



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC The Valley of Berakah (2Chr 20:1-30)

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THEME Kingdom Quest

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been declared a global emergency by the World Health Organisation. Singapore has raised DORSCON (Disease Outbreak Response System Condition) level to Orange. Many people are anxious, concerned and there's still much unknown about the virus. What is God's kingdom like in a crisis like this? How do we then, as God's kingdom people, respond to this global crisis?

In this sermon, we learn from King Jehoshaphat as he turned to God in a pressing time of facing a "vast army" which was less than a day's foot march away from the city. (2Chr 20: 1-2)

The Valley of Berakah

1) PRAYER IN THE FACE OF CRISIS

"Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord..." (2Chr 20:3-4) Jehoshaphat's very first response was to go to God in prayer. Instead of spending this critical moment preparing his horses and chariots, he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. He chose to put his trust the Lord.

- **Seek God, not a Solution**

Jehoshaphat first chose to seek God and magnify the character of God (2Chr 20:6). He acknowledged God's sovereignty over the kingdoms and nations. He proclaimed of God's power and might. We are reminded that solution is important but the most important thing first is to know where to place our trust and who to place our trust in. Next, Jehoshaphat remembered God's goodness. (2Chr 20:7). When we are in a state of panic, it is easy to forget of God's goodness. One way we can remember God's goodness is to keep a journal of all the significant events of what happened, what God did and how we can respond. Lastly, Jehoshaphat called on God's promises to hear their prayer and to save them. (2Chr 20:8-9). Similarly, we can pray the word of God to claim the promises of God.

- **Hope in God, not our Strength**

"For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." (2Chr 20:12) Jehoshaphat recognised and acknowledged his weaknesses and chose to place his hope in God. Heb 12:1-2 reminded us that we can have this hope because, Jesus Christ, the founder and perfecter of our faith, has endured the cross and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. We can therefore reject fear, uncertainty and panic, and fix our eyes on Jesus because of what Jesus had done on the cross of us.

- **Fight alongside God, not on our Own (2Chr 20:13-17)**

God strengthened Jehoshaphat by reminding him of God's presence with them. *"Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out and face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you"* Rom 8:31-39 further reminded us that if God is for us, nothing can be against us.

2) PRAISE IN RESPONSE TO CRISIS

"Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before he Lord" (2Chr 20:18)

- **Choose Worship not Worry**

Bowing down is a posture of total dependence and surrender to God. Jehoshaphat chose to yield to the sovereignty of God. Rom 12:1-2 further reminded us to offer our body as living sacrifice in worship so that we can be transformed by the renewal of our minds. Instead of succumb to worry, we can make an intentional decision to worship and renew our mind.

- **Choose Worship not War**

"Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendour of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army..." (2Chr 20:20-21) Jehoshaphat showed everyone - God, his people and his enemy, that the Lord is over all and we can worship God even in trials. Let thanksgiving and worship be our way of life.

3) PEACE AFTER THE CRISIS

- **From Crisis to Blessing (2Chr 20:22-26)**

God turned the valley of death into the valley of blessing for Jehoshaphat as he carried off the plunder - and the articles of value were more than they could take away.

- **From Fear to Rejoicing**

"returned joyfully.... For the Lord had given them cause to rejoice..." (2Chr 20:27-28)

Isaiah 61:3 also reminded us that God will give us the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit

- **From Panic to Peace**

"and the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side." (2Chr 20:29-30) Heb 4:9-11 also urges us to enter God's rest. This rest does not mean a rest from crisis and problems, for God has also warned us of more tribulations to come. This is a rest in God through obedience because we have a certain hope and future in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION

The world is watching us in this crisis. Do we respond in faith? Or is our behaviour displaying fear? A crisis like this is a place where faith is purified. We can choose to be the light that brings hope, or we will be the salt that loses its saltiness if we fail to respond. Let our first response be of prayer and worship as we learn to rest in Him. Let us be the light that shines for the Kingdom of God in a crisis like this, may we bring blessing, rejoicing and peace to the land.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 2Chr 20:3-17. How did King Jehoshaphat pray in his time of distress? How do you usually pray to God about your problems?

2. Jehoshaphat responded with praise and worship even in the midst of a crisis. Have you ever praised and worshipped God in the midst of your crisis? Why or why not? Share your experience.

3. How can our speech, our behaviour, our attitude, be one that bring blessing, rejoicing and peace in the midst of the fear and panic of the COVID-19? Give specific examples.