

The Watchtower in the Wilderness

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon highlights the necessity of unwavering faith and prayer in facing sudden challenges, as exemplified by King Jehoshaphat's experiences.

Duration: 55:01

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 26:34, John 19:27, Ephesians 1:17-19

Topics: "Wilderness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a harrowing experience in Nigeria where a soldier, seemingly possessed by a demonic force, violently attacked their team. With no legal protection in some parts of the world, the only response was to cry out to Jesus for help, and miraculously, the soldier immediately stopped. The speaker reflects on the power and mercy of God, thanking Him for delivering and setting them free from the devil's influence. The sermon concludes with a reminder that despite the overwhelming challenges we face, God offers a different perspective and lifts us up to see the situation as He sees it, giving us victory over our enemies.

Transcript

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2 Chronicles chapter 20. The message that the Lord has given me today is called The Watchtower in the Wilderness. The Watchtower in the Wilderness.

2 Chronicles 20. Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit.

Lord, you have something in your heart that you're going to do in this service today. You're going to accomplish something that has eternal value to it. God, thank you that our hearts are open.

I thank you for the enablement of the Holy Spirit. I thank you, Holy Spirit, that you will quicken this Word and that you will cause it to find its intended mark in every one of our hearts and lives and our minds. God, thank you that there is going to be a deliverance and a shout of victory in this house.

Not only today, but throughout this entire day. As you continue to minister, Lord, you continue to conquer our enemies and give us hope and life and strength that only comes from Jesus Christ. God, thank you for your mercy.

Thank you for the enablement that you put upon me and on those that have come to hear the Word of God. Be glorified, Jesus, in this house. That's the only cry of our hearts.

Be glorified. Be honored. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Now, 2 Chronicles 19 and 20 are a continuation as it is in the life of Jehoshaphat. He was a king of Judah. Now, you remember after Solomon, the kingdom of Israel divided into two parts, the northern part of Israel and the southern.

And Jehoshaphat was one of the kings of the southern part of Israel, which was after the division known as Judah. The Bible clearly declares him to be a righteous king, even though throughout his time as king he did make some mistakes. I thank God that we can lay claim to that, too, as well.

In spite of the mistakes that we make, we are still declared righteous because God said we are. And I thank God for that. He was a righteous king, and the Bible says that his heart actually never turned from God all the days of his life.

I think you'll find that near the end of chapter 20. Now, in chapter 19, Jehoshaphat has just come back from a wrong alliance with Ahab, the king of the north. He has come back, and I believe that at this time he has certainly learned some things from this affiliation he made, just like we do when we make mistakes.

If we are wise, we learn from our mistakes. And something stirred in this man's heart, and he said, My life is going to be used to bring others to the knowledge of God and to bring God's order among his people. And he set out to be a man of God, literally, a godly king, a godly ruler, just like you and I do when we come to Christ.

We set out, as it is in the power of God, to be a godly leader in our home or a godly boss at work or a godly employee, whatever our situation might be. But we do set out to have an influence, because that is the call of God on each one of our lives. I am to influence you, you are to influence me, but for the better.

Always, line upon line, image upon image, we are to provoke one another to the righteousness that can only come from God, and to godly living, which he promises the power to do. Jehoshaphat, in chapter 19, verse 4, said, He dwelt at Jerusalem, he went out through the people from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim, and he brought them back unto the Lord God of their fathers. If you were to follow through, he advocated righteous living, he set up judges, in other words, those that were to speak for God and to bring the word of God into confusion and confusing situations, and to bring about the deliverance that God brings.

You remember the history of Israel is that after Joshua, the Lord set up judges over Israel, not too long after that, and the judges were those that were empowered by God to speak the mind of God, always bringing the people back to faith again, out of unbelief and back to faith in God. That was the purpose of the judge, as it was in the period of the judges. And Jehoshaphat set up judges and told them to establish

judgment, in other words, bring God's order, bring divine order into this nation.

He said, you're not to have respective persons, you're to speak what is the truth, you're to do it in the fear of the Lord. And he charged them, saying, this will you do in the fear of the Lord, in verse 9, and you'll do it faithfully and with a perfect heart. And then he goes on, and he told the people, he said in verse 11, he said, Amorai, the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord, and Zebediah, the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters, and the Levites shall be officers before you.

And then he said, deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good. In other words, if you do it the way God says, you will always have his presence with you. You will always know his power, his deliverance will be there, and this is the essence really of the gospel that we preach today.

If you live for God, if you walk in the fear of the Lord, if you begin to understand the promises, the power that God says, I will give to those who are mine, if you will do it honestly and ask for divine order, first in your own life, and then subsequently in the ministry or whatever influence God has entrusted to you. He said, if you will do this courageously and not be dismayed, God will be with you. And the evidence of God being with you is not an enemy, will be able to stand against you all the days of your life.

Yes, they will come, and they will come ferociously from every side, but they will not be able to stand against you. Now, this is the gospel. This is an incredible truth.

When a man or woman lays hold of this truth, I believe the devil shakes right in his tracks because he knows exactly what can happen. He knows history. He's been here longer than you and I have, and he knows history.

He knows what happens when a Gideon lays hold of God. He knows what happens when God begins to speak into the simplest and lowliest of the saints, and they begin to believe the word of God. I think of the story of D.L. Moody.

If any are readers of history, you know how God greatly used this man in such a powerful way. Sitting on a park bench one day, and a friend came to him and said to him, he was a teenager, he had very little education, he was not a well-spoken young man. But the man said to him, the world has yet to see what God could do through a fully surrendered vessel to the will of God.

His friend just simply got up and walked away, and in his own biography, D.L. Moody said, something stirred in my heart, and I said, by the grace of God, I will be that man. By the grace of God, I will be the man that the world, in effect, waits to see. And it's incredible, he just set out to obey God in all things, and the Lord took him and raised him up and used him to confound the then very proud religious society of his day.

Not in only one continent, but other places throughout the world. God used this man in powerful revival. He really never mastered English, and he never could read or write.

And he always had a childlike passion in him for God and for life. He loved life, he enjoyed life. But God took this man and used him very, very powerfully, and Jehoshaphat was a man like this.

He began to have an influence over people around him as God raised him up. Now, in chapter 20, the Bible tells us that suddenly he's attacked by a multitude. In the midst of the prosperity, in the midst of standing and encouraging others, a sudden attack comes his way.

Now, if you've never had one of these, you haven't been around very long yet. And quite often these sudden attacks come from those that are really being used by God. They are living for the Lord.

I think of, I could recount numerous times in my life where there have been sudden attacks because I set my heart to serve God with all that was within me. I remember being in the Philippines a few years ago, and we were heading to a crusade service. We knew that there were going to be multitudes of unsaved people, and on the way, having a young man literally leap in front of our car and go through the windshield, the car hit him with such an impact, he broke the windshield and shattered glass, and there was blood everywhere.

We picked him up, we didn't even know if he was alive, put him in the car, took him to the... It's a sudden attack. Suddenly these things come against you. And I could go on and on with the different stories of these sudden attacks as we are... I recall the entourage as we were traveling through Lagos in Nigeria.

Now, you know what happened in Nigeria, how God so undertook and gave victory. And without any warning, a soldier that looked like he'd lost his mind came out of some vehicle somewhere and began viciously kicking and punching. He was literally frothing at the mouth.

He had a... I think it was an M16 rifle in his hands. And he was punching the lead car that was in front of us that had some members of our team in it. And I remember looking at this man and he was... It was a demonic thing that was manifesting in him.

There was no reason in this man for what he was doing. And you have to understand, in some of these parts of the world, there are no law. And I remember the only thing we could do, I was in the car right behind, and I just yelled out, Jesus, stop him.

And immediately he stopped. As soon as I finished praying, he stopped, stared at the car, and as suddenly as he had come, he disappeared. We began to realize that these things are sudden attacks to cause fear to come into the heart.

I remember preaching the gospel as a young pastor having given up everything, having given up my job and giving up future as the world sees it. Pension and dental plan, all these things that went with the employment that I once had. Going and surrendering to God and preaching revival crusades to come home to find my house burned to the ground, literally.

Nothing, nothing. A sudden attack. Sudden, wanting to cause contrary arguments to the truth that we've learned about God and to instill fear in the heart.

I remember just before coming to New York, just going to get my hair cut and sitting down in a barber's chair. And this sudden attack, this person who was cutting my hair began to speak death into my life. It was an incredible thing.

And you'd think I could shake those thoughts. They stayed with me for a long time. Began to speak about hardship and death and other things like this that were coming my way.

And just absolutely the enemy coming suddenly. You don't expect it. You are living for God.

You have a heart to serve him. And you are suddenly. And this is exactly what happened.

It was after Jehoshaphat was reestablishing the order of God that the children of Moab, in chapter 20, verse 1, and of Ammon, with others besides the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. And there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There comes a great multitude against you from beyond the sea on this side of Syria. Verse 3 says, Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed to fast throughout all Judah.

Now, keep in mind, this is the same man that's saying, Do it right and God will be with you. Be courageous. And all of a sudden, a multitude comes against him, his mind, and he begins to fear.

Now, Moab and Ammon, in Genesis 19, you'll see that these are the descendants of the daughters of Lot. You remember that Lot was a type of a mixed Christian. Loved the Lord, loved the world at the same time.

Dwelt in Sodom and Gomorrah. Couldn't get out, even though he was rescued once by Abraham. He still thanked Abraham for the rescue and went back to Sodom and Gomorrah again.

He could never distance himself from the world. And after Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, he and his two daughters ended up in a little hill, a place called Zoar, in a cave. And in that place, the daughters said, We have no, there's no man to come into us so that the seed of our father may be continued.

So let's make him drunk. And in turn, we will each lie with him. And so both of Lot's daughters had children by their father.

It was an incestuous relationship. And these were the descendants of children who had no faith. Their whole sense of continuance is by human reason and effort.

In other words, God's promises don't have any force of weight here. We've got to take matters into our own hands. God will not be faithful.

You see, their father hadn't taught them in the ways of God, so they really didn't have a heavenly mind. They had no sense of reason. And this is the type of the Christian or the argument that comes against what God has said.

You see, because God lives in the realm of the impossible. When we're walking with God, He is the one who makes impossibility possible. He is the one who calls those things that are not as if they are.

When we get outside of the realm of God, even though by family name, as it is, they were associated with Abraham and subsequently with God, still these children had no faith. And when they found themselves in a difficult situation, their natural human response was to say, we've got to figure out how to do this. Not have faith in God, but we've got to figure it out.

And the end result is they fathered and mothered a mess. A people who always warred against the children of God. A secular thinking people.

It's the same way in the church of Jesus Christ today. There are churches that open this book and they have an ounce of faith in their heart. Everything is about how to do this and how to do that and how to figure it out.

And subsequently their minds are darkened. They hold God, but not in righteousness. And subsequently they expound or expound on truth, but they have no force of weight within their own lives.

They're always reasoning and figuring. There's so little faith of anything within them. This is what the devil is always after.

When the devil comes against you to infuse you with that sudden fear, it's to take away your confidence in God. That's ultimately what the battle is all about. You are walking by faith.

You are preaching by faith. You are talking by faith. You are moving by faith.

You are changing by faith. You have touched, as it is, the light stream of God. You understand what eternity is about.

The devil looks and he knows that that's such a threat to his kingdom. And so now he will send a multitude. This multitude will come against you suddenly.

It's quite often simply in the mind. It's in the realm of your thought life. I remember one night I'd left the church.

I was in the offices on a Tuesday. I was heading home. I stopped at the corner of 51st and 9th.

I was just waiting for the sign to turn to walk. And all of a sudden a thought came to me. An incredible thing, just a battle in the mind.

The thought came that you're not going to make it. Now, that's an incredible thing. I should know where that comes from.

But strangely enough, I entertained it just for a moment. I entertained all the reasons why I shouldn't. And there are a multiplicity of reasons why I shouldn't make it.

All I have to do is look in the mirror long enough and say, Hey, yeah, you're right. I'm not going to make it. If you and I start staring in the mirror, looking at our own history, relying on our own strength, we're not going to make it.

You see, but the focus was wrong. It was not about God. It was about me.

And when the devil can do that and come against you with this multitude, he can begin to erode your confidence in God and then take you to a place where you say, Well, I've got to do something about this. I've got to read more. I've got to get up earlier.

And the devil just loves it because he gets you right under the law and then has a legal ground to condemn you even more. The issue is not really about doing. It's about trusting.

Yes, we should do these things. But they're not the basis of our new life. The basis of our new life is an absolute and unconditional trust in almighty God.

David, the psalmist, said it. Oh, Lord. And Psalm 3 said, How are they increased that trouble me? Many there are that rise up against me.

Many. This is a multitude. There's are they which say of my soul, there is no help for him in God.

You see, this is the attack of the devil. This is the multitude that comes against you. They came against David because David was being used of God to bring about divine order, as it is in worship, divine order in

the kingdom of Israel at that time.

And the multitude that came against David were saying there is no help for you in God. In other words, God's not going to help you. God has seen some weakness in you.

God has seen some failing in you. God has, for whatever reason, decided that he's made a mistake when he chose you. And he's turned away from you.

He's found somebody else to take your place. Oh, folks, I want to tell you something. This is a warfare that comes against the mind of those that are being used by God.

And 2 Chronicles 20, verse 3 says, Joshua feared. You know, you see, the sudden attack of our enemy is designed to produce fear. And it robs us.

Remember, in the New Testament, Paul said to Timothy, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, or I may paraphrase that, the knowledge of God's love and of a sound mind or sound thinking. Fear robs you of all three. Fear takes away the power of God.

Fear takes away the knowledge of the overwhelming and all-consuming love of God for you. And ultimately, fear takes away the sound mind. The sound mind now leaves, and the human spirit begins to take over.

You want to see how fear turns confidence in God to questions. Here's the man who's saying in verse 19, Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good. Or whatever God, in other words, has ordained, God will prosper.

God will be with you. Now, look at the change in a few short verses. Verse 6, chapter 20.

Jehoshaphat comes now, stands before the court of the Lord and says, O God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? Do you see what's beginning to happen here? Where fear turns faith to questions. And it can even appear holy. You could have been among those at the altar this morning praying, believing you have faith.

But if you've been praying questions, the faith that you profess to have is in doubt. Faith just says you are God. You do live in heaven.

You do rule. Remember in the book of Acts when they were threatened, and they came and prayed and said, God, you are in heaven. You rule the nations.

This is what the scripture says. Now, who are these that think they can stand against the power of God? But now here's Jehoshaphat. He said, art thou not God in heaven? And rulest thou not over all the kingdoms of the heathen? He said, are you not God? Now, this is a man of fear now praying.

And do you not rule over the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might so that none is able to withstand thee? Now, you have to understand, these are not statements of faith. These are questions that he's asking God. Are you not God? Do you not have power? And is it not true that none is able to withstand you? Verse 7, art thou not our God, who did drive out the inhabitants of the land before thy people Israel and gave it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend forever? He's saying, are you not God? Do you not rule everything? Do you not have power? Are you not faithful? In verse 12, he says, O God, will you not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that comes against us,

and neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon you.

O God, will you not? Now, the word judge is used here in the context of Old Testament judges that I spoke to you about earlier. In other words, he says, will you not pronounce their sentence and dispel them with your power? O God, will you not do this? And then verse 13, Scripture says, all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones and their wives and their children. Now, here's the man who's talking about faith and trust, divine order.

Now, he's got the whole congregation standing before God with questions. So, little faith now. And that's exactly what the multitude coming against them is all about.

That's why the devil will fight against your mind. That's why he will constantly try to infuse you with thoughts that have no basis in the word of God. That's why he will constantly come against your weakest areas and try to trouble your mind and to erode your trust in the one who's able to keep you.

Think for a moment about the disciples of Jesus Christ who could, in agreement with Peter in Mark 10, 28, say, Lord, we have left all and we have followed you. Think about the 70 in Luke chapter 10 who returned with joy and they said, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name. And Jesus said to them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Now, in other words, Christ was saying God's right order is being restored through you. You've left all. You've followed me.

I've enabled you. And through your life, Satan is falling from his lofty places. I saw him fall because you're an obedient people.

You've gone out. And through you, the kingdom of God is being established. Right order is coming into the world.

Remember in Matthew 20, 21, the Bible tells us that some of them were so secure of their position in Christ that they began to negotiate on which side of them they would sit forever in his kingdom. James and John didn't have the courage to ask him themselves, so they asked their mother to ask him. Can one of my sons sit on your right hand? One of my sons on your left hand? You see, they were so sure.

They had left everything. They were seeing the devil fall from heaven. They knew the power of God.

They believed every word that Jesus was speaking to them, at least the words they could understand. They believed that they were going to rule and reign forever. So convinced that they said, well, I would like to sit on your right hand and I'd like to sit on your left.

And only with all this confidence to be scattered in Gethsemane, only to be overwhelmed by sudden fear and confusion as a multitude seemingly carries away their Savior. The Bible says a multitude came into the garden of Gethsemane and a multitude carried Jesus away. A multitude of thoughts, an argument against truth, trying to take away their confidence.

Second Chronicles again, chapter 20, verse 14. Then upon Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of etc., etc., came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation. And he said, Hearken all ye, all Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Now the word of God comes back again. And thou, King Jehoshaphat, thus saith the Lord unto you, be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude. For the battle is not yours, but God's.

Verse 16, he says, Tomorrow, go down against them. Behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz. That means a cliff, a hill of difficulty.

You shall find them at the end of the brook. The word for brook actually better translated valley. When the water is run out before the wilderness.

And this is exactly where the devil attacks you, isn't it? In a difficult place, when it seems you're at the end, you're hoping you're at the end of the valley you've been walking in, but before you just seems to be an endless wilderness. And this is where the devil comes with contrary arguments against the truth that you've learned about Christ. And the man of God says, You shall not need, in verse 17, to fight in this battle.

Set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you. O Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed. Tomorrow, go out against them, for the Lord shall be with you.

The word of God comes, it says, Tomorrow, stand still and see the salvation of God. It was the next day. Jesus was betrayed in Gethsemane in the evening.

Remember he told Peter, You'll deny me three times before the rooster crows. The rooster, of course, crows at daybreak. It was the next day that Christ came to trial, ending in his crucifixion.

And Luke 23, 49 tells us that all his acquaintance and the women that followed him from Galilee stood afar off beholding these things. All they could do is stand and watch something that they didn't fully understand anymore. Yes, they believed it.

Yes, they trusted. But there was such a multitude come against their Savior now. And it seems the multitude was threatening to virtually carry him away to a place where they would never see him again or could ever hear him again.

Mark 15, the attack goes on. Verse 31, there are those, I want you to picture this now. We don't know, we know John was there.

We don't know which other disciples were. The Bible just says his acquaintances were there. We know that some of the women who came to Christ were there.

But there were many standing, simply beholding. There was no power in them to do anything. They had all run.

They'd all fled. They all found that the bravado they professed to have had failed them. There was no hope, no strength.

Peter had denied him. John had fled away naked. Everyone had forsaken him.

In spite of all their words that they were willing to go to Jerusalem and die with him, they'd all forsaken him. The multitude had come and attempted to carry away their confidence as it is, to take away their Savior. And the only thing left to do was to stand and behold him.

It's an incredible thing. There was no... they had a choice. They could have done like Moab and Ammon.

They could have done like the daughters of Lot and sat down and tried to figure out, now how are we going to do this thing? Where do we go from here? Or they could have just gone as they did and beheld him. There was nothing else to do but just watch him. The attackers, motivated by the devil himself, are doing everything in their power to take away the people's confidence in their Christ.

They walk back and forth. You see, religious can never sit still. You ever notice that? They can never stop talking.

They can never sit still. They move and they're always trusting in themselves, trusting in their righteousness. They're walking back and forth.

They're wagging their heads. While the true disciples are simply beholding him. Oh, beloved, there's such incredible truth if you begin to understand this.

Christ said, it's not in what you do. Your strength comes in beholding me. Your strength comes in standing still and having confidence in who I am.

In trusting in me. The multitude coming to carry away the Savior and to erode and destroy his work and his disciples. They said he saved others.

Himself he cannot save. And the argument is simply this. His word has no redemptive power.

It cannot be trusted. You see, that tactic of the enemy comes against you every time you find yourself in a trial. When the multitude have come against you and attempted to carry away your Savior out of your sight, the devil will come to you and say, you cannot trust his word.

You place your faith on it, but look it. We've carried him away. He's in our power.

Again, in Mark 15, 32, they said, descend now from the cross that we may see and believe. The inference is simply, if you don't see it now, you never will. If you don't see the deliverance, is God not God? Can he not set you free immediately? Can he not give you the victory? If you don't see it now, you never will.

It has to happen. And you ever been in a situation where the devil masquerades the voice of God? Thus saith the Lord, by six o'clock today you will have the answer to your prayer. Six o'clock comes and the answer isn't there.

And another voice comes and says, can God really be trusted? And if you don't see the answer now, will you ever see it? And even the soldiers were parting his garments as if there was no possibility he would ever return to claim what was rightfully his. Yet to those who were beholding him, they were seeing and hearing one of the most powerful sermons that this world will ever hear. They heard him say this to John.

He said, behold your mother. Incredible. That is a sermon all in itself.

John 19, 27. You see, John had fled. John had been weak.

John had run. John was the one who had had his head on the chest of Jesus at the last supper and probably had a reputation of loving him more than anybody else. At least perhaps in his own sight he did.

But he had fled. And now he stands and he has nothing left to do but behold him. And as he beholds him, Jesus begins to speak right to John and of course to everyone else who could hear.

And he says, behold your mother. In other words, Christ was saying instead of exacting vengeance on our weaknesses, he entrusts to us those persons and things closest to his heart. In other words, John, nothing has stopped.

I've not withheld from you. In spite of what they're saying around, I'm going to give you that which is most precious to me. I've called you to a holy calling and I'm going to give you a sign in the sense that you've not lost that calling because of your weakness.

I'm going to give you my mother, John, because there's something in you that is going to lay hold of the power of God. And I'm going to entrust the care of my mother to you. I thank God that even when we are weak, Paul says, then we are strong when we come to the knowledge that it's not in our strength that God gives us an enablement.

It's in our weakness. It's in our worst moments that God comes and says, you need love. I have something very precious to give to you.

Behold, here's the love that you need. Behold, here's the peace that you need to get you through this trial. Here is the strength you need in your time of testing and weakness.

I give it to you. I entrust these things to you because I know you will use it wisely. I know that you understand that you have failed and I know that you know your own weakness.

But I have not withholding from you because you have failed me. And to the thief, he preaches another sermon to the multitude. Luke 23, 43, he says, today you will be with me in paradise.

Now, here's a man who has no opportunity to do anything for him in return. He can't read his Bible. He can't go to a single prayer meeting.

He will never attend a church service. But he has met with Jesus. It's incredible.

He can't do a good deed. He can't go back and repay the wrong he has done. He has no opportunity to do anything.

And Jesus says, today you will be with me in paradise. Today, not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he has saved us. His mercy.

His mercy. You can throw to flight the multitude of thoughts sent by the enemy. They're trying to tell you because you haven't done this or you haven't done that.

Or you haven't been faithful in this or you haven't done that. That somehow you've been rejected by God. And God says, no, it's not about that.

It's about a believing heart. It's about the heart that says, Lord, I deserve what I've got. But you don't deserve to be where you are.

Remember me when you come into your kingdom. Is all this man could say. Nothing else he could do.

Thanks be to God. This is the wondrousness of our salvation. That the ground is totally level at the cross of Calvary.

Anyone, whosoever will, can come. It's not about what we do. It's about what Christ has done for us 2,000 years ago.

Matthew 27 tells us that he cried out with such incredible trust. A loud voice, the scripture says. One of the gospels says, he said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.

Another account says he yelled out, it is finished. It is finished. He cries out with such an incredible trust.

Coupled with such a release of divine power. That a Roman centurion who is beholding him is convinced that he is the son of God. The scripture says after he cried out, the veil of the temple was rended too.

The earth began to quake. Rocks began to split. And people who were dead were raised again to life.

And the Roman centurion who is so used to seeing men die. Surely in his heart said, I've never seen a man die like this. I've never seen anything like this.

Truly, this is the son of God. Hallelujah. Seeing the power.

Seeing the passion. Seeing the trust. That cry was that right from the very heart of God himself.

Saying, I have created a creation that has sinned against me. But I have so longed for fellowship. That I was willing to come to this earth and suffer this.

That they might be reunited with me once again. It's as if God couldn't wait. He took his hands and tore the veil.

No more formulas. No more formulas. I'm coming to you now where you are.

I'm coming to you in your weakness. I'm coming to you in your struggle. And I will give you the power.

And I will cause you to walk in my statutes. I'll give you a new heart and a new mind. I will be your God and you shall be my people.

I will dwell in the midst of you. People will pass by you. And they will know what you used to be.

And they will be dumbfounded at the change that has come into your life. Back in 2 Chronicles 20. Verse 18 says, Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground.

Remember, the word was stand still. And see the salvation of the Lord. Tomorrow go out and fight and the Lord will be with you.

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground. And all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord worshipping the Lord. And the Levites and the children of the Kohathites and the children of the Korites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

You see, faith was coming back. Faith will always result in praise. And the deepest praise will be in the darkest times.

Because it's not about a song. It's not about getting the right tune. And somehow God will come.

It's about the knowledge that God always has been here. Now I'm just becoming aware of it. And I lift up my voice in the deepest darkest trial.

And praise, praise to God begins to resound. The sound the devil hates. He hates it with a passion because he used to lead worship.

He hates it when God's people begin to praise. And their praise has a foundation in truth. They know why they're singing.

The psalmist said, sing praises with understanding. Know why it is you're singing. Know who it is you're singing to.

Know the faithfulness of the one that says, Listen, when you have run into a wall, stand still and watch what I will do for you. They praised him with a loud voice, verse 19, on high. They rose early in the morning and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa.

And as they went, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in the Lord your God, and so shall you be established. See, Jehoshaphat's got his faith back now.

Believe in the Lord your God, and so shall you be established. Believe his prophets, and so shall you prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers to the Lord that should praise the beauty of holiness.

As they went out before the army and to say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy endures forever. Praise him, his mercy endures. And when they began to sing and praise the Lord, and praise the Lord, set ambushments against the children of Moab and Mount Seir, which would come out against Judah, and they were smitten.

Now, it's simple. Here's the people who just get their focus back on the truth again. And they begin to praise, and all this multitude of contrary argument is smitten.

Just absolutely destroyed. It seemed like these thoughts are coming from every side. We're not going to make it.

Is God real? Can God be trusted? Can his word be relied on? Is he going to protect our families? Will he really save our children? Will he really set me free from depression? Will he really make me into a new creation? And all of a sudden, when they began to praise him, God said, This is the ambush that I have determined against all of these thoughts from the foundation of the world. When there are a people who begin to praise me and trust me, I dwell in the midst of those praises. I dwell in the midst of those people.

And keep in mind, the Lord is the one who conquered all the powers of evil. He is the one who defeated and made an open display of all of the devil's power. And he says, I stand as conquering king.

I know it, heaven knows it, the devil knows it, and hell knows it. Everyone knows it. Every knee bows, every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, everyone helped to destroy another. In other words, their arguments, literally, one came against another and were destroyed.

And when Judah came towards the watchtower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth and none escaped. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds, casting down imaginations.

These are the thoughts. These are the multitudes that comes against the truth of God's word and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. When they got to the watchtower in the wilderness, now this is a place where they were raised up above their enemies and their circumstances.

They were lifted up. The watchtower was a higher place than the wilderness. And when they got there, and I can see that when they sent that first spy as it is up into the watchtower, tell us what you see.

And he yelled down from the watchtower, they're all dead. They're all dead. All the contrary arguments, all the theories and philosophies, the doubts, the contrary reasonings to truth, they're all dead.

Now, he could see it because he was in a higher place. You cannot see it until you get into that higher place in God. I want to show you exactly where it is.

Go lastly to the book of Ephesians. In the New Testament, Ephesians chapter 2, they got into a higher place. And in that higher place, the watchtower in the wilderness, they began to see something.

You see, that's what the word of God will do. If your heart is open to the word of God, God will take you to that watchtower in your wilderness. He'll take you to the higher place where you now are seeing from God's perspective.

When we're down on the ground and in the valley, it can look so powerful because we're looking eye to eye with our enemy. And we're looking eye to eye with everything that surrounds us and is trying to come against us and destroy us. And it can look so overwhelming.

But God says, no, let me take you to another perspective. Let me lift you up. And let me show you this situation the way I see it.

Now, Ephesians chapter 2 in verse 4 says, But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ. By grace are you saved. And has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

This is the watchtower in the wilderness as it is. He has raised us up together and given us as it is a new mind, a new understanding, a new heart. He has given us his word.

He's made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ. That in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Now, he's raised us up.

He's made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus for the sole purpose. First of all, obviously, because he loves us and wants us for fellowship. But that in the ages to come, he might use you and me as a display throughout all of I don't know what or where, but it's a lot bigger than where we live down here.

But he might show his kindness through us. It's not going to be about us and what we accomplished or didn't accomplish. It's going to be about his kindness.

People are going to look at my life and say, God, you were so kind. You are so kind. They're going to look at you.

The Lord's going to hold you up. He might take you to some other galaxy. I don't know what's out there, but he'll just hold you up in his hand and people are going to look at you and say, God, you are so kind.

You are so kind. There was a million reasons why that person shouldn't have made it to heaven. But, God, you are so kind.

You are so good. So kind. Ephesians 1, 17.

Paul again. This has been always one of my favorite scriptures. I've probably preached it here about 50 or 60 times now.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power. The Bible says that after they saw these dead bodies, they went out and they were three days in gathering all the spoil, all the treasure that they found there.

Remember that it was the third day that Christ rose from the dead and gave gifts unto us. They were three days as it is gathering all the treasure. And Paul said, oh, if you could only see what is the hope of the calling that God has put on you.

If you could only understand the treasure that is in Christ and what is your inheritance as a child of God. If you could only fathom the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power. Paul said, oh, I pray if he's in church above everything else, that you would see this, that you would understand these things, that you would know that God will be faithful to you because he is kind and his mercy endures forever.

It's not works of righteousness, it's according to his mercy. Paul goes on in verse 20 and he says, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, power and might. Say that with me.

Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. So listen to me now. We sit with him in his strength with the riches of his life being lived in us.

We sit far above all principality, power and might and dominion. We sit above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And even more, he has put all things under his feet.

We sit with him. We sit in him. He sits in us.

All things are under his feet and he is the head over all things to the church, which is his body. The fullness of him that fills all in all. Hallelujah.

I am seated in heavenly places with Christ. There is an inexhaustible supply of life in him for me. The treasure of God is unlocked to me every day as I get into the word of God and behold him and just simply

behold his mercy.

The power that he has, he has entrusted to his church. And he said the things that I put under my feet when I rose from the dead on the third day are now under your feet. I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

I give you power over every name that is named, both in this world and in the world to come. Everything is under your feet. Depression is under your feet.

The fear of failure is under your feet. The power of sin is under your feet. Weakness is under your feet.

Loneliness is under your feet. Torment is under your feet. Captivity is under your feet.

Hallelujah. Listen, moral temptation is under your feet. Failure is under your feet.

Hardship is under your feet. Trial is under your feet. The fear of tomorrow is under your feet.

Worry is under your feet. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Battles against our children are under your feet! Failing marriages are under your feet! And every name that is named is under your feet! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Thank you, Lord! Thank you, Jesus! Mighty God, we praise you! We praise you! We worship you, God! We worship you, Jesus! We exalt you! We glorify you! My God, thank you! Thank you, Lord! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise you! We worship you! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh, Jesus, thank you! Thank you, Lord! Mighty God, thank you! Hallelujah! If you are suffering from any of these things... Now, you're doing exactly what the people in Jehoshaphat's day did. First, they praised.

But then they went out against their enemies. And when they went out, the Lord lifted them up to a high place. And they saw that their enemies had no power.

And if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you and you are battling any of these things that the Lord has given me to speak about today, I want you to come to this altar and we're going to pray a prayer of absolute victory today. We're going to believe God. Balcony, you can go to either exit.

Main sanctuary, you come this way. Annex, just stand between the screens. We'll pray for you.

Let's all stand. Let's all stand. We're going to pray.

We're going to believe God. Your enemies are going to be under your feet. You're going to have faith again in your heart.

Hallelujah! Pray with me, Lord Jesus. Thank you for lifting me up. Above my enemies.

And opening my eyes to see the greatness of your power and your mercy for me. And to see the absolute defeat of all my enemies that oppose me by opposing your truth. Thank you today for delivering me and setting me free from the power of the devil by the truth that sets me free.

I thank you. I praise you from the depths of my heart in Jesus name. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! This is the conclusion of the message.

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