

Don't Be Dismayed, God Will Not Fail You

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon encourages believers to trust in God's unwavering promises and not to succumb to dismay in the face of life's challenges.

Duration: 57:16

Scripture: Numbers 31:7-8, Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 8:1, Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:31

Topics: "Dependence On God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Joshua in the book of Joshua, chapter 8. The Lord speaks to Joshua and tells him not to fear or be discouraged, as He has given him victory over the king of A.I. and his people. The preacher emphasizes the importance of seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance and understanding in times of struggle and setbacks. He encourages listeners to examine their lives and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of compromise or sin that may be hindering their victory. The preacher also highlights the need to have a strong foundation in God's Word and to trust in His promises, even in the face of difficult circumstances.

Transcript

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However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. I'm hoping that after today, that you'll be able to look the devil in the face and say, take one last good look because I won't be back anymore. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Deuteronomy Chapter 31, please, in the Old Testament.

My message title is Don't Be Dismayed, God Will Not Fail You. Don't be dismayed, God will not fail you. Precious Jesus, I thank you for your presence today.

I thank you, God, for your word that you've delivered throughout this day. Thank you for your manifested glory. Now, God, I stand before your throne and before your people one more time.

And I ask only, Jesus, that you would be glorified. I ask that your word would be real, more real than life and breath. I ask that your word would be so real that we can lay hold of it, that faith would find its mark in our hearts, that your kingdom would advance through your people.

You have a destiny for this church. You have a destiny for those that you've gathered here tonight. I pray with all my heart that none of us would fall short of it.

Oh, Jesus, be manifested in us and to us. I yield myself as a vessel that your mind and heart to this people can flow through me. I ask that I be taken out of the way.

I ask that my thoughts surrender to yours and my heart to yours, my voice to your voice. I ask, oh, God, that I may disappear, that Jesus, you may appear, that your voice might be heard, that your kingdom can come with great power and glory. I ask that you would demolish works of darkness in this house tonight.

My God, let your kingdom come and your will be done. I ask it, believing in Jesus' name. Don't be dismayed.

God will not fail you. Deuteronomy chapter 31, verses 7 and 8. And Moses called unto Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage, for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them, and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is, that doth go before thee.

He will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee. Fear not, and neither be dismayed. Now, this is a word that God spoke firstly through Moses to Joshua, a leader that came after a leader.

And, beloved, in every generation and at every time, one generation passes and another takes over. There is a season and a time for you and for me. When God passes to each one of us the torch as it is of his truth, not just the truth that we are to expound to people so that they might increase in knowledge, but as God spoke through Moses to Joshua, we are called, if we know Christ, to lead people into that truth, that they might possess it.

That was the call of God upon Joshua's life. You're not to just teach the people, you're to lead them into the truth. And the truth that you're leading them into will possess them.

They will not possess it, it will possess them. And there will be a transformation. They will go from a place of wilderness and sin into a land of promise.

And in that land of promise there will be plenty. They will flourish. And, of course, God's intended design for his people was and always is to so bless us with his presence that he makes his name through us a praise in the earth.

And God spoke to Joshua and he said, I'm going to go before you. I'll be with you. I will not fail you.

I will not forsake you. So don't be afraid or don't be dismayed. Now, fear and dismay are bedfellows as it is, but dismay is a step beyond just being afraid.

I think all of us from time to time are afraid. But dismay in the original text means to be broken, abolished, confounded, in despair, crushed, terrified, demoralized, broken in pieces and beaten down. Now, dismay is not fear alone.

Dismay comes when the argument of fear, because fear never comes by itself. Fear comes with an argument. And the argument that fear brings is always against what God has revealed to you and I through his word.

It's always a contrary argument to truth. And when fear's argument has been embraced as a greater reality than that which God has spoken to your heart, then dismay is the natural consequence. Getting to the place where you don't see hope in the future.

You don't see any possibility of change. You are so beaten down by a besetting sin, a struggle, an inward conflict, whatever it is that's going on in your life. You are so beaten down by it that you don't see any hope of ever getting up.

You so feel sometimes like you've failed God. And if you are really an active seeker of God, you're going to have to go through this classroom. I don't see there any escaping it.

Every man or woman who's greatly used of God has to go through some very, very difficult classrooms that the casual seeker will never embrace. Classrooms of isolation, confusion, despair come into the hearts of those that are truly seekers of God. God has to bring us through the whole arm of flesh until finally, like Paul, we said, I reckon this thing dead.

I reckon there's no hope within any self-effort that I will produce for the kingdom or the glory of God. I reckon it's all dead. The only hope that I have now is the life that Christ has promised to live through me.

God said to Joshua, there are things before you that you've not anticipated. God knows these areas. And the wonderful thing about Christ is that he's already in our future.

He's not bound by time like we are. He's the only one that can go into the past and heal. He is an ever-present God, ready to help us in our times of trouble.

But thanks be to God for the knowledge he's already in the future. You ask me how I know that? Because he's already sitting at the right hand of all glory and all victory. He's already more than a conqueror.

We've already conquered in him. And even though we have to go through valleys and trials and difficulties, we're already on the victory side because of Christ. He is in your future if you are a Christian, if you're trusting in him.

And he said, I've gone there before you get there. You're going to go through battles. You're going to go through trials and difficulties, but I've already gone there.

And I already am there before you even arrive. And in the midst of them, I will not fail you and I will not forsake you. All the promises I've ever made to you, I will perform to you.

And in spite of your weakness, I will remain your strength. In spite of your inconstancy, I will remain the one constant in your life. I will not forsake you.

I will not fail you in your time of difficulty and trouble. Paul, the apostle, had a unique perspective. He described the battle that's ahead of us as being on two fronts at the same time.

The first front, of course, is that which God does through us. And the second is that which God does in us. He said in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 5, when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest.

Without were fightings and within were fears. It's an ironic kind of a paradox in the Christian life that we can be experiencing wonderful victory on one front and be going through a life and death war on the other, both at the same time. It's an amazing thing.

In other words, God can be conquering through us while at the same time there's a war, a life and death war going on within us. Victory and war at the same time. It makes for a very unique perspective in the Christian walk.

You know what I'm talking about. You're sitting and singing in the choir. You get up and you sang such marvelous songs tonight and you see the victory.

The victory is emanating as it is. As you choose to praise God, the victory is emanating from you and other people are getting free. And in your own heart, you're saying, oh God, oh God, help.

You're singing songs of incredible victory on the outside. But on the inside, it's Jesus, help. Help me.

Help me. I'm going through the most intensive warfare of my entire life. The psalmist said in Psalm 61, he said, hear my cry, oh God, attendant to my prayer.

From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee. And when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. And sometimes it really seems that we're at the end of the earth. There's nowhere else to go.

Have you ever gotten to that place in your life where this is the end? There's a sign. You've reached the end of the earth. There's nowhere else to go.

The psalmist says, when I get there, oh God, hear my cry and lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Now, Joshua had a word from Moses. But a little later on, if you'll go with me to the book of Joshua, just turn ahead a few pages. He begins to hear the same word of encouragement from the mouth of God himself.

You know, I'm very, very thankful tonight that the more I study the Bible, the more I realize how frail human beings are. There is frailty in every leader that God ever chose. Inconsistency, struggle, trial, just like you and me.

These were not superheroes. They were not extraordinary people. They were ordinary people that had a confidence in God.

And because of that confidence, they became extraordinary and did exploits for God. But they were just simply ordinary people like you and me. Joshua, chapter one, says after the death of Moses, chapter one, verse one, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord.

Now, first of all, it is Moses speaking. But now it's the Lord himself speaking to Joshua. The Lord speak to Joshua, the son of none.

Moses minister saying Moses, my servant is dead. Now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people into the land, which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given to you, as I said unto Moses.

Thanks be to God that the promises of God are not just for somebody else. It's for every subsequent generation. Every promise that's ever been spoken to anybody since Calvary is also mine.

Hallelujah. And every promise that is mine is also yours. You can be a brand new Christian.

You could have come to Christ at the three o'clock service today. But I tell you, surely as I stand and live and breathe, that every promise that has ever been spoken is now yours. The inheritance is now yours.

Everything Christ won on Calvary is now yours. Every power of hell has to now bend its knee and confess with its tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord. Nothing can stop, nothing but unbelief can stop what God has destined to do and ensue your life.

From the wilderness, verse 4, and Lebanon, even to the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites. That means the whole book, everything. Unto the great sea towards the going down of the sun shall be your coast.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

Be strong and of good courage. For unto this people thou shalt divide for an inheritance the land which I swear to their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous that thou mayst observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee.

Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left that thou mayst prosper with us wherever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou mayst observe to do according to all that is written therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and thou shalt have good success.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. For the Lord thy God is with thee wheresoever thou goest.

Again, God speaks to Joshua and says, I have commanded that the land yield as it is. All of the promises that I have made to Moses that are going to be given to my people, I've commanded it to open before you. Now, I'm asking you and telling you that you've got to meditate in the word of God.

You've got to keep your thoughts and your mind focused on those things that I have promised you. Now, folks, it's not enough for others to tell you. To make it through the battle, you've got to hear it for yourself.

To make it through the battle, you've got to get into this word and ask the Holy Spirit to make the promises in here more real than life and circumstance. Ask God by the Holy Spirit to literally engrave it on your heart with a pen. That all of the promises that he has made are now yours.

It can't be me telling you. Now, it's a good thing that I am telling you this tonight, but if you don't hear it for yourself, it's of no avail. The first time you run into difficulty, you're going to be dismayed.

You're going to be cast down, broken, shattered, dismayed. You'll say, oh God, that which Pastor Carter told me is not coming to pass. But you see, it's not good enough that just Pastor Carter tell you or Pastor Neil or Pastor Patrick, Pastor Dave.

You've got to hear it from God for yourself. You've got to get in this book. You cannot walk the Christian life on emotion.

You cannot face the giants on feeling. If you're trying to do that, you're going to fall, you're going to fail, and the devil will overwhelm you and dismay you. There comes a point in your life that you've got to get in this book by the power of the Holy Ghost and say, God, make this thing real to me.

Make these promises real. Engrave them on my mind, engrave them on my heart, and make them more real than any circumstance or any struggle I will ever face in my life. God said to Joshua, I've commanded you, don't be dismayed.

Now, from this point, Joshua begins to lead the people. Joshua experiences great miracles. It's not long after that the waters are parting, just as they did for Moses.

He sets up a memorial in Gilgal to the faithfulness of God. He prepares the people for war, causes them, in a sense, to roll away again. Those that had been reared in the wilderness to roll away the reproach of Egypt and to prepare to take the promised land.

And finally, in Joshua chapter 5, he has a face-to-face encounter with the pre-incarnate Christ. You know the story. Just as Joshua came into the place of promise before facing Jericho, chapter 5, verse 13, it says, It came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.

And Joshua went to him and said unto him, Are you for us or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship. And he said unto him, What sayeth my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.

And Joshua did so. Now the word for holy in the Hebrew text is the very word that is used for the holy of holies in the Old Testament. It was Christ himself who had come to Joshua.

He said, Joshua, this is a holy place. You are in the presence of God, and I'm calling you and commissioning you. You've got to take off your own shoe.

In other words, you've not got this pathway that you're going to walk is not going to be something of your own making. You're not going to know victory in your own strength. You're going to know it only as you trust me.

As you walk in the steps that I've outlined for your life, then I'm going to vanquish your enemies. You're going to know incredible prosperity as you continue to walk with me. From this point of encountering Christ, Joshua goes into Jericho.

And with the battle instructions, I think, in all of history, an incredible walled city falls. And the children of Israel go up. And it seems like the promises are just too good to be true.

It's incredible what takes the enemies of the Lord, what it has taken them, perhaps, generations to build. God, in just simply a few days of obedience, tears it all down. And it seems like none of our enemies can stand before us.

And what an incredible celebration when Joshua said to the people, Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. What an incredible celebration it must have been as they went up and conquered that which threatened the very entrance into the land of promise. But then a little later on, they come to another city called Ai.

And it's only a little city. And the leaders come back and they speak to Joshua. And they say, well, it's only a little one.

Let's not bother sending a big army against it. How about maybe two or three thousand men can go up and smite Ai for it's only a little city. There's only a few people.

So the two or three thousand warriors went up and stood against this little city called Ai. And the inhabitants of this little place came out and put to rout, as it is, the armies of Israel. The Bible says that 36 men were killed.

Now, folks, that's not a lot of men, really. When you consider that there were tens of thousands armed for war, I wouldn't call that a huge defeat, although it is a defeat that 36 men are killed in this battle. But now look at Joshua's.

Look at his response in verse six, chapter seven, verse six. Remember, remember, the Lord said, Joshua, don't be dismayed. The Bible says Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until even tied.

He and the elders of Israel and put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, alas. Now listen to his incredible confession.

Now, testimony. Alas, oh, Lord, wherefore as though at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites and to destroy us? Would to God. We had been content and dwelled on the other side of Jordan.

Incredible, isn't it? Thirty six. Thirty six men. The first little defeat.

And that's just the way you and I are. Folks, that's the way we are. We can go to Nigeria and see a hundred thousand people a night come to Christ.

We can go out on the streets and have massive crusades. We can have testimonies of deliverance and victory and have one little thing come into our life. One little struggle.

One little defeat. One little time when we seem to be backing away from the enemy. And there we are, down on our faces, bemoaning the very day we even came to Christ.

Oh, I wish I had stayed working on Wall Street. I left all to walk with you and you're delivering me into the hand of the Amorites and the Hittites and all these otherites. Oh, Lord, he said, what shall I say when

Israel turns their back before their enemies? Oh, God, what shall I tell everybody that I am boasted about, about your strength and your power? Because I have so little.

I have seemingly no power over this little city, this little enemy. And the Lord responds to Joshua. In verse 10, he says, the Lord said to Joshua, get up.

What are you doing lying down on your face? Get up. You know, we expect sometimes this great revelation from heaven in our struggle, don't we? God looks down and says, get up. What are you doing? Has everything I've spoken to you worth nothing? He says, don't cast off your confidence in a time of minor setbacks.

He said, I'm going after something in you. There's a little compromise in your tent. I'm going after something that you don't see.

Now, you have to understand, there's a huge camp. There's hundreds of thousands of people involved in this exodus into the land of promise. And right, if you would have seen it from perhaps a hill perspective, you'd need binoculars to even see the end of the camp.

There's hundreds and thousands of tents out there and families and people on the move and warfare and all types of things going on. And way over perhaps in one corner, there's one little wee tent. And underneath that little tent is hidden something.

This man called Akin went into Jericho and he took something he shouldn't have taken. It was only a garment and a bar of silver or something like that. And he hid it under his tent.

And we look at that and say, God, what seems to be the problem here? The whole of, we're all moving. We're all of one heart and one accord. And it's the man or woman that says, God, for goodness sakes, I've given all that I've got to you.

And you allow me to suffer defeat because of this little thing in my life. But you forget something. God said to Joshua, I'm at the end already.

And what you see as a little thing now, I see it as something else if I don't deal with it now. It's a little bit of covetousness. It's a little bit of another trust.

But you see, if I don't deal with it, then Akin is going to get away with it. And if he gets away with it, he's going to tell his neighbor about it. And the next battle, his neighbor is going to get away with it.

And he's going to tell his neighbor. And before you know it, the whole camp will be disobeying the word of God and having other loves and other trusts. So I'm going to deal with it now.

God isn't nitpicky when it comes to our lives. Sometimes there are things in us that we don't see it as a big deal. Oh, Lord, I'm Italian.

You know I like a glass of wine with my dinner. It's cultural. Oh, you see, but he's at the other side.

And he sees you when dismay comes into your life and when battles come into your life that you don't understand. He sees you now turning to something a little bit more than cultural. A little more than just a little drink at dinner time.

And he sees it and he's got to go after it. He sees the man or woman who's walking into the corner store and just enticed by, Oh, God, if I win that lottery, just think of what I can do for Times Square Church. Oh, the Crusades and all.

Don't be deceived by all of that bunk. That's all it is. God says it's another trust.

It's a covetous spirit. It seems like a little thing, but I'm going to go after it. And just to get your attention, I'm going to cause you to not be able to stand before an insignificant enemy.

Oh, just a little bit of bitterness. Somebody said it's only a little bit. It's only one person after all.

There's 8,000 people in Times Square Church, Lord. I mean, it's only one person. I can't stand in the whole place.

What's the problem here? It's only a little bit of bitterness. God, you what? I love 7,999 people. What's the problem? Why can't we just let this one go? Why can't we? Why can't God? You probably don't even love them.

Why? What's the problem here? God says, no, no, no, no, no, no. It's just a little thing. And I'm going to go after that little thing.

And when I go after it, don't be dismayed. Don't be destroyed. I'm doing it because I love you.

I'm doing it because you said you wanted me. You see, the prophet Amos said, can two walk together except they be agreed? And God says, you will never get me to agree with this. You will never get me to walk in line with your little compromises.

And I will never call them acceptable or weakness or necessity. I will never agree with you. And if you want to walk together with me, if you want to know the fullness of what I have for you, you've got to call sin, sin.

What I call it, you've got to call it. We've got to deal with it. And I can see Joshua rising up from the earth and saying, oh, God, what do we do then? How do we do this? How do we approach this? And the Lord says, I've got a plan.

We're going to go family by family. We're going to go area by area, tribe by tribe, area by area, family by family, man by man, tent by tent, and we're going to get right to the root of it. Hallelujah.

And that's exactly what the Word of God is going to do this year in Times Square Church. For those who say, God, I want you with all my heart, he says, I'm so glad you said that. Now, tribe by tribe, area by area, man by man, tent by tent, family by family, we're going to go right to the root of what's in your heart.

We're going to go there, not to hinder you, not to destroy you, not to dismay you, but so that you might be set free by the power of God, that you might be strong and know your God and be able to do exploits for Him, that I might be able to give you wisdom that doesn't come from anything of the natural man, that I might be able to give you power and authority over the powers of darkness, that I might be able to make you a clean vessel that bears the name of Christ. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Chapter 8, Joshua. The Lord again begins to speak. Joshua deals with this area, and God begins to speak again into his life.

The Lord said to Joshua, chapter 8, verse 1, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed. Isn't it wonderful that word always comes back again? Thank God. Take all the people and go up to Ai and I've given into your hand the king of Ai and all his people and all his city and all his land.

In other words, the Lord's saying, I just allowed you this setback to get your attention. If you find that you've got something in your life that you're not getting the victory over, the Lord has allowed it to get your attention. Instead of just focusing on the struggle and the battle and trying to push through, take a moment sometime and draw back and say, Holy Spirit, what are you trying to show me? What are you trying to speak to me that I don't want to hear? What little thing has gotten into me that I don't want to acknowledge? I don't want to agree with God on this, but Lord, you want to take me into the place of promise, and until I agree, I can't go until I agree with you on this area.

God again speaks comfort and Joshua experiences a marvelous tactical victory over the little city of Ai. And then at the end of chapter 8, something wonderful happens. Verse 30 tells us that Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal.

And all the people gathered around. He did it, verse 31 says, the way that Moses, the Lord had commanded Moses to do it. It was not done with any human tool.

And they wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, and all the elders and officers and judges stood on one side of the ark, and the Levites were on the other side. And Joshua, verse 34, it says, he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the curses, according to all that is written in the book of the law. And there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not, before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, the little ones, the strangers that were conversant among them.

Now here, Joshua is a teacher now. He's building the altar. There's a point where we cease becoming a student to a large degree.

We will always be learning. But there is a point where we take a leadership role in the church of Jesus Christ as a Christian. Whether we're just teaching our own family, or we're involved in leadership of the church, whatever the situation is, but we're involved in teaching.

And we see Joshua now is building an altar, and he's doing it the right way, and he's reading the book, and everybody's gathered around him, only to lead him into chapter 9. That's an incredible thing. You see, because in chapter 9, he's deceived into embracing a people that God has destined for destruction. In chapter 9, the Gibeonites come, which are a people that are destined to be destroyed and overpowered.

And they come disguised and say, we're not in the immediate vicinity, we're from a long ways away. Look, we've got moldy bread, and we've got worn out shoes, and Joshua doesn't inquire of the Lord. He takes their statements at face value, and he makes a covenant as it is with the people that are destined to be destroyed.

And ironically, later on, ends up having to defend them. And there is a warning in this. And here's my warning.

It's this, beware when you become the man or the woman with all the answers. It's a warning for teachers. It's a warning for the more mature Christian.

It's when you are the counselor, and everybody's coming to you, and you have the answer. You've got the book, you know the book, you know how to build the altar. You have all the answers for everybody.

But you see, you're losing your own day-to-day dependence and moment-to-moment dependence on God. And are not even aware of it. The Bible tells us that there's a knowledge that puffs up.

If knowledge and experience puffs you up. If in our experience as a church, as a church body, we're involved in crusades, and we're involved in conferences. And there's a lot of people that are tuning in and listening to Times Square Church messages from all over the world now.

We get letters from Ireland and Thailand and all over the place. And people are listening every week to the message. They'll be listening to what I'm preaching tonight.

But if the experience and knowledge that we have puffs us up. And if we lose our day-to-day dependence on God. We have just invited dismay into this church.

We have just invited a Gibeonite. Something that God will allow to come our way to test our heart to see whether or not we are still humble before Him. And if we're not truly humble before Him.

If we truly are not acknowledging our day-to-day and moment-to-moment need of the Holy Spirit. Then we will end up making allegiances with things that make us look like fools. Can you imagine the people looking at Joshua? Every time they saw a Gibeonite.

There's our wonderful Bible teacher. Here's our leader. And look what he does.

He makes an allegiance with an enemy. Something that God clearly said we are to go out and we are to demolish. By faith.

He makes an allegiance with it and now we can't touch it. Incredible. But it's a warning from the Holy Ghost.

If we are to pray I think for anything in Times Square Church. If the Lord uses us. We need to be very careful.

We need to be very careful that we say in our hearts we are only unprofitable servants. That's all we are. And all we are doing is what God has asked us to do.

No more and no less. If we become puffed up and begin to brag and begin to boast. You can be sure a Gibeonite will end up in our doctrine.

And God help us. God keep us. God give us strength.

You see the Holy Spirit has to break the independence and the pride in us. And produce in our heart a humble cry for his leading once more. Not enough to have victories in the past.

Not enough to say we've got the book and we've got the altar. No. There's more.

We need the dependence on God. And we must never lose it. I speak this as a warning from the heart of God.

Into my own life first. And into the life of every Christian that's called by Christ's name in this church. God will use us but only so long as we stay small in our own sight.

I want you to go to 2 Chronicles. Go ahead in your Bibles please. Just after Kings you're going to find Chronicles.

In 2 Chronicles chapter 19. There was a king of Judah called Jehoshaphat. And Jehoshaphat was a man just like we are.

Made mistakes. He made a terrible mistake. He made an allegiance with Jezebel's husband Ahab.

And he went into a battle with Ahab. And in that battle Ahab convinced him to appear like a king while Ahab disguised himself. And when Jehoshaphat was about to be overpowered the Bible says he cried out to the Lord.

And the Lord gave him a great deliverance. Then he came back home. And the moment he came home 2 Chronicles chapter 19.

Verse 1 it says Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him. And said to king Jehoshaphat should thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord.

Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land. And you've prepared your heart to seek God.

Now imagine coming home to a message like that. There's wrath upon you. The word for wrath means that God has a quarrel with you.

Because you have lent your strength to that which God despises. A little later on in chapter 20. Jehoshaphat and Judah are attacked by a great multitude.

A great army. Chapter 20 says it came to pass after this also that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon and with them others besides the Ammonites came against Jehoshaphat to battle. And there came some that told Jehoshaphat saying there comes a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea.

On this side of Syria. And behold they be in Hazon Tamar which is in Gedi. Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

Chapter 20 verse 12. Oh God Jehoshaphat said will thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that comes. Now I'm making a point here which I want you to understand.

Here's a man who has really failed God. Here's a man who has made mistakes in the past. But I want to tell you something.

If you know you have failed God. And you know you have made mistakes. You are a candidate to be greatly used of God in the days ahead.

He said we don't know what to do. But our eyes are upon you. Verse 13.

You can just see the devil right there. Remember the word. God's wrath is on you.

That's why this multitude has gathered together against you. There's no hope for you. You see the devil is always there to dismay the child of God.

None of us are perfect. Nobody here has ever gone through this Christian life without making mistakes. That's why the psalmist said God if you took mark of our iniquities who could stand? Which one of us? Which one of us have never thought an evil thought? Which one of us have never said an evil word as a Christian? If God took mark of this nobody could stand.

And the devil is there always to remind you of the past. To try to dismay you. To try to prove to you that God will not be faithful to you.

But remember God's word to Joshua. Was don't be afraid or dismayed. I will not forsake you and I will not fail you.

I said I'm going to bring you in. And it's not going to be because you do everything right. It's going to be because I am faithful to you every time you turn to me.

You're going to find me there. Verse 13 says all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives and their children. Then upon Jehaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jael, the son of so and so.

And Levi of the sons of Asaph came to the spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation. And he said hearken all Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem. And thou King Jehoshaphat.

Thus said the Lord unto you. Be not afraid nor dismayed. Same word that God spoke to Joshua.

By reason of this great multitude. For the battle is not yours. It's God's.

The battle is not yours. I didn't call you because you were a success. I didn't call you because you did everything right.

Hallelujah. I called you to prove that I will be faithful to you. Hallelujah.

That is the rejoicing of the Christian. That's our hope. That's the source of our joy.

That's the joy of our salvation. Tomorrow, he says in verse 16. You ask me tonight how soon am I to go out and fight against the enemy.

God says tomorrow. Go down against them. Behold, they're going to come up against you by the cliff of Ziz.

Now, the cliff of Ziz means a difficult place to climb. The enemy is going to come against you in the hard. When you're having a difficult climb, that's when the enemy is going to come against you the hardest.

You shall find them at the end of the brook. In other words, when you're. In other words, for brook actually, the original text is a valley.

When you're getting near the end of the valley. Sometimes that's when the enemy will hit you hardest. You're just about to experience the victory.

And the enemy will come against you with his fury. And with a multitude to try to convince you that God will not be faithful to you. You'll find them when you're climbing in a difficult place.

That's where your enemy will be. You'll find them when you're going through a long valley. You're at the end of the brook.

It seems like there's no hope. And there's no more water. And you'll find them just before the wilderness of Jeruel.

In other words, you'll find them in a place where they're inviting you into the wilderness where they dwell. Trying to convince you there's no deliverance. There's no victory.

There's no hope. To dismay you. To crush you.

To cause you to be cast down. Absolutely disillusioned. Thinking there's no hope, no future, no tomorrow.

That's where you're going to find them. But God says to Jehoshaphat in verse 17. You shall not need to fight in this battle.

Set yourselves. And stand still. Hallelujah.

If you could only see it. God said, yes, when you get to the end of all you can do. And you finally realize there's no hope in the flesh.

You don't have to do anything. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord with you. Oh, Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed.

Tomorrow, go out against them, for the Lord will be with you. The Lord will be with you. You've heard it today.

You've heard it all day today. God said, I'm not called you to be strong in yourself. I've called you to trust me.

Even if you are at the end of all your resources, go out against them and stand still. God says, I will be with you. Because I've told you, I will not fail you and I will not forsake you.

Hallelujah. And when he had consulted, it says in verse 21, with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, that they should praise the beauty of holiness as they went before the army. And to say, praise the Lord, for his mercy endures forever.

Hallelujah. And the Bible says, when they began to sing in praise, what was their song? Praise the Lord, his mercy endures forever. Yeah, I've failed.

I've failed big time. Yeah, I fall short. I fall short big time.

Yeah, I let Ahab be my friend for a season. I blew it big time. I deserve the wrath of God.

But I can praise him tonight, because his mercy endures forever. Hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

I can see it now. They're just heading into the battle. And they're singing, praise the Lord, for his mercy endures forever.

God said, oh, that's the song I've been waiting to hear. That's the song I've been longing to hear. I've longed to hear the song of a people who know they've failed, but they have placed their confidence in me, as the one who cannot fail nor forsake his own.

Hallelujah. The Bible says, when they began to praise the Lord, set an ambushment against them. And it caused their enemies to begin to turn and smite one another.

And when the children of Israel, when Judah came towards the watchtower in the wilderness, they looked to the multitude of their enemies, and behold, they were all dead bodies, fallen to the earth, and not one of them escaped. They were dead. They were dead.

I'm telling you what's going to happen in 2003. You're going to begin to praise God in spite of your failure. And you're going to just walk out of captivity.

You're going to walk out of the power of the enemy. You're going to walk out of that which once held you. You're not going to know how it happened.

Somebody's going to say, how did it happen? How did you get free? How did you get strong? How did you break the chains? And you'll just say, I don't know. Praise the Lord. His mercy endures forever.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I want to finish with this, Joshua chapter 10. Now Joshua has just come out of the Gibeonite debacle, if I can call it such. He has really blown it.

Big time. And immediately after this, five kings come against him. Five powerful kings with a whole host of an army.

And the Lord came to Joshua. Now the Bible doesn't tell us what happened after the Gibeonite thing. But in my heart, I feel like Joshua was maturing.

Joshua was coming to the place and saying, well, it's not about me anyway. I've made mistakes. But God doesn't stop His work because of my mistakes.

Thank God. Thank God. And the Lord said to Joshua, chapter 10, verse 8, Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand.

And there shall not a man of them stand before thee. It's amazing. God is not upset because of what Joshua did.

He doesn't expect us to be perfect in ourselves. And we will all make mistakes. You see, if we get to the point of being so proud that we can't handle making a mistake and we're all cast down and dismayed and discouraged, it's because there's a root of pride in us.

Folks, it's not about us. Then spake Joshua unto the Lord, verse 12, in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel. You see, they go into the battle.

And he says, Son, stand still upon Gibeon and moon in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is this not written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

And there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man. For the Lord fought for Israel. Incredible.

This is not a perfect man. But this is a man who had a word from God. And the word was, Don't be afraid or dismayed.

I'm going before you. I will not fail you. And I will not forsake you.

And in spite of his mistakes, he got up and took God at his word. You see, I think sometimes the greatest miracles are just waiting to happen for us to make a few mistakes. Not that we head out to do it intentionally.

But until we have learned that there's nothing in ourselves that we can offer to the kingdom of God. Joshua goes into the battle. And he has such power with God now, that God suspends the working of the universe for him.

I want you to think this one through for a moment. This did happen. This is history.

Joshua went into the battle and says, God, you are there. And here are five kings come against us. Oh God, I've got it down now.

I've got it now. You've gone before me and you're not going to fail me nor forsake me. Hallelujah.

I'm going to trust you in this. And he got so into the battle. He got so into winning the victory.

He said, Oh God, I don't want this to end. Stop the sun. Stop the moon.

Stop the earth. And God listened. And he suspended the working of the universe for the prayer of one man.

He said, I'm so anxious for you, Joshua, to win that victory. And to understand the power that's behind you to win it. That I will stop the earth from turning to show you what I will do when there's somebody out there who trusts me.

Hallelujah. If we can just see it. If we can comprehend it.

If we can understand it. God said, I will not fail you. I will not forsake you.

I will not let your enemies overpower you. I will not leave you in a prison of despair. I will not let you be bound or addicted or tormented by your enemy.

It doesn't matter how many kings come against you. And how big their army is. I'll stop heaven and earth to set you free.

Five kings ended up fleeing and hid in a cave. And then Joshua sent for them and took them out. Verse 24, chapter 10.

It says, It came to pass when they brought out those kings to Joshua. Joshua called for all the men of Israel and said to the captains of the men of war that went with him, Come near. Put your feet on the necks of these kings.

Remember the word this afternoon. You're going to tread upon the devil. He's not going to tread upon you. He's going to bite your heel. But ultimately, you're going to tread upon him. And they put their feet on the necks of them.

And Joshua said. Now this is the first time Joshua said it. Hallelujah.

Fear not. Nor be dismayed. Be strong and of good courage.

For thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

It started with Moses. It ended with the Lord telling him. And now Joshua is saying it.

It's in his heart now. It's in his spirit. He's failed enough times to know it's got nothing to do with him.

It's got everything to do with the faithfulness of God. Hallelujah. I thank God with all my heart.

I can stand before you tonight. And I can tell you with an honest heart that I have failed enough times. To be able to say to you.

Fear not. And don't be dismayed. Be of good courage.

The Lord will destroy all your enemies that fight against you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

I get excited about this. Fear not. Don't be discouraged.

What a year this is going to be. What an incredible year this is going to be. I want to give an altar call tonight for all the failures in Times Square Church.

All the failures. All the people with little things in their tent. All those that have made covenants with the Gibeonites.

All the failures. All those that have no more confidence in themselves. All those that are on the verge of being dismayed.

Because the word to you tonight is don't be dismayed. Don't be afraid. The Lord is going to keep you.

He's going to fight for you. You're going to become a mighty, victorious man or woman of God. Let me change it.

Everyone who's dismayed tonight. Everyone who's dismayed, crushed, cast down. I have a scripture that I'm going to read to you.

And we're going to pray together. We're going to go out with a shout of glory tonight. Let's stand.

Education Annex, we'll wait for you. The Holy Spirit is speaking to you tonight. You've been dismayed.

You feel like you failed God. You are a candidate for the power of God. A changed life.

Hallelujah. Just slip out wherever you are in the balcony. You can go to either exit.

Make your way here. Main sanctuary. Just slip down.

Move in close. All my fellow failures are going to gather here at the altar with me. Psalm 130.

Says out of the depths. I've cried to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice and let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

And I believe that many who are at this altar tonight. That's that's been your prayer. You said God.

Out of the depths of my struggle, I've cried. I've asked you to hear me. And tonight the Lord says to you, I have heard you.

Psalm. It says, Lord, if you marked iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord.

My soul doth wait. And in his word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.

I say more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord. For with the Lord, there is mercy.

And with him is plenteous redemption. In other words, it's a full salvation. Not just a partial victory.

It's an absolute, complete victory. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquity. That's the word of the Lord for you tonight.

The Holy Spirit gave me that very clearly last night. Says you tell those that come to the altar. I'm going to set you free.

I'm going to set you free from all of your captivity. I'm going to establish a testimony in you. Hallelujah.

And you're going to have a song. And that song will be praise the Lord for his mercy endures forever. Now Lord, you've spoken your word.

God, these that have come tonight have believed it. Lord, you've never failed nor forsaken any of us. You've kept us.

We are here. That is a testimony of your faithfulness. If you marked our iniquities, none of us would be here.

But we are here. And there's mercy with you that you may learn to be feared. God, I'm asking now.

That you would sow faith in the hearts of those that have gotten out of their seat and responded. Sow of faith, oh God. That causes us to go forward singing the songs of victory and the mercy of our God.

Seeing the power of hell vanquished. The power of evil demolished. The power of prisons broken.

The power of the grave triumphed over. The power of despair turned to glorious victory and joy. My God, I'm asking you that in Times Square Church there could be a song of victory that would resound.

A song of glorious victory. My God, let it come to us as an inward working of your power. Your victory, your triumph that you won for us 2,000 years ago on Calvary.

We walk in the strength of that victory. We trust and believe every promise you've made to us. You've said you would not fail us, you would not forsake us.

God, we believe it. We say, lead on. Lead on, Christ.

Lead on, Captain of the Host. Lead on. Take us from image to image and glory to glory.

Take us, God, wherever you want us to go. Do through us whatever you want to do. My God, give us faith to step on the necks of our enemies.

Every power of evil. Every devil of hell. I speak to every bondage.

I speak to every affliction. I speak to every tormenting spirit. And I bind you in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

We take absolute authority over you. You have no power here. You have no authority in the life of any Christian.

Even the youngest and smallest can put you to flight, Satan, in all of your power. Hallelujah. My God, I'm asking that faith arise in our hearts.

We lay hold of you, Jesus, like we never have before. Let your kingdom come. Oh God, thank you.

My God, I praise you. From the depths of my heart, I praise you. Hallelujah.

I'm going to ask you to do that right now. Just begin to praise Him. Just do that.

Just praise Him and thank Him. This is the conclusion of the message. This is the conclusion of the message.

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