

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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Deeply Rooted (PEACE)
Matthew 1 and 2 Chronicles 20

We are in the second week of this season of Advent. The word “advent” means “arrival.” So, Advent is a season during which we prepare our hearts to celebrate the arrival of Jesus and the hope, peace, joy, and love He brings.

And the genealogy found in Matthew 1 is a record of the people God used to bring about the arrival of Jesus at Christmas. It was through these people and the events of their lives that Jesus came into this world.

But these stories don't just show us how God brought Jesus into this world; they tell us why. Their lives exemplify the great need all mankind has for life only Jesus can give, a life filled with genuine hope, peace, joy, and love. Those things are truly found only in Jesus. They are deeply rooted in Christ. That's what this series is all about.

Last week, we learned about hope from the story of Abraham and Isaac. This morning, we are going to learn about peace from another of Jesus' ancestors. So, look with me at Matthew 1.

Matthew 1:1, 6-8

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham...

Middle of verse 6...

6 And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat,

The first two names in the genealogy of Jesus are David and Abraham. Last week, we saw the significance of Abraham. God promised to bless the entire world through one of Abraham's descendants. That descendant is Jesus.

But, what about David? David was the first great king of Israel. And, like Abraham, God made a covenant promise to him. He promised that another King would come into this world who would be descended from King David. He would be the greatest King to ever live and would set up a Kingdom that would last forever. That King is Jesus.

So, Matthew's genealogy shows Jesus is descended from David. He is the fulfillment of God's promise to David. All the other kings are just a shadow of the reality that is found in King Jesus. And the story of one of those kings mentioned in Matthew 1:8 is a beautiful example of the peace Jesus came to bring the people of His Kingdom.

So, turn with me to 2 Chronicles 20 and let's learn about peace from one of the most beloved Christmas characters of all-time: King Jehoshaphat.

David was the first great king over the nation of Israel. In many ways, he strengthened and established the kingdom in a way that allowed his son, Solomon, to reign over a golden age in the history of Israel. But, after Solomon died, Israel experienced a civil war and split into two distinct kingdoms – the Northern Kingdom (which retained the name, “Israel”) and the Southern Kingdom (which took the name of its most prominent tribe, Judah).

For the rest of the Old Testament, the story of God's people is split between life in the northern kingdom of Israel and life in the southern kingdom of Judah. King Jehoshaphat ruled over the Southern Kingdom of Judah. And, unlike most of the other kings, he was a good and godly leader. 2 Chronicles 17 says that God kept the surrounding nations away so that Jehoshaphat's kingdom could enjoy a time of peace.

But a time came when that peace was threatened. And that brings us to our text this morning.

2 Chronicles 20:1–3

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...

There are two things that disturb the peace in the life of King J.

1. External Conflict

That's verses 1-2. Several nations join forces to do battle against Jehoshaphat. Conflict threatens our peace. Can you identify with that? How many of you can say you are under attack today?

- In your family or marriage...at your job or school...in your health or finances...
- Like Jehoshaphat, forces beyond your control are on the attack.

But notice something about this attack.

- Verse 2 says men came and told King J that a multitude was coming against him. The battle hasn't happened, yet. It's not technically an attack that is threatening Jehoshaphat's peace, it's the threat of attack that's threatening his peace. Let me say that another way. It's not just what is happening that is disrupting the peace, it more about what might happen that's disrupting the peace.
- And we can certainly identify with this. We live without peace when we look at things we don't like about circumstances...things that might represent a very real risk or danger, and we begin to consider what might happen.

That becomes the next wave of attack that disrupts our peace.

2. Internal Conflict

Verse 3 Then Jehoshaphat was afraid...

Even though the fighting hasn't broken out yet, Jehoshaphat is living without peace because he is living in fear. The external battle has turned into an internal war.

- Once again, we all know what it's like to live there. There's a war that rages in our hearts and minds when fear and worry stir up all kinds of anxious thoughts. You wake up in the morning and anxious thoughts invade your mind. You go to work or sit at dinner and your heart is a battlefield. You aren't just in conflict, you are conflicted.
- As Paul described it in *2 Corinthians 7:5* - *our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within.*

That's Jehoshaphat. And that's some of us today. Fighting without. Fear within. Not enjoying peace, at all.

So, what do we learn about living with peace from this man whose peace is under attack? Let's keep reading.

2 Chronicles 20:3-12

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."

This is so good. Jehoshaphat isn't content to spin round and round in fear. So, he prays and he calls others to pray. Keep that in mind because we will come back to that. But, there's something underlying the prayer of Jehoshaphat that we can't overlook. What motivates him to pray and serves as a foundation to his prayers?

It's faith. The reason King J does what he does is because he believes something about God. We find two things Jehoshaphat believes.

First, he believes in the power of God.

- ***Verse 6 - "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.***
- ***Verse 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."***

I love verse 12. We are powerless. We don't know what to do but our eyes are on you. That should be your new life verse. I don't know what to do and even if I did, I couldn't do it. But, God, you have all power and might, none is able to withstand you, so we are looking to you.

Jehoshaphat believes God is able to do whatever needs done. But, that's not all he believes. Let's keep reading.

2 Chronicles 20:13-21

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."

How great is this story?! As Jehoshaphat seeks the Lord in prayer, believing in God's power, we find the other thing he believes. He believes in God's promises.

As the people believe the truth about God's power and seek His face in prayer, God delivers this promise to them through a prophet in V. 15: You don't need to be afraid or dismayed at this great horde. The battle is not yours, it's the Lord's. He will be with you. V. 17 All you have to do is stand firm in the right place, pop a bag of popcorn and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf."

What a promise! And how do the people respond? They praise Him. We'll come back to that in a minute, but why would they praise Him? Because they believe Him. That's exactly what Jehoshaphat says in verse **20: Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."**

They praise God because they believe His promises are true and He has the power to do what He says. So, even though the battle hasn't even been fought, let alone won, the people are already at peace. They believe God and it is well with their souls, so they praise.

And that teaches us a great lesson about living with the peace of Jesus. It brings us to our big idea for this morning.

Big Idea: PEACE IS DEEPLY ROOTED BY FAITH IN THE POWER AND PROMISES OF GOD.

If you want peace this morning, it won't be found by fixating on the things that are threatening your peace. Don't hear what I'm not saying. I'm not saying you should live in denial or disengaged from the issues in your life. What I am saying is that if you want peace, it will only be found by turning your eyes to the Lord...Believe in His power and take Him at His word. We are powerless, but He is mighty to save. We might be perplexed, but He has a perfect plan.

And peace comes to our hearts as our hearts are deeply rooted in the power and promises of God.

And that brings us to Christmas. Almost 900 years after Jehoshaphat sat on the throne of David, the Son of God left the throne of heaven to become a man. Jesus, the son of God and son of David, the prince of peace, came to earth to fight for us. He defeated our greatest enemies - sin and Satan, death, hell, and the grave. He established a Kingdom where His people can live with peace that surpasses all understanding. At the cross, Jesus took away the only real threat that Satan can use to

harm us – the accusation against us that we are sinners and deserve to be condemned by God. Jesus died in our place so that He could take the punishment of our sin, and we could be forgiven by God. He made it so that we could live at peace: peace with God as our Father and peace within the midst of life's storms

Do you want to have peace today? Then look to Jesus. Trust in His power. Have faith in His promises.

This week, I got a really good question about standing on the promises of the Bible. The question was basically, how can we know when a promise is for us and not just a one-off promise to an individual? For instance, the promise that the Lord will fight the battle without Judah's army having to do anything wasn't a promise for every battle. Sometimes the Lord led His people to fight.

So, how can we know when a promise applies to us as followers of Jesus? Well, most of the time you can read from the context whether or not it is a specific promise to one person or a general promise that is for all of God's people throughout time. For instance, when God promised Mary that she would have a child who would be the Son of God, that is clearly a one-time, specific promise. You can't claim that one. When Romans 10:13 says that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, that's clearly a general promise for anyone willing to claim it.

The other thing to keep in mind is that many of the Old Testament promises reach their fullness and find their fulfillment in the work of Jesus. So, it's best to start by looking at the New Testament promises that are clearly for everyone who is trusting in Jesus and when you encounter promises in the Old Testament, ask whether or not that promise connects to something that is fulfilled in Jesus.

For instance, our text this morning is a call to see the salvation that comes entirely from the Lord and stand within the victory He will bring. Is there any promise in the New Testament where that promise to Jehoshaphat reaches its fullness or finds its fulfillment? I believe there is.

Romans 8:31-39

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is for all of us in Christ. And it's even better and fuller than the promise made to Jehoshaphat. Friend, no matter what you might be facing – persecution, danger, or poverty or sickness even death itself – you need not live in fear. If you are trusting in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, God is for you. He is fighting on your behalf. The Battle belongs to the Lord. He will see to it that you will be more than a conqueror and stand in victory as He works all things together for your greatest good and His greatest glory.

Are you trusting in Jesus? Then all will be well. All will be well.

That doesn't mean life won't get hard or that things will always go the way you would choose. That's not what God is promising. He is saying that when all is said and done, you will stand in the place of victory, the place where you look around and see the salvation of the Lord and the work He has accomplished in His great love for you. You will be more than a conqueror because the Lord fights for you.

So, much like last week, the question boils down to whether or not you are standing firm on the promises of God. You won't have peace any other way. So, what does it look like when we stand firm on God's promises?

It looks the way it looked in the life of Jehoshaphat. There are two practical things that happen in our hearts when we live by faith in the power and promises of God.

1. Faith that brings peace...prays like God's power is mighty to save.

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.

What did Jehoshaphat do? He prayed. He called the whole nation to pray. He truly believed that we are powerless, and God is powerful. Peace came through prayer.

Philippians 4:6-7

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

What is threatening your peace today? What promise are you claiming in prayer before God? How would you pray if you believed God is for you and is able to do everything that needs done?

"Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear.
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."

Faith that brings peace prays like God's power is mighty to save. So, pray.

2. Faith that brings peace...praises like God's promises are as good as done.

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."

When the people believed God's promises, they praised Him as though He had already done what He promised to do. That's because faith believes God's promises are as good as done.

Think about the things that are threatening your peace. Now, think about one of the good promises of God for you that relates to that threat.

- God will work it for good. (Romans 8:28)

- He will give you everything you need. (Philippians 4:19)
- In the midst of sorrow, He will give you reasons to rejoice. (Philippians 4:4)
- He will wipe away every tear from your eyes and He will make all things new. (Revelation 21:5)

He will do those things. He has promised them and will bring it to pass. So, how would you praise Him today if you believed all His promises are as good as done?

And when you take Him at His word, look how the story ends.

2 Chronicles 20:22–30

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.

How does the story end? The people who trusted God experience His victory. Their biggest problem became how to get all the spoils of victory back home and it took them 3 days just to do that. They live in His peace with quiet and rest. The story ends the way the story always ends. God keeps His promises and accomplishes His purposes. And that's why it's always right to be deeply rooted in the power and promises of God.