

Vertical Church Series, Part 6 “Praying Together” 2 Chronicles

Intro: In the days when men primarily traveled by sail boat from one continent to the next

- A) There was a very important activity that was crucial to a ship’s survival.
- B) Someone on that crew was appointed to climb the mast and be the look out.
- C) Sometimes when the seas were rough & the swells were high – **hard to see beyond the next coming wave**
 - 1) That member of the crew would climb the mast to getting a higher perspective
- D) To point the ship in a direction toward land or out of danger
 - 1) It was often the only way for the captain and his crew to see beyond what was right in front of them

As believers it is important that we learn to climb the spiritual mast – to get a higher perspective

- A) To see the things going on in our lives – to see what is on the horizon – from a higher perspective
From God’s perspective
- B) VERTICAL CHURCH – Focus on Prayer - Go VERTICAL in order to navigate the HORIZONTAL
 - 1) SEE THINGS FROM GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

So far most of what we have looked at in this series we have associated it to – our lives as individuals

A) Today I want us to look at a story in 2 Chronicles 20 – reveals what happens when pp ban together in prayer!

B) Many of the principles we have talked about in the previous weeks – we will see modeled in this story.

C) Set the scene.

Jehoshaphat is the King in Judah / reigned in Judah 25 yrs

A) Great King – Asa’s son – inherits a kingdom in much better shape

B) Under his father’s leadership Judah had 35 yrs of **blessing and Revival**

1) Kingdom was thriving –

C) Few Hiccups – but overall it was good.

D) So Jehoshaphat takes over a kingdom where the pp were seeking God –

1) **Sacrifice was reinstated – God had blessed**

The highlight of his reign happens in Ch. 20 Look at today Big Test – V.1-2

It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.

2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). Great place to stop and be refreshed

So 3 Kingdoms are coming against him / Now anyone of these groups would be a formidable foe – but together – Wow – Crazy Huge Challenge

A)V.3 And Jehoshaphat feared, 1st reaction - He is afraid – Normal – Ok

B)But he doesn't stay there – he refuses to be ruled by his emotions.

And Jehoshaphat feared and *set himself* to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

C) notice how he deals with his fear

1)First thing- He Set Himself to seek the Lord

D)He Set Himself – describes taking a fixed position – not going to be moved.

1)He FORCED HIMSELF

This was not a fly by night prayer! On the go – bless us Lord as we go to do this.

A)He set HIMSELF to hear from God!

B)See, here is one of the first keys to getting vertical

1) It involves taking a fixed position to seek God!

The second thing we notice is it involved calling upon others to seek the Lord as well.

A)**Called for a fast** – Said to the nation this is big, we need to fast and seek the Lord.

B)Fasting is denying the physical in order to seek the spiritual. **Denying flesh ... give to the spiritual**

C) **Normal part of the Christian life** – Jesus said Matt 6 when you fast not if but when

There are times when it is appropriate for leadership to call for a fast.

A)Something powerful happens when a group of pp collectively join their hearts in seeking God!

B) That is what is happening here!

C)After calling the people to fast for a few days – He then calls them together.

4 So Judah *gathered together* to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

{A collective time of knocking, seeking, asking.}

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6 and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?

Notice the frame work of his Prayer! V. 6

A) *Oh Lord God of fathers* – **Covenant relationship** -

B) **YOU ARE GREAT** - Focus on God's authority
Are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. {Sovereign}

C) Focus His Power and might – His strength
...and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?

V.7 He moves to consider God's past faithfulness

7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?

Uncertain situation – Fall back on what you do know

Great to remember God's past faithfulness

A) Here Jehoshaphat is relying on God's past faithfulness

B) You are the one who gave us this land – settled Your people here!

C) V.8-9 The Focus is on the security of God's presence, relationship – belonging to God.

8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9 'If disaster comes upon us — sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine — we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.'

Then in v.10 They present the need!

A) Note this- before going straight to the need – they get the right perspective.

B) God is Father – Great Dad- Powerful – faithful – trustworthy –

1) Our greatest need is Your presence

C) V.10 the Need

10 And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir — whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them — 11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit.

D) You wouldn't let us attack them when we were coming out of Egypt – **Showed them mercy**

1) Now they are rewarding us by attacking us

V.12 Is a Gem

12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, *but our eyes are upon You.*

Key to this prayer – Lord we have no power against.... our eyes are on you

A) Powerful when God's pp confess their inability –

B) **Getting vertical is about confessing dependency.**

B)God I don't have any power

God I can't do this

C)When that happens – we are communicating a position of dependency –

1)a position of surrender – tired of calling the shots
Being the driver -

E)When we pray in that way – God always responds

Notice who is a part of this gathering:- **13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.**

Lord moves when his pp fast / seek him PRAYING TOGETHER. He sends a messenger with A word of encouragement.

14 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah,in the midst of the assembly.

Before we consider this message – consider a few ways that God speaks to us –

A)His word – the Bible – guide book – MANUAL

B)God speaks to us through His word – Pen and paper in hand – computer ready.

C)Come to the word with expectation – He will answer

But God's word does not speak to every situation.

A)Where do I put my kids in school?

B)What Job do I pursue?

1)Whom do I marry - **Not Page 410 – here is the person you are supposed to marry.**

C)So there has to be another way that God speaks to me!

1)Through His Spirit - **STILL SMALL VOICE!**

D)We have to learn to distinguish that still small voice of His Spirit – amongst the other sounds in life.

Jesus said “I am the good shepherd – and My sheep know My voice.” John 10:11-15

A)Sheep are in tune with the Shepherd's voice. –

B)Happens over time – as you walk with the Lord – You grow accustomed to His voice.

C)**Like marriage** – you learn to know your spouse's voice – tone – mad or happy.

1)**Know their looks** – You are hot right now – or stop talking.

Signals – Out to dinner – pat on the leg – Means something

A)First time – my woman is getting frisky – Couple of times -

“So what was with the leg pat thing all about.”

B) Talking too much – Oh – so now I know – ok

C) She has another signal for it is time to go – time to wrap this up.

My point is this, when you walk with someone for a while – you know the signals – you know their voice

A) Radio – Hey I know that voice!

B) Same is true spiritually – the longer you walk with Jesus – learn to Be still and knowGod

Bb) The more accustomed you get to hearing His voice

C) The more you are able to distinguish that still small voice of the Lord amongst everything else going on in your world

We see a Great example of this in the Life of Elijah.

A) Not familiar with his story, read your Bibles.

B) Prayed – no rain and it didn't for 3yrs

1) Man just like us

C) Show down MT Carmel – 450 prophets of Baal. God showed up, fire came down from heaven – powerful display of God's power

D) The pp turned on the 450 prophets of Baal and killed them

The Problem this made Queen Jezebel mad – She really ruled the country – Husband king Ahab.

A) Ahab's last decision was I Do

B) She vowed to Kill Elijah – Elijah ran in fear!

1) Not just running from Jezebel – He was running from God – He begged God to kill him.

C) 1 Kings 19 – MTS - Elijah is hiding in a Cave.

And the passage says – There was an earthquake – shook the Mt – but God wasn't in the earthquake.

A) Mighty rushing wind – broke up the Mt. – but God wasn't in the Wind.

B) Then came fire – out of no where? -

1) God wasn't in the fire!

Why was God not in the Earthquake?

A) Elijah didn't need a symbol of God's power – He just saw God's power displayed on MT Carmel

B) Why wasn't God in the wind? – Symbol of God's sovereignty and His power over the elements.

1) Elijah didn't need that either – He had just seen God not send – rain for 3yrs / then send it again

C) God wasn't in the Fire – cool thing – make fire out of nothing.

1)Hard to make Fire – Did you see cast away – How hard it was for Tom Hanks to make Fire?

Earth, Wind and Fire – But God was not in that ANY OF IT!

A)Elijah goes out to the mouth of the cave – then God speaks – Still small voice!

B)The NLT calls it a GENTLE WHISPER!

C)Why a whisper – God, why did You whisper to Elijah -

1)Answer – because I am close.

God whispers because He is close!

A)Saying – feel far from God? – Who moved?

B)Answer is you both did – You ran from Him and He pursued you. -

1)He loves you so much.

C)Not going to let Elijah run from Him and run from His calling. -

1)Doesn't let us either - whispers – “I AM STILL HERE!

Listen, the Devil shouts lies – God whispers truth.

A)I will never leave you or forsake you.

B)God whispers to Elijah – What are you doing here?

1)Doesn't shout in anger –

C)God says to you – still small voice of His spirit in your heart – when we compromise

1)What are you doing here?

D)Why are you watching that? Doing that?

1)I have so much for you –

Now here is the question: How could Elijah distinguish that whisper from the Earthquake, Wind and the fire?

A)Our mistake – catastrophe a Shake up – God is trying to tell me something –

B)This one – God must be mad at me!

C)Often times it is just life - We get sick – pp lose jobs – etc

How could Elijah distinguish the Whisper from everything else going on around him?

A)Elijah had cultivated a walk with God – where he had grown accustomed to hearing that whisper.

B)Still small voice of God's spirit in His heart.

C)PRAYER IS A TWO WAY CONVERSATION.

D)Talk and then your listen- Walk 1 mile – listen the 2nd mile.

1)Back and forth -

So God speaks to us through the word – and
Through His Spirit – still small voice hearts

A)Note this: God is not going to tell us anything that
doesn't match up with His word.

B)Money problems - Rob that bank –

C)Relationship problems - Leave your husband for
another man

1)Marry that non –believer

D)Not going to happen – God will never tell us to do
something **that contradicts His word.**

E)Ever have a question – what does God's word say
about this? **Ask a Pastor/ home group leader....**

1)never tell you ok – sleep with boyfriend – Love
each other – getting married.

2)Aside from Robbing a bank – I have had pp tell me
all of the others/ leave spouse/ marry unbeliever / sex

3)NOT GOD!!!! – Never contradicts His word!

Witness to your neighbor!

A)Call friend – encourage

B)Definitely not the Devil –

So God speaks to us through the word – and
Through His Spirit – still small voice hearts

A)And God speaks through others. – Messengers

B)Bible study – a friend – and in church settings
when waiting on the Lord.

1)OUR LEADERSHIP – ALL THE TIME

C)Back to our story – that is what we see here
the Lord is going to speak through **Jahaziel**

**15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you
inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat!
Thus says the LORD to you:'Do not be afraid nor
dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is
not yours, but God's.**

God's word to some of us today: Don't be afraid –

A)**Don't be Dismayed** – confused, beat down,
discouraged

B) Don't be afraid or discouraged by this great thing
that is before you – **the battle is NOT YOURS**

1)Cling to that today: - **Not yours but God's**

**16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely
come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at
the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17
You will not need to fight in this battle.**

**Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of
the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!**

{Find a good spot to watch what God does!}

Do not fear or be dismayed; AGAIN – GET THIS tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you."

Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord

A) Stop worrying – fretting – scheming – Stop – rest – trust believe – See His salvation { **Position of faith**

B) Getting vertical is about taking a position of faith to stand still – and see the salvation of the Lord!

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. Bowed down – good to get on our faces before God

B) Mark of Humble submission-

19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

C) That ends this day: Hearts up lifted worshipping trusting / Pumped up!

Prayer and praise – Go hand in hand.

A) We start with a need – We are reminded of God's greatness, His power and His faithfulness.

B) We put our trust in Him!

C) One way we acknowledge that is through Praise!

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

A) Jehoshaphat reminds them here of their mission!

B) Peter said – Stir up your pure minds by way...

C) Sometimes we need to be reminded – the very next day!

Note V.20 again – the Phrase: Believe and be established!

A) Believe His word and you shall prosper!

B) God's word to a few of you today! – Believe and be established – God's word – His past faithfulness

C) The Cross – His Love!

**Believe – take a position of faith today!
Take a position of Praise this morning**

A) Set yourself to seek Him this week! – Do it

B) He will respond.

C) Jeh. Does something incredible – feet to faith – **UNIQUE BATTLE STRATEGY**

1) Puts the worship team in front of the army!

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever."

D) Praise = Yadah = to worship w/ extended hands

E) Lifting hands – lifting hearts – lifting voices

1) Full expression of Adoration and surrender

Love what it says next! 22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

So as they began to worship – God moved, set AMBUSHES, they just stood there amazed

A) God wants us to lay hold of this today.

B) Believe and be established – In Faith – Worship

C) God is going to set up Ambushes – today – begin to work in your situation

D) Story ends - Their biggest trial became the source of their greatest blessing

1) It Took 3 days to gather the spoil

Listen, What they first thought was going to destroy them ended up enriching them.

A) For us today: Be Dismayed or we can believe and be established -

**B) Position of faith –
Position of praise**

C) God is going to set ambushes on the enemies in your life.

**Running from God – hear the voice of His whisper
I still love you!**

Done some bad things – I will forgive you –

Surrender your heart to Me! – Now