

Helpful Hints for Hard Times

“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.” 2 Chronicles 20:1 (NKJV)

These words by good King Jehoshaphat were uttered after he had received distressing news that a multitude was coming against him and the inhabitants of Judah. It was distressing because he knew he was no match for these nations that were intent on taking him down. Previously, he had nearly been destroyed by the Syrians after he had made a military alliance with wicked King Ahab. Making some unwise decisions, Jehoshaphat learned the painful lessons of loving those who hate the Lord and trusting in his own wisdom and strength to get through his problems (2 Chron. 19:2).

Realizing the Problem, Resorting to Prayer

His experience in 2 Chronicles 20 provides a blueprint for us when we are going through troubling times and navigating through turbulent waters. We have all felt the panic and anxious moments when it seemed that all around our soul was giving way, with pressures and problems coming fast and furious. What should we do when these things occur? The answer is that we should do exactly what Jehoshaphat did - call for others to join us in prayer and to ask for the Lord's help and strength during our time of trial. Jehoshaphat utilized the greatest resources that every believer has at their disposal – the sword of the Spirit and prayer. This is the strategy to adopt whenever we see problems coming our way that threaten to undo us.

Recalling the Past, Remembering the Promises

Another helpful lesson from Jehoshaphat's experience is that he recalled the Lord's faithfulness to him in the past. The same God who drove out the inhabitants of the land and gave it to the descendants of Abraham, could certainly do it again (v. 7). Like David when he went out against the Philistine giant recalling with confidence and conviction, *“The Lord who delivered from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from of the hand of this Philistine”* (1 Sam. 17:37, NKJV). God had proved His faithfulness in the past to David and would prove it again. Our God is faithful to His people and whatever transpires is ultimately for our good and for His glory, though it may not seem so at the time. It is so important to remember His dealings with us in the past, lest we sink down in the “slough of despond.”

Yet another helpful hint that springs from these pages is the significance of remembering the Lord from His Word. One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to call to remembrance the things that we have learned from Him. John 14:26 and 16:15 reminds us that He will call these things to humble and yielded minds as we have need. What better incentive do we have to ensure we are filling our hearts and minds with the Word of God through the diligent study of His Word? *“Study to show thyself approved unto God...”* By so doing, we will bolster our faith and be reassured that the Lord has everything under His control. The One whose eye is on the sparrow and has numbered every hair on our head, is fully aware of every detail to our situation and has a purpose in mind for letting it penetrate our lives.

Rejoicing in Praise, Reaping the Results

Lest we paint too rosy a picture that everything will work out just fine in the end, like Jehoshaphat we can come to our wit's end. It is then that we need to confess our utter helplessness and total reliance

upon the Lord. Enter Jahaziel, the servant of the Lord who came in just at the right time with a word of encouragement (20:14-18). Thank the Lord for servants like him who speak a word in season and remind us that the battle is not ours but the Lord's! What was the result? First, Jehoshaphat bowed his head in worship. Then, instead of running from the battle he went into the fray with an attitude of praise (20:21). This thoroughly confounded the enemy, who were defeated without anything else being done on the part of Jehoshaphat. The Lord had taken care of the matter, much like He will do for us as we roll our burdens upon Him. It was the same principle that was exhibited by Job when he was hit with calamity. The result for both Job and Jehoshaphat was that they emerged from the ordeal as the victor having reaped the results of a deeper walk with the Lord. Enriched by the whole experience (depicted by gathering the spoils of war), Jehoshaphat returned home where his realm was quiet, *"for his God had given him rest all around"* (20:30, NKJV). God had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction, and so the Lord will do for us as we follow these helpful hints for hard times.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." 1 Peter 5:10