
Taking New Territory in Troubling Times, Pt. 12

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Today

We're okay with supernatural things — so long as they don't challenge our natural reasoning too much.

- Good with Jesus forgiving us — but us forgiving others 70x7 — disciples prayed to increase faith.
- Healing, delivering people — but not walking on water — disciples thought, that's a ghost.

- **Romans 8:28**

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (*some things — all things — really???*)

Today — *Three ingredients that may challenge our natural sensibilities, yet they must be practiced if we are going to live a thriving, powerful, Christian life, take new territory!*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Yes —
rejoice always,
pray without ceasing,
in everything give thanks —
God's will!

Is that too crazy for you? Does that challenge your logic and reason too much?

If so, it will go undone and you will miss out on the depths of God's miracle power in your life.

These three things are God's will

...because of what they produce for us

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

*prayer and thanksgiving
produces peace and composure*

Philippian Jail — Praying and Worshiping — Miraculous Freedom

Fact — no wonder rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, giving thanks in everything is God's will — look what those three things produce!

Today— Unpack a miraculous story that is rooted in prayer and worship — a miracle doesn't happen apart from prayer and worship.

Judah's King Jehoshaphat is about to be invaded by Ammonites, Moabites those from Mt. Seir — an innumerable, overwhelming number.

2 Chronicles 20:3-4

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

Application — *fear will either produce prayer and fasting — or paralyzing panic. God is calling us — an invitation to seek Him.*

Jehoshaphat's Prayer

“one of the dearest and most honest in all the Old Testament”

2 Chronicles 20:5-12

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save. 'And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."

5 Powerful Keys to this Prayer —

these MUST be incorporated into our prayer lives!

1. Possession — God of our Fathers — Our God (*we possess God and He possesses us*)
2. Power — You rule over all kingdoms and nations — In Your hand is power and might — no one is able to withstand You! *Do you magnify your problems, or do you magnify God?*
3. Promise — You gave us this land forever — You said You would hear and save in our distress.

“I like to plunge my hand into the promises, and then I find myself able to grasp with a grip of determination the mighty faithfulness of God. An omnipotent plea with God is:

“Do as Thou hast said.”¹

~ Charles Spurgeon

4. Problem — innumerable number are trying to throw us out of our inheritance — we don't know what to do, we have no power against them.
5. Pursuit — Priority — Provision — our eyes are upon You.

Notice what this prayer produced —

¹ Spurgeon, Charles. *The Power in Praising God* (Whitaker House, May 1998)

A New Promise

2 Chronicles 20:15-17

And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's... You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you."

Listen — some of us need to seek God with prayer and fasting to get a “now” promise!

A New Worship Experience

2 Chronicles 20:18-19

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

Listen — worship before the miracle happens is the single greatest expression of faith you can offer God.

A Miraculous Victory — Ambushed the Enemy

2 Chronicles 20:22-23

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

Listen — I want my prayer and worship to cause God to set an ambush against my enemies, those evil forces who are trying to steal, kill, and destroy my rightful inheritance to the peace, prosperity, and purposes of God for my life!

Conclusion

Beloved — We will not take new territory in these troubling times apart from rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks!

It is high time we take God at His word seriously — and start rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks — so He can work peace, composure, and miracles in our midst!

Discussion Questions

1. When you are seeking God's will for your life — do you consider starting with what He clearly states is His will... in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18?
2. Have you experienced the “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding”? When?
3. Do you magnify your problems — or do you magnify God?
4. Discuss: “Worship before the miracle happens is the single greatest expression of faith you can offer God.”
5. Read 2 Chronicles 20:22a. Talk about how their prayer and praise caused God to set an ambush against their enemies. Do you believe that can still happen today?
6. How are you going to take God at His word seriously?

NOTES