

## When the Odds are Against You

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

“It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup>Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar” (which is En Gedi). <sup>3</sup>And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup>So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. <sup>5</sup>Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, <sup>6</sup>and said: “O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? <sup>7</sup>Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? <sup>8</sup>And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, <sup>9</sup>‘If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.’ <sup>10</sup>And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir - whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them - <sup>11</sup>here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. <sup>12</sup>O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.” <sup>13</sup>Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD. <sup>14</sup>Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the

assembly. <sup>15</sup> And he said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. <sup>16</sup> Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. <sup>17</sup> You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.”<sup>18</sup> And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. <sup>19</sup> Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high. <sup>20</sup> So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.” <sup>21</sup> And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever.” <sup>22</sup> Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. <sup>23</sup> For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. <sup>24</sup> So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. <sup>25</sup> When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. <sup>26</sup> And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the

LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. <sup>27</sup> Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. <sup>28</sup> So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. <sup>29</sup> And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. <sup>30</sup> Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.”

**Wise people make calculated risks.** They consider the odds before they make the investment – the investment of time, energy, money, reputation. They ask themselves, “Is the cause worth the cost? Is the reward worth the risk?” They know that they need to consider the odds in life.

**As I was preparing this segment I did a little research on what the odds were in certain areas.** If you play lottery the odds are you are more likely to visit the moon than win the jackpot in the lottery. In fact, you are six times more likely to be struck by lightning than to win the odds in the lottery.

**Here are the odds on how you will die.** The odds are that you will die in a car wreck one in a hundred, that you will die by murder the odds are one in 300 in America. That you will die in a fire, one in 800. **That you will die by electrocution, one in 5000.** That you will die in a flood, one in 30,000 or in a tornado, one in 60,000. That you will die by a venomous bite or sting, one in 100,000. **That you will be killed by lightning, one in 2.8 million.** (By the way, the world record of being struck by lightning is a guy named Roy Sullivan, a forest ranger. He has been struck seven times by lightning!) The odds that you will die by food poisoning is one out of three million. (I would have thought far more die by food poisoning.) The odds that you will be on a plane with a bomb is one in thirteen million.

**Sometimes it seems the odds are against you.** Sometimes it seems life has stacked the deck of cards for you to loose. I read the story of Brian Hice who had a day like that in Provo, Utah. **First, his apartment became flooded from a broken pipe in the apartment above his.** So his manager told him to go rent a water vacuum. **That's when he discovered that he had a flat tire.** He changed it, went inside again to phone a friend for help but standing in water and grabbing the phone, the electrical shock he got so startled him that he accidentally ripped the phone off the wall. By the time he was ready to leave, water damage had swelled his door jam shut and he had to yell for a neighbor to come and kick the door down. **While this was all going on somebody stole Brian's car.** However, it was almost out of gas so he found it a few blocks away. But he still had to push it to a gas station to fill it up. **That evening, Brian Hice attended a military ceremony at his university and he injured himself severely when he somehow sat on his bayonet, which had been tossed on the front seat of his car.** Doctors were able to stitch up his wound but no one was able to resuscitate Brian's four canaries that were crushed by fallen plaster from the wet apartment ceiling. When he got back from the university, Brian Hice slipped on the wet carpet and injured his tailbone. He said he began to wonder if, "God wanted me dead but just kept missing."

**Have you ever had a day like that?** Do you ever feel like everybody is ganging up against you? That everyone is conspiring to make it a bad day or week or month or life?

**In this segment I want us to look at what are the odds and how do you face them when they are against you.** What do you do when you are facing insurmountable, overwhelming problems?

One of the names of God in Hebrews is Jehovah Nissi, which means, "I am the God who defends you." **I am the God who protects you.**

Literally, “I am your banner. I defend you when the odds are against you.”

**One of the great examples of this is 2 Chronicles 20, one of my favorite stories in the Bible.** The story goes that three enemy nations of Israel decided to team up against Israel and go to war against Israel at the same time. So they were going to, kind of, tag team Israel into submission. **The king of Israel at this time was a guy named Jehoshaphat.** He's got a triple threat; the odds are three to one. Three enemy nations are going to come to battle against little Israel. **You would think this would be a story of defeat and devastation but in the true ending, Jehoshaphat wins.** He beats the odds because he did everything right.

**It is a wonderful story that explains God's protection over the nation of Israel.** But God does not put these stories in the Bible just to teach us history lessons. There are principles there that we are to learn how to handle overwhelming odds, how to handle your circumstances when you are in the battles of life. **Some of you are in a financial battle.** Some of you are in a relationship battle. Some of you are in a battle with a disease. **These same principles apply to the battles of life that you are going to face this week even when it seems like there is no way out, even when it seems like you are going under for the last time.** What do you do?

**1. Turn to God first.** Before you do anything else you go directly to God. You do not pass “Go,” you do not “Collect \$200.” You go straight to God and say, “God, I am overwhelmed!” You ask, “God, what do You think about this situation?” and you try to get God's perspective on the problem. **The reason why is because your perspective is limited while God's perspective is eternal.** He can see the *beginning* and the *end*. He can see *past*, *present* and *future* all at once. So you need to get a larger picture of what the problem really is that seems so overwhelming to you right now.

Too often we see prayer as a last resort rather than as our first thought. Prayer is usually something you do way down the line after you have tried everything else. People will say, “I guess all we can do now is pray!” It’s as if prayer is the last thing – you have tried all the major things that should work and all you can do now is pray. And your friend says, “Has it come to that? Is it so hopeless that all we can do is pray?”

Prayer should be your first choice, not your last resort. If you want God to help you overcome the odds in any area of your life you have to turn to Him first.

2 Chronicles 20:1 & 3 tell, “And it came to pass after this also, that the child of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with some of the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle...And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.” Notice the words, "after this." “After this” there came a battle. After what? In the previous chapter, 2 Chronicles 19 there is the story of a great national revival, a spiritual awakening. There is great joy in the country, because of the prosperity, and blessings of God. It is a time of good times! Then it says, “After this there came a battle.”

We all know this principle - with every high Satan tries to attack us with a low, with every mountaintop he tries to attack us with a valley. And after every victory, he always tries to attack us with a letdown. And with every blessing, he tries to attack us with a temptation. You may not be in a battle right now, but Satan will see to it that you are going to be in one tomorrow or the next day or the day after that. You may be in a time of blessing right now, soaring with eagles. You may be on the mountaintop. But Satan is going to try to bring you down eventually. So you need to expect blessings in your life but you also need to expect battles in your life. Trust me, Satan will see to it that you are going to have some difficult times.

**Notice the king's first reaction.** It says he was *fearful*, he was *afraid*. May I tell you that fear is a normal reaction? It was a reasonable reaction. **Here are three very able enemy nations teaming up – ganging up – against you and they're going to come pound you at one time.** It is normal to be afraid. Whatever things are overwhelming your life right now, your problem is not that your initial response was that you were afraid of them. That is not your problem. **Your problem is what you do with your fear.** When you are afraid in a situation, when you feel overwhelmed, when you feel stressed out, and when you feel that the odds against you, do you let that fear de-motivate you, destabilize you, depress you, or discourage you? Does it cause you to want to throw in the towel and say, “I give up!” even before the battle starts? Does fear cause you to say, “I can't make this work. Why should I even try? Why put forth the effort? Why even go into battle because I am going to lose? I give up. The odds are stacked. I am not even going to try.”

**Listen very carefully to this statement - Never let an impossible situation intimidate you.** Let it motivate you. **How can the problems in my life motivate me?**

**Problems can motivate me to pray more.** They can motivate me to *trust* more. They can motivate me to *expect* more from God. **They can motivate me to depend more on God.** They can motivate me to *get my priorities right*, to decide what is important and what is not worth doing. Therefore, it is true that problems can motivate us.

**So, my advice to you tonight is this: if you are facing problems let those problems motivate you, and turn to God first.** That is exactly what Jehoshaphat did. He headed straight to God.

**2. Talk to God.** I know this might seem elementary, but you need to talk to God about your situation. There is no problem that is too big and there is no problem that is too small for you to pray about. In 2 Chronicles 20:5 we are told, “Then King Jehoshaphat went and stood

before them [the entire nation] and he prayed aloud.” **That was a good thing to do.** I am convinced that one of the greatest things that our president could do for our nation is to get on national television and pray for us! I realize that he might upset the ACLU and the other groups that are anti-God in this nation, but who cares? It is time for us to understand the promise in Psalm 33:12 that says, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord...” And Proverbs 14:34 says, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” **It is time that we stopped trying to politically correct, and started being biblically correct!** It is time that we stopped worrying about the agnostics and atheists who want to destroy this nation, and started trying to please the God Who wants to bless this nation! It is time for our political leaders to stop being afraid to stand up for what they say they believe!

**But there is something else about praying out loud.** Sometimes praying aloud keeps your mind focused. When you pray in your mind, have you noticed that sometimes your mind tends to wander? **It does not tend to do that as much when you are praying out loud.** So, sometimes you need just to pray aloud.

**It is important, when the odds are stacked against you, for you to see that there is a certain way you need to pray that is different from the way you normally pray.** Jehoshaphat gives us a model example of the three things you need to pray when you feel overwhelmed.

1. **First, I need to remind myself just exactly Who God is.** Verse 6 says, “Are You not the God who is in heaven? Don’t You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand, and no one can withstand You.” The first thing you do is remind yourself of who God is. I need to remind myself of who God is. **Before I talk to God about the problem, before I focus on the problem, I need to focus on God and I need to remind myself that God is bigger than the problem I am facing.** I need to speak my faith by saying, “God, You’re all powerful. Nothing is too hard for You. With God all things are

possible. You rule over all kingdoms and nations.” The king here realizes that three enemy nations are coming at him, so he stops and speaks his faith, “God, You are bigger than all the nations. I know that You are bigger than anything I will ever face.” **Ever so often I need to remind myself of who God is.**

**2. Second, I need to remind myself of what God has done in the past.** I just need to remember the times past when God has helped me. I need to remember the miracles that He has already done in my life and the way He has helped me through difficult times. In verse 7 Jehoshaphat says, “Didn't You drive out those who lived in this land when Your people arrived?” **He is going all the way back to Moses and Joshua.** He is saying, “Didn't You give us this land? Didn't You do miracles that got us here in the first place?” He recalls (read the whole passage) all the ways that God has worked in the past and he is saying, “I know who You are and I know what You have done in the past.”

**3. Third, I need to remind myself that God can do it again.** Ask God for help now. Jehoshaphat says, “O God, won't You stop them.” In other words, he is saying, “How about an instant replay, Lord? Give us a repeat performance. Do it again!” **In verse 9, he mentions how God had help this nation overcome other tragedies, physical needs and material needs, plagues, famine.** He says, “None of this is too hard for You. You have helped us in the past, so do it again!”

His prayer is actually built around three questions: “Are You not? Did You not? Will You not?”

“Are You not God?” Jehoshaphat says, “If You are God, then You are in charge.” He says, “If You are God, then, You are big enough to handle it.”

“Did You not help us in the past?” Jehoshaphat concludes, “Yes. You did help us in the past.”

“Will You not do it again?” And Jehoshaphat says, “Yes, if was You who helped us, and I know You will do it again.”

**Do you see how Jehoshaphat used his faith?** That is the way we need to pray when we are overwhelmed. No matter what the situation is, you need to learn to speak your faith. **Begin by reminding yourself first Who God is, by reminding yourself what He has done, and by asking God to do it again.** Once you have spoken your faith, relax and trust God to take care of the situation. Listen; do not allow worry to steal your victory.

**3. Tell God exactly how you feel.** I need to be honest with God. In verse 12 Jehoshaphat says to God, “We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us.” **Have you ever felt that way?** Have you ever felt powerless to deal with a problem in your marriage, your career, or somewhere in your life that you thought was overwhelming. Maybe you have felt like this poem:

“The world had a hopeful beginning  
But man spoiled it all by sinning  
We trust that the story  
Will end in God's glory  
But right now the other side is winning.”

**Have you ever felt like that?** You pick up the newspaper and it looks like the bad guys are winning. We have kids killing kids in high schools. **The moral and spiritual climate of our society is collapsing.** Everything around you it looks like the bad guys are winning in many ways. And it is easy to become overwhelmed and conclude, “God, we are powerless and we don't know what to do.” When you are overwhelmed it is all right to tell God exactly how you feel.

It is interesting when you compare this verse 12 where it says, “We are powerless” to verse 6 where he says, “You have all the power in the world.” **You see, there is a trap that Satan sets for us.** He tries to get

us to focus on our problems, on our circumstances, on our present situation, instead of realizing that our victory has already been established in Christ Jesus. Isaiah 41:13 says, "The Lord my God holds my right hand; He is the Lord, Who says to me, Fear not; I will help you." The words of Jesus recorded in John 14:27 read like this in the Greek, "Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Jesus is saying, "Stop allowing yourself to be agitated and disturbed; do not permit yourself to be fearful and intimidated and unsettled." We have been given this promise in Romans 8:37, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Listen; what Satan does not want you to see is that God has given us power and authority over him, over every circumstance, over every enemy.

4. Trust God to help you. The third part of verse 12 says this, "We were powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us and we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You." Notice the words, "our eyes are on you." Ladies and gentlemen, we do not need to not focus on our problems but put our focus on the Lord.

This is the biggest mistake that people make when they are overwhelmed. When we are overwhelmed all we tend to see is the problem. Instead of seeing the power of God at work in our lives, we become defeated because our eyes are on the problem.

One of my favorite quotes is from Corrie Ten Boom: "If you look at the world, you will be distressed. If you look within, you will be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you will be at rest." It all depends on what you have your eyes on.

What are you focusing on right now? If you are discouraged, your focus is not God. You can't be discouraged and focus on God at the same time. You know who He is and You know what He has done and He wants to help you again. Listen to this statement: it is impossible to be discouraged and depressed and praise God at the same time! Look at God response in verse 15, "Do not be afraid or

discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours but God's!" God says, "Relax and trust Me to help you."

**The reason why you are so *fatigued* all the time and so *tired* all the time is because you are trying to fight battles that belong to God. That is your biggest problem. You are trying to fight battles that are not your battles in the first place. They are God's. And when you try to fight them, you are going to get worn out. You think, "I will make this thing work." And out of sheer willpower we put our head down, our shoulder into it and buck up and say, "Just out of my own willpower and energy I will... save this marriage... turn my kids around ... resolve my financial difficulties... find a life mate... make myself a success." And you are striving and fighting against your circumstances and against people! But that is not what God has said! You see, when I come to Christ and say, "Jesus Christ, I want to serve You the rest of my life. I want You to be my master and I will be Your servant." When I put myself in the servant position to the master God, the master assumes responsibility for all the needs of the servant. If I live in the master's house, he pays for my room, and board, and insurance, and cares for my medical needs and all the other things because I am serving Him. The battle is not mine anymore; it is His.**

**But we don't get this. We try to fight God's battles all the time. We go out and work real hard and try real hard and we give it our best shot and inevitably we fail and we're disappointed in ourselves and we come back with our heads bowed, our eyes droopy, our tail between our legs and we walk into God and say, "God, I am so sorry. I have really let You down. I know that I tried hard and tried to do this and I have made a mess of it. I blew it. I have really let You down. I am sorry, God." God says, "Wait just a minute! Let Me clarify this. You did not let Me down because you are not holding Me up!" Have you ever thought about that? You don't let God down because you don't hold Him up. God holds you up; you don't hold Him up. I don't know how to say it any clearer than this: You cannot disappoint God because He already knows everything. He knows every stupid, sinful, dumb**

thing you have ever done. He also knows every stupid, sinful, dumb thing you are going to do. **So it is not going to be a big surprise to Him when you end up doing it.** You cannot disappoint God. This is what grace is all about. **You don't earn God's pleasure, or God's approval.** It is a free gift when you trust in His Son Christ. You don't hold God up, He holds you up. **It is not your battle!**

In verse 17 God says, “You are not going to need to fight in this battle.” **What kind of battle is that?** He says, “Stand strong in your places and you will see the Lord save you.” **Please listen to this statement: If it is God's problem; let Him solve it. If the Christian life is ever going to be “joy unspeakable and full of glory” for you, it is imperative that you learn to relax in faith.** Twice in this story, verse 15 & 17, God says, “Do not be afraid or discouraged.” Why? **Number one, it's God's battle.** Two, and more importantly, **God has never lost a battle.** Never! So, you do not have to worry. Remember what I have said, “There is no need for me and God both to worry about something.” So relax, God is in charge and He can handle it!

**What does God want you to do if He does not want you to fight in the battle?** What are you supposed to do when you are facing an overwhelming situation?

Two words: “Stand strong.” **What does it mean to stand strong?** **It is a mental attitude.** It's an attitude of quiet confidence. It is a determination of faith that says, “I am not going to get ahead of God, but I am not backing up either. I am going to confess my faith and watch God work. I am going to stand strong. I am not going to give in to my fears and I am not going to give in to Satan.”

**One of the most important truths you have to learn in life is it is never God's will for you to run from a difficult situation.** Never. He wants you to learn that He is sufficient in every situation that you face in life.

**In today's society, there are plenty of ways to run.** What is your favorite escape? There are lots of ways to escape from reality and responsibility today, but God says, "I want you to stand strong and by faith watch Me do a miracle in your life."

**What do I stand firm on?** He tells us in verse 20, "Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld. Have faith in His prophets and you will be successful." **Do you want to be successful? You stand on two things: the character of God and the word of God.** Have faith in the **character of God.** You need to know who He is. **You need to know what He has done in the past.** You need to know of His faithfulness. **Have faith in the Word of God. You need to understand the validity of the Bible.** The Bible contains over 7000 promises that relate directly or in directly to our lives. **Therefore, when you are facing overwhelming odds, and unbelievable circumstances, you can stand on these two things: the character of God and the Word of God. And when you understand the character of God and the Word of God, you will have no trouble speaking your faith! No problem, no conflict, and no loss. Why? Because our God is still in control of every situation.** And if God is for us who can be against us?

**5. Thank God in advance.** When you learn to walk by faith and really trust God to help you, then you are able to thank God in advance. **Notice verse 21,** "The king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army singing to the Lord and praising Him. This is what they sang 'Give thanks to the Lord for His faithful love endures forever.'" **Obviously, this is a very unusual way to organize an army.** Jehoshaphat's battle plan is to put a choir before the infantry. Patton would have fainted! **Jehoshaphat says,** "Here's my idea. Do any of you sing?" He picks these guys out. "We are going to form a little choir here and you are going to go out first." **Picture this: On one mountain are the three enemy armies amassed to do battle against Israel. Three nations of armies.** Then there is the valley where they are going to do battle. **Then there are the lowly Israelites.** **Jehoshaphat says,** "We are going to take you who sing and make a choir out of you

and put you in front of the army as you march into battle.” They are out there singing, “Thanks to God from whom all blessings flow! Bless the Lord! Praise God!” **Imagine Darren leading them out, dancing and singing a Praise Song!** The enemy is going, “What is going on?” The Israeli army is going, “What is Jehoshaphat doing?” And the choir is saying, “We would like to know what is going on!”

**There is a very important truth here.** There is a symbolism in this. They were thanking God in advance for the victory. **Before it even happened, they were thanking God in advance.** *Praise and thanksgiving is simply verbalized faith.* If you thank God after the fact, that is gratitude. Therefore, they said, “Give thanks. We thank God for the victory.”

Look at the effect of praise in verse 22, “At the moment they began to sing and to praise, (the very moment) the Lord caused the armies of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir to begin fighting among themselves. They destroyed each other.” **There is power in praising.** There is power in *expecting*. God confused the enemy and they started fighting each other and killing themselves. **They turned on each other and destroyed themselves while the Israelites looked on.** They were thanking God in advance.

**Here is the question: You know that insurmountable problem in your life?** The one where the odds are stacked against you? When are you going to start thanking God for the fact that it is solved? **That is simply speaking your faith.** Do you feel like you are victorious? Probably not! **Can you reach out and touch your victory?** Probably not! It is not a matter of feeling and finding; it is a matter of faith! Romans 4:17 puts speaking our faith this way, “...calling those things which are not, as though they were.” **Thanking God in advance. Praise God for your victory!**

**Listen to the results.** The enemy destroyed themselves and after the battle was over, as seen in verse 25, “So Jehoshaphat and his men went off to carry off the plunder [the spoils of war after the battle was over]

and they found among them a great amount of equipment and clothing and articles of value – much more than they could carry away. [There were so many spoils of war they could not carry it away. God wants to bless your life so much, more than you can even handle.] There was so much plunder that it took them three days to collect it. [This is what you call abundance.] And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah (Ber-a-kak) where they praised the Lord and this is why it's called the Valley of Beracah (Ber-a-kak) to this day. **“Beracah” (Ber-a-kak) is the Hebrew word for praise and this is where God wants you to live. In the Valley of Blessing. It means blessing and praise. God wants to bless your life. And He wants you to live in that Valley of Blessing, in that Valley of Praise.**

**How do you get there? By speaking your faith! By thanking God in advance.**

**When Christians act the way they ought to act the world takes notice. Listen to what the Bible says, “When the surrounding kingdoms heard that the Lord Himself had fought against the enemies of Israel, the fear of God came over them. [I guess so!] So Jehoshaphat’s kingdom was at peace, for God had given him rest on every side.” Wouldn’t you like for that to be true in your life? Living in rest and have peace on every side – the family side, the career side, the financial side, the social side, the physical side, the sexual side – you have peace on every side. How do you get there? How do you get to the Valley of Blessing, the Valley of Beracah. You speak your faith, and allow God to solve your problems. And when you do, it becomes a testimony to unbelievers and the world takes notice that your God is a miracle-working God. And God loves to demonstrate His power in those who will just believe Him and expect Him to work in their lives.**

**Are you facing a difficult circumstance this week? Do you feel like the odds are against you? Do you think that problem is**

overwhelming? What are you going to do? You turn to God, speak your faith, and praise Him for the victory!