

How to Pray When Satan Wreaks Unrelenting Havoc

Schools are closing. The stock market is crashing. Economies are staggering. Hospitals are preparing. People are panicking. Stores are emptying.

The coronavirus pandemic, or COVID-19, is taking a global toll. For many, it looks dire.

However, the Bible is full of examples of God's miraculous deliverance during hopeless situations. At this moment, the world needs a confident church amid uncertainty. Through yielded vessels, God's authority and peace will prevail to bring hope and change to a stunned world.

I'm grateful that President Donald Trump called for a National Day of Prayer on March 15. Prayer is not an addendum to our faith; prayer breathes from communion with God and moves mountains. In times of crisis, the Bible and history record the result of united prayer against common enemies.

Impossibility Creates an Atmosphere for a Miracle

Do you believe in miracles? I do. God is a God of miracles—the same today, yesterday and forever. I love to read Bible accounts and church history where God makes a miraculous intervention for His people. To me, it's the Lord's invitation to believe He will do it again!

I'd look to look at a wonderful story of miracle deliverance from a common enemy in 2 Chronicles 20 with you today (I encourage you to read this entire story in 2 Chr. 20:1-30).

"After that, the Moabites and the Ammonites, together with some Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. And some came and declared this to Jehoshaphat, 'A large multitude is

coming against you from across the Dead Sea from Edom; and observe, they are in Hazezon Tamar' (that is, En Gedi)" (2 Chr. 20:1-2).

King Jehoshaphat was in power. If you'll remember, King Jehoshaphat came to reign at a young age; he was a righteous king who revered the Lord. During his time in power, you can read back in Chapter 18, he removed the high places and groves (that were in God's land), which were used for idol worship. He sent his army into these places and tore them down.

This is a wise thing to seek to do in our lives; we should aim to tear down the old areas of our lives that were not dedicated to the Lord. However, Jehoshaphat didn't stop there. Having torn down the high places, he sent teachers and brought in the principles of the Word of God.

You see, it's not enough to simply remove the negative in our lives—we must rebuild on the Word. We must refill that empty place with God and His Spirit.

A Common Enemy

What happened to King Jehoshaphat after he removed the enemy territory and rededicated it to the Lord? The enemy surrounded him, ready to attack the nation. Historians have said they were outnumbered 60 to 1. It was an impossible situation.

See what happens in verses 3-4:

"Then Jehoshaphat was fearful and set himself to seek the Lord, and he called for a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah was assembled to seek the Lord; even from all the cities of Judah, they came to obtain aid from the Lord."

Notice Jehoshaphat's initial reaction: he feared! It's easy to become fearful when dire events loom. The coronavirus is real; there is nothing fake about it. The science reveals it spreads twice as fast as the flu and has a much higher mortality rate.

However, faith doesn't deny the facts of a situation, but trusts God for help and deliverance—in this case from a pestilence called coronavirus.

The psalmist wrote:

"You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that strikes at you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling, there shall be no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your tent" (Ps. 91:-6, 9-10).

The prophet told Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah:

"And he said, 'Pay attention all Judah, and those dwelling in Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you, 'Do not fear, nor be dismayed because of this great army, for the battle is not yours, but God's'" (2 Chr. 20:15).

Did you catch that? Do not be afraid! Why? The battle is God's!

We believe in science and our medical community. We don't disregard their models and pandemic practice. We support their efforts. We pray for leaders and the medical community to have divine wisdom and protection. But as a faith community, we also know God still answers prayer, stops pandemics and changes dire situations quickly. It's who He is!

Jehoshaphat turned his fear into action: he sought the Lord with prayer and fasting in the land.

Jehoshaphat prayed in verses 5-12:

And Jehoshaphat stood in the midst of the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord before the new courtyard, and he said:

"O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens?"

And do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In Your hand are strength and might, and there is no one who can oppose You. Did You not, our God, drive out those who lived in this land before Your people Israel, and You gave it perpetually to the descendants of Abraham, who was in covenant love with You. And they have dwelled in it and have built in it for You a sanctuary for Your name saying, 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, then we will stand before this temple and before You because Your name is in this temple. And we will cry out to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver.'

"Now here are the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, when they turned away from them and did not destroy them. See how they are rewarding us by coming to drive us out of Your possession, which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not render judgment on them? For we have not strength enough to stand before this great army that is coming against us. And we do not know what we should do, but our eyes are on You" (2 Chr. 20:5-12).

Out of this prayer, three prayer principles emerge.

- 1. We pray because of who God is:** First, we pray on the basis of who God is. Jehoshaphat begins his prayer not with the need, but with God Himself—God's character. If you begin with your need, your focus is wrong.

Prayer isn't reminding God how serious the situation is. Can you see God wringing His hands?! We must cultivate a relationship with God to really know who He is, what He is like, what His character demonstrates.

Jehoshaphat turns his back on the armies of the enemy. He fills his heart and mind with the greatness of God. God is big enough to orchestrate all of the pieces in our lives. Whatever

the situation may be, God can bring the right people, the right provision into place and so on.. It's who He is.

2. We pray because of what God has done. Jehoshaphat is standing in the land that God has promised them. "You drove out the inhabitants ... We were an unorganized people, but God you did it supernaturally ... if we are going to stay here, it will be supernatural!"

He's essentially saying, "God, You did something supernatural back then, and we put our eyes on You. We put our feet down and say, 'The very God who helped us across the Red Sea and across the Jordan is going to move now and keep this in our hands!'"

Can you remember a time when God helped you? Do you have any covenant history with God? Pray based on what He has done for you and others in the past. It's an invitation to the miraculous!

3. We pray because of what God has said. King Jehoshaphat prays on the basis of who God is, what God has done and finally on the basis of what God has said.

It's a good thing he knew what God had said. If he hadn't known what God had spoken, and prayed, holding that word up to God and against the enemy, *the enemy would have taken their inheritance.*

What does this look like? "God, you said, 'by His stripes we are healed.' God, you said, 'Seek Me first and all these things will be given to you.'"

God loves it when you and I stand on His Word.

You see, many believers get a victory based on the sovereignty of God, but if they don't know what is in their covenant contract with God, the enemy will come and take it away from them, whether it is healing, financial breakthrough, their

God-given destiny and more.

Someone might say, "Well, I guess it wasn't God's will, or I guess it was just my imagination." No! Do you know what He has promised you? If you don't know what God has promised you, that which is in His covenant policy, you'll make no claim on it.

Jehoshaphat knew that the enemy had no right. "Right here, Lord, it says in your covenant this land is ours forever!" Therefore, enemy, you can try and send 60 to 1, *but God said!* I put my feet down on the solid rock of the Word.

Hide His Word in your heart, make your claim and stand on it!

Final Thoughts

How do you pray when all hell has broken loose? You go to God alone.

If our eyes are on the great multitude coming against us, we become discouraged. But when they are on God, on His throne, all things become possible. Our world needs the church to stand in the gap and pray. This is not a time to panic like many in the world, but rather to keep our eyes on Him and trust Him amid this storm. We will get through this—nothing is impossible for God!

Are your eyes on Him? Are you trusting in who He is, what He has done and what He has promised?

Make a demand today based on who God is, what He has done and what He has said. God is for us!

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