

## **FBC Service Sunday June 11 2023 2 Chronicles 20 1-22 Let's Just Praise the Lord**

From an early age I loved to sing. It must have started very early, because I can hardly remember a time when I didn't love to sing. Maybe I learned it from my dad.

Trooperslane club

Gospel Male Choir

Mass Male Choir Festivals – **"Sing forth the honour of His name."**

Mixed Choirs

Open Air Meetings

Ambassadors Male Chorus Radio Choir Broadcast to Isle of Man

Church Solos

Love to hear good singing.

"I have no use for cranks who despise music, because it is a gift of God. Music drives away the Devil and makes people gay; they forget thereby all wrath, arrogance, and the like. Next after theology, I give to music the highest place and the greatest honour." **Martin Luther**.

In 850 BC, a godly king named Jehoshaphat reigned during a period of prosperity and happiness for the people of Judah. He honoured God's Word, and God honoured him in return.

All of that changed when word came that a vast enemy army was approaching. When the king got the news, the advancing army was only 40 miles away and closing rapidly.

Jehoshaphat now faced a very personal crisis. The army he faced was far larger than the army he commanded. In a straightforward battle, the men of Judah would lose badly.

What will Jehoshaphat do?

*"After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: 'Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever'" (2 Chronicles 20:21).*

This must be the most unusual battle plan in history.

**A man's response in the time of crisis tells a great deal about his character.** Our first reaction reveals our deepest values. We may cover up a problem, we may deny it, we may panic and throw in the towel, or we may decide to turn to the Lord.

Jehoshaphat responded in three ways: (v. 3)

First, he took the threat seriously.

Second, he prayed to the Lord.

Third, he called for a fast.

Verse 4 says that from all over Judah people came to Jerusalem to seek the Lord together. Because their leader felt the burden, the people shared the burden with him. Everything in this story turns on this simple point.

When the king issued a call, the people came to seek the Lord together. Jehoshaphat understood that by himself, he could not defeat the mighty Ammonite army, but united together, they could multiply their prayers to the Lord.

With the people assembled around him, and the enemy army advancing hour by hour, **Jehoshaphat offers one of the greatest prayers in the Bible.**

He begins by declaring God's greatness: *"O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you"* (v. 6).

Next he reminds God of the promises he made to take care of His people when they were in trouble. **Then he tells God, "We're in big trouble now!"**

He freely admits, *"We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us"* (v. 12).

And he concludes with this simple confession: *"We don't know what to do, but our eyes are upon you"* (v. 12).

**Jehoshaphat's prayer proves that in a moment of crisis, a short prayer often means much more than a long prayer.** Because his prayer came from a heart of faith, it got God's attention in a big way.

When the prayer was over, the Holy Spirit prompted a man named Jahaziel to stand up and announce the battle plan:

*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. Tomorrow march down against them.*

*They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel.*

*You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you."* (vv. 15-17).

**God gave them three specific details:**

**1) A time:** Tomorrow

**2) A place:** March to the end of the gorge

**3) A plan:** Stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you.

And he said it very plainly: “*You will not have to fight this battle.*” It doesn’t get any clearer than that. Go out, take your positions, and then don’t move a muscle. Stand still and watch God do the work.

**Satan’s greatest weapon against us as believers is discouragement.** If he can cause us to give up, he wins before the battle even starts.

If the battle is yours, you are in big trouble.

If the battle is ours, we’re in big trouble.

**If the battle is the Lord’s, we’re going to be okay.**

At that moment the Levites began to worship the Lord loudly (v. 19). These were the trained temple singers who had been appointed in David’s day. Across the generations they had led the people of God in public worship.

**Now they begin to sing ... loudly!**

This is not a small point.

Remember the situation. The bad guys are closing fast on Jerusalem. The odds don’t favour the men of Judah.

The king has just proclaimed, “We don’t know what to do.” Jahaziel has just said, “*Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.*” What happens next?

**The singers begin to sing ... loudly!**

Luther said it very plainly: “Music drives away the Devil and makes people gay; they forget thereby all wrath, arrogance, and the like.” Do you believe music drives the devil away? I do.

Preaching is one thing.

Prayer is one thing.

But music is something else.

**It touches the heart and soul at a level too deep for words.** Music is not better than preaching or better than prayer, but music takes the words of the sermon and brings them home to the heart, and music lifts our spirit to believe the words we utter in prayer.

**Music is a weapon of spiritual warfare. The devil hates it when we sing.** He hates our music because our singing rouses our souls, gives us courage, lifts our hearts, restores our faith, builds our confidence, unites our voices, and lifts up the name of the Lord like a mighty banner.

**When God's people sing together, we invade the devil's territory.**

Jehoshaphat sends his army out to do battle with the enemy. We all know that a wise general puts his best troops at the front so they will bear the brunt of the battle.

This is what the king did: *"After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendour of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: 'Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever'"* (v. 21).

He put the male singers at the front of the army and had them lead the way to the battlefield. And he had them sing as the army marched along, thus giving up the element of surprise.

*"As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated."* (vv. 22)

**Note the key phrase, "As they began to sing and praise."** It was their singing that unleashed the ambush that led to the rout of the enemy army.

When that was done, the people gathered for a praise service. Then they returned to Jerusalem, singing and praising as they went to the temple.

**You can't escape the real meaning of the text. Music played a vital role in this amazing victory.**

Music is not just a means of praising God. It's also a means of throwing the devil and his cohorts into confusion.

Amy Carmichael, missionary to India, said, "I truly believe that Satan cannot endure it and so slips out of the room – more or less – when there is a true song."

On many occasions pastors have come to church on Sunday mornings feeling weak and tired. Perhaps it was because of a busy week or perhaps carrying a particular burden.

Then the worship service begins. It might be with the piano playing "Brethren We Have Met to Worship," or it might be "Lord, We Lift Your Name on High."

Or it might be singing "Like a River Glorious" or "Down at the Cross" or "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," or perhaps it was a new worship chorus. Their spirits were lifted heavenward, tiredness vanished.

**Meadowview and after Communion sing "The Family of God."**

There is something very powerful and God-glorifying about God's people singing together.

It was true in Jehoshaphat's day. It's true in our day as well. **If we want spiritual victory over the devil, one way to get it is to sing our way there.** I find it noteworthy that the people of God were singing before, during and after the battle. They ambushed the enemy with music.

We should do the same thing.

**Let the pastors sing!**

**Let the deacons sing!**

**Let young and old sing!**

Fill your heart will God-honouring music all day long.

We ought to listen often to music that focuses on the cross of Christ. Given today's resources, there is no reason why every Christian cannot go through each day listening to God-centred, Christ-exalting music.

You can find it on the Internet. You can play it on a DVD. You can play it on your smart phone or you can listen to Christian music on the radio.

When you're discouraged, sing "Shout to the Lord."

When you feel like quitting, sing "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

When you feel empty, sing "Come Thou Fount."

When you're tempted, sing "How Great Thou Art."

When you feel overwhelmed with guilt, sing "Wonderful, Merciful Saviour."

When you're hungry to know God better, sing "As the Deer."

**Sing to your children ... and to your grandchildren.**

Teach your children and grandchildren to sing hymns, gospel songs and choruses.

Sing while you're in the shower.

Sing while you ride your bike.

Sing along while you listen to the radio.

Sing while you work out.

Men, sing together ... loudly!

Women, sing together ... joyfully!

If we want to take on the devil, we need to take our music outside the four walls of the church. We will do this with our Church services in the park this summer.

If the devil gets his music played everywhere, why shouldn't we be at least as bold about taking our music to the park and singing loudly?

Each Sunday take time to prepare your heart by listening to God-honouring music.

**Ask God to enable you to worship fully every Sunday morning.** When the time comes, when the congregation stands and the music starts, the words flash on the screen or you pick up a hymnbook, don't hold back. **Sing with all your heart and soul and mind and strength.**

Go ahead. Drive the devil nuts.

Keep on singing and drive him away.

He hates the music God loves.

Satan hates a singing church.

So sing out and make the devil mad.

**One final word.** I add this because we live in a day when music has become a contentious issue in many churches. We hear a great deal about "worship wars" that have torn apart many local congregations.

**Instead of using music to fight the devil, we've used music as a weapon to fight each other.** How sad. How tragic. How Satan must crow over our divisive attitudes. Ask God to deliver us from musical smugness.

Across the world, God's people worship Him in a bewildering variety of styles, languages, accents and rhythms. When we look down on others whose musical tastes differ from our own, we run the risk of destroying the unity of the body of Christ.

We don't all worship the same way, and that's okay. **But we do worship the same Lord.** And it's in his name that we will win our battle with the devil. Keep the main thing the main thing and all will be well.

Singing will bring new strength to your spiritual walk.

Singing will bring new power to your spiritual warfare.

Singing will build up your faith.

Singing will strengthen the whole church of God.

God loves it and the devil hates it when you sing for the glory of God.

Sing out ... **"Sing forth the honour of His name make His praise glorious."**