

## THRESHOLDS

### 1. CRISIS

HVC, Feb. 2, 2020

2 Chronicles 20

*2 Chronicles 20:1-2 (NLT)*

*After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites **declared war** on Jehoshaphat. Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, “A **vast army** from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at Hazazon-tamar”...*

What is the biggest crisis *you* have ever faced?  
How surprising was it? How big?  
How did it go? How did you handle it?

*2 Chronicles 20:3-4 (NLT)*

*Jehoshaphat was **terrified** by this news and **begged the LORD for guidance**. He also **ordered everyone** in Judah to begin **fasting**. So **people** from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD’s help.*

Why do you think it was important that the people be fasting? Why do you suppose Jehoshaphat ordered that?

What experience have you had with fasting (whether food or anything else)? Why do you think it is a “spiritual” practice? How does it work?

Why do we not do it more?

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

*The temptations [or tests] in your life are **no different** from what others experience. And **God is faithful**. He will **not allow** the temptation to be **more than you can stand**. When you are tempted, he **will show you a way out** so that you can **endure**.*

In your experience, do (serious) temptations usually feel like “*more than you can stand*”? Why is this verse important to understand?

What, exactly, does God promise here?

How could you “apply” this verse the next time you’re under severe trial?

James 1:2–3 (NLT)

*Dear brothers and sisters, when **troubles of any kind** come your way, **consider it an opportunity for great joy**. For you know that when your faith is tested, your **endurance has a chance to grow**.*

When does James say we should have “joy”? Why?

What is the difference between “enduring” trials (1 Cor. 10:13) and actually welcoming them (Jas. 1)?

How much do you value “endurance,” really?

What would be great about growing in endurance?

What is your usual knee-jerk/instinctive response when a crisis hits? Do you run TO God? Why/not?

**2 Chronicles 20:5-6 (NLT)**

***Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the LORD. He prayed, “O LORD, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you!***

How different would your prayers be if you began with praise and celebrating Who God Is?

Why do you suppose we are slow to do that?

**2 Chronicles 20:7-9 (NLT)**

***O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? Your people settled here and built this Temple to honor your name. They said, ‘Whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come***

***to stand in your presence before this Temple where your name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will hear us and rescue us.’***

How often do you remember and rehearse God’s great acts in your prayers? What difference does it make?

What are some ways we can “remember” the things God has done for us so that we do not forget?

Have you ever tried “praying Scripture”? What was it like? How did you do it? How did it help?

**2 Chronicles 20:10-12 (NLT)**

***“And now see what the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir are doing. You would not let our ancestors invade those nations when Israel left Egypt, so they went around them and did not destroy them. Now see how they reward us! For they have come to throw us out of your land, which you gave us as an inheritance. O our God, won’t you stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.”***

Have you ever laid out a “complaint” to God, or objected in prayer to a perceived injustice? How might that change your prayer life?

Do you ever confess your weakness and helplessness in prayer? What was it like?

**2 Chronicles 20:14-15 (NLT)**

the **Spirit of the LORD** came upon one of the men standing there. His name was **Jahaziel** son of Zechariah... He said, "Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: **Do not be afraid!** Don't be **discouraged** by this mighty army, for **the battle is not yours, but God's.**"

Have you ever had an experience where you felt God "showed up" in a particular way as you were praying? What happened? What was it like?

What difference would it make in your life if God said this directly to you?

**2 Chronicles 20:16-17 (NLT)**

Tomorrow, **march out against them.** You will find them coming up through the ascent of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. But **you will not even need to fight.** Take your positions; then **stand still and watch** the LORD's victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. **Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you!**"

How do you think Jehoshaphat and the people felt when they heard this command?

How many times does God command them to go and meet the enemy?

Why would God command them to do that?

**2 Chronicles 20:18 (NLT)**

Then King Jehoshaphat **bowed low** with his **face to the ground.** And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem did the same, worshipping the LORD.

What do you think of Jehoshaphat here? What does it tell you about his leadership?

**2 Chronicles 20:20 (NLT)**

**Early the next morning** the army of Judah went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. On the way Jehoshaphat **stopped** and said, "Listen to me, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! **Believe** in the LORD your God, and you will be able to **stand firm.** **Believe** in his **prophets,** and you will **succeed.**"

What else does this reveal about Jehoshaphat's leadership?

Why do you think he felt it was necessary to add this to what had already been said?

Why does he specifically mention having faith in the "prophets"?

**2 Chronicles 20:21 (NLT)**

After **consulting** the people, the king **appointed singers** to walk ahead of the army, singing to the LORD and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang:

***"Give thanks to the LORD;  
his faithful love endures forever!"***

What part of your prayer time is devoted to “worship”? What is that time like? What do you do?

What “lessons” might we take from this with regard to our own public worship?

*2 Chronicles 20:22-23 (NLT)*

**At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other.**

Why do you think this “timing” is important?

How do you suppose the Lord “caused” (v.22) this?

*2 Chronicles 20:25-26 (NLT)*

**King Jehoshaphat and his men went out to gather the plunder. They found vast amounts of equipment, clothing, and other valuables — *more* than they could carry. There was so much plunder that it took them three days just to collect it all! On the fourth day they gathered in the Valley of Blessing, which got its name that day because the people praised and thanked the LORD there. It is still called the Valley of Blessing today.**

When have you seen God “bless” more than you expected?

How do you think they felt praising and thanking God? Why is praise pleasurable?

What was the value in re-naming the valley?

*2 Chronicles 20:27-29 (NLT)*

**Then all the men returned to Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat leading them, overjoyed that the LORD had given them victory over their enemies. They marched into Jerusalem to the music of harps, lyres, and trumpets, and they proceeded to the Temple of the LORD. When all the surrounding kingdoms heard that the LORD himself had fought against the enemies of Israel, the fear of God came over them.**

Why is public celebration important?

If you had been in one of the surrounding nations, what would you have thought when you heard the news about this event?

Which of these four principles or “certainties” speaks to you the most today?

**I. GOD IS ALWAYS AS NEAR AS OUR DESIRE TO FIND HIM**

**II. IF YOU ACT ON IT, YOU’LL EXPERIENCE IT!**

**III. GOD WILL GO AHEAD OF US**

**V. GOD WILL BLESS MORE THAN WE EXPECT**

Share about a time when God went to battle for you.