

## A Christian Revolution - 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

**Introduction:** *"Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's.'"* 2

### Chronicles 20:15 (NIV)

This weekend, we are celebrating our nation's 233<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Our nation was founded as a result of a revolution. England's government had become too tyrannical for some to bear, so a few daring and determined souls began to speak against the government. They were hounded and persecuted to the point that they fled across the ocean to a new world.

The Pilgrims braved the harsh winters and savage conditions that made it tough to even survive. But as they adjusted to their new surroundings, and forged out a living, a growing sense of independence began to burn within them.

As time went on, the early settlers found themselves still being harassed by the mother country. England still wanted to lay claim on the people and the land, and the tension grew between the shores of the old and new world, but for the colonists, the sense of independence and freedom still continued to grow.

Finally, one patriot, Patrick Henry, speaking for many, rose up to proclaim *"Give me liberty or give me death,"* This led to another crisis--the revolutionary war between the early colonists and England. During that struggle, many people fought and died for freedom, until one day, those patriots, our courageous forefathers, met and signed their Declaration of Independence, and began to frame a government *"of the people, by the people, and for the people."* They said, *"This is America, the land of the free and the home of the brave."* They proclaimed that this nation would be *"One nation under God with liberty and justice for all."*

And as a result of what history calls the American Revolution, Americans have enjoyed freedom from tyrannical rule and freedom from oppression. We have lived under the Bill of Rights which guarantees us freedom of religion, freedom to bear arms, and freedom of speech.

But today, America faces other crises that threaten to undermine everything our forefathers fought for. Today, we face a crisis of hope. We face a crisis of integrity. We face a moral crisis. We face a crisis of trust. What was once labeled as the American Dream, has become a nightmare of bureaucratic, corporate and personal greed and selfishness. As we said last week, it's becoming harder and harder to keep our dreams from becoming shattered. We need, in my humble opinion, another revolution. We need a Christian Revolution. Christians all across this great land of ours are being called to stand up and protest. Christians are being called

to service and called to arms. Not arms of guns and tanks and bombs, but spiritual arms of prayer and truth and obedience to God's commands. If America is going to survive this crisis, we've got to take our eyes off our problems, and put them on the Lord. We've got to understand that we're in a spiritual battle. And we've got to understand that God has spiritual forces fighting for us.

This Christian Revolution starts and ends with believing God for the victories in our lives, and quitting the habit of limited or negative thinking and beginning to see the bigger picture. We've got to stretch our faith, and enlarge our vision.

You see, God wants us to grow in our faith. He wants to meet our needs. But we have to do our part. We can't get lazy and let our guard down and allow the enemy to steal from us. We've got to stand up against the enemy.

Like Elisha did, we've got to develop an unshakable faith in God, and know that no matter what may come, no matter how big or how many problems we have in life, that God is able to see us through each and every one of them.

See, God is looking for people that are spiritually tough. You'll never experience God's best if you go around discouraged or bitter and have a defeated or apathetic attitude all the time. God never promised us that the Christian life was going to be easy. That's why Paul said we've got to *"fight the good fight of faith."*

Life is a fight. And just because you're going through some tough times, doesn't necessarily mean that you've done anything wrong. Jesus said in **John 16:33 (NIV)**, *"In this world you will have troubles. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* So no matter what you go through in life, you've got to stand strong and don't give up and don't give in.

But Steve, what do I do when my dreams get shattered? What do I do when I get bad news or when tragedy strikes? What do I do when I am facing a hopeless situation? What do we do when we don't know really what to do?

Well, there's an interesting story in 2 Chron. 20. We won't read it all, but I want to point out three things about it that will help us answer this important question. First, let's notice:

### **1. The Impossible Realization (1-2)**

King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah had an impossible realization come upon them. In vs. 2 it says that some of Jehoshaphat's men came in and said, *"King, we've got bad news. There's a vast army is coming against us. They're going to be here any day. And we're outnumbered 10 to 1. We don't have a chance. What are*

*we going to do?"*

Now what would you do? I mean, what can you do when you realize that in a matter of days - if not hours - you're going to be wiped out? I'm sure ole Jehoshaphat was panicking and thinking about hopping on the first plane out of town! But there were no planes, trains or automobiles to hop on, and there was nowhere to run. They we're completely surrounded.

You see, there wasn't just one army coming - there were three armies bearing down on them, and in a matter of days, Jehoshaphat and his kingdom were going to be totally wiped out.

Maybe you've faced a similar realization in your life. Mom told me that bad news always came in threes. Maybe it's when the doctor says, *"Man, I'm sorry but there's nothing we can do for you."* Maybe it's when a spouse walks out on you one day and says, *"Forget it. I'm leaving."* Maybe it's when an employer walks in and says, *"Man, business is really bad. I'm sorry, but we're going to have to let you go."*

What do we do when trouble knocks on our door and we realize that things are never going to be the same? Let's notice:

## **2. The Possible Reactions (5-12)**

**A. We Can Weep** - Some people get emotional and cry. Maybe that's what Jehoshaphat wanted to do. There's nothing wrong with that. God's created us that way. Just because we're people of faith doesn't mean that we don't have feelings.

There is a time and a place for weeping. God made us to feel things. When we're happy, we laugh. When we're sad, we cry. When we're scared, we tremble. That's the way God made us. So don't ever let anybody try to convince you that it's wrong to weep when tragedy hits your life. The Bible says, in **Psalms 34:18 (NIV)** *"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."*

I know some of you have gone through some tough times and you've shed many tears. I want you to know that God knows about every one of your tears. I've had a few myself.

My Dad was a great man. He was a work-a-holic, but he was a man who always seemed to have time for us kids. He was like me - laid back and quiet, and he was everybody's friend.

Toward the end of his life though, he was very sick. His kidneys began to fail, and eventually had to be put on dialysis three times a week. It was a real hard life for him. Then, it was in and out of the hospital for him. One-by-one, all his vital organs began to shut down. He had numerous surgeries and complications until his body was just wasting away.

Then one day, I was sitting in my office, when I received a phone call from the hospital in Ft. Oglethorpe. The nurse whom I knew very well, said, "*Steve, if you want to see your Daddy alive, you need to get up here - now!*"

It was the worst feeling I believe I had ever had. I called home, and told Elaine to be ready when I got there, that we had to go to the hospital. And all the way up there, I kept thinking about funeral plans and what life was going to be like without Daddy. But I was too concerned to cry.

Well, Dad hung on for a couple of more weeks. And during that time, I was trying to be the strong one. I mean, I was the minister. I was supposed to act that way. I felt as though everyone was looking to me for strength, you know.

Well, Dad passed away on Father's Day that year. And it wasn't until the next day that I finally broke down. And when it hit, it hit suddenly. I was on my way to the church to take care of something I had to do when all of a sudden the tears started flowing. I couldn't quit crying. All those feelings I had suppressed during Dad's sickness just came out, as the weight of being parentless came crashing down upon me.

But as bad as that whole experience was for me, I learned first hand that God will never let you go through anything too difficult for Him to handle. I know a lot of people believe have told me, "*God won't let you go through anything so difficult you can't stand it.*" But that's not in the Bible. The Bible says that God's won't put any more on us than **HE** can stand. And God can stand a lot. That's what I had to do. I had to put all my grief and cares and fears and worries – all the things I could not handle on Him. And when I did, I learned that death is just as much a part of life as birth is - it's something we all must deal with.

And after I had that good cry, I had a peace on the inside that can't be described. I heard that still small voice, saying "*Everything's going to be fine Steve. I'm still in control. Just keep your trust and faith in me.*"

See, the Bible says in **Psalms 55:18 (NLT)** "*He rescues me and keeps me safe from the battle waged against me, even though many still oppose me.*" God will always give you whatever you need to make it through the dark times of your life and come out victorious. So, don't ever give up in your time of need.

Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes and says that there is a time and a season for weeping (Ecc. 3:4). but the Psalmist says in **Psalms 30:5 (NIV)**, "*...weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.*" So yes, there comes a time when the weeping is done and it's time to stand up strong and prepare for the battle ahead.

If you try to hold on to grief, it'll eventually turn into self pity. And before long, if you're not careful, you'll

let bitterness develop and you'll start to blame and question God. David said in **Ps. 23:4 (NIV)**, "*...I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.*" You've got to go through your period of weeping, and grief. Then you've got to find a way to refocus on the battle that lies ahead. So, after we've wept:

**B. We Can Pray** - That's what Jehoshaphat had to do. These armies were quickly closing in on him. He was afraid and he's gone through his period of grief, but it's interesting what he did. The Bible says in vs. 3 that after he called for a fast, he invited people from all across the nation to join him at Jerusalem to pray. And the Bible says they turned their faces up toward the heavens. And King Jehoshaphat prayed this powerful prayer

**Read 2 Chronicles 20:6-12**

When you come to a place in your life where it seems hopeless and you just can't see any possible solution, and really you just don't know what to do; you've got to do what King Jehoshaphat did. You've got to lift your eyes up and:

**1) Remember the Power of God.** He's the Sovereign King. He's the Lord of All, the Great I Am - the Omnipotent, All powerful Creator of the Universe. You've got to look up and see Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord your Provider, Jehovah-Rapha - the Lord who heals. You've got to focus on El Shaddai, the God Who is More Than Enough. Then, you've got to:

**2) Recall the Providence and Protection of God.** Recall all those times God has provided and protected you when you were not even aware of them. Recall those times when you've enjoyed your health and prosperity. Recall those times when He's picked you up from the depths of despair. Then thank Him for lifting your spirits, and seeing you through those rough spots. Thank Him for your family your job, your friends, your church. Thank Him for saving you. Then:

**3) Rely on the Promises of God's Word.** His Word says that you can come boldly to the throne of Grace to find mercy and find grace to help in time of need. His Word says that "*many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers us out of them all.*" His Word says He will defeat your enemies, and that we are "*more than conquerors.*"

If you'll pray like that, I believe God will meet you in your point of need. See, you've got to understand you can't continually think about all the problems that's surrounding you. Don't focus on your circumstances. Don't focus on the negative. Don't whine and cry and say why me! Don't think about how big your problem is. Instead, think about how big God is.

Jehoshaphat was surrounded by the enemy with no way out. But instead of wringing his hands or throwing

in the towel, he said, “*God, we don't know what to do, but we're looking to you for help.*” Vs. 13 says that as the people were praying, something amazing happened. It turned out to be a peaceful resolution.

### **3. The Peaceful Resolution**

The Bible says the spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaziel, and he began to prophesy. *"Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's.'"* **2 Chronicles 20:15 (NIV)**

Friends, when you keep your focus on God in your time of need, and keep your faith in Him, and don't rely on your own strength, then you really don't have a thing to worry about. Because God says that you're not even going to have to fight. He promises that He's going to fight those battles for you.

God told them to march down toward the enemy, take their position, and stand still and see the deliverance of the Lord. Then He reminded them in vs. 17 that He would be with them.

Now God works in mysterious ways, but look at what Jehoshaphat did as he carried out God's plans. The Bible says in vs. 21 that he put the musicians out in front of his army. And with every step toward the enemy, they shouted, *"Give thanks to the Lord; His faithful love endures forever."*

And vs. 22 says that when they began to sing and shout the praises of God that the Lord caused the three armies to become confused and begin to fight amongst themselves. And by the time the army of Judah arrived, not a single one of their enemies remained alive. God caused them to destroy each other. Now that's a real Christian Revolution. God did the fighting for them.

And the Bible says when King Jehoshaphat got to the enemy's camp and saw that they had already been defeated, he instructed the people of Judah to gather up the spoils. Vs. 25 says there was so much stuff, it took them three days to cart it all off. They went back to Jerusalem rejoicing. And the Bible also says that this good news of how God defeated their enemies and took care of them spread all throughout the area.

Folks, It's time for God's people to rise up in the name of Jesus and take back everything the enemy has stolen from us - our families, our finances, our marriages, our children in the name of Jesus. This is the time to recover it all.

Do you have a problem that's just about got the best of you? Is the enemy surrounding you and causing you to give up? Are you at the point where you just don't know what to do? I believe God has a Word for you today, and that word is **FOCUS**. Not on your problems - not on your enemies, but focus on God. Remember His power and stand strong in it. Remind God and thank Him for His providence and protection. And then Rely

on His promises to get you through any situation. Will you do that today? Will you just trust Him for the battle? It's time for a Christian Revolution. *'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's.'*