

The Believer's Hope

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our own limitations and trusting in God's presence and power to guide and direct us in our daily lives.

Duration: 57:21

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:12, Isaiah 41:10, John 14:13-14, Romans 8:31, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 5:20, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 2 Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 11:1

Topics: "Faith", "Assurance in Christ"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the believer's hope in Christ, illustrating how true assurance comes from recognizing our inadequacy and relying on God's sufficiency. He recounts the story of Jehoshaphat, who learned to turn to God in times of crisis, demonstrating that faith involves not just belief but active appropriation of God's promises. Thomas encourages believers to abandon self-reliance and embrace a life led by Christ, who empowers us to face challenges with confidence and praise. The sermon highlights the importance of understanding our identity in Christ and the transformative power of faith in action.

Transcript

Some of you, hopefully, come in these days for the first time to know the Lord Jesus personally as your Savior. When you arrived a week ago, you weren't quite sure whether you were at peace with God, had no rich assurance in your heart, but you've come to know how simple, how gloriously simple it is, in recognition of your need to apply all the adequacy of His atoning debt and by faith appropriated what you don't deserve, but what God in grace and mercy has provided. And we rejoice in this assurance.

The Bible rings with certainty. And if there's anybody who maybe only has visited you today, come for the very first time, it may be that this is God's appointment for you to come to know and know that you're not certain that Christ has redeemed you. Nowhere in the Bible are we left in any ambiguity as to God's concern for us and God's purposes in redemption towards us.

I'm sure some of you will remember that choice servant of God who's now with the Lord Jesus, Captain Reginald Wallace. And I remember on one occasion, it was my joy to know him well and his family and his boys who are ministering today in England, I remember on one occasion how he quoted the verse of the hymn that he said should never have been written. It went something like this, there is a thing I long to know.

Of it gives me anxious thought. Do I love my Lord or no? Am I His or am I not? Can you imagine anything more prophetic than that? And he went on to say, if you were to go home to your wife, if you happen to have a wife, and sit in the kitchen or the washroom or somewhere like that, and you were to go up with her with a dreamy languid look in your eyes and wringing your hands, you would have said, darling, there is a thing I long to know. Of it gives me anxious thought.

Do I love you dear or no? Am I yours or am I not? Well, he said she'd probably reach for the heaviest frying pan that she could find. And in a matter of seconds, you wouldn't be in any doubt at all. She'd probably say to you, it's not faith you need dear, just assurance.

And proceed to administer it. Well now there are some of you who come out of that languid state and you're rejoicing, I know whom I have believed. Not what I have believed, some of you knew what you believed when you came but didn't know whom you have believed.

But now you can say, I know whom I have believed. And I'm persuaded that he's able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Well we rejoice with you, those of whom we may welcome as our newborn brothers and sisters in Christ.

You've gone through the door, now with us go on into all the fullness of God's gracious provision. And there are some who've been making this discovery this week. You came here defeated, with a sense of impotence and powerlessness.

You've been trying so hard, desperately serving Christ to the best of your ability, willing, both to will and to do. And I, at the close of this session, want to gather in a few friends, because it is sometimes possible, as some have told me as they've come personally, to know the principle. I see it clearly now, but just how do I apply this principle? As I leave Katoomba and go down into the valley, now having come to grasp what God had in mind when he gave his son to me, dying for what I've done, to rise again from the dead, to live in me, taking the place of what I am.

Now it's the practice of the principle. And if there was one last word more than another I would wish to bring to you, it is a message of appropriation. To step out and act on the assumption of everything that God had been pleased to tell you is true.

Almost in recklessness, to stand back and let God vindicate his utter integrity. To work it out. Work out your own salvation, says Paul.

But work out your salvation with fear and tremor, recognizing that it's God who vindicates his sufficiency in you and through you. And so I thought it would be a good thing for us to examine a very vivid illustration that God gives us in the Old Testament, and there's no better part of the Bible to go to for illustrations of the deepest spiritual truths that concern our walk in Christ than the Old Testament. If you may be during these days for the first time have grasped the principle of Christ's indwelling, you've got a new Old Testament.

It's just bursting to tell you of a living Christ, and how those who walk by faith are to appropriate the adequacy, the overwhelming adequacy, of the God who dwells within. Now, all down the history of God's dealings with man, those who have been his choicest servants have graduated out of despair, graduated out of failure, and defeat, and frustration. That's a wonderfully encouraging thing.

When we do this, we're always surprised. When we discover that God isn't surprised, we look into our own hearts and utterly shocked with ourselves. At last, timidly, we come and tell God all about ourselves.

And there he is waiting. He says, I've known it all the time. I've just been waiting for you to find it out about yourself, and admit it.

I can't tell you what a relief it was to me when, for the first time, I realized that God had never expected of me at any time anything than the hopeless failure that I'd been. What a relief! And for all this time, I've been trying to present myself to God in a second light. And all the time, God was waiting for me to give up the struggle, and capitulate, and recognize, in abject defeat and despair, that I was beyond remedy apart from a divine intervention.

This was certainly true of Abraham as fifteen frustrated years were wasted in trying to squeeze blessing out of an Ishmael. Certainly true of Moses after he'd been isolated in the backside of the wilderness, the desert there, until at last, by faith, he stepped into the principle of the God who dwells in any old bush. And any old bush will do, so long as God is in it.

Certainly true of Jacob. It was certainly true of Peter. What a wonderful day for him when the cock crowed in the bitterness of his despair, and a new door broke.

As through Pentecost, he entered into that unique relationship with the Lord Jesus that would release the divine power of the risen Lord through his redeemed humanity. It's certainly been the history of almost all the names down the Christian story that have come to be household words. And it's come to be true of some of you.

Amongst them is number Jehoshaphat. And the story that we're going to consider for a few moments is the nineteenth chapter, second chronicles, two chronicles, chapter nineteen. Jehoshaphat, the 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, Shouldest 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 hast prepared thine heart to seek God. God is meeting with Jehoshaphat in an entirely new way, for he's known the bitterness, the awful bitterness of hopeless failure and defeat. And out of this bitter experience of his own defeat, he's made the wonderful discovery of the divine principle that is to operate in the hearts of men.

The story of his defeat is recorded for us in the preceding chapter. It begins as the story of every defeat begins, with a false affinity. Chapter eighteen, verse one.

Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance, and he joined affinity with Ahab. That was the false affinity. He made an unholy alliance with one whom God had sentenced to death, Ahab.

A wicked king, as we've been hearing, but one who specifically was under God's sentence of death for the murder of Naboth. You remember the sentence that God passed upon him? You find it in the first book of Kings, in the twenty-first chapter. It came from the lips of God's faithful servant, about whom we've been hearing.

One Kings, twenty-one seventeen, the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab, king of Israel, which is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to possess it. Thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, hast thou killed, and also taken possession.

Thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, in the place where dogs lick the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine? And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? He answered, I found thee, because thou hast told thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. And it was with this man that Jehoshaphat entered into this unholy alliance. In the wonderful picture language that God gives us in the Bible, we recognize in this that unholy alliance into which we by nature as the fallen seed of the fallen Adam are entered.

With that hostile sin principle of satanic origin, this carnal mind that is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, this flesh that is at enmity with God our maker. Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab. After certain years, it says in verse 2 of 2 Chronicles chapter 18, after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria, and Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance and for the people that he had with him, and he persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth Gilead.

And Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, will thou go with me to Ramoth Gilead? He answered, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and we will be with thee in the war. Without one moment's thought of his own responsibility, his own relationship towards God, he makes his decision, joins affinity with Ahab in this attack upon the Syrians that Ramoth Gilead might be recovered for Israel. Interesting that it was against Ramoth Gilead that Ahab should have planned this campaign.

For Ramoth Gilead was one of the six cities of refuge that God had given by his command to the Levites, amongst the 48 cities that were to be their portion of the inheritance of the land. The six cities of refuge which were designated by God for those who were men's slaves, but without wicked intent, and of all the places that this murderer should have wanted to recapture for his own use, was the place of refuge for men's slaves, seeking a place of refuge. Self, the flesh is always seeking a place of refuge, a place where it can survive.

This is the satanic genius. The devil doesn't object unduly if you insist on being a Christian, he can't do much about it. But his agency within you must survive at all costs.

And that's why it's so easy to join in this unholy alliance, and make this false affinity with evil. Because the flesh within will encourage you to do your uttermost, to do your best, bend all your resources in God's service, if only, if only the flesh can survive. Jehoshaphat wasn't too happy about this.

He said to the king of Israel in verse 4, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today. And the king inquired, Shall we go to Ramoth Gilead to battle a four hundred prophets? And they said, Go up, for God will deliver thee into the king's hand. They were yes men.

They had no doubt except the Lord from God himself. But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides that we might inquire of him? He was trying to reconcile a false affinity to a bad conscience. He wasn't really at ease.

There was really in his heart no sense of vocation, no sense of commission. There's never real peace, there's never real rest in the heart of any man or woman, or boy or girl for that matter, who seeks to serve

Christ without a real appropriation of the principle's divine action. You engage in every kind of warfare for God, maybe, but there isn't that spontaneous spiritual initiative that stems from God himself.

Well, we're not going to examine too much the story of his defeat. This is how it began. When the voice, that lonely voice of God, raised by Micaiah the prophet, warned them of God's impending judgment, the tragic thing was that Jehoshaphat still allied himself with Ahab when Ahab threw him into jail and said, Put this fellow in the prison, feed him with bread of affliction, with water of affliction until I return in peace.

And Jehoshaphat, to maintain this affinity, had to tittle the voice of God to his own heart. And Jehoshaphat went down to battle with Ahab. And the king of Israel, verse 29, we're told, said to Jehoshaphat, I'll disguise myself and I'll go to the battle, but put thou on thy robes.

And so this wicked man disguised himself as the flesh will always disguise itself if it can. And the Syrians, thinking Jehoshaphat to be the king of Israel, pressed in upon him, came to part, verse 31, when the captains of the chariot saw Jehoshaphat that they said it's the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight.

And in this, his moment of utter extremity, Jehoshaphat cried out in despair. And the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him. This was the lowest point to which he had sunk.

In a sense of utter loneliness, recognizing himself to be in the wrong company, despairing of life itself, he cried to God. And God helped him. And a certain man drew a bow at adventure and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the heart.

And about the time of the sun going down, he died. Because God's judgment must always fall upon the flesh, no matter how it may disguise itself before men, it can never disguise itself before God. And as a man drew a bow at adventure, pierced between the very cracks of its armor, and Ahab died.

And the dogs licked his blood as they swilled out the blood-stained chariot in which he had been traveling. Now it was out of this bitter experience that God's word came to Jehoshaphat. In chapter 19 verse 2, We've been coming to understand this and its spiritual significance for you and for me during these days that we've been spending together.

That in our flesh dwelleth no good thing. That all that we are and all that we have and all that we can do apart from the Lord Jesus himself is something which God must of necessity repudiate. It's under the sentence of death.

It's fit for nothing but the cross. It's fit for nothing but to be taken in God's eternal economy with the Lord Jesus into the place where they buried him and to be left buried, rejected and repudiated. And it takes sometimes years of bitterness and defeat before at last we're prepared to recognize that we ourselves are as wicked as the things we do.

This is true repentance. Not only to be sorry for what I've done, but to be sorry for what I am. To recognize that in me dwells no good thing.

And from this time on as God's word comes to his heart, Jehoshaphat learns a new principle. And it is that his life as from now on can never be lived under any circumstances except by virtue of his relationship in responsibility towards his God. And he set judges it says in chapter 19 and verse 5 in the land throughout all the cities of Judah city by city.

And he said to the judges take heed what you do for you judge not for man but for the Lord who's with you in the judgment. From now on all your judgment must be identified with God's judgment. There must be an absolute identity between you and him.

Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you take heed and do it for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God nor respect to persons nor taking of gifts. Verse 9 he charged them saying thus shall you do in the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart. And what cause so ever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities between blood and blood between law and commandments, statutes and judgments.

No matter what may be, no matter what the problem that must be resolved, no matter what the new responsibility you must assume ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord. He is the one who in every And we are no longer at liberty under any circumstances to do what is right let alone what is wrong in our own eyes. Deal courageously last part of verse 11 and the Lord shall be with the good.

And this now was to be the principle of life for Jehoshaphat. God forbid he says that I should ever again deliberately with my eyes open enter into a false affinity with that which God hates. How can I help the ungodly? How can I love them that hate the Lord? Is that the place to which God has brought you in these days? I see now that the principle of life for me is that I am utterly committed to the Lord Jesus.

Utterly to him and to him alone. And I'm committed to him in such a way that I'm committed to all that to which he and he alone is committed to me. He's the one with whom I now reckon.

Love and respect as I may my fellow men and without being pig-headedly offhand insofar as their counsel or advice may be to me good or bad. I recognize that I have from now on to reckon with only one person who has redeemed me through his death reconciled me to a holy God and has come himself by his gracious Holy Spirit to live out his life through me and tell the story in terms of my humanity that in the eternal counsels of God in the ages of the past has been written for me. Just for me.

I'm going to reckon with Christ. I'm going to reckon with Christ. That's the principle to which God brings us out of the graduation of despair.

I've reckoned with my friends. I've reckoned with my church. I've reckoned with my personality.

I've reckoned with my scholarship. I've reckoned with my training. I've reckoned with my family.

I've reckoned with my godly upbringing and yet I failed because in all this I didn't reckon with Christ. It isn't that I wasn't sincere. It isn't that I didn't really try.

It isn't that I had holy ambitions but I made the one elementary fatal blunder. I just did not reckon with Christ. I accepted him as the way the one who died for me.

I preached him fanatically as the truth and yet miracle of all miracles, wonder of all wonders, stupidly, blindly, I never once reckoned with him as my life. I'd never learned the principle of stepping out of a situation instinctively, automatically, in the recognition of the fact that the only person competent in that situation was the Lord Jesus living in me. But now I see it.

It's the principle of divine action. It's the faith that releases God through me at any time, day or night, come what may. Now this was the principle to which God led Jehoshaphat.

Well, that was the theory. He'd set his heart now to seek God in this sense, on these terms of reference. The question now that remained was how is it going to work out in practice? It's one thing to make his resolution.

It's one thing to give mental consent to the principle that has been enunciated. But what happens when the first big test comes? What's the procedure? Now that may be the question that's in your mind. It seems so easy here.

The words are still ringing in your ear that you've been hearing from the platform, and the words are still fresh in your heart that you've been reading as you've studied the word of God in some quiet spots. But you say, when I'm back in the bustle, when I'm precipitated suddenly into the bundle of life again, and everybody's rubbing shoulders and jogging me, when the next big test comes, what's the procedure? Well, it's thrilling to read the procedure in chapter 20. Out of defeat in chapter 18, to discover the principle of divine action in chapter 19, into the practice of faith, the practice of the presence of God, the appropriation that takes and says thank you and sees God vindicate his integrity and prove himself indeed more than conqueror through the man that trusted him.

That's what we discover in chapter 20. It came to pass after this also that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them other besides the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great mountain against thee from beyond the sea on this side, Syria.

Behold, they are the Enhazons and Tamar, which is in Gedi. That was bad news. This was calculated under the old terms of reference at any time to produce panic in the camp.

This was the threat of a major disaster of the greatest magnitude. But now you see there's an entirely new attitude being adopted because now there's an entirely new principle to apply. Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

Instinctively, at once, he said, This isn't my situation. This isn't my problem. This isn't a threat to me.

This is to be referred and related at once to my God. Have you learned that yet? Do you realize that this is going to be the outworking of what God has worked in? I don't know what the next test will be. It may be something quite tiny or insignificant, as you might, humanly speaking, measure it.

It might be some overwhelming calamity that suddenly breaks on your head like a tropical thunderstorm. But this is the attitude to be applied in relation to the principle now adopted. No panic.

No fuss. You step right back. This must be referred at once to the Lord Jesus, who is my life.

In speaking to some of you and chatting with others personally, I've said to you, don't keep asking God for help. And I can see your eye lighting up and say, well, look, there you are, you see. I was right after all, wasn't I? Yes, but you see, it depends what you mean by asking for help.

There's a world of difference between begging and appropriation. It isn't the language that you use. It's the attitude of your heart.

I suppose if my boy needed something very, very urgently, he'd come and ask me, but he wouldn't be begging for it. At least I hope he wouldn't. There wouldn't be any need for him to beg if it was something really legitimate.

I'd be more than happy within my capacity to meet his need. You see, to ask help of God, and we shall see how Jehoshaphat did it in a moment, to ask help of God is not to plead with him as though he were unconcerned. As I've said to some, importunity is not a pistol at God's head.

Importunity is your need confidently placed at his feet. And you simply come and remind him that you've placed it there to leave it there. That's importunity.

Jehoshaphat now knew his resources. He stood in the congregation of Judah, verse 5, and continuing in verse 6, he said, All Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? Rulest thou not over all the kingdoms of the heath? In thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand it? Ah, now he's on firm ground. He begins by an absolute, unashamed affirmation of the utter overwhelming adequacy of God.

Art not thou God in heaven? What are we told in Hebrews chapter 11? He that cometh to God must first believe that God is. So he begins at the point where faith begins. God is.

But he goes beyond that now. Verse 7. Art not thou our God? In other words, the God who is, is my God. That he that cometh to God must first believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder.

Who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the friend? Forever. He's taken trouble too to examine his Bible. The record of God's past dealings with his people, he's on sure ground now.

This land, being threatened, had been given by God, never deserved, never earned. It was something that God had given his friend. Forever.

And he is now invoking the integrity of a God who is not a man that he should lie. And they dwelt therein, and they have built thee a sanctuary, saying, If when evil cometh upon us as the sword, judgment, pestilence, famine, any single circumstance that could ever enter into the minds of man, as they stand in thy presence, for thy name is in this house, and cry unto thee, then, they said in our affliction, as we cry, thou wilt hear and help. Now, he said, having got the decks well cleared, and they were well cleared, weren't they? He's affirmed his absolute confidence in the fact that God is, that the God who is, is unconquerable, not able to withstand thee.

He has identified by faith the God who is, the unconquerable God, with himself and his people. He's affirmed the fact that they're in the land that he, God, gave them. Forever.

Now, he says, behold the children of Adam, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and destroyed them not. Behold, I say, just look at them, how they reward us to come to cast us out of thy possession. We're only stewards.

It's thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit. See how they reward us to come to cast us out of thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit. Affirmation of the person of God, identity of that personal God with their interests, because their interests are bound up with God's interests, and then after

that positive affirmation, he simply lays the situation on the table and says, behold, just look at it, God.

Behold, I say, verse 12, O our God, wilt thou not judge us? We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do. I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, but our eyes are upon thee. Now that's appropriation.

That's how he asked for help. Now it's begging about that, wasn't it? The whole thing was a positive affirmation of faith, a complete repudiation of self-sufficiency. He didn't ask God to give them a little help in their resources, what they were doing.

He didn't say, God, look what we're doing, we're doing our very best, see, but we need a little shove from behind us. That wasn't what he said. He says, God, we have no might against this great company that cometh against us.

We haven't a clue as to what to do. Our eyes are upon thee. We're simply waiting for instructions.

And all Judas stood before the Lord with their little hands. Well, now, whose responsibility was it from that moment? Verse 14, Upon Jehaziel, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation. And he said, Hearken ye, O Judah, ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou King Jehoshaphat.

Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude. The battle is not yours, but God's. In other words, God's instant response to the affirmation of faith that repudiated self-sufficiency and cast the whole situation unreservedly upon God, God's instant response was, All right, Jehoshaphat, it's taken.

It's taken. No panic. Don't be dismayed.

Don't be fearful. I've got this thing in hand. The battle's not yours.

You've given it away. You've given it to God. Now it's His.

That's the rest of faith. He that has entered into rest has ceased from his own words. As every new situation arises, instantly you give it away.

Who to? The Lord Jesus. Isn't that great? Suddenly you're confronted with a tremendous worry. Well, whose worry is it? It can't be yours because you are crucified with Christ and dead men don't worry.

Crucified with Christ, nevertheless you live. Not you, but Christ lives in you. So whose worry is it? Christ's.

But he never worries. Because he always knows the end from the beginning. He always knows at any given moment, in any set circumstance, exactly what he's going to do.

He may not let you know for a week. May not let you know for three months. But he won't be inactive.

But the wonderful thing is, it's not your worry. The moment you give yourself the right to worry, you give yourself the right to live. And God has only given you the right to die.

So that you do not reckon with yourself, you reckon with God who raises the dead. Tomorrow, verse 16, go ye down against them. Behold they come up by the cliff of Diz.

Ye shall find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Zuru. Seek the enemy out and march, God said. This is one of the paradoxes of the Bible.

Rest in faith is never inactivity, it's Christ activity. The Lord Jesus affirmed, as we have already seen, that he could do nothing apart from the Father. But that doesn't mean to say that the Lord Jesus Christ was pathetically lethargic.

No, it simply means that in the whole activity of the lifetime of the Son of God, it was the activity of the Father through the Son, and it kept him busy almost day and night for 33 years. And as you rest and relax into Christ, don't imagine that it's going to make you languish. Some folk often object on this very score.

They say, if you talk to people like this, they'll become far too subjective, and they won't have any vision, they won't have any concern for the lost, they'll just put their feet on the mantelpiece and lean back into an armchair. But how blasphemous. How blasphemous to suggest that the moment I present my body unreservedly in total availability to the Lord Jesus, that he in me will be totally unconcerned about the lost.

What a blasphemous suggestion. That the moment I sign myself over as totally available to the one alone who has the right to direct the conflict, that he won't be on the job. Oh, my Christian friend, I'm going to tell you this, that if you make yourself out like a blank check to the Lord Jesus Christ and let him expend you, it'll keep you busy day and night as you never knew it before, but always in perfect rest.

Tired, of course you'll be tired, but always inwardly at peace. You'll know that strange poise that in the midst of a multitude of things that have to be done, keep you serenely calm, and instead of living on your nerves and everybody else's, you rest in the Christ. And it doesn't matter how baffling the situation, no, no matter how impossible, you quietly say, thank you, Lord, and if it's a brick wall you've got to walk through, you walk straight at it, just when you get there.

Think how Moses tried to deal with the situation of his people in bondage, ended up only by murdering one Egyptian whom he couldn't even bury because he left his toes sticking out of the sand. And 40 years later, way in the backside, looking after a handful of cattle, after 40 years at last when he steps back into God's story, steps back into it, and he leads his people out by command, and suddenly he's confronted with the Red Sea in front and the Egyptian following hard behind. Was there ever a dilemma like that? Death to the front of me and death behind me and no way of either side.

But no panic, no panic now, because Moses refused to accept any responsibility whatever for that situation. He simply looked up into God's face and said, God, I started telling my story 40 years ago and it wasn't a very good one. It landed me in the backside of the wilderness.

Now, the situation is, to say the least, a little sticky, but, and yours is the next chapter. Red Egyptians behind and all the folk around me are waiting for the next chapter. Over to you.

And God said, thanks Moses. That's what I like to hear. That's the language of somebody who's learned the principles of divine action.

You're quite right. Death in front of you, death behind you, quick march. In you go.

And you'll discover that the problem that battles you, the problem from which you in your own strength and in your own wisdom would inevitably flee. You'll find the very problem that threatens you in front of you, the deep depths of the Red Sea, you'll find that that problem is the solution of your problem. In and

through and on dry ground by divine intervention raised from the place of death as they were baptized into Moses, going through the Red Sea to be poised upon the threshold of a new life and a new land, which the Egyptians are saying to do well.

Drown. And when God told his story, he didn't just bury one with his toe sticking out. He put the whole lot in and buried them all in one.

That's what Jehoshaphat found out. God said, I've taken over. Isn't it a thrilling and a wonderful thing? This is the principle that you'll find again and again, even when Joshua led them into the promised land.

And the first big problem confronted them. Now it's a question of working it out in practice. It was all very well listening to sermons on But here we are.

And there's Jericho right in front of us. And Joshua, not quite yet sure of how to put the principle into practice, went out and made a reconnaissance as to how now we're going to deal with Jericho. And he saw the man with a sword in his hand.

He said, Who are you? Are you on our side? Are you on their side? Rather big sword you've got in your hand there. I'd like to know on whose side it's coming down. You know what the answer was? No, he said.

No, you got me wrong. As captain of the Lord's host, I don't take sides. I take over.

Get the principle. You see, when you're a carnal Christian, you're always making God's plans, deciding what you'll do, just like Jehoshaphat, when he said straight away, do I have it? Oh, you make your plans and then you ask God to take your side. God says, no, I don't take sides.

I take over. Jehoshaphat learned. He didn't ask God to help him by taking his side.

He said, I've got nothing. I am nothing. I can do nothing.

We've no life and I have no plans. Oh, what a wonderful thing to come to God like that. I am nothing.

I have nothing. I can do nothing. I have no plans.

Here I am waiting for instructions. And God says, don't be afraid. Don't be dismayed.

The battle is not yours. It's mine. But now march, march straight at the enemy.

March, go on straight at him and see the salvation of the Lord with you. First 17, 2 Chronicles 20. You shall not need to fight in this battle.

Set yourself, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you. 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 Kohites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high. And they rose early in the morning and they went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah. Hear me, inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Believe in the Lord your God. What shall we do that we might do the works of God? Said the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the work of God, that you believe, that you step out of every situation and with relentless insistence and consistency, you depend upon your God and leave him to take over in the battle.

Believe in the Lord your God. So shall ye be established. Believe his prophet.

So shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, to say, Praise the Lord for his mercy endures forever. As they marched against the enemy, overwhelming in their numbers, far too great for Jehoshaphat for such resources as he, humanly speaking, might have.

But now he goes in all the might of an almighty God who has assumed responsibility for the outcome of the conflict, and on the way they sing, they sing, they sing the praise of God in the face of their enemies. Has Jehoshaphat learned anything? Oh, he's learned a whole lot, since he made that false affinity with a man God hated and whom he had sentenced to death. And verse 22, and when they began to sing and to praise, when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir which were come against Judah, and they were smitten.

God waited for their praise. God watched them march, but he held back all his forces and all his resources and all the omnipotence of the triune deity. He held it all back and says, I'm waiting for them to sing, I'm waiting for them to say thank you, I'm waiting for the praise of victory before I've given it for that.

But when they began to sing and to praise, God smote the enemy. And we're told in verse 27, they returned every man of Judah and Jerusalem and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them to go again to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. Now do you see the principle in action? It was a theory in chapter 19, a theory born of the bitterness of chapter 18.

But it's a glorious accomplished fact, experience has now been added to truth by obedience. And this is going to be your glorious, glorious 1962. I've got a tremendous confidence in what the Lord Jesus Christ is going to do in your lives in these coming months.

You're not going to come back to Katoomba next Christmas just to tell a story of defeat. There are some of you, you're going to come back in a year's time and you're going to say it was gloriously true. But in a sense it was a theory to me up there at Katoomba at Christmas.

I learned it, I got the principle, I gripped it and I said thank you. But as I went down into the valley it was still in a sense something I'd learned in my head. But do you know as I began, immediate dilemma, I proved every day, every day in every situation, every certain, every problem, every temptation, every responsibility, every new problem that's confronted me, I proved the overwhelming adequacy of Christ.

And now I've got 12 months of experience added to the truth which I then began to obey. That's why I believe that we shall see infinitely more of what has happened this week in six months time than right now. And even more in six years time.

If we're just giving you a shot in the arm, you know giving you a challenge with a desperate need of the world until you all churned up inside and you all rolled up your sleeves and said we'll go out and do something for God, I wouldn't have had much expectation of this conference. It would have all withered and faded. You'd have been like balloons with a small leak, you know, you've gone out great big fat balloons and they would have been for 12 months until just a horrible little thing would be brought up here

and presented to the speaker and say please blow them up again.

You know that's what happens at any number of conventions and conferences. People bring their empty balloons to have them blown up and they go away fine. You know those sort of figure balloons that kids have now.

They all stand up right there and then they go like this. I've seen it. You don't even need to be a Christian for that.

But it isn't this we're after. It's that you should discover in the presence of Christ within you the principle of divine action. In the experience of which principle you will be enlarged in your enjoyment of Christ as day succeeds today and every week will be a new adventure.

So that experience is piled upon experience that leaves you with an ever-widening base for your faith, undergirded again and again by the sheer integrity of God who doesn't lie, who vindicates all his promises. And you're going out from this place not to prove how much you can do for God, not to prove your size for God. You're going out recognizing that you are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing.

And you're going out to prove God's size and to allow the Lord Jesus to demonstrate through you how gloriously he acts adequate he is. And God will begin to act when you begin to say thank you in joyful anticipation before ever the battle has been joined. I'm going to finish in just about four minutes, five minutes.

Then we shall pronounce the benediction, we shall go home rejoicing. But I want you to see that this is the New Testament teaching concerning the appropriation of faith. We're just going to turn quickly to one or two passages, that's all.

And I want you to see, maybe you've never noticed it before, how prayer is linked indissolubly with prayer. For prayer is an affirmation of your attitude, a blanket affirmation, an attitude that you've adopted once and for all. Instinctively now, the principle of my life is that everything must instinctively, automatically, at once be related to the Lord Jesus because he's the only one who's adequate and he's the only one who has the right to exercise jurisdiction.

So in the second epistle, the first epistle to the Thessalonians in the fifth chapter in verse 16, we're going to read the four verses only. They're some of the shortest verses in the Bible. Evermore pray without ceasing.

That means maintain this attitude without ceasing. You couldn't pray without ceasing according to the definition of praying that you had when you came here a week ago. That would mean this inward attitude of dependence, which is focused as a situation arises in words upon that situation.

That's all that verbal praying is. Verbal praying is simply giving a manifestation of an attitude already adopted. So no calamity takes you by surprise because in principle you've already recognized the answer to any kind of calamity.

So when it arises, it doesn't take you by surprise. There it is in front of you and you immediately focus your attitude of dependence upon that situation. And because of the adequacy of Christ, because he's as good as his name, you're left with no alternative but to do what the next verse tells you, verse 18, in everything.

How many things? Everything. Give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerned. You're not allowed to keep one tiny little thing to worry about.

Isn't that bad news? Nothing to ring the neighbors up about. No good leaning over the garden fence now and pouring out your soul to Mrs. Jones because you've got nothing to pour your soul out about. In everything give thanks this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you quench not the spirit for the Holy Spirit is the one who occupying your humanity efficiency of Christ himself.

Now isn't that in everything? Give thanks having exposed the situation as Jehoshaphat did faithfully to God. He stepped back and said we've no might and we've no plan. We're looking to you.

Is that passivism? Well if it is let's have more of it. If God reacts the way always in us as he reacted then in Jehoshaphat. Look in Philippians, Philippians chapter 4, written for the hard of hearing, verse 4 of chapter 4 rejoice in the Lord again and again I say rejoice.

Be careful for nothing but in everything everything by prayer and supplication that's invoking the almightiness of an almighty God. That's what it means in prayer and supplication placing every situation on the table all that you would seem to recognize as a need. You simply place it on the table and then it says with prayer and supplication and with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God.

Prayer and supplication gather up the situation stick it on the table and then you stand back and you quote verse 19 my God my need your riches. Thank you very much. Simple isn't it? Result verse 7 the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

That's God's plan. Colossians chapter 4 verse 2 continue in prayer in other words constantly affirm your attitude of dependence. Watch in the same how with thanksgiving with thanksgiving and finally Ephesians chapter 5 be not drunk with wine verse 18 wherein an excess but be filled with the spirit speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Doing what? This is the hallmark of a man woman boy girl genuinely filled with the Holy Ghost giving thanks. How often? Always. So how about all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is appropriation. This is simply acting as though God were and finding that he is. How wonderful who then is the one who faces the future in 1962 not you Christ himself anyway and he takes your life fills it with himself and tells out his story the great violinist enraptured his audience as he played and then suddenly stopped walked across the platform lifted up his violin and smashed it across the back of the chair threw the pieces on the ground everybody was amazed shocked then he went to the front of the platform he said ladies and gentlemen I bought that violin yesterday morning for seven shillings and tenpence then he went behind the curtain and he produced his own priceless violin and he began to play again the same piece and none could tell the difference you see it wasn't the instrument it was the player you are nothing you have nothing you can do nothing that's the wonder of it that's the blessing of it

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