

## ENCOUNTER

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### Week 1: Halal/Yadah

- Today I want to look the story of a man named Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah
  - He was the great, great, great grandson of King David
- Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah begins in 2 Chronicles chapter 17 after his father Asa passes away.
- Jehoshaphat must have learned from his father's mistakes because Asa was a king that would not seek the Lord.
- But verse 3 says, ***"The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel. Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand. And all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. His heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord."*** -2 Chronicles 17:3-6a (ESV)
  - The next few verses describe how he sends out prophets and teachers from town to town in their nation to teach people the word of God.
  - And the Lord blesses him so much that verse 10 says,
- ***"And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat."*** -2 Chronicles 17:10 (ESV)
- Jehoshaphat was doing everything the right way. He was making the right decisions, putting the right people in the right positions, he's doing all of the right things!
- And the Lord was blessing him!

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- But how many of you know, that even if you're doing everything the right way, that doesn't mean that you will never experience adversity and opposition.
- No matter how centered you are in God's will, there is still an enemy that hates you and makes you a target.
- The people of God will always face hardship and struggle. If our Savior wasn't exempt from it, why should we?
- But sometimes we have been so good, in our spiritual walk, we feel like we've been doing all the right things taking the proper precautions, but we still get blindsided by life from time to time.
  - And it can be a terrifying thing.
- In the beginning of chapter 20 it says, ***"After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. 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). Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord." -2 Chronicles 20:1-4 (ESV)***
- *Finding out Fletcher's coming*
  - *When we found out Fletcher was coming, even my brother Matt said that we were some of the most prepared soon-to-be-parent that he had ever seen*
  - *We had all the things we needed for him, the nursery, and more*
  - *Rachel had a birth plan, she made me take extensive notes on the birth plan and of course we weren't ready, no one is ready, but we were prepared*

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- *That is until Rachel went to a midwife appointment and found out her blood pressure was a little high*
  - *They send us to the hospital for routine observation*
  - *Before we knew it, the Doctor was telling us that Fletcher's heart rate kept dropping with each minor contraction that Rachel would have, and they wouldn't know what the problem was until he was out*
  - *After a series of hours it was determined that we needed to C-section*
  - *So I asked the Doc how long it would take and he said, "You'll have your baby in your arms in 30 mins."*
  - *And that is when I grabbed my chest, and went white as a ghost. The nurses said later they were positioning themselves to get me because they thought I was going to pass out!*
  - *But with all of that preparation, all of the sudden nothing was going according to plan, and it was terrifying.*
- I can imagine this sort of panic and fear sets into Jehoshaphat whenever he finds out and 3 of the surrounding countries have decided to attack him, and he doesn't find out about it until they are 40 miles away.
  - They are coming in from every angle so they are sitting ducks that are outmanned and outgunned.
  - We're going to walk through the whole context of this passage, but skip down with me to verse 18 for a moment:
  - ***"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. And the [Worship Leaders], stood up to praise (Halal) the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.... And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise (Halal) him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks (Yadah)***

***to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever.” -2 Chronicles 20:18-21 (ESV)***

- So here in this passage we have 2 different Hebrew words for praise... Halal and Yadah
  - **HALAL- To Shine, to Celebrate, to Be Foolish**
- Sometimes whenever you praise, you're going to look foolish
- Going back to Fletcher's birth story, I'm in a panic, I rush to the car to get the overnight bags, I'm so flustered I get off on the wrong floor twice, and there's only 3 levels!
- When I get back up they put me in scrubs and take me to a waiting room while they prep Rachel in the OR
- And I am sitting in that waiting room and I start singing, out loud, any worship song I can think of
- I can only imagine how foolish I looked in that moment, but there are going to be times whenever the timing of our praise looks foolish to others
- Heck, our faith looks foolish to the majority of the world
- ***1 Cor 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (NKJV)***
- So as most of you know, Fletcher and momma had a successful surgery, they were both ok, and it was such a blessing that Rachel's midwives sent her to the hospital because who knows what would have happened if the doctors weren't able to catch the way his heart rate was dropping.
- But now we have our boy who is such a goof ball. I just spent a week away from him, first time I've been away from him for more than a night since he's been born
- That's why I'm talking about him so much.

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- *But just the other weekend, we were at a wedding in Columbus, GA, and during the ceremony, he thought it was hilarious to put his finger as far up his nose as he could and laugh at the people behind us.*
- *And then he has this new thing that he likes to do when he gets excited, and that is to grab my neck, and start head butting me in the face!*
- *So I have to take him to the back of the sanctuary and try and chill him out and as I get up, there are some of those with young kids who are chuckling at me, and they I see the older crowd to my left, the good-ole-baptist giving me scowls.*
- That's the fear that we live in the tension of too often whenever it comes to our praise. We either fear that people are going to chuckle at us, or scowl at us
- But the only opinion that we should ever be worried about is God's...and that's what made Jehoshaphat's praise so foolishly powerful.
- Back in verse 3, we see that Jehoshaphat is being warned that the enemy is closing in, and we see his immediate response.
- ***"Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord.."***  
***-2 Chronicles 20:3 (ESV)***
  - How you respond in the midst of adversity will indicate what you worship
  - When things get hard, do you respond by taking matters into your own hands. bearing all of the weight on your own shoulders? You worship yourself, you are God of your life
  - Do you turn to substance abuse? Thats what you worship
- **PRAISE IS AN INTENTIONAL RESPONSE**
  - *We praise in response to His blessings, we praise in response of His mercy, we praise response of His love, above all we praise in response to the Cross.*

- *But, will we still praise in response to hardship, can we find a way to praise in response to anxiety? Do we respond to fear, with praise?*
  - *They say Fear is the Opposite of Faith*
  - I don't necessarily agree with that statement
  - If you remember we talked about this in our Fruit of the Spirit series but I think it bodes repeating.
  - Fear is a feeling, a natural feeling that God created. Feelings are never wrong or a sin, until you allow those feelings to have power over your life. There is nothing wrong with the feeling of fear.
- ***1 John 4:18- "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love."***
  - **Fear: Phobos-** "fear, dread, or terror"
  - **Fear: Phobeo-** "to put to flight by terrifying (to scare away)"
  - So one is the feeling of fear, and the other is allowing fear to dictate your actions
- ***1 John 4:18- "There is no [phobos] in love, but perfect love casts out [phobos]. For [phobos] has to do with punishment, and whoever [PHOBEO] has not been perfected in love."***
- Something we have to remember is that FEAR IS AN INDICATOR, NOT A DICTATOR
  - There is nothing wrong with feeling fear
  - Fear can be a healthy feeling that God created that helps indicate danger and keeps you safe
- But the feeling of fear can also keep you from stepping out in faith if you let it

- God's love has given us no reason to be afraid, because of His love we have NOTHING to fear
  - But we are human, and we have those initial feelings and emotions and situations where we are scared
  - There's Grace for that
  - Jesus in the garden
- But Jesus did not allow fear to dictate His actions, and He went to the cross and perfectly obeyed the Father's will shed His blood for you and me
  - God wants to build your faith so that the fear no longer dictates your actions...no longer keeps you from obedience
  - Fear is not the opposite of faith because, Faith will come with the feeling of fear
  - When God tells you to step out in faith, more often than not it will scare you to death
  - Faith is scary, because we cant see the end result. Thats why it takes faith.
- *"A step of faith will never make sense until you take it."*
  - You can either let fear hold you back, or allow faith to drive you forward
  - You can either let fear bring you down, or drive you to your Father
- Look at Jehoshaphat's leadership in verse 5, ***"And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, 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." -2 Chronicles 20:5-6 (ESV)***

- His fear was not going to allow him to forget who His God was and what His God was capable of
- **PRAISE IS PUTTING GOD IN HIS PROPER PLACE**
  - and His rightful place is high above us
  - When preparing our hearts for worship, the first thing we have to do is lift God up
    - It is acknowledging that God is above me, He is not my peer
    - He is not just above me, He is above my circumstances, He is above my mistakes, He is above my fear, He is above my hurt, He is above my family problems, He is above my struggles
- He is High above and victorious over all things, His position never changes.
  - **Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”**
  - **Numbers 23:19 “God is not man, that he should lie or a son of man that He should change His mind. He has said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?”**
  - Sometimes we need to intentionally remind ourselves how High and lifted up He is, and tell ourselves what He’s done
- This is what Jehoshaphat does in verse 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? And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name,” -2 Chronicles 20:7-8 (ESV)**
  - He’s not questioning God, He’s reminding Himself of God’s faithfulness
  - Did you not God, repair my marriage when it was on the verge of ruin
  - Did you not God, bring my family through that tragedy



- *Did you not God, put me on this career path, you didn't bring me this far just to abandon me*
- *Did you not God, meet me at my most desperate hour?*
- Some of us whenever we feel like we're getting surrounded and bogged down by life, we just need to take a few moments and remind ourselves how faithful he's been throughout
  - Remind ourselves of when we first met Jesus
- We lose complacency when we remember who He is and what He's done
  - And complacency is replaced with confidence
- Let's continue in verse 9, Jehoshaphat says, ***'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.'***...***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.***” -2 Chronicles 20:9-11 (ESV)
- *God Comes into full view in our lives when we come to the end of ourselves*
- You know, I have a lot of people ask me a lot what our church growth strategy is. And you know, I believe that our number 1 church growth strategy should be to constantly remind ourselves that we have no idea how to grow a church
- We are powerless in and of ourselves to do this thing
- We have no idea what we're doing, we have no answers in and of ourselves.
  - *The only strategy I can think of is to seek the face of the Lord and readily admit to Him, we don't know what we're doing!*

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- *This is so much bigger than us, it's so far beyond us, we don't know what to do, we don't know how to build a church, BUT OUR EYES ARE ON YOU!!*
- *That's why I think it's absurd that some people say "GOD WILL NEVER GIVE YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE"*
  - *He always allows us to go through more than we can handle because it teaches us to rely on Him, to depend on Him, and teach us where the power really comes from*
- ***2 Corinthians 12:9-11 (NLT) 9 Each time He said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10 That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.***
  - What is the emphasis of this passage?
  - Not our weakness, but God's strength
- When I hold to and define myself by my weaknesses and emphasize them, all I do is make God small
- Someone needs to hear this, *Emphasizing your insecurities just minimizes the work that God is doing in your life.*
  - In reality, if I view my weaknesses and insecurities in the Light of who God is, I can realize that my weakness is just an opportunity for God's strength to be shown
  - My weaknesses and my flaws do NOT limit what God can do... they just give Him a platform to move in a greater way in my life
  - That's why no matter what I'm going through, no matter how far I fall, or how many things seem to be surrounding me, I can still call upon HIS NAME

- He will always answer, but almost never the way you expect Him
- So in verse 15, God answers Jehoshaphat's prayer through a prophet named Jahaziel who 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... 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."*** -2 Chronicles 20:15-17 (ESV)
  - Ok so, you want me to go to battle but not fight?? That doesn't seem like a very effective battle plan!
- I love that God tells them they don't have to fight, but they still need to show up to the battlefield
- God sometimes, not always, but sometimes He likes to have an audience when He does the impossible
  - WE GET A FRONT ROW SEAT
  - Do you think God rolled the stone away from the tomb so Jesus could get out? No! He rolled the stone away so his people could show up and see what He had done
- The amazing thing about the Christian life is that we get to show up and just watch Him work. Just because He does all the work doesn't mean we're not called to show up.
  - We don't pretend that the battles don't exist...but we show up in the power and strength in the Name of the Lord who fights on our behalf
- Stop Fighting in our own strength....Start Trusting in His
- Stop taking matters into your own hands and leave them in your Fathers

- *No matter the battle, no matter the adversity...“Cast all your cares upon Him”*

**- ADVERSITY IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRAISE**

- Jehoshaphat is facing the most adversity he has yet to date in his life and in his reign, but he set's his face to seek the Lord, he keeps his eyes on the Lord, and he intentionally chose to praise the Lord in the midst of it.

- Again in verse 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. And the [Worship Leaders], stood up to praise (Halal) the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.”***  
**-2 Chronicles 20:18-19 (ESV)**

- **HALAL- To Shine, to Celebrate, to Be Foolish**

- Now this doesn't seem like a time to celebrate, this seems like a dark moment not a shining moment, so yea, this praise definitely seems foolish at this time
- But we need some more people in the church that are willing to look a little foolish with their praise.

- *Praise in the midst of adversity will always look foolish to the outside world.*

- Faith looks foolish, faith may even feel foolish to you sometimes, but when you take the time to Worship even when you may be walking through the valley of the shadow of death...you can remember that you're not called TO that valley, you're called to walk THROUGH that valley and He'll hold your hand the ENTIRE TIME
- *And when you come through that valley on the other side you wonder why you ever questioned Him in the first place.*

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- *And what becomes foolish to us is the thought that we could ever do anything without Him*
- *And the next time we go through a Valley we can walk through it with a little bit more confidence, a little bit more praise, with a little bit more seemingly foolish worship*
- *There is never a greater opportunity to show off God in your life than when you are going through one of the darkest valley of your life and still Praise Him throughout*
- ***“And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise (Halal) him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, “Give thanks (Yadah) to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever.” -2 Chronicles 20:21 (ESV)***
  - What I love about this is that Jehoshaphat preps for battle with praise
  - He uses Worship as His weapon
- The other word for Praise here in this passage which is actually translated, “Give Thanks” is the Hebrew word...
- ***YADAH- “To revere or worship with extended hands. To hold out the hands. To throw a stone or arrow.”***
- Posture is very important when it comes to praise, we’ll get into that more throughout this series
  - But this is the reason why you see people raise their hands toward heaven during worship
- But I also love the other symbolism within this definition.
  - Reminds me of David throwing that stone at Goliath
  - David stepping up and facing that giant was not just act of courage, it was an act of worship

- **1 Samuel 17:45** ***"You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts,***
  - You think Goliath fell because of Davids strength and accuracy?? No! He just showed up and God won that battle for Him
- I also love the part of the definition that means TO SHOOT AN ARROW
- *To shoot an arrow requires your full attention mentally, emotionally, and physically. It requires tremendous concentration.*
  - When I worship I am going to mentally put all my focus on Him
  - When I worship, no matter what I am feeling, I am emotionally going to set my focus on Him
  - When I worship I am physically (raise hands) going to set my focus on Him
- *One of the greatest hindrances and common mistakes that archers make is having an inconstant stance....*
  - Then the common mistake is they allow their stance to shift between shots
  - They shift their feet, they drop their shoulders, and they get a little lazy in between shots
- **One the the greatest hindrances to our praise is an inconstant stance**
  - We come to church, have a great service, but then allow the grind of monday morning to throw our stance off a little bit
  - *Things are going good, and then that switch gets flipped and things start getting hard and our stance goes from THIS to this... (Hands up to arms crossed)*

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- We start worrying about other people think or looking foolish and our stance gets off because we worship the opinions of other people and our reputation more than we worship God
- We start to look at our giants more than we look at God and our stance get off again
- But you will truly experience the Power of Praise whenever we can consistently in the good times, or the bad worship Him
- You know after Jehoshaphat led the whole nation in praise and worship and giving thanks. They went out to the battle field, they looks out toward the great horde that was surrounding them.
- You know what they saw? They were already allll wiped out. The Lord had already fought the battle, and whenever the Lord fights a battle He never loses. So why would we ever want to fight on our own?
- Look at verse 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. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.” -2 Chronicles 20:29-30 (ESV)***
- Isn't it amazing that whenever we worship and allow the Lord to fight our battles, we experience two things. Victory and Rest.
- We all know about those times, when your back seems to be against the wall. The weight of life and the world seems to be closing in on you. You're surrounded by problems, depression, anxiety, addiction, sickness, and what do we do??
- *Our default response...* And you know I've tried that. I try that all the time. But whenever I try to fight through the battles of life on my own, you know what happens? I end up more beaten, more defeated, more lost, and more confused.
- What's the answer??

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- **Exodus 14:14 says THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU, YOU NEED ONLY TO BE STILL.**
- I've had to learn that whenever my backs against the wall and the troubles of life seem to be surrounding me, I just need to lean back and rest. I cast all my cares ....
  - *I need to rearrange my focus from my problems to my Solution.*