**Text: 2 Chronicles 20:1-4; 14-25**

**Subject: How Do You Respond to Fearful Situations? Part 1 (of 2)**

 In our text, we find Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, in the midst of a fearful situation. According to our text, in verse 1, the Judahites were surrounded by the Moabites, the Ammonites and others.

 Then, to add a layer of drama, in verse 2, we find a mysterious group of “some” people who came and told Jehoshaphat that the great multitude had formed and was coming against them.

 Now, let me pause here for a minute because I find it curious that the Bible does not define who this group was. Thus, we cannot be sure if this group had good intentions and simply wanted Jehoshaphat to know that they were in danger, or if this group was some group of people who had bad intentions of instilling the atmosphere of fear. Either way, whatever their intentions were, Jehoshaphat immediately began to fear because of the news that he had just received.

 We know this because verse 3 tells us that Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the Lord for guidance.

 Now, also, let’s pause here for a moment because this really is the moment of truth that we all face when we are confronted with a seemingly impossible situation. In fact, I will go out on a limb and say that most people initially respond with fear because it is a very natural response.

 However, because fear is probably the most natural and human response, we have to be conscious of it because if we allow it to linger in our minds too long, it can have a very negative, paralyzing and debilitating effect on our minds, bodies and souls.

 For instance, 1 John 4:18 tells us fear has torment. This torment is manifested in our minds. Also, Job 30:15 says, terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my soul as the wind: my welfare passeth away as a cloud. Lastly, Luke 21:26 says, men’s hearts fail because of fear.

Therefore, we have to be conscious of our fearfulness and we have to respond to it in the right way because if we don’t we may find ourselves having to endure prolonged and severe suffering in our hearts, minds, bodies or souls and may find ourselves stifled, disabled or even dead because all of that pressure that we have swirling around in minds.

 Even more, when we do allow for fear to remain, the enemy does a celebration dance because his main objective is to kill, steal and destroy. However, this is not God’s will because The Lord Jesus Christ came so that we might have life, and have it more abundantly no matter what we are going through in our lives.

 In other words, life or destruction can be determined by our response when we are confronted with seemingly impossible or difficult situations. And that’s why I stopped by here today to ask you: How Do You respond to Fearful Situations?

 Now, if we look real closely at our text, we can find at least 3 Good Ways to Respond to Fear.

First, in verse 3, we see that initially Jehoshaphat was terrified when he received his negative news. Then, he begged God for guidance. However, in the King James Version it says he set himself to seek the Lord. The NIV versions says, when he was alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD. The New American Standard Version says Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD. The Gods Word Translation says, Frightened, Jehoshaphat decided to ask for the LORD's help.

 Therefore, our first response to fear is that we should first **Decide to Take Spiritual Action** against fear. That means at the very first moment we become consciously aware that we are afraid, we have to be resolved and determined to turn our attention away from the object of our fear to only One who can do anything about our fear.

This process begins when we have a conversation with ourselves after we have listened long enough to negative news, or after we have contemplated long enough about all of the possible bad outcomes that we have derived in our own minds.

I know this subtle but very important first step is hard to take especially now that we are living in these very scary and uncertain times in which we are living in.

This is especially the case because of all the bad news of the virus that is blasting through the airwaves all day every day. At the same time, it’s hard because we are inundated with the possibility of an impending economic down-turn bearing down on us. Also, it is really hard because we don’t know what is going to happen next or what is going to become of our lives in the not so distant future.

However, if we don’t take this step, we might get stuck in a rut of fear which means that we may suffer paralysis of our analysis and may become stifled or disabled by the onslaught of negative thoughts that keep running through our minds like a waterspout that we cannot turn off.

Therefore, we have to Decide to Take Spiritual Action against fear by first becoming conscious of our fear and then having a brief conversation with ourselves about how we are going to respond. Then, we have to make a choice to either let fear linger, or to make a resolution within the constitution of our hearts, minds and souls that we are going to turn away from the object of our fear, and turn to the only One who can do anything about everything.

If I may, let me press on this point a little further because in considering verse 3 of our text, what it says is that Jehoshaphat was terrified then he set himself to seek the Lord.

In other words, before he turned to God, he first had to get himself to together because he knew that he was standing at the crossroad of victory or imminent defeat given all of the bad news that he had received.

Therefore, we must do likewise. We must get ourselves together as we stand the same crossroad of more fear, or more freedom from our fear. Now, I don’t know about you but I want to be free.

Then, after we have Decided to Take Spiritual Action against fear, the next way we can respond to fear is we can **Ask God for Help**.

For instance, in verse 3-4, Jehoshaphat did. (READ)

 Now, let me just say, there are some situations that require that we both fast and pray because fasting causes us to focus all of our Spiritual energy on a specific thing; and when we do that, the likelihood increases that God is going to respond.

 At the same time, we have to be confident when we Ask God for Help. That’s how Jehoshaphat approached the situation. He was specific and confident when he and the Israelites went before God to ask Him for help.

 Let’s dissect his prayer in verses 5-9.

 In verse 5-6, he acknowledged the authority and sovereignty of

God. (READ) And in verse 7, he remembered what God had already done. (READ). Also, in verse 8, he reminded God that they were in the right position to petition God. (READ). Then, in verse 9, he was very specific and very confident that God would hear their prayer. (READ)

 We can do the same thing. We should acknowledge who God is; remember what God has already done; recognize that we too are in right position to petition God with anything and everything because of our relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ.

We know this because 1 John 5:13-15 says: these things I have written to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life;

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

 By understanding these principles, we can then be very specific and very confident like Jehoshaphat was. In verse 9, he prayed: whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come to stand in your presence before this Temple, where Your Name is honored. We can cry out to You to save us, and You will hear us and rescue us.

 Family, during this time of plague and pandemic, and this time of economic uncertainty, we can be just as specific and just as confident as Jehoshaphat was when he asked God for help in the midst of his fearful situation.

 I would say taking these steps, to first Decide to Take Spiritual and then, to Ask God for Help in a specific and confident way, is critical because doing so will short circuit the impact of the negative news that we have received and the negative situations that we are in. Then, God will begin to restore peace in our minds.

 In fact, this is what Isaiah meant when he said in Isaiah 26:3, thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee…In other words, when we immediately ask God for help in the midst of our fearful situation, He will begin to snatch back the peace of mind that the devil is trying to steal from us.

Therefore, let me ask you: How Do You Respond to Your Fearful Situations?

 The third way we should respond is by **Listening Out for God’s Response**. In verse 14, we see that after Jehoshaphat, Decided to Take Spiritual Action against fear, by Asking God for Help, he then Listened Out and received God’s Response. (READ v14-15)…

 Here, we see that God spoke, by His Spirit, through one of the Levites—who were those who were responsible for ushering in the Spirit of God. And what He said was—Be Not Afraid and Don’t Be Discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but it is the Lords.

 In other words, what God was saying to Jehoshaphat, and what He is saying to you and me is that He is well aware of whatever we are going through in our lives. He knows about the condition of our country and of our world. He knows about what the doctor said or about the symptoms we are starting to see. He knows about what’s happening in our families and in our finances.

 Nevertheless, we should not be afraid and we should not be discouraged because the battle is not ours, it is the Lords. However, the question becomes, are we willing to Listen out for God’s Response to Our Situation, or are we going to grow impatient and stop believing that God is aware and is able to move in and on our behalf?

 You see, sometimes, it takes God a little while to work out, but that doesn’t means that He is not listening. In fact, we should know He listens because He responded by His Spirit through Jahaziel to the Children of Israel and told them—to just hold on a little while longer because God was going to work it.

 In verse 16-17, he said, tomorrow, march up to the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. But, you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand and watch the Lord’s victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the Lord is with you!

Let me just say. This word was not just for the Israelites. This word is for you and me. God has not changed His strategy. If He was for them, then that means He is for us. We know this because Romans 8:31 says, what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, [then] who can be against us?

 Then, Romans 8:34-35 asks, Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

 Therefore, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (shall conoravirus, economic turmoil, etc)

 The answer is no….. in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

 Then, the Apostle Paul goes on to say, for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, church, we should not give in or give up to our fears.

Instead we should respond by:

* **Deciding to Take Spiritual Action** Against Fear
* **Asking God for Help**
* **Listening Out for God’s Response**

And God will respond by giving us the victory!