

# The battle is not yours, but God's (Quality: Good)

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[ 0 : 00 ] The Lord helping us, I ask your attention to the second book of Chronicles, chapter 20, the part of verse 15, 16 and 17.

The second book of Chronicles, chapter 20, the part of verse 15, 16 and 17.

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.

Tomorrow go ye down against them, behold they come up by the cliff of Ziz, and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jerul.

Ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem.

[ 1 : 18 ] Fear not, nor be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you. A long text, but it cannot be separated, neither experimentally, neither grammatically.

But a few words first about the context. The people and children of God, the Israel of God, were where they should be.

They were gathered together, as we have read down the word that the Lord provided for them, in the place they were, they should be, but now against them came these three great enemies.

And it would appear that they were on the borders, if not within the borders of the land. Very great enemies, great opposition to Jehoshaphat and his people.

Opposition of which, of course, they were unable to in any way affect or to, by themselves, overthrow.

[ 2 : 46 ] But they, with grace, Jehoshaphat with grace, went into the house of the Lord and sought to lay the matter before the Lord.

I've often said, you know, that if ever you want confirmations of prayer meetings, we have it in this chapter. They stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord before the new court.

They called a meeting for prayer. And they laid their burden, their exercise, their many fears, they laid it before the God of Israel.

They sought his help and asked for his deliverance. And there's something also, though it might seem so exceedingly simple. In verse 13, we read, And all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

It was just as if, you know, they were waiting for the answer. Prayer meetings are ruled and overruled, of course, by the time.

[ 3 : 55 ] And we meet for prayer and in an hour or so, we disperse and we go home. But the case was so great and the burden was so heavy and the need of Israel was so that the Lord must appear or else they would be defeated.

And so they all stood before the Lord. And you'll notice too that not one of them were separated in that day.

Their little ones, their wives and their children, the whole of the families gathered together for prayer. But you will notice also that the Holy Spirit worked.

And if ever there was those in the Scriptures of which our heart goes out after in affection, spiritual affection and love, Jayazel is such a character.

Well, he is so to me. There in the midst of all this multitude of people stood one man and the Lord spoke to him and spoke through him.

[ 5 : 03 ] He was a Levite of the sons of Asaph. He had his office or his work to do in the house of God. The work of a Levite, what you know, was to assist the priests, was to indeed be responsible for the music and also for the cleanliness of God's house, amongst other things.

But amongst all that great number there stood this man, Jayazel. And he was God's mouthpiece. And so the text we have is that which the Lord spoke to him which he was to speak to Jehoshaphat.

Now, the Lord knows, and I did pray yesterday, both in private and in our family altar, that this day there might be a word for some soul in the house of the Lord today or others whose pathway, of course, is of complete of no knowledge to me.

But the Lord knows, I would pray this and I would seek this day that as the Lord has given us such a word to speak, that it might be for the purpose of encouragement and comfort and direction to the people of God whether it is one or more.

Now, the text then, although it is a long one, we cannot separate it because of its content and because of the way in which the Lord was to use his word and to speak through this man.

[ 6 : 48 ] So, it starts, I saith the Lord unto you, it was what do you come up to the Lord's house and the Lord has given you the ministry of his grace week after week and week nights as well but do you come to the Lord's house in this frame and in this spirit it's to hear the word of his grace but it's to hear what God the Lord will speak.

My friends, it's listening for the voice of the Lord. It's hearing what God will say. You know, I often thought of that word in Jeremiah of late.

Jeremiah was a persecuted servant of God and he was put into prison because they didn't like what he spoke and he told them the Lord's word.

He was, he came with a thus saith the Lord and so they put him in prison because they didn't like his word and my friends that's still about today when there's a faithful servant of God he often been put in prison because of what he says they don't want to hear what he says but you know Zedekiah that Judas king brought him out of prison and asked him is there a word from the Lord and Jeremiah said yes there is well now here we have a word from the Lord and we have a word too which it is so graciously received by Jehoshaphat and the people of God because they were waiting for him having stood all Judas stood before the Lord with their little ones their wives and their children they were waiting to hear what the Lord will say they got a burden which they could not lay down they got a trouble for which they could not escape from they had to if the children of

Moab and of Ammon and of Mount Seir would have their way they were to be overthrown and destroyed thus saith the Lord unto you but then again there is a place that you and I have got to come to in our exercise in our prayers in our trials in our afflictions in our concerns when we wait upon the Lord we've got a place to come to you know and that is this and I suppose that some would have thought this was the text today neither know we what to do but our eyes are upon thee my friends this must come first this must come first when the Lord is to speak to his people in ways of divine direction or in the ways of deliverance for their soul or their pathway they must be brought to this place and that is total dependency and total emptiness and poverty

[10:02] O our God wilt thou not judge them for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us neither know we what to do but our eyes are upon thee my friends it's a great mercy when the Lord empties before he feels it's a great mercy when he reduces and takes away all supports and props and helps elsewhere we sang recently at home that word no help in self I find but though I sought it well the native treasure of my mind is sin and death and hell my friends when you're in soul trouble or whether you're in the trials of an exercise the trying of faith whatever that may be in your lot you know you'll find it unprofitable to turn elsewhere even to the best of friends to the best of people the most gracious of people oh the exercise here of Jehoshaphat was in this one place he was to wait on the Lord and he was to wait for the

Lord my friends that is the place where you'll have to come if I'm speaking to a soul here that is in this text for this day thus saith the Lord unto you the Lord to speak but my friends you'll be brought to nothing first you'll be brought to nothing there's no strength no wisdom no grace within us that will alter the circumstance will supply the support that you need comfort you in your times of affliction or deliver you out of the greatest of your trials my friends it's the Lord's hand and it's the Lord's work and it's he that shall have all the honour and glory but then there's something else I want to say before we go on in this beginning of this text there's submission there's submission to the mind and will of God here my friends when you draw when you draw near to the

Lord with your trial with your trouble submission becomes this and it comes before obedience submission they waited on the Lord and they watched the hand of the Lord they listened for the Lord and that was the word which they thought divine direction to be given them so in that word that we have just reminded you of neither know we what to do but our eyes are upon thee that was submission to what the will of the Lord was they were to listen to him and to him only they wasn't to lean on their own strength or their own wisdom or their own grace they weren't to say they're God's divine they're God's national people so therefore they have a right for this or that or the other they were to listen to what the will of the Lord was and so submission is found in the hearts of Jehoshaphat and his people and before obedience there must be submission because you know when the Lord speaks to a people or to a person and it commences doesn't it our text this morning thus saith the Lord unto you the Lord is then revealing his will he is speaking to a soul and he's telling them what his will and purposes are you know in Psalm 37 you have this word commit thy way unto the Lord trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass now this is what these dear souls did in the house of God with Jehoshaphat they committed their way but then let me say this also the way that was set before them the pathway yet to walk they reminded the Lord in their prayer

Jehoshaphat did reminded the Lord in his prayer before Israel of what God had done the first words of the prayers of Jehoshaphat of course spoke of the greatness and the power and the authority and the faithfulness of the God of Israel O Lord God of our fathers art not thou God in heaven and ruleest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heaven in thy hand is there not power and might so that there is none able to withstand thee this is the God that they had to deal with Israel's God and then they said to confirm the covenant and to confirm the that Israel was the people of God art thou not our God my friends you can draw much comfort from these words but then he reminds the Lord

Jehoshaphat does that they were there because the Lord had directed them there art thou our God who did drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever and they dwelt therein and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name and he goes back in his prayers as it were in remembrance of the day when Solomon was at the dedication of the temple and if you read at the dedication of the temple that he presented in his petitions these same words if when evil cometh upon us is the sword judgment or pestilence or famine we stand before this house and in thy presence for thy name is in this house and cry unto thee in our affliction then thou wilt hear and help you remember those were the words of Solomon my friends so they presented their petitions or Jehoshaphat presented his petition to this gracious

[ 16 : 20 ] God of Israel this faithful God of Israel this covenant keeping God of Israel and also to remind them in the past of the past blessings and promises because when Solomon presented his petitions there was a glory that filled the house and that was the glory of a covenant God but the word which we have my friends concerns the tomorrows of his people tomorrows my friends they've been brought thus far they are the Israel of God and God has appeared for them brought them out of Egypt brought them through the wilderness brought them into the promised land set them up as a nation before the rest of the world and the rest of the world cannot overthrow the national people of God but then Israel's God is an unchangeable God a faithful God so it is to him is these petitions presented and then there's this word from the Lord concerning their future pathway concerning their future way and the ordering of it all how sufficient and how suitable and indeed how wondrously sufficient is that word from the Lord thus saith the

Lord unto you my friends if you've got a tomorrow as God puts in your heart a pathway which is before you which is fearful to your old nature which is accompanied by three great enemies now you'll say well three great enemies one's enough my friends in the New Testament scriptures you will find three great enemies to the lot of God's people the world the flesh and the devil that's three great enemies my friends far and above your ability to stand on your own against such you and I have no strength nor wisdom of our own to withstand the torts or the temptations or the darkness or the distress you know we read of Satan for instance in Paul's epistle that he's described as a roaring lion he isn't always you know he isn't always have you ever listened to his whispers my friends that's not the path of a roaring lion you're saying it's just an effectual because he's got in your heart you know an ally and your old nature oh how he whispers and they're just whispers too but they're effectual that is they register and they begin to bring in doubts and fears they begin to distress the soul there's a withdrawing and this unbelief raises up is raised up and what about the path of temptation my friends every child of God will know somewhat of the path of temptation and how

Satan rests upon the unwillingness of old nature and tries by the old nature to walk another path which is contrary to the will and purposes of God thus saith the Lord unto you be not afraid nor dismayed by reason in this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God's my friends when you are taught by the Holy Spirit when you're brought into an exercise by the Holy Spirit into the days and ways which are set before you the pathway which is the Lord's purposes and will that you should walk and when you're brought into that submission to his mind and will in the matter my friends it will be always accompanied by opposition and that opposition will be distressing and that opposition will be with this intent to alter the way or to get you to withdraw from the way to take away your submission to the

Lord's will and to bend your natural mind into overthrowing what is the will of God but then you know there's one great enemy that we all suffer with if we've got grace pulled right into the Hebrew church reminds us of it again and my friends it's a common enemy to the people of God and let me remind you what it is in the 12th chapter of Hebrews he says wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us my friends you don't have to search to know what that sin is you don't have to say well you know I believe I've not committed this sin or that sin my friend what Paul speaks about there is the sin of unbelief that's common with the people of

God and my friends do you mourn over unbelief William Calper did you know and he said blind unbelief is sure to her and scan his work in vain God is his own interpreter and he will make it plain do you suffer with unbelief do you suffer with Satan's thoughts and temptations does he I'll tell you where Satan will touch and this will bring you into distress and into bondage the word here says thus saith the Lord unto you be not afraid nor dismayed by reason this great multitude my friends how he stirs up the fears of a child of God and that is the natural fear that lies in the heart my friends things which make us afraid the future path and all its opposition with all its distress my friends how and all the insufficiencies of old nature thus saith the

[ 23 : 01 ] Lord the Lord has spoken it's come from the mouthpiece of the Lord it comes through the man Jehozeel he is the servant of God and he's the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message and he speaks words of strength and words of comfort and words of consolation to Jehoshaphat and the people of God be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God's now when somebody speaks and Jehozeel speaks words of truth and righteousness when he speaks what the Lord has given him to speak the Lord always confirms his words of consolation and words of confidence to the people of God he confirms them by what it rests upon by the very fact my friends it's thus saith the Lord should it not be sufficient should it not be sufficient my friends if grace and faith was in exercise the Lord has spoken and the

Lord will fulfill he's a promise giving and he's a promise fulfilling God he is able to do far more than we can ask or even think my friends this is the God that spoke in Jehoshaphat's day this is the God that speaks today be not afraid or dismayed but he gives the reason why we shouldn't be afraid and he gives the reason why we shouldn't be dismayed for the battle is not yours but God's you know there's something very wonderful about these Old Testament situations and particularly about this one and the word of God is absolute simplicity to me but all for grace and faith to believe it when it is our pathway my friends here was three great enemies and here was Jehoshaphat with the only weapon he'd got which was effectual and that was the weapon of prayer and the

Lord's appearance for them was to deliver them out of the hand of these three great enemies and to bring them into that peaceful state and condition as we ended our reading the Lord and his God gave him rest round about now they did what they had to do and that's call upon the name of the Lord and that's all they had to do you know there's something very wonderful about this they was in such a dangerous and such an extreme situation but the Lord was to tell them what they were to do and they were to do nothing that seems to me to be quite remarkable grace and faith in exercise rest upon the word of a gracious and a faithful God you remember when they went out to the following morning they went out into the wilderness of Tico and as they went Jehoshaphat stood and said hear me oh Judah and Jerusalem and you inhabitants of Jerusalem believe in the Lord your God that's all

I had to do and I mean that in a gracious way that's not that's not blind faith that was trust and that was faith in a promise giving and a promise performing God if you read in the book of Nehemiah when those of Nehemiah's friends built and strengthened the walls of Jerusalem they of course as in Jehoshaphat's days reaped opposition from unbelieving Jews and so on and they worked on the wall one hand they held a weapon the other one they worked and we read that this continued and there were trumpet blowers situated along the wall so that if any attacked they would blow the trumpet and they would get support and help from elsewhere but there was one word you know

Nehemiah spoke to Israel and he said this in all this opposition in all this work that they had to do and they had to rebuild the walls and hang the gates in their places and this word has often reigned with me Nehemiah said to Israel remember the Lord remember the Lord my friends what else have they got what else have you got you've got three great enemies you've got a pathway to walk which is so opposite to your old nature you're suffering under the hands or the threat of these three great enemies the doubts and fears alternate rises and unbelieving fears rise in the heart rise in the heart my friends what have you got a child of God you know has on his side and for his deliverance a gracious and a promise keeping a promise performing

[ 28 : 31 ] God thus saith the Lord an awe dismayed by reason of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God's my friends that's a great mercy if you can rest upon his faithful word and who has brought you thus far and who has maintained you thus far who has been your strength and your support thus far who has heard your prayers to this moment of time my friends each new circumstance or each new trial each new affliction that comes into your lot they are oppositions to you they are hindrances to you they are things which distress you but does it not cause you to look back sometimes in thankfulness for the Lord thus far that he has brought you I believe

God's people you know are coming to this place at times the psalmist tells us about it in Psalm 27 where David is seeking the Lord's appearance and his help and he says this hide not thy face far from me put not thy servant away in anger thou hast been my help now that's David's looking back that's David's remembrance of the faithfulness of his God thou hast been my help and then he goes on to say leave me not neither forsake me O God of my salvation my friends do you remember how the Lord has brought you thus far then brought safely by his hand thus far why dost thou now give place to fear it is we often sing that don't we has ever trouble yet befall and he refused to hear thy call and has he not his promise past that thou shalt overcome at last 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 but then you know there's something else which every child of God shall walk in especially too as this word is about the tomorrows those things which are set before his people those pathways in which they are constrained by the Lord to walk and that is the trial of faith do you know something of that say what is the trial of faith well Peter writes of it of course in the first epistle his first epistle and the first chapter and he blesses the Lord in that first chapter of the mercies and the goodness and the kindness that are found in Christ Jesus but then he comes to this but now for a season if needs be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations now my friends is that where you are and he goes on to say that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearance of

Jesus Christ though it may be with someone or it may be with many that are in this season though now for a season but my friends here is a word from the Lord the Lord only can apply it and I beg he will do so that it may be proved that it's a word from the Lord this day be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God my friends that is the comfort of the people of Israel here and that is the comfort of the spiritual Israel of God I thought and it may be for a purpose that in you'll find these words a word in Romans 8 which again is I was going to use the word complementary to this word there the apostle as he writes to the

Romans and says this what shall we then say to these things if God be for us who can be against us my friends he didn't say there wouldn't be anybody against us and some of you may remember when we was at Lamberhurst the other Friday night we spoke of the the psalmist words in Psalm 107 he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation but my friends if you read on in the Psalm 107 you will find though Israel's God was ready to help and though he was as he heard the prayers of the people of God he raised up help and delivered them my friends whatever came in the way was the right way whatever opposition was found in the party and it had a right ending too but here we have Paul's words then what shall we say to these things if

[ 34 : 03 ] God be for us who can be against us well we know who can be against us and we know that by the fact that they raised themselves against us so often but here we have then this promise this wondrous covenant promise from the Lord be not afraid nor dismay by reason of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God's and I would also say this you know my friends as I am absolutely ignorant of your paths I know not what the Lord's purposes are for any one of you nor for the calls of truth nor for the Lord's servant is the pastor of this cause but we have our tomorrows which we fear we have those things in which we think they're going to be our overthrow to think they're going to be our overthrow in judges we find the case there of one poor unbelieving believer if you'll excuse my way of putting it how he was he felt the the

Lord would bring them to nothing if I can just find it in the book of judges in the 13th chapter we you remember Manoah and his wife were visited by an angel of the Lord and the angel of the Lord promised them that Samson should be born and that he should have a work to do in Israel but we read this that Manoah said unto his wife we shall surely die because we have seen God but his wife said unto him if the Lord were pleased to kill us he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands neither would he have showed us all these things nor would he at this time have told us such things as these my friend when God puts his hand to a when he instructs and teaches his people as to the future way in which they are to walk before him my friends that work and that way will be accomplished and

God reveals his mind and will and his eternal mind and will is this that the people of God shall submit and be obedient to his mind and will and as many fears and as Manoah here says because we have seen God we should die but my friends there is another word before that you know which is a word of comfort to the Lord people and the angel did wondrously and Manoah and his wife looked on that's a good place to come to you know no hand no hand of self in it nothing the Lord appears the Lord performs and there is a witness to that work but my friends there is nothing of the flesh in it 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 is he leading someone here is he directing someone here he is exercising someone here in a matter whether it's the church or the ministry my friends it's an exercise which

God begins God will maintain and God will bring you and I into the submission to it and the falling under it and nothing and no one can overthrow it I remember in my years ago now when we joined the church at Hanover my friends how tried and tempted we were having put our hand to the matter and there's a certain right way in which the Lord's people put their hands to the matter of the Lord because there must be a fulfilling of his will and purpose my friends how much opposition from Satan comes in a way of whispering in a way within one's own heart and attempting to bring to nothing what is the will of God but you know I was strengthened I hope by the words in the closing verse of the closing verse of the ninth of

Luke no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom 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 tomorrow go you down against them behold they come up by the cliff of Ziz you shall find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jerul you shall not need to fight in this battle my friends it would have been a battle wouldn't it if it was left to the natural mind and strength of the Israel of God but it was no battle it was no battle as far as they were concerned they had cast their burden on the

[ 39 : 29 ] Lord they had committed their way to the Lord they had sought him and for his appearance and he had come through to give them what they was waiting for a gracious promise but you know there's something else I want to say before I sit down and that's this has God given someone here a promise there's to be a performance of that promise my friends that's the trial that's the exercise if God's given you a promise a promise which is your tomorrows whatever that day may be it might not be Monday it's your tomorrows there's a performance of that promise that you will be the witness of and the mercy is you know he doesn't need your hand to it he doesn't need he will bring it to pass I don't know when it was but recently we spoke from the words in the 41st of

Isaiah words which were which are a comfort to the fearing and the distress of the people of God that's got a holy promise you know but it's a sufficient promise fear thou not for I am with thee be not dismayed for I am thy God I will strengthen thee yea I will help thee yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness when you my friends have anything to do with the revealed will of God whether you whatever that pathway is your calls to walk it will always be accompanied by fears that is the natural mind of a person and the distresses of Satan the opposition of the evil one and it might be from others also you might find like the poet says from sinner and from saint we meet with many a blow it comes from various sources

Satan raises up opposition to the will of God but my friends not only is the committing or the promise giving God speaking here but there is also the performance of that promise it may be in your case it may well be that there is a season between the two the Lord has spoken a sweet and precious promise but it's the performance of it which we shall look at later my friends but here is the word then of encouragement 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 Amen I Amen Let's close this morning by singing hymn number 229 to the tune Houghton 808.

Hymn number 229 Omnipotent Lord, my Saviour and King, Thy succour afford, Thy righteousness bring, Thy promises bind Thee compassion to have, Now, now let me find Thee, Almighty to save.

Hymn number 229 Hymn number 229 Thee?

[ 44 : 31 ] Thee? Thee? Thee? Thee?

Thee? Thee? Thee?

CHOIR SINGS I dreamt I leave, I will, I dreamt I will, The sound of the fire In the night his hands we pick.

Yes, look inside you And the things of sin Our shapes really start No matter who shall lead Sons of every brooks In the sky and the sky In the sky and the sky In the sky and the sky In the sky and the sky Dear Lord, grant thy blessing

Upon thy word And thy forgiveness of anything That's been amiss And Lord, remember As they gather here for the prayer meeting Lord, grant the spirit of prayer Grant them access Through Jesus Christ to the mercy seat And may there be a seeking For those answers And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father The fellowship and communion Of the Holy Spirit Remain with us each Now and always Amen