

Success in Trials
2 Chronicles 20:01-23
Series: Topical

1. Introduction:

- a. I start with a confession: I have recently gone through a major trial in my life in which I have, to my own shame, despaired and lost my focus on God.
 - i. I realized that I knew all the platitudes of success given in Scripture but I didn't know the specifics to waging a winning campaign.
- b. As Christians, we are often told that:
 - i. The Lord will never leave us and forsake us, Jesus is always with us, and that God has made a way of escape.
 - ii. However, although these and other statements like these are true, as Christians we are in need of direct biblical instruction as to the specifics of triumphing through the trials.
- c. Because of this time, God has profoundly impressed upon my heart the belief that most Christians do not know how to handle significant trials as part of their daily Christian lives.
 - i. This is why we despair, blame, lose faith, and go through periods of despondency.
- d. Today, by the grace of God, I will endeavor to take us through the very specifics outlined in Scripture. By the end of today, I pray that we will all know the way to victory during troubling times.

2. Verses 1-2 – When trials hit

- a. We all get bad news at some point: A dire situation—Jehoshaphat is told that his enemies have aligned themselves for his destruction.
 - i. The number are countless.
 - 1. The perfect storm of numbers and circumstances is coming against him.
 - a. Like Job, we will receive distressing news after distressing news.
 - b. Like the disciples in the boat, we will in the midst of an incredible storm with Christ, apparently, nowhere to be found.
 - ii. A successful sneak attack:

1. At times the trials will approach dramatically and unexpectedly.
 - iii. They are about 36 miles away (already in Israel's territory) and no strategy can be formed or army prepared to withstand this significant threat.
 1. Effectively, they are helpless.
 - b. What are we to do when we are surprised, surrounded, pressed upon, and overwhelmed by trials?
3. Verses 3-5 – We are to choose between the natural vs. the spiritual reaction
 - a. Notice that Jehoshaphat was afraid – this a natural reaction
 - i. **Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
 - ii. Overcome the great truth of fear by the greater truth of God's abiding presence.
 - b. **Step 1 – Concerted Effort to seek God** – Notice what he did with the fear – Because he was afraid, he set his face to seek the Lord
 - i. We cannot allow the natural reaction to keep us from our spiritual course. We are to set our faces to seek the Lord in prolonged, unabashed, deep, meaningful prayer.
 - c. **Step 2 – A Separation is needed** – He proclaimed a fast – he separated himself from the pleasures of this world and even the necessary to devote himself to seeking God's assistance.
 - i. Jacob when stuck between Esau and Laban
 - ii. Christ at Gethsemane
 - iii. Paul during the trial with a messenger from Satan
 - iv. The Ninevites
 - v. There are going to be times in which you are going to have to separate yourself
 - d. Notice that all Judah separated itself for the purpose of seeking God.
4. Verses 6-12 – **Step 3 – Meaningful and Substantial Prayer**
 - a. Verse 6 – The Pattern for Meaningful and Substantial Prayer
 - i. Lord – first
 - ii. God of our Fathers – faithfulness of God
 - iii. Sovereignty
 1. Over heaven
 2. Kingdoms
 3. No one is able to withstand you.

- b. V. 7 – Recounting God’s Faithfulness –
 - i. God’s goodness to Israel through history –
 - 1. He goes to the Scriptures
 - c. V. 8-9 – A reminder that they were under covenant
 - i. **Romans 8:28** And we know that for ***those who love God all things work together for good***, for those who are called according to his purpose.
 - d. V. 10-11 – Present the problem as you see to the Lord
 - e. V. 12 – Admit your weakness, your powerlessness – trials are spiritual
 - i. **Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
5. V. 13 – **Step 4 – Whole Devotion** – to the last person
6. V. 14-15 – There is a point when God Speaks through His Word. Listening to the great truths (platitudes) found in the word of the Lord.
- a. The battle is not yours –
7. V. 16-17 – **Step 5 – Obedience to the revealed word of God**
- a. Whatever God says is true and we must carefully follow it to the letter.
 - b. As Christians, it is imperative that we realize that our deliverance comes from the Lord.
 - i. Deliverance can come in a variety of ways:
 - 1. Miraculous and unexpected
 - a. Here
 - 2. Through the trial
 - a. Daniel and his friends
 - 3. Ultimate deliverance from this life through the trial
 - a. Stephen
 - ii. We cannot be delivered by our own wisdom, power, and ingenuity.
8. Verse 18 – **Step 6 – Gratefulness vs. doubt.**
- a. When we receive the imparted word of God in the form of His promise to deliver, we should be overcome with gratefulness and no doubt.

9. V. 19 – ***Step 7 – Praise with very loud voices***

- a. After having aligned ourselves to God in the midst of our most severe trials, we are to Worship God for his goodness and impending deliverance.
 - i. This is a sign of faith in God
- b. Paul did the same thing:
 - i. **Acts 16:24-25** Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.(25) About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,
- c. Martin Luther Quote:
 - i. The great Christian reformer, Martin Luther, in fact, once spent three days in a black depression over something that had gone wrong. On the third day his wife came downstairs dressed in mourning clothes. “Who’s dead?” he asked her. “God,” she replied. Luther rebuked her, saying, “What do you mean, God is dead? God cannot die.” “Well,” she replied, “the way you’ve been acting I was sure He had!”

10. Verse 20 – Again we are reminded to:

- a. Believe in the Lord
 - i. So that we can be established – ***unmovable***
- b. Believe his prophets (the word of God) –
 - i. So that we can ***succeed***

11. Verses 21-23 – What happens when we praise vs. complain

- a. The Lord works out deliverance in his time, and in his way.

12. Benediction –

- a. **Psalms 121:1-8** A Song of Ascents. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? (2) My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. (3) He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. (4) Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. (5) The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. (6) The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. (7) The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. (8) The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.