

Stop, Drop, and Roll

What to Do When Your World Catches Fire (Part 2)

Introduction

The Text

¹ After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. ² Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar” (that is, Engedi). ³ Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

⁵ And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, ⁶ and said, “O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. ⁷ Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? ⁸ And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, ⁹ ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.’ ¹⁰ And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— ¹¹ behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”

¹³ Meanwhile all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. ¹⁴ And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. ¹⁵ And he said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God’s. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you.”

¹⁸ Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. ¹⁹ And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

²⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.” ²¹ And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, “Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.” ²² And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. ²³ For the men

of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.

²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped. ²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much. ²⁶ On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the Lord. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Beracah to this day. ²⁷ Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ They came to Jerusalem with harps and lyres and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. ²⁹ And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around. (2 Chr 20:1–30)

From Fiery Clothes to Fiery Trials

- A. This is now the closing Sunday of our Week of Prayer and it's part two of what I began last week in our consideration of this amazing story here in [2 Chron 20](#).
- B. Last week I mentioned the fact that, as kids, we all likely were taught precisely what to do if ever we were to have the misfortune of catching fire. Back in the 80s and 90s at least, the proper steps were somewhat driven into our little elementary school brains. There were three of them, you remember: stop, drop, and roll.
 1. But, as we saw last time, I took a show of hands, and I suppose this is good news, but none of us has actually had to put this brilliant little bit of wisdom into practice. Oh certainly we're ready in case an article of clothing ever were to burst into flame. We know just how to handle it. But we've never had to make use of such knowledge. We've never had to stop, drop, and roll.
 - a. In the end, this training, I fear, has come to seem a little bit unnecessary to us. We thought it would prove more relevant than it has.
- C. Well, as I said last time, so I say it again this morning: prepare now to see the payoff! While, you've likely never put those three steps to use in dealing with fire in a literal sense, what we see is that these steps actually become quite useful when dealing with fire in the spiritual sense.
 1. And these spiritual fires are fires that we face all the time—day after day. These are those fires that Peter speaks of in [1 Pet 4:12](#), when he writes: "[Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you . . .](#)" Trials. They burn don't they?
- D. We ought not be surprised when they come. But we are often disoriented nonetheless, aren't we? When your world is set to flame, aren't you spun violently around and left wondering: What do I do now? Where do I even begin?
 1. Well, I think we see the way put forward for us in this story in [2 Chr 20](#), and, on my read, I see what Jehoshaphat and Judah doing here conveniently dividing into those three basic steps we were taught back in elementary school. What do they do when three enemy

nations have coalesced and are now converging upon them, when it seems their very lives have reached a terminal point, when it seems everything round about them has gone up in flame?

a. Well, I'll tell you: They stop, drop, and roll.

E. And we're here trying to learn from them, that, when the fiery trials come for us, we might be equipped and ready to do the same.

Last Time and This

A. Last time we looked at the first two steps in particular.

1. We saw how in [vv. 1-3a](#), the first thing they did was stop. "[Jehoshaphat was afraid and \[rather than scramble about in his own strength in an effort to save himself, instead he . . .\] set his face to seek the Lord . . .](#)" ([v. 3a](#)).

2. Then in [vv. 3b-19](#), we watched as Jehoshaphat and Judah, in effect, dropped down before the Lord. They stop their own clamoring about and just fall down before God. They reflect on His word, they pray, they fast, and they do it all together in assembled fashion as His people.

B. They stop and they drop . . . and then, now as we come to [vv. 20-30](#), we see that they go on to roll. And, of course, what I mean by "roll" here is that they roll on. They don't stay down on their faces forever. They are reminded who their God is, they get a sense of His direction, and then they move on it—they walk out by faith . . . they roll.

1. It's this third step that we have now on the agenda for us to consider more deeply this morning.

C. And I should like to divide my consideration of it up into three points. We see in these verses at least some of what is involved in this rolling on by faith: (1) They Get Up and Go ([v. 20](#)); (2) They Worship as a Way of War ([vv. 21-23](#)); and (3) They See the Salvation of the Lord ([vv. 24-30](#)).

(1) They Get Up and Go (v. 20)

A Fight for Faith

A. The people of Judah, at Jehoshaphat's command, have stopped and dropped, they have prayed and fasted, and sought the Lord together, and you remember, there in [v. 14](#), we're told that "[in the midst of the assembly,](#)" the Spirit of God came upon Jahaziel and a word is given to him for them all there in [vv. 15-17](#).

1. And here's what I want you to notice: God begins with this wonderful word of promise there in [v. 15](#), doesn't He? "[Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.](#)" And He reiterates this again once more at the end there in [v. 17](#): "[You will not need to fight in this battle.](#)"

- a. Now, if that's all that God says, I'm thinking: "Yes and amen! Let's uncork the champagne now. Let's get the party started. There's nothing for us to do. He's got it handled. We're going to throw a killer party tonight and then we're going to sleep in tomorrow."
2. But that's not all He says, is it? Not at all. Even though the battle is God's, there in [vv. 16, 17](#), we see that God still tells them they must go: "[Tomorrow go out against them . . .](#)" ([v. 17](#)).
 - a. "I'm sorry, but you've got put away the champagne. You'll have to postpone the party until tomorrow night. There's not going to be any sleeping in in the morning. You must suit up and step out. You must get up and go. But, again, let's be clear. It's not because I want you to fight, but rather because I want you to watch how I will fight for you. And I want you to trust Me."
- B. In other words, brothers and sisters, their job here is not to fight with force against their enemy, their job is to fight for faith in their God—that's the battle God is calling them into! And that is the battle God is calling us into as well.
 1. It's the sort of thing Paul is exhorting Timothy to in [1 Tim 6:12](#): "[Fight the good fight of the faith.](#)"
 2. And it's what Paul later speaks of again in [2 Tim 4:7](#), this time with reference to himself: "[I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.](#)"
- C. God may give the promise, but, in some sense, we have to reach up and take it, we have to walk out on it, we have to trust Him for it.
 1. This is why Jehoshaphat goes on to exhort the people as he does there in [v. 20](#): "[And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.'](#)"
 - a. In other words: "Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, God has given you words in Scripture and words from this prophet Jahaziel concerning His character, His glory, His purposes, His plan . . . now take these words and in them fight for faith. We have stopped, we have dropped, but now it's time to roll! Oh I know it's scary. Oh I know you cannot yet fully see Him at work in all of this. Oh I know it seems like God is asking us to walk straight into the fire. But I am telling you, you can trust Him. Suit up and step out. Get up and go . . . by faith!"
- D. You say, "Oh I like the idea of just staying here safe in my little prayer closet or whatever, and God just fights it all for me out there." But that's not how this works. He wants to develop a relationship of trust with you. And that's going to require you to roll.

Learning to Walk

- A. Listen, there are going to be things God will say to you that in the moment you just won't be able to see how it's true. And yet He's going to call you to walk out in it.

1. I imagine that some of us might feel like we've sinned ourselves outside the kingdom. "I fell into that same sin again. It's over for me. I don't belong here. I don't even want to come to church. It just makes me feel worse about myself to see all these people growing in their faith, growing in godliness, and here I am turning round in the mud." You're convinced that God has pulled the welcome mat on you and deadbolted the door. Your life is on fire.
 - a. So you stop, and you drop, and in comes the word: "⁵ [God has] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7). And you say: "Me?! Saved?! Washed?! Renewed?! Justified?! Heir?! No way! How can it be?!" "Oh," Christ says, "But it is. Believe it!"
 - i. So you fight for faith, and you step out in it, and you come into the assembly of the saints on a Sunday morning, with full assurance: "Because of Jesus, I belong here!"
2. I imagine some of us are in the midst of back-breaking trials. A busted up marriage. A wayward child. A lost job. Cancer, again. Whatever it is, your world is on fire.
 - a. So you stop, and you drop, and in comes the word: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good . . ." (Rom 8:28). And you say: "Get real! This? For good?! I don't see it. I don't get it. How can it be?!" "Oh," Christ says, "But it is. Believe it!"
 - i. So you fight for faith, and you step out in it, and you trust Him through the tears, in comes that peace that surpasses all understanding. He's with you. You know it. And in time, perhaps, you start to see how He's been up to good in it all.

It's Going to Be Hard

- A. So we stop, and we drop, and then we roll. And the first thing we see here is that this rolling out means we get up and we go. We trust God. We fight for faith.
 1. But this fight for faith is hard, right? It runs contrary to our senses and emotions and things. While, on the one hand, it seems reasonable because God is God and He can do anything, on the other hand, it seems so crazy because the situation around me appears to be so contrary to what He is saying.
 - a. So we're going to need to pull out all the stops.
- B. And back in our text, what's great is that Jehoshaphat knows this. He knows that it's going to seem absolutely out of touch and even insane as they're making their way towards this great horde of enemy armies that could, in an instant, wipe them out. "What in the world are we doing?!" The

fight for faith is going to get real in those moments. They're going to need all the help they can get in those moments.

1. And that's why he does what he does next . . .

(2) They Worship as a Way of War (vv. 21-23)

Getting It Backwards to Go Forwards

- A. After exhorting them to fight for faith in v. 20, we come to v. 21 and read this: "And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, 'Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.'"
 1. What an amazing thing! I wonder if you see what is going on here. Jehoshaphat—in an effort to help his people fight the good fight of faith, in an effort to help them keep rolling forward—he appoints Levitical singers to go, note this, "before the army" of Judah and sing. And what are they to sing? Songs of thanks: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever."
- B. Now, there is so much that, at first glance, seems to be so backwards in all of this.
 1. For one thing, the army should be out in front. After all, the people are marching out towards their enemies. Soldiers should be leading the way, shouldn't they? But instead Jehoshaphat puts the singers there.
 - a. They don't have any weapons to wield. Or do they?!
 2. But secondly, shouldn't all this singing and giving of thanks come after the victory? But here they are offering it up before. What is this all about?
 - a. Does it not appear to be a case of premature celebration? Like those sports clips I've seen where, perhaps, a runner thinks she's won the race and throws up her hands in excitement, only to find another come up from behind and beat her to the tape. Ah, we say, you celebrated too early. Now you look like a fool.
 - i. Is that what this is? Premature celebration? It surely does seem like it. Until we factor in God's word and the call for faith in that word. Then all of a sudden it all makes sense.
- C. God has already said the battle is mine. And He's told them their job is simply to believe Him for it. So Jehoshaphat sets the singers up before the army and has them give thanks before the victory. It's all a part of this fight for faith.

Why Do We Sing?

A. And, of course, there is much for us to reflect on here. Certainly, we learn a lot about the purpose of music and singing in the church, do we not? We see, above all else here, I think, as I put it in the heading, that musical worship is a way of waging war.

1. Now, there are two things I want to bring out in particular on this point—two ways this warfare of singing plays out:

(1) Our Singing Makes an Impression

A. Now, by this, I certainly do not mean that we are singing to impress others. That is not it at all. I am talking rather about the way that singing in thanks to God, singing about the words and works of God, actually is a means of taking those realities and impressing them on my heart.

1. We often only think of singing a way of expressing what's already on our hearts. We get this idea. We understand that we sing on the far side of God's provision and victory. In an overflow of joy and gratitude, we sing.
2. But I wonder if we've ever thought of singing as moving in the other direction as well. It doesn't just convey things that are already on my heart, it puts things on my heart that to this point might not have been there.

B. Now this may be somewhat of a foreign concept to us. We may even be a bit turned off by it at first. I for one used to think of such a thing as being hypocritical. Why would I sing to God in thanks and praise and all that if that's not what I'm feeling, if that's not what's already on my heart? It feels disingenuous. Like I'm not being honest.

1. Ours is the day where we care a great deal about being "real" and "raw" and just "saying it how it is." We sniff out insincerity and platitudes and things like this. This just seems like plastic Christianity where everybody smiles and acts all perfect, but is so far from it. This just feels like a spiritualized version of "fake it until you make it." Yuck!

C. So we come to this first notion of singing in worship to impress and we think: "I don't want to sing this if I'm not feeling it, if it's not on my heart."

1. But we need to realize that God calls us to sing it to help us feel it. God calls us to take the lyrics on our lips in an effort to get them on our hearts. This singing is an important part of the fight for faith. It is taking what know to be true with our heads and inviting, even begging, our hearts to follow suit.

D. All of you would grant me that the Christian walks by faith and not by sight. The Bible says it plainly (2 Cor 5:7). But I wonder if you'd allow me, as an extension of that, to say sometimes we walk by faith and not by feeling. It's really the same idea. We take God's word and say: I know it's true—objectively, absolutely true . . . but I'm not feeling it right now.

1. Have you been there? If your feelings are ultimate, what is left for you? Nothing! You just sit and wallow in those feelings until God somehow lifts you out.

- a. But if I'm reading our text correctly, Jehoshaphat is saying there's something else you can do in those moments. You can get in the face of those feelings and sing. You can call your heart towards the things you know to be true of God with your head. Musical worship is a means of waging war.

- E. You may be familiar with [Eph 5:19](#) where Paul calls believers to sing with and to one another and things. But I wonder if you've ever noted the context. Look at it: "¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Eph 5:15–20](#)).

 - 1. Did you catch that? The context is: "[T]he days are evil" (v. 16). The exhortation is, therefore: "Sing! Sing with all you've got!" Christians lift their rebel voices and sing in the face of evil.
 - a. Now, do not be mistaken. This is not merely "whistling past the graveyard." These songs are not our way of distracting one another from the grim realities of life. Quite the opposite. This is our way of helping one another see through the hardship and trial and surrounding fire into ultimate reality—that God will get the final victory over all of this even if only on the other side of death.
 - i. These songs aren't cheap little psychological tricks to get us thinking happier thoughts, these songs are declarations of war . . . against unbelief and any spiritual agent of evil trying to influence us towards it.

- F. I imagine it is something of this sort that Paul himself and Silas are doing in that Philippian jail cell at midnight. Do you remember?
 - 1. They had been dropped in the dungeon for proclaiming Christ only after they'd been stripped and beaten by the mob and magistrates of the city. And as they lay there in the dead of night, with feet fastened in the stocks, what is it that we're told they're doing? "[P]rayer and singing hymns to God" ([Acts 16:25](#)).
 - a. I used to just think this was an indication that they were somehow superhuman—like they just weren't normal and didn't get freaked out like you and I would. But now I'm inclined to think they were probably waging war, trying to impress on their hearts the reality that they couldn't currently see with their eyes—that God is in control and He's up to good even in this.

- G. I have to think something like this is at least part of what Jesus is doing in [Matt 26:30](#) where just after sharing the Passover meal with His disciples, the Last Supper, as it's been called, we're told that Jesus "[sung a hymn.](#)"

1. Now, bear in mind, Gethsemane is moments away, in a few hours He will be nailed up to a cross and left to die. And what does He do in the face of such a thing? What helps Him fight for faith and keep going in the midst of this black prospect? Singing!
 - a. Now, this “hymn” He sung scholars assume consisted of [Psa 115–118](#), as these were traditionally sung at the end of the Passover meal. And do you want to know what the very last verse of [Psa 118](#) is? Well, wouldn’t you know it, it’s the precisely the same refrain Jehoshaphat has these Levitical priests singing back in [2 Chron 20](#): “[Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!](#)” ([Psa 118:29](#)).
 - i. These are perhaps the very last lyrics on our Savior’s lips before His crucifixion. “Thank You! You love me! You will be here for Me! You will get the victory! Help me trust You Father!”

- H. Some of you have heard how our last worship leader, Celi, and her husband, Josh, had to move to Austin for work. And recently things have been so hard for them. She was pregnant and a couple days before her due date, there were complications and little baby Zoe didn’t make it.
 1. What do you do when the womb becomes a grave? What do you do when your child’s birthday and funeral collide? What do you do when you finally get home from the hospital and somehow have find the courage to walk down the hallway past the baby’s room you had all ready for her arrival? There’s a crib in there. But no little girl. What do you do? How do you keep rolling on with the Lord, trusting Him, serving Him, living for Him?
 - a. I’ll tell you what you do . . . you sing! You sing through the bitterness and through the anger and through the devastation until you feel . . . until the truths of God you still know with your head are at last impressed once more on your heart.

- I. When I first heard the news, knowing that music means so much to Celi, I texted her this song by Shane and Shane entitled “[Though You Slay Me!](#)” It’s a line taken from [Job 13:15](#). Shane Barnard wrote the song after the untimely death of his father—when he was trying to trust God through the pain of it all.
 1. And the chorus goes like this: “[Though you slay me / Yet I will praise you / Though you take from me / I will bless your name / Though you ruin me / Still I will worship / Sing a song to the one who’s all I need.](#)”

- J. Celi texted me back a couple days later and wrote this: “[This was one song I could never get myself to sing. I just found the lyrics . . . too hard. And I always feared they would become real in my life. Well, it’s now real and I can actually sing this song and say with complete confidence that even in the midst of this storm, we will continue to sing praises to Him and will never let go of Him.](#)”
 1. Can I just say: That, brothers and sisters, is a worship leader! It’s not just singing when all is well and it feels good. It’s singing through tears when your heart feels like it’s being crushed under sorrow, when your world round about you seems to have been reduced to ash.

- a. It's going before the soldiers of God and calling them to trust Him for things they have heard but don't yet see.

K. Our singing makes an impression. But it does more than that . . .

(2) Our Singing Unleashes an Ambush

A. Look at vv. 22-23: “²² And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. ²³ For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.”

- 1. Here we see our singing to God in worship is not just doing work on us, it is moving things out there in the spiritual dimension. Stuff is shaking up, Satan is sent running, because God's people are singing.

B. So, Mercy Hill, this is why we sing as a church. It's not some show, or a nice way of mixing up things before and after the sermon. It's a big part of the way we fight for faith and push back darkness.

- 1. So let me encourage you, when Brian comes out here in a few moments, sing . . . as if your life depended on it . . . because it does!

(3) They See the Salvation of the Lord (vv. 24-30)

A. Obviously, I don't have much time for this one. But that's okay. The main thing I want to point out is: God did what He said He would do, and He did it in a way that I'm sure exceeded their wildest dreams. Look at vv. 24-25: “²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped. ²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much.”

B. Listen to me: That thing which now has you most worried, most troubled, most distressed, has the potential in Christ to be the very means by which you are brought the most joy in God.

- 1. They thought these armies had come to kill, and no doubt they had. But God would take their ill intent and turn it for His people's blessing. And He's doing the same for you.

C. So when your world catches fire I hope now you have a better sense of what to do. I hope you stop, and you drop, and you roll!