

April 2009—Where Do You Turn in Times of Trouble?

In March I had the thrill of preaching for the second time at a men's prayer breakfast at South Baptist Church in Flint, MI. Their precious fellowship, enthusiasm, and responsiveness to the Word make ministering to these gents a preferred assignment.

We decided on the topic of "*Troubled Times*" and who better to learn with than Jehoshaphat! Here was a man who faced impossible odds. Humanly speaking, the people of Judah did not stand a chance as the Moabites, Ammonites, and other strong enemies of the Lord planned to annihilate them. So we asked the question: **When we face impossible odds what can we learn from Jehoshaphat?** Let me encourage you to open your Bible to 2 Chronicles 20:1-25 and follow along as we look at the precious truths that have ministered to me countless times.

A. Establish a Purpose (v. 3-4)

When we are under pressure, we may be tempted to rush ahead without proper spiritual consideration. Jehoshaphat knew better; he fasted, sought the Lord, and immediately asked for His help. God will give us as much light as we need to establish a direction that will please Him and sustain us.

B. Review the Past (v. 5-7)

As you face the future, it is acceptable to draw comfort from the past. Jehoshaphat reminded himself—and the people—that God gave them the land, drove out their enemies, and made a covenant promise with Abraham. By way of personal testimony, I am in Montana as I write, facing *troubled times*. And God is blessing me with the same biblical principles Jehoshaphat used! In the final analysis, Jehoshaphat reviewed the fact that the Lord never failed His people. Missionary—consider this: as He conforms you to the image of His Son, our Heavenly Father has never made even one parental mistake. What a basis for our continued trust! It's no wonder we can believe Romans 8:28.

C. Find a Promise (v. 8-11)

Faith is simply a response to the promises of God. His promises are not just words to hang on a wall; they require action on our part. **Hebrews 13:5-6** provides a wonderful demonstration of how we should apply God's Word to our lives—here is the promise: "*...for he hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'*" Here is how we flesh it out: "*...so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'*" One of my favorites is **1 Chronicles 28:20**—in this case, our response comes first: "*And David said to Solomon his son, 'Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed.'*" Here's the promise: "*...for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.'*"

As you face difficulties, dig into the Word of God and ask Him to direct you to specific passages that apply to your specific circumstances. After all, this is no dusty book we hold; it is alive. Through His Spirit, this living book is able to examine our heart as well as meet

our needs—“... *the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12).

I have to get a move on, but we'll visit this passage again next month. For now I am going to strap on my snowshoes, hike to my cabin, and enjoy time with the Lord in His Word. (There is about four feet of snow at Triple Creek today and it is snowing again.) By His grace, I'll continue to live above my circumstances. Isn't He wonderful!

Bill