BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!
Part 20: Problem of SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH PRAYER

INTRO: (p. 83): Even Christians have problems (Jn. 16:33; Job 5:7; 14:1; Jam. 1:2). In fact, just becoming a committed Christian can create problems. How is a believer to deal with difficulty? Learning to pray through problems is crucial. Using King Jehoshaphat's experience as recorded in 2 Chronicles 20, we find some key principles for solving problems through prayer.

Jehoshaphat was a good and godly king who sought to reform the people. He reigned over Judah some twenty-five years (875-850 B.C.). In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat faces an attack from an insurmountable foe. How he faced his problem provides some valuable principles for praying through problems.

I. Accept God's solution, whatever it is, before a problem arises (vv. 1-3).
When praying through a problem, we should never come to God with some predetermined answer in our mind as to how God should resolve our problem. Regardless of the nature of a problem, it is essential that we accept God's solution no matter what.

II. Believe that our heavenly Father is vitally and personally interested in our problem (v. 4).
Like Jehoshaphat, so it is with every believer. Upon conversion, we enter into a covenant relationship with God. Every need and desire we have matters to our Father. Every problem we have is God's problem (v.15). We must realize that God can and will be involved with us in our problem (1 Pet. 5:7).

III. Affirm that God is greater than our problem (vv. 5-7).
Jehoshaphat prayed and praised the sovereign power of God. There is nothing we'll ever face that is greater than our God. No problem is too big for God! This kind of affirmation will provide great confidence in any difficulty. God is never confused by or subject to any problem we'll ever face.

IV. Seek the Lord first (vv. 1-4).
3xs the passage says that Jehoshaphat sought (not his generals) the Lord for help (vv.3-5). Even though he was much afraid (v.3), when the problem came, his first response was fear, but then to seek the Lord in prayer. Seeking the Lord should always be my initial response to every problem. Too often we're in a hurry to solve the problem our way. We must give God the time and attention necessary for Him to sift our fearful thoughts and replace them with His wisdom and courage.

V. Realize God wants us to involve others in praying about our problem (vv. 3-5).
Jehoshaphat encouraged all of Judah to join him in fasting and seeking the Lord. Many of life's problems are resolved between us and God alone. Yet, in some problems, it is God's plan for others to become involved. Why? First, God does not want us to become self-sufficient islands. Second, others can learn from our struggles. Third, we need the support of intercessory prayer.

VI. Believe that God will provide the answer to our problem (vv. 12-20).
Our heavenly Father is in the problem-solving business. He always knows what to do about every problem we face. He does not need our help. He will answer our problem either directly or indirectly. In Jehoshaphat's case, God spoke the solution through Jahaziel (vv.13-17). But remember, God's answer is not always what we expect. We should neither fear nor fight our problem. We must know that He has the answer. He is working in and through our every problem. Many times, God will provide a specific passage of Scripture that applies directly to our problem.

VII. Keep our praying God-centered rather than problem-centered (vv. 6-12).
Jehoshaphat's prayer is clearly focused on the person and promises of God. We should concentrate our attention on God and His faithfulness rather than on us and our problems.

VIII. God's solution usually demands a step of obedient faith (vv. 21-23).
Most of the time, we want God to solve our problems and demand nothing of us. God does not oftentimes work this way. He may require some risk-taking on our part. We must learn to live by faith. There are those times when risk overrides reason and faith overrides fear. In Jehoshaphat's problem, God's solution was to have the choir lead the army, and the weapons were songs of praise!

IX. God will give peace and rest about our problem (vv. 29-30).
If we listen and obey, then God will work. He may not always remove the problem, but He will give us peace in it. Every day, sometimes many times, God asks me to choose: "Will you trust me and let me show you the next step, or will you try to resolve matters on your own?"

X. God will use our problem and response to influence others (v. 29).

Because Jehoshaphat listened and obeyed, "the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries…" How you and I work through the problems of life has a profound effect on the cause of Christ.

CONC: Whenever we try to solve problems by our own means and in our own timing, then disaster is just ahead. Instead, we must learn to come to our heavenly Father in humble and submissive prayer—affirming God for who He is, acknowledging our relationship with Him, and accepting His solution, whatever it is. Then we must move out in faith. In time, He will either remove our problem or give us the grace to see it through.