lord, it was his desire to be *pleasing to* the Lord. But he had his faults; there were times that he failed. It kind of struck me in a fresh way the other day as I was thinking through these various men, these kings of Israel and Judah. Some of these guys were incredible, God blessed them tremendously, yet none of them made it through unscathed, David had an incredibly hard fall, Solomon's heart departed from the Lord in his latter days, Asa looked to man and not to the Lord toward the end of *his* days, Jehoshaphat joined arms with one of the single most wicked kings that Israel ever knew. and I was reminded again of the fact that none of us are exempt, it doesn't matter how long you've known the Lord, or how close your walk is with the Lord, if you're not abiding *in* the Lord on a daily basis disaster is lurking, looming and waiting for you...for me. We live our lives but a step away from a downfall, and the bible is clear, "...*let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" 1 Cor 10:12 It's so easy to sort of set our relationship with the Lord on "autopilot" and we get familiar with the mechanics of the ministry, and it happens with out our even realizing it whereby we begin to drift from our 1st love relationship with the Lord. and Before we know it we're taking part *in*, or aligning ourselves in some way *with* an ungodly situation, something that we know the Lord wouldn't approve of, and we stumble. No one is exempt, if it could happen to David, or Solomon, or Asa, or Jehoshaphat, all these godly guys who wanted nothing more than to serve the Lord with all that they were, it can happen to me, and it can happen to you. How we need so desperately to cling to Jesus Christ, abiding in Him and in His word.

But along with the concern that confronts us with what's revealed to us in those situations is also the comfort of knowing that God is eager to receive the repentant back into fellowship with Himself. Are there ramifications? Absolutely, but as we confess our sin, as we bear fruits worthy of repentance, God forgives, He restores, and He renews us in our relationship with Him. Jehoshaphat has gone outside the parameters of God's will for his life, and God is going to rebuke him for it, but whom the Lord *loves* He chastens. and The bible says, "*Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*" Heb 12:11

So though the warning was given, Ahab's death prophesied *before* him, Jehoshaphat still went to war *with* him and he barely escaped with his own life. Remember the chariots were closing in on him and he was screaming out to God running for his life and so in some way God diverted them, they realized he wasn't Ahab so they quit pursuing him. Then a "random" arrow struck Ahab between the joints of his armor and he propped himself up in the chariot till evening but as the sun was setting he died.

And again you might be able to fool me, or camouflage yourself in the flow of life, but God knows who you are, He knows *where* you are, and there's no escaping His judgment. How much better to simply repent of your sin and come to Jesus Christ?

Vs1

And of course if we were to read it all in one sitting this would stand out in contrast to Ahab's death there at the end of Ch 18. Ahab died as prophesied, however Jehoshaphat returned safely to his home in Jerusalem.

And really it's simply another testimony to the grace of God knowing that Jehoshaphat was in compromise, was in a place that he never should've been, yet when he cried out to the Lord, God met him where he was at and delivered him out of that place. and Such is the nature of God, He's willing to meet you wherever you're at, and as you call upon Him, as I cry out to Him in truth He will lift me up out of that place. Now again it doesn't mean there aren't consequences to the decisions I've made, but God is faithful nonetheless and as I draw near to Him the bible is clear that *He* will draw near to me. So Jehoshaphat returned home safely as the result of the grace and mercy of God toward his life in the midst of a position of compromise.

Vs2-3

So we see here consequences sort of tempered with mercy. Jehu rebukes him, gives him a no holds barred exhortation, but then tempers it with a commendation from the Lord. Now we've seen these guys before at various times in our studies of Kings and Chronicles, some yrs back Jehu was in the northern kingdom of Israel rebuking Baasha for his idolatry and following after the sins of Jeroboam. and Probably through some sort of persecution of the prophets he migrated down here to the southern kingdom of Judah and here he comes on the scene again with a word from the Lord for Jehoshaphat. and His dad (Hanani) was a prophet who spoke to Asa, Jehoshaphat's dad. and So it's kind of neat to see that both Jehu and his dad served the Lord and God used them both in incredible ways, John said that he had no greater joy than to hear that his children walked in the truth. Of course he was with reference to his spiritual children, but that's easily applied to our literal children. and Hanani had the joy of seeing his son Jehu walk in the truth, sharing and speaking the word of the Lord to the people.

And in this case he's sharing the word of the Lord with the king. and He says, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?" Or to understand that another way, "*...what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?*" 2 Cor 6:14-16 James said, "*Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?*" James 4:4 There is a marked difference between caring for the lost and enabling or purposefully helping to accomplish the agenda of the wicked. Are we to care for the lost? Absolutely; are we to love the sinner? You bet, but we don't condone or commend the agenda of the ungodly. If I owned a company would I hire an unbeliever if he was the best man for the job? Sure, would I yoke up with an unbeliever in sharing joint ownership of the business? No, can 2 walk together lest they be agreed?

No, you'll have 2 different standards, 2 different sets of convictions, it'll be a constant struggle and eventually you'll be compelled to compromise. and That's what happened here; Jehoshaphat was helping someone who was wicked, and in that sense loving (or supporting practically) one who hated the Lord. Paul told the Ephesians, "...*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*" Eph 5:11 We're to walk in the light as He is in the light, in the world, but not *of* the world. Jehoshaphat crossed a line, and it's brought the chastening hand of the Lord upon his life.

Yet at the same time the Lord recognized the fact that he wasn't just all about evil, he blew it, but it didn't have to be the end of the world. There was good found in him, he did away with places of idol worship, he pointed people toward the Lord and prepared his heart to seek the Lord. He genuinely wanted to follow God; he simply made some poor decisions. and So though the exhortation came, right on the heels of that came a commendation. and Paul the apostle often used this format, because it's important that I as a child of God really understand that God *truly* is for me and not *against* me, but He needs to deal *with* me, He can't turn a blind eye to my sin.

So there are times whereby He administers faithful wounds, as a loving father to his child. and That's what we have happening here, God is dealing with him but that doesn't mean He doesn't love him. and In our dealings with one another I think it's important to remember this general pattern, exhortation is fine and well when the situation calls for it, but encouragement is needed as well. If someone genuinely has a heart to follow the Lord, acknowledge that, recognize it, your ultimate aim isn't to simply tear them down, but rather to build them up, to encourage them in the more excellent way.

Vs4-7

The idea here is that he bore fruits worthy of repentance and encouraged others to follow suit. and Then on top of that he sought to enforce a righteous standard legislatively throughout the kingdom of Judah. Now obviously you can't legislate righteousness, however standards can be enforced that are righteous. In other words people can't be made righteous by what they do or by forcing them to uphold a particular standard. However that shouldn't hinder the standard that's set from being a right one, one that's godly in its essence. After he went on a campaign to encourage the people personally to turn back to the Lord (apparently his alliance with the north had some fall out in his own land, which is always the case, our sin ripples into other's lives) he set judges in place, leaders in place to uphold godly standards.

And anyone who's in a position of authority be it in ministry or politically, or whatever would do well realize these facts and recognize their place (being one of accountability and responsibility) in the Divine scheme of things. Because to whom much is given, much is required. and There in Vs 6 where we read, "...you do not judge for man but for the Lord who is with you in judgment." I think that often times that's something that's forgotten, a) that we don't judge for man but for the Lord, and b) that He is with us in judgment.

We fail to recognize that God is with us, taking note *of* us and the decisions we make, and that we're making them on *His* behalf as *His* ambassadors. and When you fail to realize that you can find yourself in big trouble fast. Because suddenly you're tempted to consider how you can benefit from the judgment, you'll be partial if it's beneficial, take a bribe to sway the judgment. It becomes a power play and whoever can benefit me the most gets my judgment, and that's a lot of what goes on in the courtrooms of America today. If you have enough money you're free to walk. People aren't judging with the fear of God upon them, so there's partiality, pay offs and all the rest. It would be good to have Vs 16-17 inscribed over the bench of every judge in America, reminding them that they judge not for man but for the Lord, therefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our god, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.

Vs8-9

Another good reminder for really any believer; we're to act in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and with a loyal heart. It's required of a steward that one be found faithful, and we're to be loyal to the Lord our God.

Vs10-11

The proverbs tell us that, "*Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.*" Prov 14:34 and So Jehoshaphat here is encouraging them to uphold and enforce a righteous standard and God will be with them and honor their position.

Ch 20

Vs1-2

So this confederation of 3 nations align themselves with one another against Jehoshaphat and the kingdom of Judah. Now the last time he found himself in a major battle he almost lost his life, notice.

Vs 3-4

We noted last time the mercy of God in being willing to respond to us wherever we may find ourselves whenever we finally come to that place of crying out to Him from a true heart. and God knows what we're made of; He remembers that we're but dust. and One would like to think that they'd have a rock solid resolve in the face of any/all adversity, but the fact is that there are times we're afraid. The situation seems too much for us, it's overwhelming, beyond our ability to deal with. God knows what it takes to get us where we need to be, crying out *to* Him, calling *upon* Him, placing all of our trust *in* Him because we can't do it; we can't deal with it. and Here's Jehoshaphat up against a situation that's just too much for him, so what does he do? The right thing, he set himself to seek the Lord. and He knew he could turn *to* the Lord, that He could trust *in* the Lord because he'd prepared his heart to *seek* the Lord. How important it is that our resolve be to seek the Lord, because then when we find ourselves in a similar situation (that is in a place whereby the circumstances seem too much for us) we won't find ourselves in a frantic panic but rather we'll know right where to turn; to the Lord.

He set himself to seek the Lord, and remember when we read of him “seeking” the Lord the idea is to study with application. He’s looking for direction from the Lord with a heart to be obedient *to* the Lord.

So he proclaims a fast throughout Judah, a time to deny the appetites of the flesh in order to seek whole-heartedly after the Lord.

Vs5-6

An accurate view of who God is will always place our problems in their proper perspective. Jehoshaphat begins by acknowledging the greatness of God. The fact that he rules over *all* the kingdoms of the nations, the pagans believed in localized deity, the Moabites had their god; the Ammonites had their god and so forth. Jehoshaphat understood and recognized the omnipresent, omniscient attributes of God, that He *wasn't* localized and that He was all powerful and overall, in sovereign control of all things. Oh it’s true in the narrow sense of the word that Satan is the prince of this world, but in the big picture God is the One who calls the shots, who’s will, will be done. “No one is able to with stand You.” with God nothing will be impossible, there’s *nothing* or no one who can overpower or overcome Him. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. “No one is able to with stand You.”

Vs7

He’s acknowledging the great things that God has done for them in the past, therefore it’s not out of line for them to trust and anticipate that God will do great things for them in the present. It’s like, “We’ve been up against overwhelming/impossible odds before, but God You’ve always come through for us, and we’re trusting You to do it again.”

And something caught me about this phrase, “...Abraham Your friend forever.” You remember when the Sadducees were challenging Jesus as to the reality of the resurrection and they mentioned 7 brothers each having been married to the same woman in succession but each having died before they raised up a son to the original man she was married to? (Mark 12) and They were saying, “There can’t be a resurrection because who gets the girl? She can’t be each of their’s wife.” and Jesus was like, “You’re mistaken not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.” and He quoted from the burning bush passage where God said, “I am the God of Ab, Isaac, and Jacob.” and He said, “God is not the God of the dead but of the living.” Pointing out the fact that once we leave this planet it’s not the annihilation of our souls, or some suspended animation into oblivion or nothingness. Ab is alive and well in the presence of the Lord.

Jesus said, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*” John 11:25-26 and I was reminded of that when I read over this phrase regarding Abraham, Your friend *forever*.

When Ab left this planet he didn't cease to exist, He's God's friend *forever*, we'll be with the Lord *forever*, Jesus said, "*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*" John 15:15 We'll be God's friends *forever!*

Vs8-9

If this sounds familiar it's because he's drawing on Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple which you can read in Ch 6. He knows God's Word and He's standing on it, we call this faith. Remember, faith is believing God for what He's said; it's taking God at His word. and God promised that as these things came upon them, that if they *turned* to Him, *cried out* to Him, and *called upon* Him that He would hear their cry and deliver them. and Jehoshaphat is saying, "We're turning *to you* and trusting *in You* to fulfill Your Word to us."

Vs10-12

You see he's rehearsing their history, he knows the Word. "When we came out of Egypt You forbade us to attack these nations and now in return here they are to wipe us out, is that fair? Are You going to let them repay evil for good?" This is reminiscent of when the Lord told Ab that He was going to destroy Sodom. and Ab said, "Far be it from You, will not the Judge of all the earth do right? Suppose there are 50, 40 even down to 10 righteous people in that city, would You destroy the righteous along with the wicked?" and Of course there wasn't 10 righteous, only 1 but even still God delivered him before destroying the city. So the understanding that comes from that is, "Yes, the Judge of all the earth will do right." That's the premise Jehoshaphat is calling upon here, "We did right by them, they're repaying with evil, surely You're not going to let this happen!"

And then we love the humility displayed in Jehoshaphat's heart here, "We have no power against this great multitude, nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." We're placing all our eggs in Your basket, we're looking *to You*, trusting whole heartedly *in You*, there's no *thing* or no *one* else who can deliver. I was watching the invocation ceremony yesterday with respect to the horrible tragedy there at Virginia Tech. and As the nation looked on and listened in for direction, a shred of hope, where to turn, what to trust. I listened as they gave the platform to a Muslim priest, a Buddhist, an orthodox Jew, and a Lutheran minister, the Muslim quoted from the Koran and pointed people to Allah, the Buddhist quoted the Dahlia Lama and called for peace, the orthodox Jewish lady quoted from Ecclesiastes and spoke of peace and the Lutheran (w/out quoting directly) said that it was a tragedy to large for any single religion to handle alone and that we all needed to join hands to push back the darkness. There was no mention of God, the name of Jesus never came out, no, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I'll give you rest," no "If any man thirsts let him come to Me and drink." No, "I'm the resurrection and the life, he who believes on me will never die." Nothing, here we are a "Christian nation" and Jesus Christ wasn't even mentioned as the nation was held collectively captive looking for a shred of hope, something to make sense in the midst of such a horrible atrocity. But people were encouraged to turn to Allah, to cling to the words of the Dahlia Lama, to understand that there's season for everything and so somehow and in some

way we'll make it through and be better in the end. I just thought "God forgive us." It's like, "There's this great, insurmountable obstacle before us and we have power against it, nor do we know what to do." But there was no one to turn their eyes upon the Lord, how grievous.

Jehoshaphat recognized their complete inability to do anything about what was coming. But he knew who to turn to, and where his hope lied, so many with out hope being with out God in the world.

Vs13-15

Listen I don't know what's going on in your life, what the great and insurmountable obstacle is that's before you, but don't be afraid nor dismayed, because the battle isn't yours, but God's. It's God who brings about victory in our lives, oh how He chooses to utilize us in each situation may vary, from being totally involved, to doing nothing at all, but either way He's the one who delivers us, who defeats the enemy, who brings victory to our lives.

Vs16-17

W/out faith it's impossible to please God. God said, "I'm going to do the work, but that doesn't mean you can just do nothing, you need to position yourselves, get out on the battle lines, then stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." God was calling them to move out in faith and trust Him to do the work. So as they trusted Him, He'd do it, as we trust Him, He'll do the work. Sometimes He chooses to move through us, other times He moves on behalf of us, but He's the one Who causes us to walk in victory, it's not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Vs18-19

Even this was a move of faith, God called something that wasn't (their victory) as though it was, and they believed God and worshipped and praised God for the work He was yet to do. How often do we trust God such to the extent that we praise Him in advance? We'll spend our income tax return before it ever gets here because we trust the government to keep their word. Yet how often we're reluctant to trust God to keep His, they believed God, so they worshipped Him for His work on their behalf in advance.

Vs20-21

2 things, #1 Believe in the Lord your God, and believe His Word and you shall be established. #2 Why did God do this? Was it because Israel was so spiritual? No, because they deserved it? No, because God somehow owed them? Not at all, but out of mercy He acted on their behalf, His mercy endures forever. God owes us nothing, but He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love, praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.

Vs22

We have to comment on this. It was when they in faith began to praise the Lord that God moved on their behalf, the Lord set ambushes against their enemies and they were defeated.

When you praise the Lord in the face of overwhelming odds and insurmountable obstacles, you trust in Him, turn *to* Him and praise Him in faith. Somehow and in some way it confounds the enemy, it confuses and frustrates the enemy. Victory was wrought and the enemy was defeated as they got their eyes off their situation and on to the Lord and just praised Him for His overwhelming and abundant mercy.

Vs23-30

And as we mentioned earlier it's in Christ that *we* find rest, that *we* cease from our labors, that *we* stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. He's fought the fight and won the battle, we're free in Christ to simply enjoy the spoils of victory.

Vs31-33

You've heard the phrase, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Jehoshaphat sought to lead the people in the ways of the Lord, but you can't force people to walk with Jesus, all you can do is point the way be an example yourself and hope and pray for them to enter in to that same place of trusting and believing in Christ. As a general rule it appears that the people overall didn't follow his lead.

Vs34-37

Ahaziah was Ahab's son, and it seems like he didn't learn the 1st time. But we find that in 1st Kings after this happened Ahaziah sought to get him to go for it again but Jehoshaphat wouldn't do it. So eventually he learned that it just didn't pay to try and yoke up with the ungodly. and It may seem cruel that God destroyed these ships but in reality it was an act of mercy because it prevented him from building upon an ungodly alliance.

Jehoshaphat just had a propensity to try and hook up with these guys, and it was a weakness. If you're aware of a particular weakness in your life don't play to it, don't flirt with things that will only impede or impair your relationship with the Lord. You'll only wind up shipwrecked. So though Jehoshaphat wasn't a perfect king, he was a great king overall and went down in the chronicles of history as one who did not turn away from doing right in the sight of the Lord.

Prayer Points:

Father may that be our testimony as well, that we walked in Your ways, and never turned aside from doing what was right in Your sight. Increase our faith, help us to trust the promises of Your Word and to act upon them, move *in* them that You might use us and be glorified *through* us. That we would act faithfully, and with a loyal heart to You, Lord we know that apart from You we can do nothing, but we can do all things through You as You strengthen us.