

This week commemorates 5 years since COVID19 challenged the Church to determine if the government could deem the Church "non-essential." Romans 13 came into focus for many churches to review. Some felt the Holy Spirit was leading them to close their churches, some like Grace Community Church were sued by the State of California because the Word of God is supreme over government with regards to the Church of Christ.

- It was a time to determine what proper obedience to the government was warranted.
- Our church stayed connected through Zoom and online streaming. Hymn Sings were organized by our worship pastor. The preaching was done to empty rooms, and multiple services were needed to accommodate social distancing.
- Our church leadership decided that the government had overstepped its rights to control or dictate to the church concerning gathering and worshipping Yahweh.

From 2 Chronicles 20, How would Jehoshaphat Answer these Questions to Believers?

V1-2 Ammon and Moab came to make war against Jehoshaphat. They were assembled near the Dead Sea. V3-4, Jehoshaphat was afraid and sought the face of Yahweh and called a fast. Judah came from all the cities to seek Yahweh with the king.

- 1) **Why did You gather the people of Israel? I proclaimed God's sovereign power and grace.** V5-6, No one can stand against Yahweh, who inhabits the heights of heaven. His prayer showed the Solitariness of God in heaven. God doesn't share His glory. Self-Determination of God, all kingdoms are under Yahweh's power. The Strength of God, He has power over all powers. The Superiority of God, His might works itself out in total dominance over all things. The Sovereign Grace of God, V7, God promised His friend Abraham the land as an eternal possession.
- 2) **What did you do to lead your people to faith in God? I appealed only to the mercy of God, V10-12.** God didn't allow Israel to fight against Edom when they came from Egypt, but now they are coming against Israel as her enemies. Judah's eyes are fixed upon Yahweh.
- 3) **What did you see in your people? V13, I saw the people afraid and dismayed (shattered w/terror).** V14-15 Jahaziel stood up and proclaimed that the battle is the Lord's.
- 4) **What did the people do in response to a new confidence? V18, we worshipped God, bowing down before Him.** V19, with a loud voice the Levites praised God. Nothing has happened to the armies at this time.
- 5) **How did your people face the enemy? V20-21, we worshipped Yahweh.** They sang from Psalm 118, "Give thanks to Yahweh, for His lovingkindness endures forever."
- 6) **What were the weapons of your warfare? V22, Our weapons were our songs of worship to Yahweh.**
 - V22, The Lord sent ambushes against the soldiers of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. The people of Israel took spoils for 3 days, V24-25.
- 7) **What did God do through the victory? He accomplished His purposes for Israel, Ex. 19:5-6.** 2 Chron. 20:27, the people were glad and returned to Jerusalem with singing and trumpets. Jehosaphat's kingdom had quiet, God gave him rest, V30.

- 8) **Looking back, what advice would you give to believers?** V32, stay faithful and finish strong. Jehosaphat did not cleanse the land of idol worship, V33. V35-37, Jehosaphat tried to ally with Ahaziah, king of Israel, acting wickedly, and his ships were destroyed by Yahweh.
- 9) **Is there ever a time to stop, or limit, worship of God?** No, not ever. I Kings 8: 28-40 is a prayer of dedication given by Solomon that asks of the Lord if the people turn back to the Lord, that Yahweh would forgive and bring them back into the land God swore to give them.

Further Discussion and Application

They are great precedents of worship being the instrument of battle and deliverance. Jericho, Gideon, Paul and Silas, Jesus, and Revelation 19, are examples of praise being a great strength to magnify the Lord in our thinking and to give us strength. How has singing been a constant strength in your life to keep you? What do the songs you sing tell remind you about your God?

Psalm 118 recounts the faithfulness and lovingkindness of God. V1, outline a number of ways God is good. V2-3, how has God been faithful to Israel and Aaron? V5, how has God demonstrated His help to us in times of need? As you look through this psalm how will recounting the faithfulness of God give you great strength? Moses leads the congregation in song in Exodus 32. What does this song reveal about God?

The church may be forced to defy government mandates to quit worshipping in the future. How will this example and Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8 provide Scriptural authority to continue worshipping Yahweh? How is God a refuge and a very real help in time of trouble?

It is a challenge for believers to stop and consider Scripture alone when the world is arguing for a different course. But how will Scripture provide us all we need to answer the world in that time? What is sure about the Word of the Lord?