

## Faithful Friends

### Sunday school lesson: Thanksgiving



*For this lesson, you will need strips of paper to create a paper chain with residents. You will also need pens/pencils and either tape or a stapler.*

Today's HOPE (main point): I can fight my battles by giving thanks!

This month's theme is thanksgiving--not the holiday, necessarily (though we will talk about it), but what the Bible says about giving thanks to God.

Today we are going to look at a story from 2 Chronicles 20. It's about a king you've probably heard of: Jehoshaphat!

Now remember we talked about King Saul, the first king of Israel. Then David was king, then his son Solomon. Unfortunately, the people of Israel were not following God, and so God allowed them to be broken into two kingdoms, the northern and southern kingdoms- Israel became the name of the northern kingdom, and Judah became the name of the southern kingdom.

Jehoshaphat was the fourth king of Judah. He started out as a good king who obeyed God. He got rid of the idols in the land and sent teachers throughout the land to teach the people the laws of God.

In the story we are going to look at today, an alliance of nations has come against Judah to attack. The Bible says that King Jehoshaphat was alarmed (I think I'd be more than alarmed!) and he proclaimed that all the people should pray and fast and ask God what they should do.

Do you think that's what leaders today do?



If we had enemies at our borders ready to attack us, what do you think our president would do? (*discuss...our presidents, regardless of who it was, would likely consult military advisors and devise a plan*)

Let's look at 2 Chronicles 20, starting in verse 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."

I love that! "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." When you are faced with a problem that seems too big to handle, or too scary, or too hopeless, what do you do? Too often, I react in fear. I run to a friend for advice instead of opening my Bible. Some people make out lists of pros and cons, some people read horoscopes, some people try to ignore their problems with drugs or alcohol.



So this story about King Jehoshaphat is a good reminder that when we don't know what to do, we should look to God for help. Wise Christian friends or counselors are not bad, but our very first reaction should be to look to God, just like Jehoshaphat. "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

So while all the people are gathered together asking for God's help, God answers them through a prophet. Look at the next verses:

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.'"

Did God tell them to take all their weapons and put on their armor? (*no*)

What did He tell them? (*to take their positions but they will not have to fight*)

That's not really a lot of information, is it? Go face your enemy and don't fight; God will fight for you. I think I'd be asking how? What's going to happen?

So let's see what happens. Starting in 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." 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.

So there they are, facing their enemies, and what did they do? They sang praises to God!

Can you imagine standing before giant armies and all you do is sing and wait to see what happens? What amazing faith and trust that would take!

Now this is not a battle strategy that would apply in every situation. This story is not meant to tell us that every time we go to battle or face giant problems in life we should stand and sing. But, the principle is the same: we should always look to God first, trust Him, and allow Him to direct us.



And, we should always give thanks to God. 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 says, pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

We're in the month of November, the month that we celebrate Thanksgiving on the 4th Thursday, but really, every day should be one of giving thanks to God.

When my children were younger, we had a Thanksgiving tree. It was simply a couple of small branches that fallen in my yard placed down in a big container with gravel to hold them in place. I cut out leaves from paper, and then every day in November we wrote on a leaf something we were thankful for. Now my kids are grown but I find I still need the act of creating something visible to show all the things for which I'm grateful. So now I make a paper chain and every day write down on strips of paper what I'm grateful for and hang it in my house. There's something about seeing your blessings....being reminded of all the good gifts from God that really helps my heart be grateful.

So, guess what? We're going to do that together. I have paper strips for each one of us to write down something we're thankful for. We can make a paper chain with all our blessings and add to it each week!

*\*Take time to work with residents. Help them write one thing they're thankful for. Link papers together and fasten with tape or staples.*

Let's sing some songs of thanksgiving to God! **\*\*sing hymns\*\***

Let's pray together: Lord, how can we ever thank you enough? You gave us your Son! Help us remember how much you love us, and help us remember that not only do all our blessings come from you, but You yourself are the greatest blessing indeed. Amen.



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### 2 Chronicles 20:4-12

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**1 Thessalonians 5:17-18** Pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.



What are you thankful for? Let's make a paper chain counting our blessings!

Need some ideas to get started? Try these:

- Something money can't buy that I'm grateful for...
- Something that's funny for which I'm grateful...
- Something beautiful I'm grateful for....
- Something interesting that I'm grateful for...

Give  
Thanks

**Prayer:** Lord, how can we ever thank you enough? You gave us your Son! Help us remember how much you love us, and help us remember that not only do all our blessings come from you, but You yourself are the greatest blessing indeed. *Amen.*



## **O Worship the King**

1. O worship the King, all-glorious above,  
O gratefully sing his power and his love.  
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,  
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

2. O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,  
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3. O measureless might, ineffable love,  
Whom angels delight to worship above,  
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end!  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

## How Great Thou Art

1. Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder:  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.



Chorus: Then sings my soul, my savior God to Thee:  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my savior God to Thee:  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

2. And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing  
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Chorus

3. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart;  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
And there proclaim, my God how great Thou art!

Chorus

## For the Beauty of the Earth

1. For the beauty of the Earth,  
For the glory of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth,  
Over and around us lies,  
Lord of all, to Thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

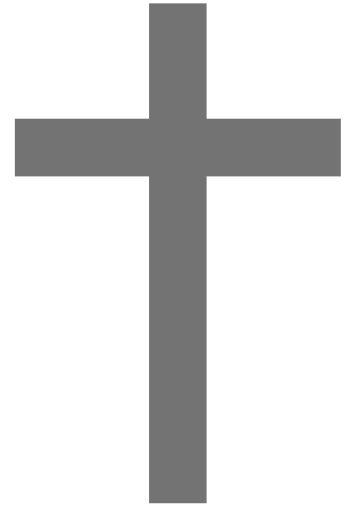
2. For the beauty of each hour,  
Of the day and of the night.  
Hill and vale and tree and flower,  
Sun and moon and stars of light,  
Lord of all, to Thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

3. For the joy of human love,  
Brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on Earth and friends above,  
For all gentle thoughts and mild,  
Lord of all, to Thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.



## To God be the Glory

1. To God be the glory, great things he hath done;  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son.  
Who yielded his life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.



Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the Earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,  
And give him the glory, great things he hath done.

2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the Earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,  
And give him the glory, great things he hath done.

# Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

1 Come, ye thankful people, come,  
raise the song of harvest home;  
all is safely gathered in,  
ere the winter storms begin.  
God our Maker doth provide  
for our wants to be supplied;  
come to God's own temple, come,  
raise the song of harvest home.



3 For the Lord our God shall come,  
and shall take the harvest home;  
from the field shall in that day  
all offenses purge away,  
giving angels charge at last  
in the fire the tares to cast;  
but the fruitful ears to store  
in the garner evermore.

4 Even so, Lord, quickly come,  
bring thy final harvest home;  
gather thou thy people in,  
free from sorrow, free from sin,  
there, forever purified,  
in thy presence to abide;  
come, with all thine angels, come,  
raise the glorious harvest home.

## **Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

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Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

Amen.

Words of Thanksgiving  
FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

Let's  
GIVE  
THANKS



**Monday:** Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. 1 Chronicles 16:34

*Thank God for a food you love.*

**Tuesday:** I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High. Psalm 7:17

*Thank God for a favorite animal.*

**Wednesday:** Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4

*Thank God for a favorite sound.*

**Thursday:** But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:57

*Thank God for freedom.*

**Friday:** Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever. Psalm 137:27

*Thank God for someone in your family.*

**Saturday:** 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." 2 Chronicles 20:21

*Thank God for a favorite book or movie.*



# Give Thanks

T A B T E W A R I U V Q V K G F U I T G  
T J C T C Y Q Q U L K C K S W P D A E Q  
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L O O A U B J E S U S S W Y B W O V K C  
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THANKFUL  
GOD  
JESUS  
HEARTS  
ABUNDANCE

PRAISE  
FAMILY  
SING  
EVERYDAY

BLESSINGS  
FRIENDS  
REJOICE  
GIFTS



# **Faithful Friends**

## **Sunday School Lesson: Thanksgiving**

### **Order of lesson**

Welcome

O Worship the King  
How Great Thou Art

Bible lesson- King Jehoshaphat

Thankful paper chain

For the Beauty of the Earth  
To God Be the Glory  
Come Ye Thankful People  
Doxology

Prayer