

The Power of Worship

Worship Song: Raise a Hallelujah <https://youtu.be/e3RRU25dpPg>

Worship Song: This is how I fight my battles <https://youtu.be/Pz7578ZNwNU>

Worship Song: This is the air that I breathe <https://youtu.be/QTzXpzSXTdQ>

PRAYER: HEAVENLY Father, we come to you today, as your children surrounded by war in Europe causing huge increases in our cost of living, while the pandemic is still-raging and impacting our lives. We grieve for the way things were, and mourn for those we have lost, but trust You to work things out for the good as part of Your plan to save the world. We ask You to intervene in the war, to provide aid for all who need it and support for all who are refugees, plus grant heavenly wisdom for those making decisions and tring to negotiate peace.

As we come to Your word we ask that You would pour out Your Spirit upon us to minister to each of us just as each one needs and help us to learn how to cope in the face of adversity by bringing everything to You in prayer and worship, and resting in Your loving arms. AMEN

Our message today is based on the life of Jehoshaphat, who we can read about in 2 Chronicles chapters 17-20.

We will focus on what happens in chapter 20 but if you have time please read through the earlier chapters for background and context.

If you don't have time here is a summary leading up to chapter 20

- The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because his heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord and not to the ways of the world 17:3-6
- 17:7 In the 3rd year of his reign he sent his officials to teach in the towns of Judah, taking with them the Book of the Law of the LORD.
- As a result (V10) the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah so that they did not make war with Jehoshaphat
- Then in chapter 18 we read that he allied himself with evil king Ahab in Israel ([1 Kings 16:30](#) *Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him.*) through marriage and joined forces with Israel against Ramoth Gilead. Ahab was killed but Jehoshaphat cried to God during the battle and he was saved.
- BUT on his return 19:2 Jehu the seer said to him "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this the wrath of the Lord is upon you
- After this Jehoshaphat continued to lead a God-fearing life but lost his immunity against others coming to make war

If you wish, you can watch a summary of chapter 20 in this short video <https://youtu.be/R-mOjdmBR8A>

And / or read in chapter 20

After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites^[a] came to wage war against Jehoshaphat.

² Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, 'A vast army is coming against you from Edom,^[b] from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazon Tamar' (that is, En Gedi). ³ **Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to enquire 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:

'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. ⁷ Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it for ever 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 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.'**

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

What can we learn from this?

- In problem situations, times of spiritual attack our first response should be to enquire of the Lord – bring it to him in PRAYER
- Fast to provide focus and declare to God how serious we are
- Come together with others
- Praise and worship
- Declare God's faithfulness and remember what He has done in the past
- Confess our need, our weakness, our inability to deal with the situation on our own

Reading on

Then the **Holy Spirit came upon Jahaziel**, son of Zechariah and he said v.15

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, Judah and Jerusalem. **Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.**"'

Jehoshaphat and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell face down in worship and some of the Levites stood up and praised the Lord with loud voices.

What can we learn from this?

- As we take our problem situations to the Lord we must make space for the Holy Spirit, wait for His answer and be obedient to what the Holy Spirit tells us to do – allow Him to be God and to fight our battles for us – remember the battle of Jericho?
- Prophets – seek God’s counsel from those we respect with a prophetic anointing .
(*Ephesians 4 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*)
- But we must not abdicate responsibility to take up our positions and to face whatever comes against us
- As we commit our situation to the Lord **as an act of worship** we consolidate our relationship with him, deepen our love, trust and faith
- As we focus our attention upwards then we receive from Him His love, mercy and grace, strength – all we need and may be overcome by the weight of His presence as we surrender our will to His.

The next day as they set out in obedience Jehoshaphat said “ Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in His prophets and you will be successful
The role of the leader is to remind the people what God has said and to encourage them

Then we read from v 21

²¹ After consulting the people, **Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendour of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying:**

‘Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures for ever.’

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. ²³ The Ammonites and Moabites rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

²⁴ When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked towards the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped. ²⁵ So Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off their plunder, and they found among them a great amount of equipment and clothing and also articles of value – more than they could take away. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it. ²⁶ **On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berakah, where they praised the Lord.** This is why it is called the Valley of Berakah to this day.

²⁷ Then, led by Jehoshaphat, all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem, for the Lord had given them cause to rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ **They entered Jerusalem and went to the temple of the Lord with harps and lyres and trumpets.**

²⁹The fear of God came on all the surrounding kingdoms when they heard how the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.

What do we learn from this?

- Prioritising praise and worship to take the lead in times of battle and spiritual warfare
- **AS THEY BEGAN TO SING AND PRAISE, THE LORD SET AMBUSHES** – as if the praise opened the gateway between heaven and earth and enabled the power of heaven to be released
- Importance of giving thanks in victory

So as we reflect on the life of Jehoshaphat what does it tell us about the POWER OF WORSHIP to bring breakthrough and victory over problem situations, problem people, health issues, spiritual attack? How does this point to Jesus?

1. **WORSHIP is a lifestyle.** He was committed to using his influence as king to ensure his people were taught the Book of the Law. He knew the power of God and had a living relationship with Him that he knew his people also needed and the result was peace as surrounding countries saw that the nation of Judah was full of God-fearing people. What about us? How do non-Christians see us? Do they see Jesus in us by the way we lead our lives and interact with others?
2. **WORSHIP includes witness.** Other people can be drawn into the presence of God during times of worship and are influenced by what they see in God's people. William Booth, who founded the Salvation Army said "If the church was on fire for God, people for miles would come to watch it burn."
3. **WORSHIP consists of many forms.** Bible, prayer, singing, giving thanks, artistic expressions, caring for the poor, good deeds, seeing God in nature Times when one is more appropriate than another
4. **WORSHIP must be in spirit and in truth.** John 4:23-24
²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'

What does that mean?

⁶ Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know^[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.' John 14

Real worship is only possible when we **know** Jesus who is the truth. How often did Jesus say, "Verily I say to you" – meaning my words are truth – no AMEN needed.

John 1:14 ¹⁴ *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

We have the truth dwelling inside of us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

5. **WORSHIP has the power to change us and to change our perspective.**

We were created to worship God. Our soul finds true peace, rest and purpose when we worship.

When we focus all our attention on Him and away from our circumstances then we are enabled to see things from a heavenly perspective. **To worship God in the midst of the storms of life is a choice that we make flowing from a lifestyle of worship because we know that God is good all the time and that He works things out in His way, in His timing far better than we ever could.**

Even when we don't feel like worshipping, if we make the choice – an act of our will wakens up our spirit to speak to our soul and changes our feelings.

We become like the one we worship. The more time we spend with Jesus the more we become like him.

6. **WORSHIP has the power to change our situation and our response to it.** Spiritual warfare. Ephesians 6

The armour of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Rebuke the devil and he will flee from you – James 4

Submit yourselves to God

⁴ What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ² You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴ You adulterous people,^[a] don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us^[b]? ⁶ But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*'God opposes the proud
but shows favour to the humble.'*^[4]

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.**

Our ability to overcome is linked to having a lifestyle of worship – our will surrendered to the Lord. Jesus said, not my will but thy will be done

WORSHIP helps to keep us humble as we become so much more aware of how awesome God is and how relatively insignificant each of us is– yet with an important role to play. Just as Jehoshaphat acknowledged his weakness and inability to fight against such a huge army, so must we maintain an attitude of humility and absolute trust in God and worshipping builds our level of faith.

Healing, deliverance

7. **CORPORATE WORSHIP enables us to unite under the Lordship of Christ, to experience him, to hear from him**

Worshipping together builds a level of expectation and sparks can fly in the spirit as we listen to one another prophesy, preach, sing, paint, dance, wave flags – creative arts bypass the head and reach straight to the heart – especially to outsiders coming in.

ENCOURAGE one another more to step out into their areas of anointing and gifting so that the whole body can be built up and function in a healthy way.

RESPECT others – come early – prepare your spirit before you come – ask the Lord to give you a word or picture, to release you into something new and take away your fear – honour this time together as something precious – taken seriously.

Essential to have extended times of worship until we sense that heaven is open at times of seeking direction, seeking breakthrough.

8.

SUMMARY

Proverbs 3 Trust in the Lord with all your heart

and lean not on your own understanding;

⁶ in all your ways submit to him,

and he will make your paths straight.

In all your ways worship, in tough times, in good times, in grief and sorrow, problems come, difficult situations, spiritual attack – Give God His worth, acknowledge His power and our weakness, commit everything to Him as an act of worship and trust Him in His own way and timing to make our paths straight

Closing Song: The Blessing <https://youtu.be/jDMijhOUOqk>