

## VIII. Gospel Worship In Biblical Perspective

### *Worship God!*

#### “Gathered Worship and Life Worship”

II Chronicles 20:1-23

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April 14, 2013 – Morning Sermon

We are in our series of a Gospel pursuit of worship. We will be looking at II Chronicles 20:1-23 and I'll start by reading the first four verses. The king is Jehoshaphat. What a great study. If you want to study Jehoshaphat on your own you can start by reading II Chronicles 17 through 22 but I'm just looking at chapter 20 in this study. This is the ministry, kingship and leadership of Jehoshaphat. II Chronicles 20:1-4 says *[1] After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. [2] Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar” (that is, Engedi). [3] Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. [4] And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever, and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Our theme for the year 2013 is “Worship God” and it brings us to this text for this study. We have been at this through a series of sermons that take us on a journey. That journey is a Gospel pursuit of God glorifying, Christ centered, Bible shaped, Holy Spirit empowered worship of the Triune God of glory. We have already gone through a series of studies where we have laid down a series of markers. There are six journey markers. I won't be going over those markers for you can hear or read those studies online at [www.briarwood.org](http://www.briarwood.org).

When I was a kid and we went on trips, my three sisters and I would be put in the back seat and my mom and dad would sit in the front seat. What is the infamous question that comes from your children from the back seat of a car on a family trip? “Daddy, mommy, are we there yet?” I noticed after a period of time that would irritate my dad and mom and it wasn't going to be a happy time after we had asked that. So I was taught and learned to look for the mile markers, the journey markers.

So I have tried to lay down for us some journey markers on why we worship, who we worship, when we worship, how we worship and the ‘that’ of worship. Then I have tried to bring this Gospel pursuit to a conclusion with four sermons on four worship services in the Bible – two in heaven and two on the earth. We started with one in heaven in the last study from Revelation 4 and 5. The last of the four will also be in heaven from Isaiah 6. In between we are down to earth. In this study we will be looking at one of those worship services in the midst of a war from the life of King Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 20. They are in the midst of enemies rising up against them in adversity.

God sovereignly sends in His own providence adversity in the life of His people. The premise of adversity is not the statement that you don't have enough faith and that if you had more faith you'd only have prosperity. That is not so. God says it has been granted unto you not only to believe in Him but suffer for His sake that God has designed in adversity. Basically I think there are two designs. This is not exhaustive but just for

this study. Adversity in the sovereign hand of God comes in His benevolent promises to work all things together for good and that you would live for His glory, I think there are two things been accomplished here. Number one it is curbing our sins and calling us to confession. In other words, God is a Father who loves us and when we are disobedient He brings redemptive discipline that curbs our sin, brings attentions to it so that we see it with this adversity, to point us to confession so that we get back on track.

The second thing is I also think there are times that God sends adversity and it's not in response to the sin in our life, but to call us to greater conformity to Him and with Him, to a deeper relationship with Him. In days of prosperity we seldom look to the Lord, we start looking to our prosperity. It's so simple. In days of adversity, we say "Oh Lord I gaze upon You, my eyes are upon You. You've knocked all the props out. You have risen up against me." As I'm in the fight the battle is the Lord's and the Lord is my Hope. It is such the second thing that is happening in Jehoshaphat's life.

In II Chronicles 20:1 where it says [1] *After this...* I can't give you everything that has happened up until this point but it is referring to everything that has happened in II Chronicles 17, 18, and 19, but I will give you a brief summary. Jehoshaphat came into the kingship following his father Asa. Here is what we know about King Jehoshaphat. We know three things about Jehoshaphat.

Remember our study is worship. There is two pieces of worship – adoration and action. Worship is a verb that describes what we do in adoration. It's not a noun naming the event that we go to look at and evaluate what everybody else is doing. There is gathered worship and life worship. The two are interdependent. King Jehoshaphat is about to teach us something about gathered worship and life worship but who is he?

The first thing you need to know about Jehoshaphat is that his father was Asa, who had a mixed review of his kingship. His father did some good and did some bad. He was a benefit to Israel and also a blight and liability to them but he is followed by Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat who is of the line of Judah, of the line of David, now takes the throne and does four things when he takes the throne. The first thing he does is he goes to all the high places and tears down all the idols and pagan worship sites. He tears down all those things that would beckon God's people away from the true worship of the true and living God. The second thing he does is he sends prophets and teaching priests to every city throughout Judah. He sends prophets to proclaim the Word and teaching priests to teach the Word throughout Judah. The third thing he does is he calls all of Judah to regular Scripture reading, prayer and worship through the prophets and teaching priests. The fourth thing is he fortifies every city and he raises up an army in excess of 1.1 million men. Then it says, related to that he relied on the Lord.

That begs for a whole sermon but I'll just give you a simple statement with it. This is one of the great examples of the full blown, Holy Spirit dependent, God dependent, responsible life before the Lord. The Bible says Jehoshaphat relied on the Lord, fortified the cities and raised up an army. Here is what we would think. If you're relying on the Lord why do you fortify the cities? Why do you raise up an army? We have this notion that reliance on the Lord is manifested with irresponsibility. I'm sick so I'm going to trust the Lord to heal me, so I'm not going to call a doctor. God ordained medical help. He designed that. Going to the doctor is not a statement that you're not relying on the Lord. That's actually part of relying on the Lord, whether you do it immediately or mediator-ally in your life. So as a believer I learn one hundred percent

dependence and one hundred percent diligence and I learn to rely on the Lord while being responsible in life.

We have another problem. Sometimes when we're being responsible, we start relying on our responsibility instead of the Lord. We want to avoid both of those. We don't want to rely on the Lord and in the name of relying on the Lord be irresponsible, nor do we want to be responsible and forget that none of this can deliver me, I need the Lord who ordains to use it.

King Jehoshaphat manifests that glorious full throated dependence on God and full orb ed responsibility as a king before God. He fortified the cities, raised the army but he didn't depend on his fortifications of the army. He relied on the Lord.

What was the result? All the nations were brought by God's hand to fear Judah and they would not attack them. They made peace with them. In fact, without demand they started voluntarily bringing tribute to Jehoshaphat. Even their arch enemy the Philistines started bringing things to Jehoshaphat. So he was at peace, all the enemies feared him, no one would attack him and they're even bringing support to the royal treasury for the nation itself.

Then Jehoshaphat gets a message about the enemies of God and the enemies of God's people. Some men come up as curriers and say, "West and south, up the Dead Sea, up through the Wadi, by way of Engedi there is an enumerable army that has been raised up. It is a coalition of the Ammonites, Moabites and a particular segment of Edomites, called the Menuites, from Mount Seir. They are rising up to come against you, the people of God to take the land of God from the people of God." What will Jehoshaphat do? He has served the Lord faithfully in the days of prosperity. He had a little blip on the screen in terms of his relationship with Ahab but I'll commend that study to you on your own. So what is he going to do when they are no longer fearing the people of God? They are rising up against us. They are not sending tribute but armies. It is a vast army. What will Jehoshaphat do?

Humanly speaking, he has two choices. One is that he might just die in a pile of self-pity. Lord, I've torn down the high places, put prophets out there, priests out there and doing this and that. Everything has been going well and now You've allowed this? I thought You loved us. Why would this adversity be here? This must mean that You don't really love us and look what all I've done for You. Or he could move to self-reliance. I have 1.1 million so let's call them out. There are fortified cities so let's go kill them. I can do this. So in arrogance he could strike out in self-confidence and self-exaltation.

What is Jehoshaphat going to do? Let's look back at the text. He calls a sacred assembly. He calls all the people to fasting and praying. Then he called them all to come to Jerusalem and come to the temple, the House of the Lord to seek, worship and praise the Lord. This is gathered worship. This is what happens when he gets them together. II Chronicles 20:5-12 says [5] *And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, [6] and said* (his call to worship), *"O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. [7] Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? [8] And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name,*

saying (he is quoting from Solomon when the temple is built), [9] *'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.'* [10] *And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy—[11] behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. [12] O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."*

O to be a man like King Jehoshaphat! Fear struck in his heart when the news got to him about the armies against him. Would he bow his back in self-exaltation? Would he in discouragement and self-pity lose the call of God upon his life? What he did was worship and he called the people to worship to the place of the Shekinah glory of God. He called them to the temple. Then he stands in the temple and calls them to worship. He leads the worship service. As he begins his first declarations are the attributes of God. God there is none like You. You created all things. You sustained all things. You are mighty, powerful and none can stand against You. O God how majestic is Your Name in all the earth. You enthroned in the heavens, rule and reign.

Then not stopping with attributes he goes to actions of God. Did You not drive out warlike nations from this land to give it to Your people whom You promised to give it as a possession to the children of Abraham? O God are You not only powerful to drive out our adversaries and enemies and Your enemies and Your adversaries, but You even took an enemy who was Abraham, a Gentile pagan, and You saved him and made him Your friend. You promised Your covenant mercies to the generations of his children and now we are here, O God of majesty and might, transcended in glory, O God of grace and power who has delivered us from Egypt and from the nations who had occupied this land. O God who is able to execute judgment and then with a childlike boldness and plea he says "Will You not deliver us?" You told my forefather Solomon, if My people in the days of pestilence, famine and adversity will come to this House, humble themselves before Me and repent and call upon Me, then I will hear from heaven and I will deliver you. We have come before You, will You not deliver us? O God, we are helpless and ignorant.

Humanly speaking when you look at that you say "Wait just a minute Jehoshaphat, what do you mean powerless? You have a 1.1 million man army!" There is another key to the Christian life. God has given many of you great resources and great strengths. Use them for the Lord but never rely on them. Jehoshaphat did not see his hope in 1.1 million. In terms of an army he was responsible and raised one but my hope is in You. In the mechanisms of this world I'm helpless. Without You I can do nothing and I don't care if it's 1.1 million men. We've won battles with 300 men in the days of Gideon and we've won them with full armies. We have been defeated with small armies and we've been defeated with big armies. Our hope in every battle against our adversaries is helpless without You. We are helpless without You in the day of trouble. You are our mighty fortress and our God. Certainly King Jehoshaphat had ruled with wisdom and yet before God he was not God's counselor. He says "God, I'm like a child. I don't know how to go out or come in. We are in need of Your wisdom. Give us wisdom, give us power."

In the midst of the worship service he has led them before the majestic God in His attributes and His acts. He has confessed their helplessness and their hopelessness apart from God. He has realized this is the hand of God. He has named his adversities. You have delivered us from Egypt and have destroyed all the nations in this land. You told us to leave Moab, Ammon and Edom alone so we went around them. We did not invade them. We showed Your mercy as You commanded us to them. Why would He have done that? There are probably a number of reasons but one of the reasons is Ammon and Moab come from Lot and Edom comes from the sons of Isaac, Esau. So He sent them around their “distant” kinship. Now they are repaying God’s patience and mercy by rising up in resolute rebellion against God to destroy His people. God, the very people You did not destroy and forbade us to invade, now rise up to destroy us. We are helpless and hopeless without You. Then the greatest words yet spoken, “Our eyes are on You. You are our wisdom, our power and our strength.”

When he finishes that the worship service continues. II Chronicles 20:13-17 says *[13] Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. [14] And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. [15] And he said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God’s. [16] Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. [17] You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.”*

He delivers a Presbyterian seven point sermon which deserves its own sermon which I will not preach but I will give you his seven points. They are extraordinary and Holy Spirit inspired to the people of God in this moment when they sense their helplessness which has been confessed, hopelessness and their need of wisdom. His first point is to be fearless. Don’t, not take council from your fears. Be anxious for nothing. Number two, the battle is the Lord’s. Sometimes you have to fight and sometimes you don’t. Sometimes He fights it through you, above you or around you but the battle is the Lord’s. Whether it’s for you or through you, the battle is the Lord’s. The third point is you still have to go down to the battle. Go meet the adversary. Go down to the battle. Number four, when you get there stand firm. Don’t give you your marriage, your family, your testimony, or your love to Christ. Stand firm. Fifthly, hold your position. Hold fast. The sixth point is stand by and see the salvation of the Lord. It is like when Moses put that staff down, the sea parted and a whole army was drowned behind him. Or when the trumpets blew, the walls fell and the Lord gave them Jericho. Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord. Finally, God will be with you. This God of glory and might, majestic, enthroned in heaven will not simply stay in heaven on the throne for He will come and be with you. God will be with you.

When he preaches this, the text goes on to say in II Chronicles 20:18-19, *[18] Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. [19] And the*

*Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice. Do you get the picture here?*

They have confessed, praised, prayed, been led, the preacher has preached, the people have responded with reverence before God, they have bowed before Him and while they're going down to bow there is one group that stands up. It is the Kohathites. I don't have time to go over all of this but you will find this group in I Chronicles 6:31. There was one group of the sons of Levi that were called to be teachers which were the sons of Asaph and Jahaziel, the preacher is actually of that lineage. There are other sons of Levi who had different duties in the temple. They were the Korahites and they were instructed to be the singers of praise before the people to lead the people. You can just picture here what is happening when everyone goes down to worship it is time for them to stand up. They stand up and praise the Lord. In other words, they are the praise team, the choir. All of the people are to sing praise to God but there are some that lead them in it that God has called and gifted them to lead them forward in praise of God.

When the moment came, they weren't embarrassed, they weren't retreating and they didn't have something more important to do. They stood up and led the people in praise. The worship of God in the gathered assembly that day was done to echo with voices raised loudly into the heavens, led by the singers, appointed and gifted by God. Gathered worship finishes and they have their instructions for the next day. Now what do they do? Let's look further in the text.

II Chronicles 20:20-21 says [20] *And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."* (God's victory comes for His glory in the days of adversity.) [21] *And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say* (They begin to sing Psalm 136), *"Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."*

In our singing we did some repetitions and some probably think 'why do we repeat that so many times?' The Lord has us to repeat things one to tell us it's important and two because we're ignorant (stupid) and we need repetition to learn. I know some of us don't claim that but I know some of us are. We need to say it three or four times to remember it. If you look at Psalm 136 this phrase "Give thanks to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever" is repeated 26 times in the chapter. You can almost see the army going out with the choir in front of them and the choir is setting the pace, 'for His steadfast love endures forever.' They see the host in front of them and this phrase is continually repeated as they move forward. Then they take their position and hold fast. Now what happens while they're singing?

II Chronicles 20:22-23 says [22] *And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. [23] For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.* So as they are singing songs the adversaries turn and kill each other. The battle is over and I commend you to read the rest of the chapter. Israel is at peace for the rest of the days of Jehoshaphat.

I have one takeaway but before I give the takeaway I want to make this point. Life is worship. There is gathered worship and life worship. [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. Every piece of life is worship. Some say to me “Pastor when you’re talking about worship, don’t your people need something more practical? What does it mean to be a husband, a wife? How do you succeed at business? How do you keep your kids from embarrassing you? Can’t you give me something practical?” The Bible has a lot of things of how to live out our life but the first thing you need to understand is that life is worship or you won’t do it to the glory of God, you’ll do it for the glory of yourself.

So husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church. Wives, submit as to the Lord. Raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Life is worship. When you go to work, do your work heartily as unto the Lord. You’ll be amazed when work becomes worship how many employee problems that solves. So what packages life? What permeates life? What penetrates life? Life is worship. Something else about the Christian life is that it’s a war. You are in a fight for your marriage, your testimony, your church, the Kingdom, and your children. You’re in a fight but praise the Lord the war has been won but we still have the battles. The battle is the Lord’s but the battle is the Lord’s through us going down to the battle, standing firm, holding on, taking every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ. Life is worship, life is war. You go to war as worship and that’s what they did.

So here’s the takeaway. Gathered worship in general and the singing of God’s praise in particular is used by God to do two things. One, it is to focus and encourage the people of God for life worship and “the war”. In this war there are certain things you’re fighting against and there are certain things you’re fighting for. You are fighting against sin, the dishonoring of God, the flesh, the Devil, the world’s system in rebellion against God. You’re not fighting directing against the enemies of God but you’re fighting to rescue them that they might become like Abraham, the friends of God, by the Gospel. While you’re doing that you’re standing firm against sin, while you’re winning, rescuing and redeeming sinners. Then you are fighting for the souls of men and women, your children, the church’s testimony as a colony of the Kingdom to extend the Gospel throughout the world, the preeminence of Christ, the glory and honor of Christ. That’s what you’re fighting for.

When you go to the war from gathered worship, what did Jehoshaphat do first? He gathered the people for worship. Then they went to the war as worship, singing praise to God. You can almost see this. We have worshipped but don’t put away your uniforms because we’re not through yet. The choir is going to lead this 1.1 million man army. How do you like that for a strategy from a king in battle? The choir goes in front and goes forward. The same ones that stood up in gathered worship did not hesitate to lead the people to war in life worship. They lifted up Psalm 136 and as they got closer to the enemy, the more they sung and they sung it incessantly – “the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever!” No matter what comes against us the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever. The army kept its eyes on the Lord and the Lord on this day not only owned the battle but He fought the battle, not needing the army and He didn’t use it. When they began to sing the praises of God, then the enemy turned and destroyed themselves.

That is the second part of this takeaway. Gathered worship in general and the singing of God's praise in particular is used by God to confound and defeat the enemies of God to the glory of God. The Bible says that when the unbeliever comes in the midst of God's people when we're praising Him, they will fall on their faces and say "God is in the midst of these people." The world cannot explain a people who are not frightened. What does God give you? You are not to forsake gathered worship because one, God is worthy. Here is a blessing for its gathered worship that gets you ready for life worship for the week to come. It's gathered worship that sends you into the week. Believe the Word of God. Hold fast to the Word of God. God will bless you as you raise up glory to His Name and He will give you wisdom. He will empower you.

Not only is gathered worship important but there is one element that He singles out that He delights to use and that's the singing of the praise of God. There is nothing that sends me over the edge more than when I'm talking with people and they're saying "Pastor, I believe that preaching is important but we just need more worship." You have to somehow pull me off a cliff at that moment because I am ready to jump. Worship is reading the Word, preaching the Word, the sacraments, fellowship and when God's people assemble. All of that is worship and one element is speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and making melody in your hearts to God. All of that is worship and we do that from the moment we start our Lord's Day service, to the reading of His Word, to praying, to praise, to the giving of our tithes and offerings which is pleasing to the Lord.

Now having said that and fighting for that, I do now want to say, why do we tend to think that, because God has determined to do something very special when we put theology to music. Our songs this morning were unbelievably jam packed with Biblical truth and theology. Go read the entire hymn of *Be Thou My Vision* and just bask in it. With Biblical truth and theology, God's people make melody in their heart and they speak to one another with loud praises to the Lord, God uses that to send us out of here to the battle, but don't quit singing when you leave. Put the choir in front. Get a praise CD and listen to it on the way to work and coming home and watch what happens when you're praising God on Highway 280 and everybody takes aim at you. Watch what happens when God takes hold of you and all of a sudden the adversary is put away. Watch what happens at that day of work where you have attempted to be faithful with your employees and employers and now you're coming home having been beat, slapped to death, put that praise music in and forget talk radio. Then you won't kick the cat when you get home. Hug your wife or husband and sit and talk with your kids.

There is something special about the melody of theology to the heart and the soul. Lifting up praise to God fills the soul with wisdom. Most of all it gives us focus. It puts our eyes on the Lord, not our adversaries. It reminds us that it's not you that wins the battle, for the Lord wins the battle for you. So the singing of Biblical truth lays hold of our heart. I want to thank you for not putting the pressure upon us that some instrument is evil. There is no instrument that is evil. Now you can use them for evil but the instrument is not evil. No note is evil. Does it enhance the truth of God's Word so that the people singing it behold our God? Our eyes are on You and You win the battle.

Those of you whom God has called and gifted, I understand there are seasons of life and various things impinging on you so you work your way through all of the providence of God in those matters, but if God has gifted you and called you it's time for



you to stand up, get in that choir, that praise team and lead the people in worship. Then lead them into the world. Stand up for God has gifted and called you. Lead His people. Stand up and use that wonderful gift God has given you so that all of God's people can participate because you have set the environment with your leadership. Then you may get a command to go get in front of the army but that's fine for you can lead us into battle.

So here is this glorious truth and here is one other thing that worship does. It not only focus us and reminds us but it keeps the order right. Here is what a lot of us are doing. We feel so empty in this world that we want worship services around the eminence of God that is here with us. We turn down the lights and close everything in. Notice the worship services in the Bible. They all start with the majesty of God. See this God. Who has counseled Him? Who has taught Him? He created every grain of sand. He has named you. He spoke and furlled out the universe. That's the God who is with you. He moves from the transcendence of God and when you see Him high and lifted up, now He has come to be with you. That's the God who is with you. There is none like Him and so we get refocused, it confounds the enemy as we sing praises to the Lord our God.

The doxologies of God's people will defeat the strategies of Satan and the adversaries will either devour each other or God will save them and bring them from death unto life, but wait! Here is one more thing. Do you appreciate King Jehoshaphat? I do. Do you like what he has laid before you to challenge and encourage you? I hope so, but there is One coming after him in that line and He won't just send the people into battle and tell them the battle is the Lord's. There is a King of Kings coming and He'll cross that valley right outside of Jerusalem where King Jehoshaphat was and He's great than Jehoshaphat. He will go to Calvary and the battle is the Lord's. In praise to the Father He will save you. That's the Lord who is with you. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Thank You so much for this wonderful rich worship service. Would You place these basic principles upon us so that our eyes are on the Lord? Be Thou our vision. Since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us (Hebrews 12:1). Dear friend, lay aside sin and come to the Savior. Then the writer of Hebrews says fix your eyes on Jesus. Behold our God for our eyes are on You. Fix your eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). Praise His Name the battle is won. In victory He has sat down at the right hand of the Father. O Lord, our eyes are on You. Thank You that I can pray to You, in Your wonderful Name, Amen.