

DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 20, 2020 (Lots of 20's today!) – Mr. Burgess
King Jehoshaphat



Read: 2 Chronicles 20:1-30
Theme: 2 Chronicles 20:12

This story takes place in the OT (Old Testament) around 850 B.C.

Sometimes in life, we face a situation that seems overwhelming to us. Then we get scared, our anxieties and fears increase, and we don't know what to do to solve the problem. Have you ever felt that way? Talk about some of those situations with your family right now.

This week in our devotionals, we are going to talk about some characters in the Bible. I think you will enjoy these stories! Today we are talking about King Jehoshaphat. (Say that fast 5 times!) He was a good king and the fourth king of Judah (southern kingdom), and he is actually in the ancestral line of Jesus Christ.

I assume you just finished reading the Scripture. This is a terrific story, but it starts out scary. The king and his people are in big trouble! Some men just told him that three armies combined into one vast army. This vast army is headed directly to Jerusalem, AND they had already crossed the Jordan River and are getting close! How could the Jewish people survive a battle with a vast army? HELP! What should the king do?

The first thing King Jehoshaphat decides to do is to ask God for help. That's the first thing we should do, too! He declared a National Day of Prayer and Fasting! He asked all the people—men, their wives, children, and little ones—to come to the temple in Jerusalem. They praise God and worship Him **FIRST**, then they tell God about the bad and scary situation they are facing. "For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, **BUT OUR EYES ARE UPON YOU**" (v. 12).

God responds through the prophet Jahaziel: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's" (v. 15 & again in 17). Many times in the Bible God tells us not to be afraid, don't be discouraged, **because God is with us!** Since God is with us, we can give our fear to Him!

Early in the morning, they march out to face this vast army, and they are praising God as they go! And then there's a key phrase in the text: "As they begin to sing and praise." That's when God begins fighting for them. God sets ambushes against this army, and the armies end up killing each other until they all are dead. God's people just watch as God gives them a stunning victory! It takes them 3 days to gather up all the equipment, clothes, and items that were valuable!

This had been a desperate situation. There was no way that the people of Judah were going to be able to defeat this vast army! Yet God did it for them! When the people return to Jerusalem, they go right to the temple rejoicing with their instruments to thank God for this amazing victory!

Summary:

1. When trouble comes, our first response should be to praise God for His promises and then to ask Him for help! In our country, we are facing trouble right now with COVID-19. I know that most of you have been praying for God's protection. Whatever challenges you face or whenever you are fearful, start praying to God!
2. I am so excited that one of the promises God says over and over again in the Bible is that we should not be afraid or discouraged **because He is with us!** God knows how quickly we can become anxious or worried about things; that's why He keeps repeating His promise so many times. **"Therefore, we will not fear!"** (Psalm 46:2)
3. When God helps us through our problem, remember to thank Him! Praise God for taking care of you and for being with you through the storm.



Activity #1:

Make a list of some things that bother and worry you when you think of them. You may hear somebody say something that makes you anxious or fearful. How are you going to respond today? Will you say, "God, help me with my feeling/thought," and allow God to comfort you? Today give that list to God and practice going to God first when you become overwhelmed or anxious!

Activity #2:

Use the following pages to complete the maze and/or color the picture!



Prayer:

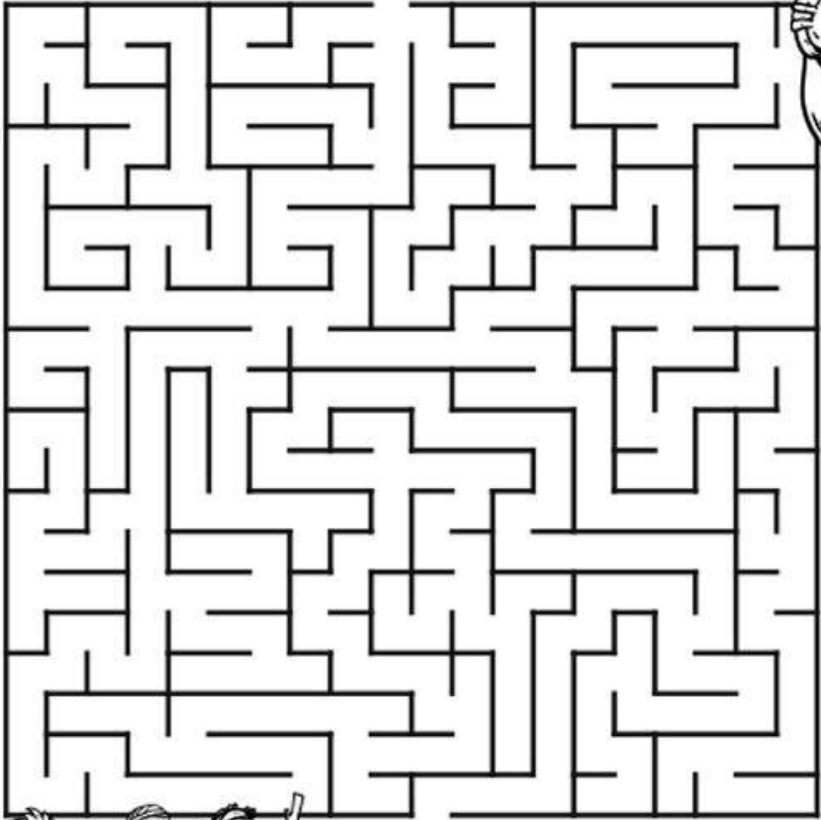
Father God, we praise You for giving us special stories like this in the Bible to teach us how to respond to problems in our lives! We thank You for rescuing the people of Judah, and we know You can rescue us today! Thank You for being with us every minute today! And we ask this in the powerful Name of Your Son Jesus, Amen.

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD

Lead the messengers to Jehoshaphat



END



START



GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD

2 Chronicles 20:21

Give thanks to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever.



DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 21, 2020 – Mr. Brooke



Read: Mark 2: 1-12
Theme: Mat Carriers

This story takes place in the NT (New Testament) around 30 A.D.

This weekend, I stumbled upon my chapel notes from our chapels back in early September. In looking at the theme, I was challenged to share a reminder of the main topic for that chapel. I spoke in chapel on Mark 2 and the story of Jesus healing the paralytic. The passage is a remarkable display of Jesus' love for the lost and his desire for those who know Him as Lord to bring others toward him.

In the story there are "mat carriers." These are individuals who stopped their normal routine, leaned down to grab a corner of a mat, journeyed toward Jesus, and would not stop until they reached Him. They navigated through their own routine, a massive crowd, and a roof. They knew the end goal of the mission was to get to Jesus. And when they arrived at the feet of Jesus, they were certainly not disappointed. The text says, "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" The joy of those words represents a new life, freedom, relationship, and purpose. But Jesus goes even further in verse 11 when he says, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat, and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

I want you to think about the joy of the mat carriers. They did not receive praise or accolades, but they ushered another toward the magnificent Savior. And I think you could argue they received some of the greatest gifts in return for their mission. They got closer to Jesus, they experienced the redemptive love of Jesus poured out on others, and they were privileged to see a life changed forever.

While the original challenge to our students to be a mat carrier was designed to be within the traditional routine of school, I think the question could challenge us to accomplish some great acts of good in this new season. Is there a way you can be a mat carrier for another in this unique time of life? Would you be willing to pray for God to reveal to you someone who might need to be helped toward Jesus today?

I continue to pray that God would make us all mat carriers. I am asking that he would give us attentive eyes to those who need Jesus. And that he would rally groups of people to each grab a corner of someone's mat to bless and love others in a way that brings glory to Jesus rather than ourselves.



Activity:

As you pray for God to reveal someone who might be in need of help during this unique season, would you think creatively about how you could help them?



Prayer:

Thank You for Your incredible work in Mark 2. May You make us all mat-carriers who bring people to You! We love You and are so grateful that You are a God who redeems the broken.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 22, 2020 – Mr. Burgess
ELISHA and the Widow's Oil



Read: 2 Kings 4:1-7

This story takes
place in the OT
(Old Testament)
around 850 B.C.

Money is one of those things that is necessary to survive in life! For those families where finances are really tight (and there are more families in this category now than even two months ago), stress can rise quickly! However, God wants us to depend upon Him to meet our needs.

Today our story is about a single-parent mom (widow) and her two sons. She is in debt (probably because her husband borrowed money to support the prophets while in hiding). Indebtedness in the ancient Near East could lead to the loss of property, home, fields, and ultimately the freedom of the debtor. In this case, her boys are now in danger of being carried off into slavery. There is a lot at stake for Mom...and her precious boys!

She goes to Elisha, the man of God, for help. He asks two questions: "How can I help?" and "What do you have in the house?" Apparently, the only thing of value was "a **little oil**."

Then he tells her to do a very odd thing. "Go around and ask your neighbors for empty jars. **Don't ask for just a few.**" Can you imagine walking down the street, ringing doorbells, and asking your neighbors if you can borrow any jars that they have? They will probably ask you lots of questions. "Why do you want our jars?" Then what would you say? It's such an unusual situation. Nobody would understand. Plus you're not really sure yourself what's going to happen!

All these jars are gathered. They close their door. There are jars on the kitchen counter, the table, the floor, and in other rooms as well...ALL OVER THE PLACE! The little house is wall-to-wall JARS!!! Then Mom takes her jar with just a little oil and starts pouring. She fills one jar, then another. She fills all the jars on the kitchen table. There's still more oil pouring out of her jar. Where is all this oil coming from? Finally, all the jars are filled! She is exhausted, and her arms are tired from holding the jar and filling all the other jars. Now there are no empty jars. At that point the oil stops coming out of her jar! Wow! Just enough and no more! It's absolutely amazing! It's a miracle!*

Mom runs and tells Elisha what had happened! Elisha says, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left." Wow! The boys don't have to become slaves. They can continue living with Mom, AND they have enough money for food and other things they need. God protected them and provided for them!

Summary:

OBEDIENCE. This mother obeyed the prophet of God without asking any questions. In faith, she obeyed God. They gathered the jars, she poured out her little bit of oil, and she filled all the jars. God met their financial needs when they obeyed in faith. We cannot expect God to reward our faith if we are not obeying Him!

Back in 1982, when Mrs. Burgess had stopped teaching fourth grade because Andrew had been born, we had a big insurance bill due on December 15—\$307.50. We were down to one income, and Mrs. B had several medical tests in the fall that were expensive. We did not have the money to pay for the bill. I wrote the check, put a stamp on the envelope, but left it on my desk because there was not enough money in the bank to cover it.

On the evening of December 14, former school parents stopped by with a gift for Andrew's first Christmas! We had a great visit with them. As they were leaving, they handed me a Christmas card which we opened after they left. Inside were three \$100 bills! Wow! We came up with the \$7.50, and I mailed in our check to pay our insurance bill! God had met our financial need at just the right time! What a God-sighting!

* "Miracles are an act of grace that cannot be controlled or predicted but are a provision of the sovereign God in time of need....Miracles are the result of faith, not the inspiration of faith. Faith is a process of learning to trust God; these stories of Elisha are intended to teach the life of trust in God and to show the power of such a faith in dealing with pain." August Konkel



Activity #1:

Talk to your parents. Do they have stories of when God met their financial needs? What God-sightings do they have about when God intervened in your family's life? We need to write these family stories down like stones of remembrance! We need to review the stories of God's faithfulness in the past. That will help us as we face difficulties in the future. God is faithful, and He is with us 24/7!

Activity #2:

Use the following page to color the picture!



Prayer:

Our Father, we praise You for giving us special stories like this in the Bible to teach us the importance of obeying You! We thank You for rescuing this mom and her boys! Help us to make good decisions today and to obey You! In the Name of Jesus, Amen.



DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 23, 2020 – Mr. Clum
Gideon

Good morning, WCGS! 😊 I want to send a word of encouragement to each of you today. It is my prayer that we are all getting to know the Lord better during these days. I believe He is asking that our hearts would be attentive to him. Let's be mindful of this as we walk through this day. Wishing each of you the best day.



Read: Judges 7:1-25
Key Verse: Judges 7:2

This story takes
place in the OT
(Old Testament)
around 1200 B.C.

I remember hearing about the story of Gideon and the Midianites since I was a child. It always intrigued me. After all, I enjoyed stories of war and battles. However, as I reread and study this story now, I see a lot more than merely God's victory in battle. I see God at work in the life of Gideon. He desires to obey, yet because of his limitations and failures, he is hesitant to do so. He needs a lot of encouragement from the Lord. And I wonder about the "Gideon moments" in my own life. What "Gideon moments" have you had? Share those with someone in your family.

The Midianites are a warring-people. They are great in number. They are closing in for what appears to be an attack. How do you think Gideon is feeling? Perhaps...scared, outnumbered, or intimidated. Have you ever found yourself in a situation like that? Most likely you have not faced a literal battle, but think about a circumstance that could make you feel scared, fearful, or not sure of yourself. Share that with a family member.

Remember, the context of this battle takes place AFTER Gideon had already asked God for "a sign." God had told him He would be with him and deliver Israel from the Midianites. However, Gideon needed added assurance from God. And so he laid out a fleece before God, asking Him to dampen it with the morning dew (while the ground around the fleece was to be dry). In doing so, Gideon was asking God for confirmation of what He had already promised. But that wasn't enough. Gideon asked again for another sign. This time he asked for the fleece to be dry and the ground around it wet.

Gideon's soldiers number 32,000 compared to 135,000 of the Midianite army. Do the math. He is outnumbered over 4 to 1. Yet God asks Gideon to whittle down his army—first to 10,000, and then from 10,000 to 300. God tells Gideon to allow any soldier to leave who is afraid or trembling. How many leave? 22,000—that's about two-thirds of his army! And how do you think Gideon feels? I imagine his heart is sinking a bit as the numbers of his army are getting smaller. And now for another whittling down of the troops. Gideon takes the 10,000 men down to the river for water. He is instructed to watch how the men drink. 9,700 men lap the water as a dog laps, with their heads down. Only 300 men kneel to quench their thirst by drinking from their hands, while paying attention to their surroundings. These 300 men are God's chosen warriors.

The stage is set. We have a selection of 300 men. God's promise to Gideon in verse 7 rings with clarity and certainty. "I will deliver you with the 300." And that is exactly what He did! God even allows Gideon to hear what the Midianites are saying (vs. 13-15); their words are an encouragement to him. And so, he divides his 300 into groups of 100. They blow the rams' horns, break their jars, and shout, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon" (v.

18). What happens next is astounding as the Midianites fall into panic and confusion. They start killing one another; those who are not killed fled to places far away.

Now let's think for a moment about WHY God acted/moved as He did in this story. The clue is in verse 2. Gideon's army was stripped down to bare bones. Why? So that God's people would not boast in themselves and in what they accomplished in their own strength. The victory belonged to the Lord! The emphasis is on what GOD DID, not on what MAN DID. Did you see that? Only God was to get the glory for the victory—not MAN. And isn't that precisely the message of the Gospel? It's all about God, the gift of Jesus, and His grace that abounds to us as sinful people. Why? So that He receives the honor and glory that is due Him.

I think we can probably all identify with Gideon in one way or another. We may look at our circumstance or problem. Gideon looked at his army that was whittled down to 300 men. When Gideon looked at his scarce resources, he undoubtedly felt insecure. Why? He was looking at the wrong thing. What did he forget? His eyes focused on what was in front of him—his small army of 300. He failed to focus on the fact that God was with them, led them, and had promised to deliver them.

Time and time again in the Bible, we see God's strength unleashed in the face of human weakness. God loves weakness. "In my weakness, His strength is made perfect" (2 Cor. 12:9). Weaknesses are opportunities to experience God's strength. That's what Gideon discovered. When he refocused his attention, he discovered that even in his weakness, God's strength was sufficient.



Activity:

Create an acrostic using the word GLORY or GOD'S GLORY. Use the story of Gideon and the lessons we learned to fill in your acrostic using either a word or a phrase. Share your acrostic and use it to retell the story of Gideon and God's victory over the Midianites with someone in your family.



Prayer:

Lord Jesus, forgive us when we are fearful or intimidated by a situation. Remind us to refocus and place our eyes on You. In our weakness, You will meet us where we are and give us the strength that we need. Thank You for the example of Gideon. It's a great reminder to us that as Gideon refocused his attention, he saw that the strength You give is enough. Allow us to rest in that promise, Lord. We pray these things in Your most precious Name, Amen.

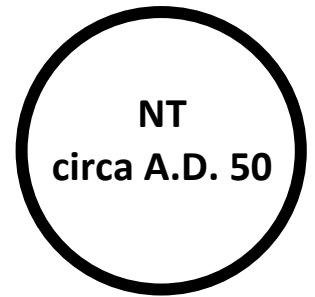
DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 24, 2020 – Mr. Burgess
Paul, Silas, and the Philippian Jailor



Read: Acts 16:16-34



Have you ever done the right thing only to find out that the situation became worse? That's what happens to Paul and Silas! Every day for many days as they walk to a place to pray in Philippi (today in the province of Macedonia, country of Greece), a slave girl follows them and announces to everyone that Paul and Silas are servants of God and know the way to be saved! She's right. However, Paul realizes that the girl has an evil spirit in her which helps her predict the future which helps her owners make money! So he casts out this spirit in the Name of Jesus. The girl is so much better now that the evil spirit is gone!

Meanwhile her owners are very angry because she no longer can predict the future, AND they can't make any money from her predictions. As the unruly crowd grows, the owners drag Paul and Silas in front of the judges and make up complaints against them. The judges order the men to be beaten with whips or rods. They are put in the inner prison cells to make sure they can't escape AND lock their feet in the stocks!

Wow! They are kind and rescue this girl from the evil spirit, and now they find themselves beaten up, sore and bleeding, and locked in the maximum security cell! They can't even move much because their feet are also locked up. Obviously, there is no way that they can fall asleep, and they are still awake at midnight!

So what would you do in prison at midnight? I would probably yell to get the jailor's attention. He needs to know that I didn't deserve this. He should release me! This is NOT fair! I'm angry! My back is hurting, I've been falsely accused, and I need medical help! Is that how Paul and Silas respond?

They start **praying out loud** and **singing** some of their favorite praise songs...at midnight! Amid their suffering, Paul and Silas experience the strong presence of the Holy Spirit, filling their hearts with **JOY** and **PRAISE!** All the prisoners can hear them. They already know how Paul and Silas had been arrested and beaten. I'm sure they had never heard any other prisoners singing in prison!!! 😊 What's that rumble? It's an earthquake...bad enough to shake the foundation of the prison, open all the doors, and break loose all the prisoners' chains. (In our earlier devotionals, I mentioned the earthquake on Good Friday and the earthquake on Easter morning! Now another one!) The prisoners are free to run away if they want!

The jailor, knowing that he would be disciplined or killed if any prisoners escaped, decides to kill himself until Paul stops him by saying that all the prisoners are still here! The jailor then asks the right question, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul is happy to answer his question and lead him and his family to the Lord.

The jailor washes the wounds of Paul and Silas. "He washed and was washed; he washed them from their stripes and was himself washed from his sins" (Chrysostom). He takes the men home, feeds them, and is filled with JOY because he has come to believe in God!

Summary:

BEGIN WITH PRAISE. Just as Jehoshaphat and Judah went into battle in praise (Monday, 2 Chronicles 20) and saw God's rescue, so Paul and Silas were praising the Lord in spite of their suffering. Once again, God responded to their praise by sending the earthquake and rescuing them...and giving them the joy of leading the jailor and his family to God!

**Activity #1:**

Make a list of things you and your family are thankful for, and praise God for those things BEFORE you give God your requests.

Activity #2:

Songs help truth travel down to the heart, and the use of music, the language of the heart, helps speed that process. Play and sing along for one or both. You don't have to wait until midnight! 😊

Lord, I Lift your Name on High (with pictures): <https://safeYouTube.net/w/gVt8>

Our God (Chris Tomlin): <https://safeYouTube.net/w/xsu8>

Activity #3:

Memorize a key verse, one I memorized as a kid: Acts 16:31. They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

**Prayer:**

Our Heavenly Father, we praise You for Paul and Silas who set an example of praising you first even when things were not going their way. Help us to praise you often today! In the Name of Jesus, Amen.