

# 11 Managing in Tough TIMES

18 Mar. 23



**Ice-Breaker:** *How do you manage stress: grin and bear it, or ask for help?*

**2 Chronicles 20:1-23 cev** <sup>1-2</sup>Some time later, the armies of Moab and Ammon, together with the Meunites, went to war against Jehoshaphat. Messengers told Jehoshaphat, “A large army from Edom east of the Dead Sea has invaded our country. They have already reached En-Gedi.” <sup>3-5</sup>Jehoshaphat was afraid, so he asked the LORD what to do. He then told the people of Judah to go without eating to show their sorrow. They immediately left for Jerusalem to ask for the LORD's help. After everyone from Judah and Jerusalem had come together at the LORD's temple, Jehoshaphat stood in front of the new courtyard and prayed: <sup>6-12</sup>You, LORD, are the God our ancestors worshipped, and from heaven you rule every nation in the world. You are so powerful that no one can defeat you. Our God, you forced out the nations who lived in this land before your people Israel came here, and you gave it to the descendants of your friend Abraham for ever. Our ancestors lived in this land and built a temple to honour you. They believed that whenever this land is struck by war or disease or famine, your people can pray to you at the temple, and you will hear their prayer and save them. You can see that the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Edom are attacking us! Those are the nations you would not let our ancestors invade on their way from Egypt, so these nations were not destroyed. Now they are coming to take back the land you gave us. Aren't you going to punish them? We won't stand a chance when this army attacks. We don't know what to do—we are begging for your help. <sup>13-14</sup>While every man, woman, and child of Judah was standing there at the temple, the LORD's Spirit suddenly spoke to Jahaziel, a Levite from the Asaph clan. <sup>15</sup>Then Jahaziel said: Your Majesty and everyone from Judah and Jerusalem, the LORD says that you don't need to be afraid or let this powerful army discourage you. God will fight on your side! <sup>16</sup>So here's what you must do. Tomorrow the enemy armies will march through the desert around the town of Jeruel. March down and meet them at the town of Ziz as they come up the valley. <sup>17</sup>You won't even have to fight. Just take your positions and watch the LORD rescue you from your enemy. Don't be afraid. Just do as you're told. And as you march out tomorrow, the LORD will be there with you. <sup>18-19</sup>Jehoshaphat bowed low to the ground and everyone worshipped the LORD. Then some Levites from the Kohath and Korah clans stood up and shouted praises to the LORD God of Israel. <sup>20-21</sup>Early the next morning, as everyone got ready to leave for the desert near Tekoa, Jehoshaphat stood up and said, “Listen my friends, if we trust the LORD God and believe what these prophets have told us, the LORD will help us, and we will be successful.” Then he explained his plan and appointed men to march in

front of the army and praise the LORD for his holy power by singing: “Praise the LORD! His love never ends.” <sup>22-23</sup>As soon as they began singing, the LORD confused the enemy camp, so that the Ammonite and Moabite troops attacked and completely destroyed those from Edom. Then they turned against each other and fought until the entire camp was wiped out!

- *Why do you think it important that Jehoshaphat gathered everyone to pray?*
- *Where did Jehoshaphat get hope from in his prayer? Can we do the same?*
- *What do we make of God's message through Jahaziel?*
- *How difficult is verse 17 to believe? Why?*
- *What do we need to do to allow God to win all our battles for us?*

**Psalm 50:7-15 cev** <sup>7-9</sup>My people, I am God! Israel, I am your God. Listen to my charges against you. Although you offer sacrifices and always bring gifts, I won't accept your offerings of bulls and goats. <sup>10-11</sup>Every animal in the forest belongs to me, and so do the cattle on a thousand hills. I know—all the birds in the mountains, and every wild creature is in my care. <sup>12-15</sup>If I were hungry, I wouldn't tell you, because I own the world and everything in it. I don't eat the meat of bulls or drink the blood of goats. I am God Most High! The only sacrifice I want is for you to be thankful and to keep your word. Pray to me in time of trouble. I will rescue you, and you will honour me.

- *What different reasons do we have to give offerings? Which are the right ones?*
- *Why does God say he won't accept his people's offerings?*
- *How can we follow God's advice relating to the only sacrifice he wants from us?*

**1 John 2:15-27 cev** <sup>15-17</sup>Don't love the world or anything that belongs to the world. If you love the world, you cannot love the Father. Our foolish pride comes from this world, and so do our selfish desires and our desire to have everything we see. None of this comes from the Father. The world and the desires it causes are disappearing. But if we obey God, we will live for ever. <sup>18-19</sup>Children, this is the last hour. You heard that the enemy of Christ would appear at this time, and many of Christ's enemies have already appeared. So we know that the last hour is here. These people came from our own group, yet they were not part of us. If they had been part of us, they would have stayed with us. But they left, which proves that they did not belong to our group. <sup>20-25</sup>Christ, the Holy One, has blessed you, and now all of you understand. I did not need to write to you about the truth, since you already know it. You also know that liars do not belong to the truth. And a liar is anyone who says that Jesus isn't truly Christ. Anyone who says this is an enemy of Christ and rejects both the Father and the Son. If we reject the Son, we reject the Father. But if we say that we accept the Son, we have the Father. Keep thinking about the message you first heard, and you will always be one in your heart with the Son and with the Father. The Son has promised us eternal life. <sup>26-27</sup>I am writing to warn you about those people who are misleading you. But Christ has blessed you with the Holy Spirit. Now the Spirit stays in you, and you don't need any teachers. The Spirit is truthful and teaches you everything. So stay united in your heart with Christ, just as the Spirit has taught you to do.

- *What do we think John means by the world in this passage?*
- *Describe the warning given in verses 18-19. How should we react to it?*
- *How does the Holy Spirit keep us on the right track?*
- *What's the key to managing in tough times?*
- *Who do you want to share this message with?*