

Kev's Guys eGroup Elevation Church sermon notes

Sermon Title: "When the Battle Chooses You"

By Pastor Steven Furtick

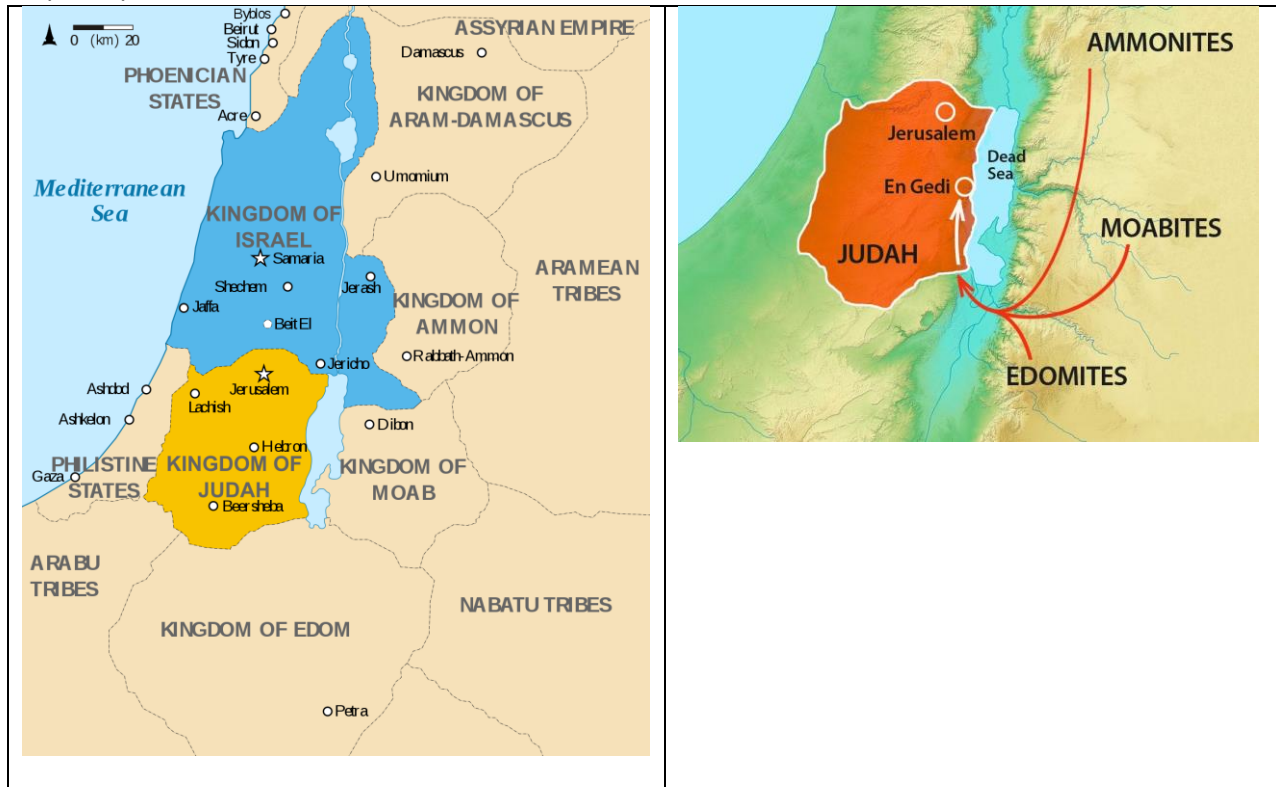
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YouTube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yoaNVFo-tI>

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20 New International Version (NIV): Jehoshaphat Defeats Moab and Ammon -
*20 After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat. 2 Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). 3 **Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. 4 The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.** 5 Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard 6 and said: "**Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you.** 7 Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? 8 They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, 9 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.' 10 "But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. 11 See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. 12 Our God, will you not judge them? 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 on you." 13 All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the Lord. 14 **Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. 15 He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel.** 17 You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'" 18 Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the Lord. 19 Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice. 20 Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." 21 After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever." 22 As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. 23 The Ammonites and Moabites rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.*

Romans 8:28: 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Map and path of attack at the time of 2 Cron 20



Special guest worship leader: Kari Jobe – “See A Victory” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7NKPKmIP1A>

Memory verse for the week: 2 Cron 20: 17 You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem.

Sermon by Pastor Steven Furtick – “*When the Battle Chooses You*”

- I hope today’s Scripture goes off like a bomb - and when I read it - a certain number of you are going to know that this scripture is for you.
- How do you know if this Scripture is for you? The Scripture is for you if you are fighting a battle that is bigger than you - and your fighting a battle that you didn’t ask for.
- See verse 15 He said: “Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. 16 Tomorrow march down against them.
- See verse 20 Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful.”
- Reflections on 17 years of marriage to Holly: sometimes I take credit for my marriage when in fact it’s more reflection of the quality of the partner. As one friend told me: the healthiest part of me

picked Holly. When I chose her, I chose the union with her strengths and I chose to cover her weaknesses as her husband - and she chose to cover my weaknesses as my wife. One thing about marriage: It is often better look at an example instead of listening to advice. As Jesus said he wants a husband to love his wife just as much as Jesus loved His church - this is more of an example than an explanation. People will give you life & marriage advice based on ideal situations - and the problem with this - while they are advising you - they may not know the exact nature of your challenges - and they might give you a strategy that worked for them - but it might not work for you - because a every relationship and every challenge and every battle are not created equal.

- When I was getting married I was offered up some of the same old clichés - like never go to bed on your anger – and I think this is a horrible thing to try - since sometimes the best thing to do is to get some rest and come out fresh in the morning - before you say something bad is a sleep deprived delirious self - with your filter off - while your exhausted and say something that you would never say if it was not 3 AM – where it was probably better to go on your respective corners and get some sleep.
- Is another cliché: choose your battles. Don't fight over everything - and this is great advice – and very relevant with today's scripture. Better to ask yourself this question: Is this really worth waging a war over? Don't get tripped up over tiny things and tiny battles.
- **So, here's the question I want to ask you today: it is wise to choose your battles while you can - but what do you do when you're Battle chooses you?** What do you do when something shows up on your doorstep and it's not Amazon prime package and not something you ordered?
- **What do you do when the devil drops something off for you to deal with - that you did not directly cause, choose, or anticipate?**
- Like vs. 2: 2 Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi).
- Just when everything is going good in the southern kingdom of Judah, Jehoshaphat gets a surprise that he does not have sufficient time to prepare for – and enemy forces are only 25 miles away from - meaning he doesn't have time to formulate a strategy to muster the required troops to defend the attack.
- See map above.
- The enemies of Jehoshaphat and the southern kingdom of Judah are launching a surprise attack by going around the Dead Sea via a little-known route - because they can't use the normal trade route.
- Have you ever get that phone call, that text message, that moment in time where the battle is coming - and it's only a day's march away?
- And we don't have time to read a book, watch a Ted talk, get some sleep, or load up on nutrients. This one caught us off guard. This slapped us up-side the head. This one left our ears ringing. This one I can't even believe it is happening. This one, we are not even sure if it's real yet. This one, I do not have time to call 12 people about - this one I do not have time to get everyone's opinion - this one I don't have time to get everyone's advice.
- So now let's watch what Jehoshaphat does. We have to go to God. **Something about a surprise attack that will drive you into the presence of God. The something about the thing you didn't see coming that will make you run to the place you should've went to all long.**
- See vs. 3. It says that Jehoshaphat was alarmed but resolved. I really like this.
- **Jehoshaphat had a determination to seek the Lord - even in the face of an unexpected attack.**

- He had made up his mind as to who he would go to before he even knew what was going to come against him. And of course, he did not always respond this way.
- No one does.
- This point is so hard to get across for all of us hypocritical Christians - who say they always seek the Lord during times of trouble - like we all pray in tongues when the battle is before us - Like we always prostrate ourselves to the holiness of God when were up against it.
- Two chapters ago Jehoshaphat hooked-up with Ahab and almost got himself killed - because it seemed like the right strategy at the time - when they wanted to attack strategic city - so they went out to do what seemed to be smart at the time - when Jehoshaphat errored by listening to false Baal prophets
- you might recall Ahab - this is the same person that witnessed the prophetic account of Elijah - who proclaimed it would not be any rain until he said so - like a voice activated shower system.
- Have you ever barely made it out when you fought a battle that you were not supposed to fight?
- Recall story of Pastor Steven driving to his wedding with his father and past a couple fighting – where the woman had the man in a headlock. I was going to try to get out and help - but when I saw that the woman had things under control - I figured the best thing to do is to praise God for his sovereignty - and this woman but apparently did not need my help - and drove off. Advice from the father in law: never get between a fight between a man in his women - because if you step into their fight and is not your fight - but you get in the middle of it - they will turn around and both start fighting you. This is good advice. Don't try to take on fight that's not your fight - because you might find out that when you do this - you realize the surest way to get yourself in trouble is to take on a battle that does not belong to you.
- This is why Christians should not comment on social media on every subject posted as a cultural issue.
- You get to choose your battles.
- And this is what Jehoshaphat wanted to know: is this my battle to fight?
- Many people ask me to get more political from my pulpit - however this is not my fight.
- I vote and am involved - and lead thousands of people to make a difference and benefit our community - I built something that reflects unity in a broken and fragmented world - and we do it every six days and during the week.
- **And we must be very careful not to expend energy to fight battles that are not ours to fight.**
- **And you don't have any energy left to fight the battles that are yours.**
- And now we are so tired leaving comments on Facebook for people you don't know - leaving you depleted so that you do not have enough strength to engage the people in your own house.
- I'm not trying to run the White House – I am trying to run my house – and my hands are full.
- **Yet we wear ourselves out swinging at stuff that we are not supposed to fight.**
- And I'm bad about this - as if I don't have enough drama in my own life - so I start to control other people. This is a good tell. When we are trying to control others - we are fighting the wrong battle - you can't control others - at a certain point you can only control short-term behaviors - but you can't change somebody's heart - that's why the New Testament says "if at all possible please try to live in peace with one another" - key point here is that the peace of another person is not your responsibility - your peace is your responsibility. And there comes a point where you just have to say - that's not my battle. I've done all I can do however this is not my battle.

- **Here's a great line to use the next time someone tries to draw you into some gossip or draw you into someone else's drama: when confronted with this question: What do you think about _____? Have you heard about _____? What do you think about _____? When you think about that ministry? Is the best answer: I don't.**
- This will work for a variety of situations.
- **Our hearts are full time drama factories - we do not need to borrow drama from anyone else's personal life - we have our own individual drama.** BWOD = bring your own drama.
- And Jehoshaphat didn't run around looking at what other people were doing – he went to seek the Lord. He went to inquire of the Lord - not some artificial prayer - not just getting some cheap feeling and then calling it God - and this isn't just slapping a scripture verse on something that you wanted to do anyway - so that you can blame on God when it doesn't work out - what Jehoshaphat is doing is seeking the Lord in an authentic way.
- Jehoshaphat was shocked - but he wasn't "shooked." He could've probably fought one of the attacking nations - but all three coming up from behind?
- **We have three different enemies: we have the world, the flesh, and the devil**
- **This is from 1 John. These are the values that opposed the world – the world. The patterns that that oppose your world – the flesh. And then there's the devil - this is the principality that opposes your purpose.**
- And we can probably fight one – however, how we fight the devil while we are also fighting our own flesh? How do I fight the world when there's a part of me that wants to do things as the world does?
- How do we raise kids when all the information of all recorded history is in their pocket? How do I have a sex talk with kids when they don't have to go to a gas station to see pornography - they can see it right next to their Bible app.
- **The nature of the battle determines the nature of the strategy. When you don't understand the nature of the battle you will not understand the nuance of the strategy** - so you will fight the battle but not understand the dynamics of the battle - and you will lose the battle because you will wrestle with it at the wrong level.
- When you understand the nature of the battle you understand the nature of the strategy.
- Jehoshaphat surrounded himself with the right people – and he is not going to Ahab this time.
- He is not looking for celebrity culture to influence his decision this time.
- He's going to the right place, however, he does not have a plan.
- **See Jehoshaphat's prayer 2 Cron 20: 5 to 17.**
- Every day this week, read what Jehoshaphat prayed. 5 Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard 6 and said: "Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. 7 Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? 8 They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, 9 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.' 10 "But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. 11 See how they are repaying us

by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. 12 Our God, will you not judge them? 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 on you.” 13 All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the Lord. 14 Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. 15 He said: “Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. 16 Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. 17 You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.’”

- Jehoshaphat shifted his focus from those that are coming against him to the one who reigns above him.
- **Remind God of what he has done when you’re not sure what he’s doing for you right now - Not so that God can remember - so that you can.** This is not your first rodeo, not your first struggle, and not your first diagnosis.
- When Jehoshaphat prays, he is both praising God and he’s blaming God. Notice the shift in his tone. See vs. 10.
- For this battle we are doing the best we can - this one we are acting according to the wisdom that we had for the situation that we are in.
- This battle is different - this one - we could not have prevented by obedience.
- Sure, we sin and we have things we have to repent – and I do too - and please don’t judge me with an angelic face - otherwise I will show something about your life on these IMax screens that will blow you away.
- The coalition of forces against Jehoshaphat are the same people that Moses was instructed not to drive out. This same coalition was part of the offspring of Esau. And Esau was the son of Isaac - and Isaac was the son of Abraham - and Abraham was God’s friend.
- When you have a friend that knows how to fight it will make you confident.
- Recall the humorous 4th grade story Pastor Furtick of Eric Pie time making friends with Harry Walker (who was big and had chest hair)
- This is to say that some battles might be bigger than us - but that are not bigger than God.
- What do you do when you have to fight a battle it’s not your fault? Sometimes we have to fight things that are in our genetic line - but we still have to figure out what to do about that battle - sometimes you fight against things that other people did - and when you’re going to shame - it is tricky to take ownership of certain parts - because shame can drive you out of the presence of God when you are in a situation that you didn’t create.
- And Jehoshaphat is transcending all of that in his prayer.
- See vs. 11.
- See how the coalition of enemies is driving us out of the land we inherited.
- God gave me this word: **if it’s God who gave it - then it’s God’s to protect it.**
- It’s not about how much power you have it’s about possession.

- And if you are God's possession – and you are stewarding something he gave you to possess - that it's not a matter of how much power you have that determines your next battle. When it's God's possession - is God's problem.
- If it hits your heart and it's God's possession - it's God's problem - and then you realize you are his treasure - you are his possession - you are His son or daughter - you are His friend - and your friend knows how to fight - and it gives us the confidence.
- See vs. 12.
- God says if you change the focus you will know when to fight.
- Stop looking at how big it is - and start praising God for how great he is.
- Help is on the way
- See vs. 13.
- Why is this vs. important: "14 Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly." This is important because every name that is mentioned is representative a generation where God was faithful - it means that every single time that God get ready to pass his purpose to a new generation - God didn't drop it - and he won't drop it now - and it won't stop with you - and you will lose the battle - unless you lose your focus.
- **It is not about your power - it is about your position.**
- I so thankful for the prophets to show up and help Jehoshaphat. Had they gotten ready to fight they would've lost. This is very ironic - and if they fought the invading enemy they would've lost.
- **When you don't understand the nature of the battle that you're in - you use the wrong strategy – and some of us are losing because we are fighting on the wrong level.**
- See Ephesians 6:12: Ephesians 6:12 New International Version (NIV): 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
- This is what we do - we fight flesh and blood.
- We even fight people that are trying to help us - because were insecure.
- We even fight battles to protect our ego and to protect our pride.
- And then we lose the battle in our spirit because we were more concerned about protecting our pride than receiving God's power - and His help and His provision in our lives.
- **Keep our mouths shut (with others) and save your energy for the real battle.**
- When I see a comment about me on Instagram about my shoes or something else - I need to start saying "not this one" - save my energy for something else.
- Because if you convince a fool - now you have is a fool as a friend.
- Recall the movie 41: When the owner asks Jackie Robinson for the courage and guts not to fight back when he is verbally attacked.
- Sometimes it takes more guts and courage not to fight back.
- **Sometimes it takes more faith to let God be God - and for God to be great in your situation.**
- Because if we manipulate the situation, were going to mess it up - where you pluck up tares as well as the good wheat
- It takes more faith to let God sort it out.
- Just as the prophet said. you have to understand the nature of the battle to understand the strategy.

- As married couples we need to line up on the same side and face it - not fight each other.
- When we become afraid, one reaction is to become angry - because the anger is a camouflage for the fear - which makes us feel vulnerable - so we get angry because this makes us look strong - because on the inside we might feel weak – a better solution is to fight the fear and we can fix this together.
- But if we wrestle at the wrong level, we will wear ourselves out - and fight where the problem shows up - not where the problem started.
- You know somebody that struggling with addiction, you can't counsel them to win against addiction using willpower - it's not a matter of willpower - it's a matter of worship - something in their life started meeting their needs that only God alone can meet - and if you don't show them that God can meet those same needs that alcohol can - God can meet those same needs that pornography can - God's can meet those same needs that overspending can - God can meet those same needs that over-eating can.
- You have to fix the worship problem because you can't fix it by addressing willpower.
- You have to fight with a focus.
- In the prophet said "this is not even about you" so don't be afraid. If it's too big for you, don't be afraid - see verse 15. Don't be afraid of the vast army - this thing is bigger than you - and if you try to fight it you going to lose.
- **Don't try to meet the righteous requirements under your own strength - and let the power of Christ flow you through you and that the power of the Holy Spirit direct you – otherwise, you are going to keep losing the battles - because you are wrestling on the level of only what you can see - but the battle is not against flesh and blood - it spiritual.**
- The battle is not yours - it's God's.
- If it's too big, it does not belong to you.
- If it's too big, you got to give it back to God.
- Yet we say the battle is the Lord's to fight but we still stress like it's ours - and still worry like it's ours.
- And we waste all of our energy stressing about the battle and worrying about the battle - when we could have been worshiping.
- The battle is not yours give it back - quit doing God's job for him.
- God wants his battle back.
- **It's too big for you and it came up behind you.**
- **How to give it back? It's a focus. It's looking beyond what is coming against you – and looking toward what is within you - to know that greater is He that is in us - then he that is in the world - and God wants his battle back.**
- Get in position's not so that you can fight - not so that you can struggle - so that you can see the deliverance that the Lord will bring about to Israel on this day.
- **God is fighting for Juda - God is fighting for worshipers - God is fighting for praises - God is fighting for his people - God is fighting for you - you are his friend - you get His help - you get His strength - you get His mercy - you get His miracles - you get His provision - you get His angels.**
- If you worship, you wage the war of worship.
- **What you do if the battle chooses you? You worship your way through it.**
- Now this sounds good but it feel stupid.
- Here comes the coalition of the enemy and they are only 25 miles away.

- And what are we gonna do about the situation Jehoshaphat?
- See verse 17 - you will not have to fight this battle. But you will experience the victory.
- Not by fighting - but by focusing.
- See vs. 18 to 23. These verses that explain the weapons in our warfare that pull-down strongholds in our life.
- It's fight or flight time - and when you can't win the fight and you can't run from it – they did not have to fight it - but they did have to face it.
- And God wants to give you the faith to face it.
- And God wants to give you the faith to trust Him.
- Do you have the faith not to fight it in your flesh - but rather to deal with it in your spirit?
- Jesus told Peter to put his sword away.
- Sometimes it takes more faith not to fight - sometimes it takes more faith to go to the cross and get over your pride - and get over yourself - and let him fight your battles.
- Singing is a strange strategy to fight three nations that are attacking you at once - however sometimes the battle is so big - we can't fight this on our own.
- I always thought that this scripture meant that when we are deep trouble that we should sing - however not everybody can sing - and they don't like music - but now I realize the passage is not about music – it about focus.
- **So today look past your enemy - and praise God for the splendor of his holiness - let's focus on this - focus on what's right about God - rather than what's wrong with our life.**
- And if you focus on that - and look past what is standing in front of you - that is bigger than you - and look to the God that is much bigger than it - and praise Him for the splendor of his holiness.
- **Today are you willing to use gratitude as a strategy for the battle that we ran - and magnify the Lord in the middle of the battle.**
- And as we read in the Scripture the angel armies of God defeated the three attacking nations. And then the enemy started eliminating the enemy.
- God is going to fight what you can see by sending what you can't see.
- I declare an ambush against insecurity – an ambush against addiction – an ambush against oppression – an ambush against the darkness in your life.
- God is going to use everything that came against you - he is going to use God to use everything that was meant for evil – to create a cross - to create a space - for a resurrection for the glory of the Lord.
- Give him a shout of praise.