

Words of Life

(May 31, 2007)

So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It is the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him.

2 Chronicles 18:31

Jehoshaphat was one of the few good kings of Judah. He followed in the ways of King David and sought God and obeyed His commandments. He sent priests throughout the land to teach the people the ways of God. He fortified the cities with garrisons of troops to provide protection and security. So it is no surprise that when he called out to the Lord in battle that God delivered him.

If we only read this one verse everything would make perfect sense. In our way of thinking God's deliverance is connected with our obedience. However, there is another aspect of this account that should be a tremendous encouragement to all of us. Jehoshaphat had been warned by the prophet Macaiah that Israel would not be successful in this battle. Macaiah had told both Ahab and Jehoshaphat that Ahab would not return alive if they went up against the Syrians. Yet both kings pushed forward with the attack, and sure enough, Ahab was fatally wounded by the arrow of a distant archer.

There are times in our lives when we make bad decisions and get ourselves into trouble as a result. I have found in my life that when that happens there is a little voice telling me that I shouldn't call out to God because I really blew it and God didn't like the fact that I blew it and why would God rescue me if the predicament I am in is of my own doing? But here we have a case in point where God did not perform that way. Jehoshaphat called out to God and God rescued him INSPITE of the fact that he had failed to heed the pre-battle warnings of the prophet.

We must never assume that God acts the way we would in any situation. To assume God will not deliver us because we made a mistake is to bring God down to our level. If you ever hear that little lying voice telling you God will not help you because of some bad decision you made, don't listen to it! Our God responds to us out of His heart of unconditional love.

We are not told whether Jehoshaphat admitted any wrongdoing to God in this account. But we are told that he cried out to God in the intensity of the battle. And when he did, God responded. I see it kind of like this. If one of my children disobeyed me by going out with some friends that I told them not to go out with and then called me on the phone to come pick them up because they were in trouble, I would be there in an instant. The fact that they disobeyed would be a separate issue. It would not alter my attempt in the slightest to rescue them. After the whole thing was over I would talk to them about choices and obedience, but I would not be hindered in the least as far as my efforts to pull them out of harms way. I believe that is how God viewed Jehoshaphat, and I believe that is how He views you and me. If you are in a difficult place today because of some bad decisions you have made, please call out to Him. Don't assume He will not hear or respond. As long as you are truly seeking Him and His way, He will respond to your cry.

*The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.
(Ps 145:18) Pastor Ted.*

*The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.
John 6:63*