

THE LORD IS GOD OF THE HILLS AND OF THE VALLEYS

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Hillburn Drive Grace Baptist Church

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1 Kings 20:22-28

This morning I would like to speak on, "**The LORD is God of the Hills and of the Valleys.**" We will return to our studies on Revelation 3, 'The Call to Faithfulness in our Day,' in January or February. I want to preach some messages that are dear to my heart this month as I celebrate 20 years here at HDGBC. The last two Sundays of this month I will speak on, The Purpose of God According to Election in Romans 9 and The Sovereignty of God in Salvation in 2 Samuel 9, to commemorate 20 years of giving ourselves to preaching the truth of God's Word without apology or fear, regardless of the religiosity that is around us, that is, seeking to preach to whole counsel of God. We seek to maintain a balance between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Thus, we make no apologies for preaching the sovereignty of God and we preach it from the prospective of preaching Christ and Him crucified.

We have before us this morning a text that is encouraging to those who are presently going through trials and difficulties in their lives. We are reminded that our living and true God is the God of the hills and of the valleys! Notice what the pagans of Syria claimed regarding the living and true God in verse 23, "*And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*" The Syrians were saying that the God of Israel was only the God of hills but not of the valleys. As strange as that may sound we hear this also in the 21st century. Maybe not the same exact words but the same concept or idea. When something goes wrong, the lost blame God. Why did you do this to me God? Especially if it is very severe God is always blamed. But let that same person have something very good happen to them, what do they say? The Lord blessed me. No, they say, "man I was lucky." Wow, I had good karma today. When things go wrong, they blame God, but when things go good, they base it on LUCK! It's no different than saying God is only God of the hills but not of the valleys or God is only God of the valleys and not of the hills.

But sadder still is that some Christians also do this. They have this concept that God is God of the hills only and not of the valleys. Pastor Joe, what do you mean? Well, when everything is going fine, when we are rejoicing and seem as though we are in the mountaintop i.e., the hill, we become strong believers in the sovereignty of God, I mean, we tell everyone that GOD IS SOVEREIGN! But let God change the circumstances in our lives, let God pull the carpet from under our feet and we stumble to the valley, then we act as though God has lost His sovereignty. We react and act as though God is not there. Please notice that I said we, yes, I've been there. We start proclaiming why; did you allow this to happen to me God? Why did you allow this God? Where are you God? We start to act as though God lost His sovereignty and cannot control the circumstances in the valley of our lives. And sad to say, we act somewhat

like these pagan Syrians, thought we might not say it verbally, but in our hearts we do think it. “*And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*” May our Great God be pleased to teach us and show us that He and He alone is the GOD of the Hills as well as the GOD of the valleys! God meets with us in the mountaintop, the hills and God meets with us in the valley, verse 28, “*And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.*” In other words HE IS GOD OF THE HILLS AND GOD OF THE VALLEYS!

- He is with us when we are victorious and when we are in the valleys!
- He is with us in seasons of rest and He is with us in seasons of trials!
- He is with us when we are happy and He is with us when we are down!
- He is with us when we are zealous for Him and He is with us when we are defeated!
- HE HAS PROMISED US THAT HE WILL NEVER LEAVE US NOR FORSAKE US! NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCE GOOD OR BAD, UP OR DOWN, ON THE HILL AS WELL AS THE VALLEY HE PROMISES TO BE WITH US ALWAYS!

God was going to show the Syrians as well as the Israelites that He and He alone is the God of the Hills as well as the God of the Valleys! Let me share another encouraging verse with you this morning: Deut.11:11 – 13, “*But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: 12 A land which **the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.** 13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.” If you remember anything from my message this morning its this: “...**the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.**”*

There are 6 things I would like to share with you this morning:

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| I. FACING ADVERSITY. | (vss 1-12) |
| II. FAITHFUL ANNOUNCEMENT. | (vss 13-15) |
| III. FOOLISH ASSUMPTION. | (vss 16&18) |
| IV. FIRM ASSURANCE. | (vss 17, 19-22) |
| V. FALSE ASSESSMENT. | (vss 23-26) |
| VI. FAITH ASSERTED. | (vss 27-30) |

The first thing we will see is:

- I. FACING ADVERSITY.** (vss 1-12)

Every time we go through a difficult time or trial we face adversity, verse 1. Life is set forth in seasons, not only in nature, but also in our individual lives. We go through changes in our lifetime, there are seasons of rest and then there are seasons of trials. Sometimes it seems that we spent more time in seasons of trials than in seasons of rest. Trials are sent to us by God for various reasons and sometimes we never find out why. Sometimes trials are sent to prove us, to see if we really love Him with all our heart, soul, strength and might. Sometimes trials come because of chastisements. Sometimes trials come so that we can comfort a brother or sister who goes through a similar trial as we did. We can comfort them as God comforted us, 2 Cor.1:4, "*Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*" Sometimes trials come to us because of bad or wrong decisions that we make, that is, we reap what we sow. Nonetheless, they come and they come in various forms and they do come from God. Turn to Psalm 66:10-12. Sometimes it is a "if need be," trial. Turn to 1 Peter 1:6-8. We don't have time but if we were to look at the life of Job, sometimes God sends trials so that He might display us as one of His chief trophies, that is, so that we can move mountains in conquering our trials by an active faith. Go read the book of Job and see that. Even our Lord Jesus Christ told us that we would have tribulation, "*...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" But regardless of the trials, we must understand that our God is in control because He is the God of the hills as well as the God of the valleys. Look at Joseph in Genesis 39; 4 times it says that "God was with him." In these first 12 verses of 1 Kings we see Israel facing adversity. They were a small group of about 7,000, but the Syrians filled the land with soldiers. This made Benhadad big headed, conceited and boastful. He thought he had the edge because he had the most soldiers, plus 32 other kings that have agree to unite with him. He goes on a drinking binge celebrating, thinking it is a done deal. His requests are foolish, but what he doesn't know is that the Living and True God never forsakes or leaves His own! He thought that his pagan gods were more powerful because he had the size the numbers the strength, a piece of cake so he thought! What Benhadad does not understand, nor the heathens of our day, that the True and Living God is a defender of His very own, Psalm 121, (read). We will have adversity, may our faith in God be stronger and mightier than our adversities. Secondly:

II. FAITHFUL ANNOUNCEMENT. (vss 13-15)

As we read in Ps.121 our God is our keeper and preserver from which comes our help. When we go through a trial an adversity a hard circumstance God always has a faithful announcement. If you search His word deep enough, He will give you a glorious and faithful announcement to sooth your soul, to help you as you go through your trial, but you must seek and search His word to find that blessed encouragement for our hearts. Notice what happens when the Syrians prepare to war against Israel, verses 13-15. God intervenes in behalf of Israel. WOW, God asks, do you see this great multitude, BEHOLD, I might, maybe, perhaps, no it says: I WILL DELIVER! What a glorious and

faithful announcement. Not only was God going to deliver them, but He even gives the time element as to when, for He says, THIS DAY, that is, today I will deliver you and you will know that I AM THE LORD! Reminds me of what the Lord told the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Now, it does not always work like this, but the application is that God will deliver in His time and He will do it. This demands our faith to trust and hope in Him! What amazes me about this trial regarding Israel is that God intervenes without man calling upon Him. God, through His prophet, asks Ahab, "Hast thou seen all this great multitude?" Remember it is not Benhadad alone, but 32 kings are also united with him. You see, what was big to Ahab and Israel was nothing to God. When we go through trials they are big to us, but in the eyes of God, that are nothing. As though God is saying, "you see this trial, I will deliver." Every trial is an opportunity to see God work in our lives. Why? That we might know that He is LORD! I'm sure that Ahab felt fear and anxiety what he saw this great multitude, but God soothes His fear and anxiety, by saying, today, not tomorrow, not next week next month, but today, I will deliver you.

In 1 Cor.1:27-29 it says, "*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.*" God does things to confound those who are wise in their own eyes. Notice what He is going to do here. 1 Kings 20:13-16. The Syrians have a great multitude and Israel has 7,232. 232 of them are young princes and they will be in the front of the fighting lines. Look at verse 17. God is going to get the glory; He is not putting the seasoned warriors in the front, no not soldiers, not veterans no, but mere young men of the princes of the provinces. God was going to deliver them with the weaklings of their company. Reminds me of when Paul called upon God in 2 Cor. 12:8-10.

- It is sufficient because it is of Divine origin.
- It is sufficient because His grace increases in our weakness.

What does Paul mean in verse 9 when he says, "*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, **that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***"¹⁰ *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*" "...that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

- Power to be submissive to the Father's will.
- Power to bring joy in our circumstances.
- Power to rest in God's grace.

God was going to show Israel that in their weakness they were going to be strong. The young princes would get them the victory, not because of the power these young princes, but because of the power of God, so that that would know, yea so that we would know: I AM THE LORD! Again verse 13-16 of 1 Kings 20. Thirdly:

III. FOOLISH ASSUMPTION. (vss. 16 & 18)

Benhadad made a foolish assumption regarding God and His people as do all those outside Christ. He was very presumptuous in his perception of victory. He thought that, because he had the numbers on his side he would have an easy victory and then he sees the 232 young men go out first and boasts and in his heart he probably said poor pigeons, they will be slaughter. From the other side, here we have 232 young men who have never been in war and when they saw the great multitude I'm sure that anxiety and fear crept in, but they were faithful in submissive obedience, knowing that in their weakness God would make them strong and the victory would be theirs because GOD SAID SO! Benhadad was filled with a foolish assumption, but these young men were filled with great faith. God had promised them that the very same day they went out He would deliver them into their hands. What faith and what trust! This leads us to our fourth point:

IV. FIRM ASSURANCE. (vss.17, 19-22)

The young men were filled with a firm assurance, a blessed holy conviction in believing and trusting their God. God said He would deliver them that day and they believed Him, they took God at His word and therefore saw God move in a mighty way. These young men did not trust in their own strength, in their wisdom, but in the living and true God. Oh to God that all young men who profess faith in God would take God at His word, that you would set forth a high ambition in seeking to be serviceable to God. They were but 232 young princes, young men with great and mighty faith in leading the way in defeating the drunken Benhadad and his military. It was a great slaughter. God can use young men, if you are a young man here and follower of Jesus Christ, are you willing to be use? Do you even seek God to use you? God uses young men. David was a young lad when he came against Goliath; God used him to defeat the Philistines. What shall we say about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? God used them mightily in taking a stand against King Nebuchadnezzar. Paul would writes to Timothy in 2 Tim.2:21, "*...he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*" Dear young person male or female are you willing to be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet, that is, ready for the master's use? Are you willing to be prepared unto every good work? These young princes were ready to be use by God and boy did God use them mightily. Why, because of their faith, because of their firm assurance in God. What a holy zeal and confidence these young princes had in their God! They went forward in faith, believing and trusting that God would deliver them. God also did it this way, so that they would know, that it was God who gave them the victory and deliverance, not their army or mighty men, no, but 232 young princes in front of the pact. In order that they might know the Lord He is God and He alone would get all the glory. God's deliverance of your trial might not be how you want it to be, but nonetheless He will deliver! So set your eyes upon Him and trust Him alone, not Him and your wisdom, not Him and your strength, nothing but Him and

Him alone! Proverbs 3:5&6 says, “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*” These young princes did not lean to their own understanding, but clearly acknowledge God and God omnipotently directed their PATHS! Why? Because these young princes had a firm confidence and assurance in their God. May God grace and help us have a firm assurance in Him whether it is a season of rest or a season of trial. God warned them that they would be back next year in verse 22. Fifthly:

V. FALSE ASSESSMENT. (vss 23 -26)

Well Benhadad and the Syrians took the loss very hard. They could not handle the fact that a ragtag army led by young princes put a whipping on them. They were defeated by an outnumbered foe. They couldn't and wouldn't swallow their pride. Well, they were presumptuous again, the sore losers convinced their King that it wasn't their fault; they fought in the wrong place. Read verse 23. The only true thing they said was that they were stronger than Israel. They were, but they were not stronger than the God of Israel. So they set up their strategy, but what they don't understand is that man's strategy always comes short to God Sovereignty! These Syrians were superstitious and religious. They concluded that there must be something supernatural about this defeat and acknowledge the God of Israel. It was a wrong assessment, it was a false assessment. They tell Benhadad that the God of Israel gave them the victory because He was the God of the hills only and therefore stronger than them. Let us get them in the plain, that is, the valley and we will beat them, we will be victorious, surely we shall be stronger than they, they say it twice, in verse 23 and verse 25. Benhadad believed them and the following year they came back to fight against Israel. The turn of the year comes and the battle is on again. Just like trials in our lives they come and go at the turn of the year. This brings us to our last and final point:

VI. FAITH ASSERTED (vss 27 – 30)

Here we see the faith of these young men asserted or declared. Their faith is maintained as they are outnumbered by the Syrians again. Notice how it is described in verse 27. Two little flocks versus an army that filled and covered the countryside. What kind of odds do you think Vegas would give for this battle? You better pick the Syrians they are the sure to win. Why even have a spread, it won't be a contest. 2 little flocks against the countryside filled with thousand of soldiers. And for the third straight time a man of God come and gives them a faithful announcement in verse 28 (see also 13 & 22). The same reason is given and that is, that they might know that the LORD is God, you shall know that I AM THE LORD! God says, I will deliver them into your hands and you will KNOW that I am the LORD. The Syrians made a wrong assessment in declaring that the God of Israel was only God of the hills and not of the valleys. God was going to prove to them the HE is indeed the God of the hills and the God of the valleys. Aren't you glad that God is both God of the hills and of the valleys! Aren't you glad God is with us in the mountaintop as well as in the bottom? Aren't you

glad that He is with us when we rejoiced and are blessed in the mountaintop and that He is with us also when we are down in valley broken and hurting? Psalm 23:4, “*Yea, **though I walk through the valley** of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*” Sometimes the valleys get very dark and clouded, whereas in the mountaintop there is much sunshine and light. When we are in the valley fear and anxiety kicks in fast and we are in despair, we are discouraged in the valley of affliction, in the valley of trials, in the valley of despair. Nothing seems to work or go right, it seems as though everything is against us. It could be sickness, financial crises, unemployment, family crises, could be death, divorce, church problems, seems that we find ourselves often in the valleys. But, but, but God is there, He is there with us in the valley. Even when it seems that there is no way out, or no way of escape, or no way out of the valley, the mountaintop seems too far up and high. And sad to say we feel abandon by God and we ask God where are you? But you see it is not God who has moved, it is you and I, we have moved. God is there in the valley, but because we get so consumed with our problems and trials we fail to see Him there, but He is there! When in the valley we are like that person in Isaiah 50:10, “*Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.*” When in the valley it seems as though we are in awful darkness without light. But even in the lowest valley and darkness of night, God is with us, He says again, “I will never leave you and I will never forsake you.” What glorious promises given to us by God to know that He will always be with us, no matter what. Even when it seems that we are outnumbered like two little flocks, HE is with us! Remember Psalm 30:5 says, “*...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*” Don’t be in despair what comes after darkness? LIGHT! Turn to John 6:1-21 quickly. Last phrase of verse 17, this is how we feel sometimes, its dark and Jesus hasn’t come yet. This phrase speaks volumes to those in the valley this morning. Be of good cheer, darkness didn’t last long; Jesus finally came in verses 19 & 20. Verse 21 shows that Christ came to where they were. He came to their valley. You might be in the valley this morning, but God will raise you up and set you upon the mountaintop. Remember it is not in your time table, but His, but for the meantime you must have faith, you must trust and believe God, it’s too easy to be in unbelief. These here were but two little flocks and saw the countryside filled with Syrians, unbelief sought to unto them, but their faith was firm in trusting the God they served.

Now, the first battle was won in one day, but this battle endured for seven long days. Some trials are short and some trials are long, but God is in control of these trials. These little flocks persevered with great faith and with patience waited for the victory for deliverance. Faith is persevering, faith is anticipating, faith is a continual seeking and looking to God. Then finally on the 7th day, victory finally came, look at verses 29 & 30. The deliverance came, not a day late or a day early, but on scheduled time by God Himself! What a deliverance 2 little flocks slaughter and slew 100,000 footmen. This is drama, this is reality. Many believe in a god that can only deliver on the hills, but we serve the True and Living God who is the God of the hills and of the valleys. The LORD Jehovah is God of Hills and Valleys, though circumstances and trials; might vary

from the hills to the valleys, nonetheless He is GOD of BOTH THE HILLS AND THE VALLEYS! He is sovereign in the hill and He is sovereign in the valley, HE IS THE LORD! Remember Deut:11:12, “...the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” How ironic, I live on Paradise **Valley** and Pastor at **Hill**burn Drive. God has been with me, these 20 years of ministry.

Let's pray.