

Introduction:

- Theme: God wants us to find the “Valley of Blessing” in our lives. It will be just past the valley of the shadow of death.
- “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” (Romans 8:28-29, NLT) I want us to note three things in this passage: First, God causes everything to work together. Second, He does this for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. Third, it is because He wants us to be like His Son.
- Romans 8:35 gives us a hint at how He does this: “*Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?*” (Romans 8:35, NLT) Paul lists seven ways God works with us in this fallen world to help us be more like His son. Now before you panic over what I just said. Know this...
- Paul uses the word, ‘pneuma’ 21 times in chapter 8 of Romans. He uses it only three times prior to. Obviously, what he gives in chapter 8 can only be done with the help of the Holy Spirit. Don’t try this alone.
- We are going to go to 2 Chron 20:25-26. We love this passage...the Valley of Blessing! The question is: How did we get there? By both the randomness of God and the right living of our lives. This miracle we celebrate in 2 Chron 20 happened over a life time of seeking God. It is more than our typical, *get your praise on so God can work*.

I. The Randomness of God

- A. When the randomness of God is against you, you are in big trouble. How do I know if the randomness of God is working against me? Is it because bad things are happening in your life? No, nothing can separate me from his love. I think you can tell based on what you are seeking.
- B. Ahab King of Israel - was more wicked than any king of Israel before him. 1 King 16:30.
 1. He had two prophetic words prior to the prophet Micaiah’s prophecy that God was ‘taking him out.’ Yet he did not turn.
 2. He pull out 400 more false prophets after Elijah killed 850 of them. He is ‘spinning the truth’ with Jehoshaphat. To ‘spin’ means to manipulate or twist the truth.
 - a) We SPIN God’s truth by accepting false assurances regarding our plans or purposes rather than God’s warnings. 18:5-6
 - b) We SPIN God’s truth when we choose to close our ears to God’s truth rather than opening our hearts to hear and do what He says. 18:7-8

- c) We SPIN God's truth when we seek to contain and confine it rather than setting it free to do its work in our lives. 18:27
 - d) We SPIN God's truth when we attempt disguise ourselves to try to hide from it, rather than facing it as we are. 18:30
 - e) You will never get to the valley of blessing if you keep spinning the truth.
3. He hated the Word of the Lord that opposed his will. 18:7
- a) When God's will is not my will there is a problem. People still believe that they know better and their ways are best. Like Ahab, they reject God's role/will in their life.
 - b) When you do not like the message you will not like the messenger! Micaiah goes to jail.

C. Life is not as random as we think because God is very intentional.

1. Random comes from the Hebrew word, 'Tome' which means integrity. But the way it is used grammatically in this scripture is: "In his simplicity, not trying with integrity." Integrity would imply he aimed, focused his shot, fired and struck right where he wanted. This man in 2 Chron 18:33 randomly shot his arrow. But God in His integrity hit the mark!
2. The arrow was random but God owned the flight path! Let's look at this.
 - a) a 'certain man' drew his bow. His name is not even important.
 - b) takes a random shot.
 - c) hits Ahab at a point where his armor is joined. (An uncovered spot in his armor.)
 - d) he is taken off the battle field, still in his disguise, and bleeds to death watching the battle.
 - (1) One thing we can learn from scripture is that God can see right through disguises.
 - (2) And God can disguise those who are His in the place of battle.
 - e) he taken from the chariot at the same place he murdered Naboth and the dogs lapped up his blood as was prophesied by Elijah earlier. 1 Kings 21:19; 22:37

D. Nor is life as fixed as you think. We see that with Jehoshaphat.

II. **The Intentional-ness of Men**

- A. The power to choose life is a great opportunity. Jehoshaphat made many right choices.
1. Jehoshaphat followed his father's example when he was walking close to God. 2 Chron 17:3
 2. Jehoshaphat did not worship idols but sought his father's God. 17:4.
 3. Jehoshaphat got rid of the high places where pagan altar were. 17:6
 4. Jehoshaphat was deeply committed to the ways of the Lord. 17:6 He removed pagan things from Judah.

5. Jehoshaphat sent his officials to all the towns of Judah to teaching the people the Word of God. 17:7.
 6. Jehoshaphat wanted to hear God. 18:6 He was always looking to hear from God's SENT prophets. Micaiah 18:6; Jehu 19:2; Jahaziel 20:14.
 7. Jehoshaphat was simply doing Mt 6:33 Seeking first the Kingdom of God... and all these other things were being added.
 8. The fruit of his intentional seeking of God
 - a) God established his authority over the nation of Judah.
 - b) The people respected that and brought gifts to him making him wealthy and esteemed.
 - c) The fear of the Lord fell upon the surrounding nations.
- B. The power to choose life when life is difficult is life transforming.
1. Made a bad choice in join alliance with Ahab. Righteousness and uprightness do not move good together.
 2. Made a bad choice to be the only King on the battle field. War itself carries with it chaos, deception, fear, trouble, calamity, danger and death. All those things in Romans 8:35.
 - a) Ahab was disguised. IE. Jehoshaphat! He is your sign!
 - b) He got in trouble on the battle field. Fear, danger, calamity, and death are knocking at the door. 18:35 God helped him!
 3. He gets rebuked by a prophet when he arrives safely home. Responds positively with all the more passion to do right. Do you see that? He responds positively when confronted. He does not run away.
 - a) He went out among the people encouraging them to return to the Lord. 19:4
 - b) He appointed judges and exhorted them, vs. 6 *"Remember that you do not judge to please people but to please the Lord." "Fear the Lord and judge with integrity, for the Lord our God does not tolerate perverted justice, partiality, or the taking of bribes."* (2 Chronicles 19:7, NLT)
 - c) He appointed Levites and priests to serve as judges in civil disputes. *"These were his instructions to them: "You must always act in the fear of the Lord, with faithfulness and an undivided heart."* (2 Chronicles 19:9, NLT)
 4. After doing all these good things ...more trouble! The 'ites' are coming! 20:3 Jehoshaphat is terrified.

III. And The Valley Of Blessing

- A. Most Valley of Blessings I have found were through the valley of the shadow of death.
1. You never know how big God is until you are in hot water.
 2. And you never know how much you have grown until you have been tested.

3. *"Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the Lord for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting."* (2 Chronicles 20:3, NLT)
- B. Jehoshaphat responds by seeking and leading his people to seek God.
1. They pray
 2. They fast
 3. They hear from God
 4. They worship
 5. They believe
 6. They stand and see!
 7. Please take note: 1-5 is not a check list they are positions of ever increasing faith.
- C. Valley of Blessing
1. Came as a result of hauling off three days of plunder.
 2. And a fourth day of praising and thanking the Lord. Gratitude.
 3. Blessing is usually transmitted from the lesser to the greater.

Conclusion:

- Do you see the difference between Ahab and Jehoshaphat's lives?
 - Both had trying times.
 - Both had choices to make.
- The random of God, 'Tome' integrity in hitting the mark, was visible in each ones life.
 - In one it produced trouble, calloused-ness.
 - In the other it produced a Christlikeness.
- *"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."*
- Note: God causes everything to work together. Second, He does this for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. Third, it is because He wants us to be like His Son.
- *"Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?"* (Romans 8:35, NLT)