

Living Hope Church
Fathers Day: Sunday, June 21st, 2009

Art Smith: Pastor

"Jehoshaphat: an 'almost' model man. Some things to imitate. Some to avoid." (II Chron.17-20)

OPENING: Paul Harvey- "A Father is..." > > > > >

A father is a thing that is forced to endure childbirth, without an anesthetic. A father is a thing that growls when it feels good—and laughs loud when it's scared half to death. A father never feels entirely worthy of worship in his child's eyes. He never is quite the hero his daughter thinks, never quite the man his son believes him to be. This worries him, sometimes, so he works too hard to try and smooth the rough places in the road for those of his own who will follow him. A father is a thing that gets very angry when school grades aren't as good as he thinks they should be. He scolds his son although he knows it's the teacher's fault. Fathers give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough so they can have grandchildren who are smarter than anybody's.

The great advantage for the Christian man is that no matter what kind of earthly father we had, **we have a heavenly Father** who is perfect and who has not only given us a model of His Fatherhood, but specific instructions as well as recording the lives of other men through whom we can learn what to imitate & what to avoid.

- We can look at the lives of others from God's perspective, and learn how to be the man God created us to be.

*"Jehoshaphat (872-848BC): an 'almost' model man.
Some things to imitate. Some to avoid." (II Chron.17-20)*

I. Ch.17: One good leader can bring blessing on many people.

A. (v.1-6) God was with him because he was devoted to God early.

1-(I K.22) – He was 35 when he began and reigned 25 years. He began the 4th year of Ahab. While Ahab was evil, Jehoshaphat chose God's way.

- This was not a given. When Solomon died (930BC), the k'dom divided. There had been 8 kings of Israel, 3 kings of Judah
- Primary reason: N.K'dom followed Jeroboam's sin (2 calves), idolatry.
- These kings were evil and God put them to death.
- It is also important to mention - Jehoshaphat had a godly dad: **14-15**

2- In the **O.T. a sign of God's approval** was material prosperity. Every time a king follows the ways of the Lord, God demonstrates His pleasure with material blessings, security, honor & peace.

B. (v.7-9) He had God's Word taught throughout the land.

McGee: "He started a "Thru the Bible" program! ...People ask me what the "J" stands for in my name and I generally give them some facetious answer like "It sands for Jehoshaphat because he was the first one to start a "Thru the Bible" program.

Since they didn't have mechanical means of communication, he sent men out by the hundreds maybe even thousands to teach bible.

You may say: "That is a strange thing for a king to do."

- Only by pagan standards. > > **Deut.17:18; 28.** ("OBEY!")
When he [the king] takes the throne of his kingdom he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests...It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left."
- **Josh.1:8; Ps.119:9,11; Is.55:6-11; Ps.1; Jn.15:9-10; II**

POINT: For a man to claim to be a Christian & desire to be a successful dad, He must be involved in a "Thru the Bible" program. Knowing God, His Word – is beginning of wisdom. –**Prov.22:6**

C. (vs.10-19) Notice the response: Blessings from a God-centered life.

-**How much difference can I leader make?** Even though the people hadn't set their hearts on the Lord (20:33), **Jehoshaphat's commitment affected the whole nation.**

- Because of him the nation: 1-Was safe. 2-At peace. 3-Prospered.
4-Was respected by foreign gov'ts. 5-Had a strong army (1,161,000 men). 6-Received instruction from God's Word = under blessing.

ILLUS: Jukes VS Jonathan Edwards Family.

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(Tardy Oxcart p. 198.)

Two families from New York were studied very carefully. One was Max Jukes family, the other Jonathan Edwards family.

- Jukes was an unbelieving man who married a woman of like character who lacked principle. Among the known descendants, over 1200 were studied.
Max Jukes Family

- 310 Professional Vagrants
- 440 Physically wrecked by a lifestyle of debauchery.
- 130 Sent to prison, average or 13 years, 7 for murder
- 100 Alcoholics
- 60 Habitual thieves
- 190 Public prostitutes
- 20 Learned a trade, 10 while in prison
- Cost to the state; \$1,500,000
- They made no contribution to society

In about the same era the family of Edwards came on the scene. Edwards was a man of God whose preaching helped bring about a great revival in the 1700's. He married a woman of like character.

Jonathan Edwards Family

- 300 Became clergymen, missionaries, & theological professors
- Over 100 college professors
- Over 100 attorneys, 30 judges

- 60 Physicians
- Over 60 authors of good classics
- Numerous giants in American industry
- 14 University presidents
- 3 U.S. Congressmen
- 1 Vice President of the U.S.

Dad – You will affect the world, and heaven & hell!

POINTS:

- 1- You cannot know God without knowing His Word.
- 2- One godly man **will** affect a family, a community, a nation, eternity!

II. Ch.18: Even good men, seeking to live upright lives, can make some bad choices.

A. (vs.1-3) Beware of people of questionable character bearing gifts! (Those who “**wine & dine**” us, then ask a favor!)

1- I K.22 indicates that Jehoshaphat is about 53 years old. No novice

- It was obviously to Ahab’s advantage to have him as an ally.

2- *Jehoshaphat’s huge mistake* = political marriage to Ahab’s family.

- This is one of the biggest spiritual mismatches in history! **1 Kings 16:29-33.** These two men have nothing in common!
- This sin was going to be passed on to his son, Jehoram, who would marry *Ahab and Jezebel’s daughter Athaliah*, who attempted to exterminate David’s line (and God’s promised Messiah) **22:10.**
- This put Jehoshaphat in a very difficult predicament!
 - μεν**: He is related to Ahab’s family. **δε**: He is godly & Ahab is spiritually dead, idolatrous, evil, wicked. **They are now -family?** - WHAT TENSIONS and pressures DOES THIS CREATE?

APPLY: II Cor. 6 :14-17 It is never right for a Christian to marry a non-Christian. They have totally different goals & spiritual identities.

ILLUS: Going to my house, vs Becky’s for New Years etc.

McGee: “*There is more tragedy, more heartache and heartbreak, more broken lives, more maladjusted children over this one problem of broken homes than anything else I know about. It will not work for a professing Christian to marry one who is not a Christian,*” 439.

POINT: People without faith will attempt to use Christians (especially successful) for their causes, which have nothing to do with God’s K’dom. BEWARE...of committing your time, \$, and efforts to them.

{Fritz Mowery??}

3- God has given Jehoshaphat peace. Ahab asks him to go to war, **v3.**

B. (v.4-28) Beware of reading God’s Word but not following its advice!

1- (**vs.4-6**) He was courageous enough to ask the right question.

- **Ahab is sly.** He brings out a mass of prophets. You can hear him: "Everyone agrees it's the thing to do. "After all they are men of god, they just see things a bit differently than you do."
- How can 400 prophets be mistaken? " > **Imagine: "400 to 1!"**
- **NOTE: There's no safety in numbers, if contrary to God's Word!**

2- (**vs.7-28**) Problem: He ignored God's answer!

- **Micaiah** is a man who is not intimidated by numbers or threats!
- Ahab hated him because he spoke the clear Word of God!
- Ahab wanted to know God's Word, but he didn't want to...

McGee: "There are a lot of folk in our day also who hate a man who gives out the Word of God. In the church which I served for many years was a sign on the pulpit which I saw every time I stood there to speak. It read: 'Sir, we would see Jesus.' I like that. But I always felt there ought to be another verse of Scripture on the congregation's side of the pulpit: '**Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?**' (Gal.4:16)."

- Here God gives His clear revelation about the issue but Jehoshaphat goes right ahead with Ahab's suggestion anyway! > **James 1:22-**

Q. – Have you ever known exactly what you should or should not do and done the opposite? How did it go?

Wm. Ward "Every great person has first learned how to obey, whom to obey, and when to obey." (Quotables, p. 266)

C. (18:29-19:3) The consequences & mercy of God.

1- (**18:29-34**) Jehoshaphat's *near death* experience!

- Ahab bamboozled Jehoshaphat into signing his own death warrant!
- He was a good man, manipulated by a smooth talking evil king.
- **LESSON: When God says something – it will happen, no matter our human scheming!**

2- (**19:1-3**) God's rebuke.

PRINCIPLE: Be careful, for whatever our reason, that we do not help those who hate God – in their cause. We put ourselves in line of God's wrath.

- **While we are to love sinners, when sinners reject God & become enemies of God's work, to help them is to become God's enemy.**
- **There are men like Joseph Stalin, who was brought up in a school in which he was given some Bible teaching, and who had the opportunity to accept Christ – and rejected Him, and who set out to do great evil in society. >To align with such = God's enemy.**

WARNING: Beware of your besetting sin! It can reappear over the years, even in godly people, & threaten your family!

1st –19:1-3 Ahab. 2nd –II K.3:6-9 Joram. 3rd –20:35 Ahaziah

III. Ch.19:4-11 Jehoshaphat renews his zeal to serve God.
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-Our tendency when we've sinned, erred, is to give up, become passive, become depressed, sit on the bench! >> **I Sam.12:19-23.**

IV. Ch.20 In times of great alarm, he walked with God.

A. (vs.1-12) When we simply don't know what to do, go to God!

- Even great & godly kings (men) become alarmed at times.
- Remember- he is in his mid 50's at this time. He is extremely successful! What makes it more difficult – is that this follows a time of his total obedience. What **humility** we see in his character.
- Note his prayer: ***It is based upon God's will & plan for Israel.***

Q? Do you know what God's plans R for U? How would we pray?

- **The "Y's" of life are reducible to God's purposes.**
- God is committed to help us in keeping with His stated purposes!

B. (vs.13-30) Don't be afraid to face your enemy with God!

1- God's first words to this people who trust Him:

"Don't be afraid." >> **-Phil.4:6-8; -I Pet.5:7; -II Tim.1:7**

- **When we face insurmountable odds our 1st reaction = fear!**

2-Once God dispels their fears, He gives specific instructions.

- **(vs.16-17)** He tells us what our part is in the battle.

3-The KEY to getting through such attacks: Believing God has spoken. He is sovereign & personally involved, take up our positions & stand.

4- God does not abandon His people in time of trouble.

NOTE: (vs.19) They began praising God merely at His Word even before the battle was fought!

>> **When God has promised something, praise Him, don't worry & pray about it.**

5-**(vs.20-30)** Remind yourself of God's promise in the A.M.

- How many times have we been encouraged & instructed one day, & the next day we've totally forgotten God's promises?
- In facing daily battles, we must daily remind of His promises.

SUMMARIZE

I. Ch.17: One good leader can bring blessing on many people.

II. Ch.18: Even good men, seeking to live upright lives, can make some bad choices.

III. Ch.19:4-11 Jehoshaphat renews his zeal to serve God. [Don't Quit!](#)

IV. Ch.20 In times of great alarm, he walked with God.

Lucado Article: finish.

ILLUS: Halftime of a football game.

- Have you ever watched your favorite football team – and the first half of the game they played horrible. Hardly showed up. Then they came out the second half and blew the other team away?
- OR...they played great the first half, and the second half gave the game away?
- Q: - What happened at half time? Would you rather they play a good first half and lose the game, or play well the second half and win the game?
- Dads, it's half time. No matter how you played the first half of fathering, go into the locker room and listen to the Coach. Correct the problems. Win the second half!
- God's Word gives correction to finish well!