



GO! Worship

Session 2 – Worship in Time of Need
2 Chronicles 20:1-30

Key Verse: *When he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy splendor, as they went before the army, saying, “Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever,”* 2 Chronicles 20:21 (New Revised Standard Version, NRSV).

Introduction

It was not my intent to interfere or to disrupt a quiet moment, so I stood some distance from the grieving man, his eyes red from tears. The door to his late father’s hospital room was closed, his mother and siblings no doubt in somber vigil at bedside. As he extended his hand I thought, “He must be going in to be with them.” But I wrong. Instead, he reached for a metal utility cart, slightly less than three feet high, positioned beside the door. He held onto the cart with both hands and then knelt with both knees coming to rest on the hallway tile. What had been a moment of quiet grief was transformed into a sacred gesture of worship. Amid the chiming of call buttons and hushed voices the man had made an altar from a common utility cart. He was there with head bowed in humility and sorrow until another staff member, wanting to offer comfort, touched his shoulders and said, “We’re here for you.”

Worship can happen in any place, at any time. Sometimes the circumstances come with sadness, anticipation or sheer delight at answered prayer or unexpected blessing. Worship can take place in a chapel, a busy car stalled in traffic, or at home with a radio playing your favorite hymn. The time and venue are as diverse as each one of us in the course of our days. Above all, worship is about expressing confidence that someone is listening, someone is in control, caring, willing and more than able to help. Worship is faith that acknowledges the God-head, as a problem presents itself or is resolved. Foremost worship is marked by reverence and respect, as David would say, “Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor,” Psalm 29:2 (NRSV).

WITH A PARTNER, recall an occasion in which you paused to worship God. What emotions do you remember? Why does that memory stick with you even today?

King Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king of Judah, and he reigned twenty-five years (2 Chronicles 20:31). One of the critical challenges he faced is described in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30.

READ 2 Chronicles 20:1-4 aloud.

- What emotion does Jehoshaphat experience when confronted with these invaders?
- What does he do in response to his fear? (He seeks the Lord and calls for a fast.)
- What do we do when we are afraid? Allow the group to discuss their responses.

READ 2 Chronicles 20:5-12

What is it that Jehoshaphat says in his prayer to God? (He exalts God for God's power and sovereignty and then reminds God of the covenant that God established with Abraham.) Jehoshaphat is not too proud to say, "...we are powerless against this great multitude that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you," 2 Chronicles 20:12 (NRSV).

- What problem or concern is facing you, your family, your church family, or your community?
- Is there hope that the problem will be resolved in a way that honors God and brings you peace?

READ 2 Chronicles 20:13-17

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah and he spoke prophetically that the people should know that God is with them. The Holy Spirit of God offers each of us the assurance that God is with us (Read John 14:15-18).

READ 2 Chronicles 20:18-23

- What role did the people play in the victory over the invaders? (They entered into worship and God brought a divinely crafted victory.)
- **READ** 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. What role do you play in advancing God's kingdom?

READ 2 Chronicles 20:24-30

After the conflict the people assembled in the Valley of Beracah (blessing or praise) and blessed the Lord. They were rescued from their enemies and experienced unanticipated blessings.

- What spiritual lesson do we take away from this passage? Worship can take many forms: prayer, fasting, humbling oneself, speaking God's promises aloud, sounding instruments, lifting words/songs of praise, to name a few. The people of Judah were united in purpose and did, when the victory was seen, worship God with authentic praise and joy.

PRAYER: Holy God, stir our imaginations to focus on your grace and power rather than ruminate on the problems that seem insurmountable. Gracious ruler of all creation, we know that you inhabit the praises of your people. We offer heartfelt thanksgiving for your presence. Blessed Savior, guide us in our personal lives and in our planning and work for your kingdom. We ask this in the name of your beloved Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.