The Battle Belongs to the Lord

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[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Pastor Tyler Nabors preaches on 2 Chronicles 20 verses 1-30.

It is a blessing to be able to be here to open the Word of God with you all today. If you all would turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles. We're going to be covering verses 1-30 this morning.
And as you read through the history of Israel, and you could read through the history of Israel in 1-2 Chronicles and 1-2 Kings, that really covers just kind of the kingly line of Israel.
1 Chronicles mainly focusing on the nation of Judah. What you begin to see very quickly in the history of Israel's kings is this slippery slope into depravity.
You know, King David, he was continually mentioned as one of the greatest kings in Israel. His faithfulness to God, his heart towards God. He was a servant of God.
[1:08] And as a matter of fact, as you read through Chronicles, what you see is when God confronts these kings that have kind of gone into sin, God even reminds them that because of my servant David and the promise I made to him, I'm not going to annihilate you for your sins.

So King David is continually looked back to as one of the greatest kings, even by God as one that was after his own heart. Now, really, Israel as a singular nation, it only lasted through the reign of three kings.
You've got Saul, David, and Solomon. And after Solomon, his son Rehoboam ascended to the throne and he did not heed the counsel of those that were wiser than him. And the nation split in two.
This was God's judgment on Solomon's sins for his many wives that led him into idolatry, which unfortunately the nation of Israel followed suit.
Ten tribes leaving to go and form the northern kingdom of Israel and two tribes, Judah and Benjamin and some of the Levites, staying in the southern kingdom of Judah, which continued the kingly line of David.
[2:22] Now, the northern kingdom of Israel, they were pretty much rotten from the start. Jeroboam was the first king. And as soon as he took over the throne, what he did was to keep people from going back to Judah and Jerusalem and worshiping Yahweh.

What he did was he made these two golden calves because the first one wasn't enough that Aaron had made. But he made these two golden calves that they were to worship instead of going back to Jerusalem to worship the one true God.
So they were pretty much just rotten from the start and never fully recovered. But in the southern tribe of Judah, you still see this gradual slide. But throughout the kingly line, you still see these kings that stick out.
Kings that were faithful. Kings that did great things for the Lord and great reforms. Kings like Josiah, Joash, Hezekiah, Asa, Jehoshaphat.
These are a few of the ones that stand out to me the most. And these made reforms and sought to restore the formal worship of God to its rightful place. And unfortunately, even with the greatest reforms and the greatest laws that were passed, these did not create a lasting revival in Judah.
[3:35] While these laws passed reforms that showed an outward expression of godliness, they did very little to cure the heart condition of Judah. This just shows the need for an even greater king.

The king that was promised through David's line that would rule on the throne forever. All these kings, as great as they were, they still fell short in some way. So even in our text today, we're going to see just kind of this longing for a better king.

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The promised king. The snake crushing king that would come from the line of Eve that was promised in the beginning. But Jehoshaphat is probably one of my favorite kings to consider in this topic.
I hope that as we read through this rather lengthy text today, that you'll see why. So if you would, let's stand together.
And we're going to read verses one through four. We will take this scripture by chunks. Don't worry. I'm not going to make you stand up and down numerous times. We don't have a meal promised to you afterwards. So I'm not going to make you exercise during the service.
[4:37] So chapter 20, starting in verses one through four. After this, the Moabites and the Ammonites and with them, some of the Munites came against Jehoshaphat for battle.

Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, a great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea. And behold, they are Hazazon Tamar.
That is in Gedi. Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face, to seek the Lord and proclaim to fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord.
From all the cities of Judah, they came to seek the Lord. This is the word of the Lord. You all may have a seat. All right. So we have this problem that has immediately presented itself in chapter 20. You have the combined armies of three nations that have come against Judah, that have come against this king, Moab, Edom, and Mount Seir. This force was assembled for one purpose, to destroy Judah.
[5:41] I'll just kind of give you an example of where they were. You've got Jerusalem up there with the star. You've got En Gedi down there by the Dead Sea. This was 50 miles from Jerusalem, where Jehoshaphat would have been.

So you can see the dire situation that they are in. Things could not look much worse. Now what we know from Israel's history though, is that really God works best and his glory is best brought about in hopeless situations.
Because it's when we are without hope in ourselves, it's when Israel was without hope in themselves, that God was able to turn things around and take the glory for himself.
So the main idea of our text today is this, is that God will receive the glory in our battles. God will receive the glory in our battles.
Battles have a way of doing two things in the life of a believer. First of all, we learn of our own frailty. We learn just how out of control we are of our own circumstances.
[6:48] But if we are faithful, if we remain faithful to the Lord, another thing that we learn is how to depend on God in a way that we never could otherwise.

2 Corinthians 12, 9 says, when Paul was writing about his own frailty, the battle that he had in his life, says this, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.
Therefore, I will boast more gladly of my weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
Now, and when we live through these battles faithfully, God is going to be glorified in our lives.
So the question is, how is God glorified in our battles? When things seem to be just going horribly wrong in every single way, how is he glorified?
Today, we're going to look at three responses that Christians should have when battles come their way. When they face their own frailty in a hopeless situation.
[7:55] I don't know what you all are facing today. Maybe you're facing a medical diagnosis. Maybe you have issues at work, financial problems at home.

Marriage, parenting problems, whatever the case may be. God is seeking to take glory. And today, from Jehoshaphat's story, I want to show three responses that believers need to have when battles come our way.
And the first one is this. You need to turn your faces to God in your battles. So Jehoshaphat has just received this disturbing news that there is this combined army of three nations literally at his doorstep.
They're well inside of Judah at this point. There's no necessarily getting them out quickly. There are a lot of ways that he could have responded to this. As a matter of fact, you know, talking about just the faithfulness of past kings, even in the line of Judah, we see several different responses.
In 2 Chronicles 12, because of Rehoboam's unfaithfulness, Shishak of Egypt came and was allowed to enter Jerusalem and plunder the temple in the king's palace.

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[9:10] 2 Chronicles 16, Asa paid Ben-Hadad from the treasuries of the Lord's temple to fight off Bashar, king of Israel, when he invaded Judah. Amaziah, when he was preparing for war against the Edomites, he hired 100,000 men from the northern kingdom of Israel, which, by the way, the Lord did not honor.

2 Chronicles 25. Also Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26, rather than allowing God to keep the glory for himself from his recovery and from the success of Judah, instead he invites the emissaries from Babylon to see all the riches of the land to bring glory to himself as if boasting and saying, this is all me.
This is my glory. This is my kingdom. Just completely forgetting about God. But here we have Jehoshaphat. When faced with an unbeatable foe, he decides to do the only wise thing that he can do.
He turns to the Lord. Honestly, the enemy was already close, so sending for help wasn't really possible. I suppose he could have emptied what was left in the treasuries to plead for peace.
He could have mustered what troops he had for a counterattack, but no. He calls the nation to seek the Lord. He calls them to prayer.
[10:32] The biggest indicator of what is going on inside is how they respond when their back is against the walls. You never truly know what is inside someone until they are pushed.

When I used to teach Taekwondo, one of the things that I would do and that was done to me when I was growing up, the quickest way to figure out if you are healthy mentally and what's going on on the inside is we would intentionally face off our students with people that were better than them and would be sure to mop the floor with them.
Why? We want them to be in an unbeatable situation. We want to see what comes out when they are physically pushed to their limits. Now, the students that had things under control in their mind, they were still calm.
They lost horribly, but they were still calm. They had control of their faculties. The ones that weren't ready for it yet, they would just go ballistic. It was quite the scene.
But that's the way our faith is tested. When we are pushed, we're going to see what comes out. We're going to see where our faith is when we are pressed in many different ways.
[11:43] Now, some of us have, like I said, all sorts of issues that are going on. Some of us are being pressed in all sorts of ways from many different directions, financially, family-wise, unrelenting temptations, whatever it might be.

These circumstances are going to bring something to the surface about where our faith is. That's why 1 Peter 1, 6 and 7, Peter wrote this, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
So you see that our response shows the genuineness of our faith. How we respond to trials is going to bring glory and honor to Christ if we respond in faithfulness, if we respond in a way that reflects Christ in us.
Now there's something that I want to point out here about Jehoshaphat's response in verse 3. It says, Then Jehoshaphat was afraid. Being afraid is part of coming to grips with our complete inability to save ourselves.
The important part of this story is where the fearful king turned, though. Just like Elisha's servant, when he was scared and saw that he was surrounded by the enemy around the city, he gained assurance when he saw the army of the Lord surrounding his enemies.
[13:25] Fellow saints, you have a God that is for you. Your trials may seem insurmountable, they may seem unbeatable, but in a world of mortal problems, we serve an immortal God.

When our strength is gone, God does not become weary. When our faith is shaken, he remains faithful. Isaiah 40, verse 31, If anyone was accustomed to trials while he was serving the Lord, it was the prophet Isaiah.
He wrote this in 40, 31, But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up on wings like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary.
They shall walk and not faint. So church, turn your faces to God. You don't know what the outcome is going to be. I understand that.

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It's not for you to know, honestly. But our strength will come from trusting the one who does know the outcomes, the one who is in control, the one who is sovereign and transcends all of our problems.
[14:40] And who is also sovereign over the battle before it is even fought. So don't make God a final option. I guess if we had to look at our first application, that would be it.

Don't make God the final option when trials come our way. Don't wait. Like Jehoshaphat, turn your face to God. The enemy is coming. And you know what?
Maybe you're in a spot where the enemy is at your doorstep. Maybe he's in your home. Maybe he's already wreaking havoc on your life. But God is still good and you can trust him with the outcomes of your problems.
So what we see the king do next is important. And this is also our second response to battles, is that you need to pray to God in your battles.
Let's read this prayer that Jehoshaphat leads the nation of Israel in. And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord before the new court and said, O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven?
[15:52] You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might so that none is able to withstand you. Did you not our God drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham, your friend?

They have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name saying, if disaster comes upon you, sword, judgment, or pestilence or famine, we will stand before this house and before you for your name is in this house and cry out to you in our affliction and you will hear and save.
And now behold, the men of Amnon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt and whom they avoided and did not destroy, behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit.
Oh, our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. And listen to this line.
We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. What a statement. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.
[17:18] I think we have all been in those situations where we do not know what to do. We do not know what the outcome is. We do not know what the consequences of our choices might be.

That is why it is so important that our eyes, our face is toward God when these battles come. When we are faced with our own frailty, when we are faced with our own disaster that is at our doorstep, look to God.
So meanwhile, in verse 13, all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives, and their children, and the spirit of the Lord came on Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jael, son of Mataniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.
And he said, listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat. Thus says the Lord to you, do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours, but God's.
Tomorrow, go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel.
[18:38] You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.

Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow, go out against them and the Lord will be with you. Prayer is often one of the most neglected disciplines.
It's the most powerful discipline, but it's often the most neglected. I can give you lots of reasons why we don't pray, but I believe that the core reason why we don't come to God in our prayer, it just boils down to lack of faith in that circumstance.
I want to make something clear to you. Lack of faith, it's not seen in the results of our prayer. Lack of faith is seen in the lack of prayers. The results aren't up to us.
The only thing that's up to us is who we turn to. The results are the Lord's. And I want to make something clear to you. That God hears our prayers.
[19:52] This is the greatest encouragement that I can offer you when it comes to your prayer life, that God hears your prayers. 1 John 5, 14 and 15. This is the confidence that we have in approaching God.

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That if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. See that? Our confidence isn't in the outcome. Our confidence isn't in the potential might be's of our situation.
It's in the fact that a sovereign God hears our prayers. Psalm 34, 17. The righteous cry out and the Lord hears them. He delivers them from all their troubles.
So what is the foundation of our confidence in our prayer life? It's that God hears you. You aren't crying out into a vacuum. You aren't getting a busy signal from God.
He hears you and he will act just as 1 John said, according to his will. So Jehoshaphat, he calls the nation together for prayer.
[20:54] Instead of calling his advisors, instead of scrambling for a plan, he holds a prayer service. I cannot think of a better example for a godly leader to set than to lead those that are following him in prayer.

To see a leader that is not confident in himself, but is humble before the Lord. That is what this nation needed. And this was something that was consistent in the life of Jehoshaphat.
As a matter of fact, if you will, turn over in your Bibles to chapter 17 of 2 Chronicles. We're going to start in verse 3. I want to read this passage to you. And this is just a brief synopsis of the ministry and reign of Jehoshaphat.
So starting in verse 3, the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments and not according to the practices of Israel.
Therefore, the Lord established the kingdom in his hand and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat. And he had great riches and honor. His heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord.
[22:08] And furthermore, he took the high places and the Asherim out of Judah. In the third year of his reign, he sent his officials, Menhal, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah to teach in the cities of Judah.

And with them, the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethanel, Zebediah, Asahel. Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobiah.
Tobadonijah. Sorry. I did practice these names before and I forgot how to pronounce that last one. And with these Levites, the priest, at least Shammah and Jehoram.
And they taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the Lord with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people. And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdom of the lands that were around Judah.
And they made no war against Jehoshaphat. Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver for tribute. And the Arabians also brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats.
[23:18] So what we see in the reign of this king is this constant dependence on the Lord. That's why this text that we just read was important. We see Jehoshaphat building a foundation of faithfulness that stood up to trials.

He had learned obedience in the good times so that when the bad times came, and the bad times are going to come for us all, but when the trials came, he knew where to turn. And so did the people of Judah.
I mean, did you notice what the nation did? They rallied around this king and this prayer that we just read. The men, the women, the children, the leaders, they all came.
All the reforms, all the teaching of God's law, it was worth it when their back was against the wall. Well, now the battle is here, and we find the people of Judah on their knees, not before their enemy, but before God.
Listen, I can't predict how God is going to work things out in your life. I cannot tell you it will all turn out the way that you pray. I can't tell you that the tears that you cry in your weakest moments will change your circumstances, but the God that you cry out to, he will hear you.
[24:35] He will sustain, and he will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Trials are not a sign that you have somehow failed in your faith, but who you turn to is going to be a good indicator of where your faith was at all along when the battles do come.

So I want to recap briefly just the prayer of Jehoshaphat. And this is a beautiful scene of God's people praying, pleading their case, citing injustices, and reciting God's past faithfulness and past promises.

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This is what prayer is. It's an open and honest dialogue between the hurting saint and the Lord himself. So I want to point out four effective elements of prayer.
The first is this. We reflect on the person of God, like it says in verse six. I love how the king starts off his prayer. He doesn't go full CNN on Jerusalem and paint this dire picture of what's about to happen.
No, what he does is he directs the nation to the power and the sovereignty of God. God. The only way we are going to view our problems in their proper context is by viewing them in light of God's sovereignty.
[25:48] That's it. Because in light of God's sovereignty, what we realize is that nothing is out of his control. Maybe out of our control, but it's not out of his.

There is nothing that the enemy can bring on us that the father has not already seen. Facing our trials in light of God's sovereignty also allows us to pray in faith, knowing that God is powerful enough to deliver us according to his will.
Now, maybe he does. Maybe he does take us out of the trials. Maybe he doesn't. But we know that because God's goodness and his sovereignty, that they walk hand in hand with each other, that whatever the outcome is going to be, it's going to be an outcome that we can trust.
It's this kind of assurance that led Job to pray in 1315. Job 1315, though he slay me, I will hope in him. Listen, maybe some of you felt slain right now.
You were just at a point where you have nothing left to give. Your strength is gone. Any earthly hope that you have is gone. And I want to tell you something that God is not surprised by your frailty.
[27:06] God is not offended by it. God does not want to push it away. That's why Jesus said, come to me all who are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

I'm sure that some of you out here are desperate for that rest right now. And that rest and assurance comes when we realize that the goodness and sovereignty of God reigns over our trials. It can only be received by us in a posture of faith. It also comes when we remember the second element of effective prayer. That is remembering the past faithfulness of God.
Second element of effective prayer is that remembering the past faithfulness of God. Why does Jehoshaphat come to God? Because God has proven himself time and time again.
God has shown himself faithful over the trials and over Israel's history. He knows that God can be trusted with whatever outcome is going to come their way. Can I tell you something?
[28:13] And I'm speaking from personal experience on this. I think that sometimes when we have gone through a lot of trials, maybe things haven't gone the way that we prayed. I think that there can almost be a fear of approaching God with the things and the trials that are so heavy on us.

Fear because we don't know how God is going to work things out. But in times like this, what we need to remember is that God is faithful. He's not going to do anything that contradicts his goodness.
God will not thwart his plans or allow anything to do so. Learning to lean on God's past faithfulness, it can be hard. Because there is pain in the past.
And it's so easy to let current circumstances take control. This is why God commands Israel to constantly call these things to mind. That's why he ordered all these festivals, all these holidays that the Jews seem to keep celebrating throughout their history.
These were festivals that were meant to call God's past faithfulness to mind. To remind them to trust in God's deliverance. So that Israel would remember, just like Jehoshaphat, when we face what seems to be unbeatable, that we can lean on God's faithfulness.
[29:34] Faithfulness. We can remember God's deliverance. We can remember that he is good and hold to these truths when the enemy throws the lies at us. The third element of effective prayer is this, also recounting the promises of God.

Recounting the promises of God. In verses 8 and 9, what the king is reflecting on is the dedication of the temple. When Solomon finished the temple, and this is close to 100 years roughly after this had happened, Solomon gives this huge prayer of dedication.
And in 1 Kings 9, what we can read is God's reply to Solomon's prayer. He affirms the things that Solomon has prayed. And to summarize, basically God says, I've heard you.
I have consecrated this temple. And he also reaffirms the covenant that he made with David to his son Solomon. So Jehoshaphat is facing this imminent threat and not only reflects on the person of

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God and the faithfulness of God, but on his promises.
There is always going to be a man on the throne from David's line. David reflected on this promise. In Psalm 89, 1 through 4, God himself repeats this promise repeatedly throughout Chronicles.
[30:52] We also see in Scripture where God promises are what sustained people when their faith could have wavered. Pastor Mike will probably be preaching on this next week, but in Hebrews 11, 17 through 19, it says, by faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac.

And he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son. Of whom it was said, through Isaac shall your offspring be named.
He considered that God was even able to raise him from the dead, from which figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. So Abraham had this kind of faith in the promises of God.
God would not contradict his promises. And even if Abraham had carried out the sacrifices, Abraham still believed, well, God is powerful. God is faithful. God will bring my son back from the dead.
And finally, where the great string of promises started in the beginning, when we see the first promise of the Messiah, when all of humanity seemed to be doomed, God made this promise to Eve and Adam that there would come from their line a snake crusher that would undo the curse of sin.
[32:07] Church, we serve a God that is a promise maker. Because he is sovereign, we know that he is a promise keeper. So don't shy away from speaking the promises of God in your prayers.

Recite God's words to him. In your anguish, cry to God, I know that you work all things for the good of those who love you.
That's Romans 8, 28. In your temptation, God, I know that you will not allow me to be tempted beyond what I am able. So show me the way of escape. First Corinthians 10, 13. In your trials, God, I know that you are working to produce perseverance.
Give me strength to persevere. James 1, verses 2 through 4. Have you been caught in sin and you don't know if God is going to forgive you? First John 1, 9. God, I know that you are faithful to forgive and cleanse me from all unrighteousness.
Are you in despair, wondering if God is done with you? God, you have started a good work in me and I look forward to you completing it. Philippians 1, 6.
[33:12] Thankfully, the promises, the list can go on and on and on. And as people who are subject to the futility of this life in an ever-changing world, what greater truth can we cling to than the promises of a sovereign and all-powerful God?

Now, Jehoshaphat, he had yet another promise of God to cling to. And this leads us into the fourth element of effective prayer, and that prayer is about responding to the obedience of God.
This prophet that spoke up in this prayer service in the desperation of the people basically says the battle is the Lord's. You don't have to fight.
You don't have to worry. God is going to win this for you. The Spirit of the Lord came on this prophet, and he tells Jehoshaphat, stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf.
I love how this promise reflects the promise, or the words of Moses, when he proclaimed over Israel that was facing Pharaoh's army on one side and what seemed to be an impassable sea on the other.
[34:20] What did he say? It said, be silent and see the salvation of the Lord in Exodus 14. When we pray, when we seek the Lord, what he is going to demand from us is a response of obedience.

He is going to demand a response of obedience. So what is the path of obedience? Where do you turn to for such wisdom? There's no other truth to turn to than God's word.
What he has given us right here. This is the source of truth. This is where we turn to in the sea of lies when our despair seems to take hold. So do not believe the lie that the truth is out there somewhere and that you need to go find it.
No, the truth is right here. All you need for righteousness, sanctification, obedience, it's right here in the word of God. So as you seek the Lord in prayer, seek the response of obedience from his word as well.
God will not contradict his word. Just like God spoke to the prophets back then, he still speaks to us today through his perfect word and you will learn obedience and love for the Lord through it.

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[35:30] Now in the case of our distressed king here, his proper response was to simply watch and see the Lord work. Don't fight.

Just watch. Because salvation belongs to the Lord. Now this leads into our third and final way that we glorify God with our responses in the midst of our battles.
What you need to do is you need to praise God in faith in your battles. You need to praise God in your battles. So let's finish out our story here.
We'll start in verse 18. So after all this, they've been praying, the prophet has spoken, then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord worshiping the Lord and the Levites and the Kohathites and the Korathites stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel with a very loud voice.
And they rose up early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.
[36:47] Believe in the Lord your God and you will be established. Believe his prophets and you will succeed. And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire.

And they went before the army and say, give thanks to the Lord for his steadfast love endures forever. And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir who had come against Judah so that they were routed.
For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.
When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground.
None had escaped. When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them in great numbers goods, clothing and precious things which they took for themselves until they could carry no more.
[37:58] They were three days and taking the spoil. It was so much. As you read on to verse 30, you will see that the rest of Jehoshaphat's reign was in peace, that God had established peace on all the borders because of his faithfulness.

I love seeing what the king does here. He musters the troops and rather than putting the bravest and the mightiest up front, he puts the musicians in.
Go on, send in the band nerds. It's going to be great. This speaks to me, I think personally, as a musician, we're very underestimated in a fight. But because of the promises of God, because of the faithfulness of God, because of the word received from God from the prophet, he's going to face the enemy with praise for the God who has already proclaimed victory over the battle that they are going towards.
He was that sure of God's deliverance that he's already praising him as if it's already happened. Now that's a response of faith. And what was their song?
Give thanks to the Lord for his steadfast love endures forever. When the fight comes to you, when it seems like you were walking through the valley of the shadow of death, the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever.
[39:27] You can proclaim that song over your life, over your battles, whatever the outcome may be. God is still enough. Christ is still enough.

What a blessed assurance and display of faith in the deliverance of God. And we see how the story ends. They looked out at what should have been a battle that would have brought about their end, but instead they saw the bodies of their enemies littering their ground.
And they received the rewards from a battle that they didn't fight. I said, I want to tell you something about praise. Praise is a conscious choice.
It's not a feeling. Praise is a choice that we make, not because our circumstances are good, but because God is good and his steadfast love endures forever.
It is a choice to praise the God that we know. And for the great deliverance, he has already performed in Christ Jesus. We can't let our circumstances determine our praise.
[40:42] It is not the circumstances that should have the say over when we praise or how we praise our God, because God is always worthy. Our joy is not rooted in potential outcomes.

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It is rooted in the character of God himself and in his steadfast love. Now, all the stories that we read in the Old Testament, they point towards Christ.
In some way, they point towards Jesus Christ, our greatest deliverer. And in this, we see Jehoshaphat, who while he was a good king, he still had no ability to deliver himself or Israel from this great foe.
He was completely dependent on the salvation of the Lord to deliver him from his enemies. And like Jehoshaphat, we are helpless against our greatest problem.
I mean, we're helpless against our day-to-day problems. But the greatest problem that we have of sin that does mean for our destruction, the sin that is our unwinnable fight that has placed us in the cross areas of God's wrath has been won.
[41:50] The battle is not yours, just like the prophet said. It is God's. We can't fight the battle against sin. We can only trust the one who has won the battle for us.

Colossians 2, 13 through 15 says this, and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.
This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.
Church, you have a victory that Christ has won for you. You have benefited from the spoils of a battle that you did not fight. Christ has shown himself mighty over your greatest foe, and we can rejoice in that battle that transcends.
We can rejoice in that victory in the war that transcends all of our battles. So are you facing the weight of your sins?
[43:01] Are you someone that is lost? There is a victor that you can look to. Do you see your problems as insurmountable?

On your own, they are. But through faith in Christ, we can see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf.
So whatever battles you are facing today, you can face it in praise, in light of this truth, that the war transcending the battles has already been won, that God's steadfast love endures forever.
As we enter this time of prayer and reflection, I want to just pose a couple of questions to you to think on while we are praying.
The first is this. What is the battle you are facing right now? What is the thing, the circumstance in your life that you just don't see the light in?
[44:04] Have you met your battle with praise or with fear over the unknown? Listen, Jehoshaphat was afraid.

King David in his Psalms expressed fear. But in their moments of fear, what did they do? They turned to the almighty God who is sovereign over their problems.
And that's what I want you to do. Next is, are you practicing the elements of effective prayer? If not, start today and begin to see how the Lord is going to change your heart.
Not just your circumstances. Don't look at the outside circumstances. God will change your heart when you see things from an eternal perspective in light of the fact that a sovereign and good God is in control of your circumstances.
And finally, are you here today and are you lost? This isn't up here, but are you lost? Have you never repented of sins? Have you never expressed faith in Jesus Christ?
[45:11] Then what I invite you today to do is to see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf. Know that your sins are not insurmountable. Know that you can come to God in faith, receive forgiveness, and collect the spoils of a battle that you did not win.

You can become heirs with Christ. And that can be your eternal hope today. I want to give you all a minute to pray through these and then we will sing a final closing hymn together.
So if you all would bow your heads, close your eyes and pray. Amen. God, I know that today there are some here that are in the battle of their lives.
They are reaching a new level of faith and dependence because they are facing things that they never thought possible. Lord, I know there are some here today that they are in the battle of temptation, facing sin that they don't see the way out of.
And Lord, I know that there are some here today that don't know the truth, that have never come to a saving faith in Christ today.

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[46:48] Lord, I pray that today that in all of these circumstances that you would invite all those that are hurting, all those that are without hope, those that are lost, to come and see the salvation that you have won on their behalf.

And that in that they would rejoice in your steadfast love. I pray for all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. To learn more, visit us in person or see the website at highlandparkbaptist.net

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