

Sermon for January 8, 2012

BMZ Church

Text: II Chronicles 20:1-4; 12-21

Title: "God Will Never Put More on You Than You Can Handle"

Introduction: How we doing, BMZ?!? Happy New Year! It's 2012 ... the last year of our existence as a country or as the human race, according to which 'experts' you are listening to. We are going to talk about that starting in February. February 5th we have a BIG DAY coming up. We need you to be praying about who you know that does not regularly attend a church and/or does not have a faith in Jesus Christ, that might benefit from being here at BMZ. We will have INVEST and INVITE CARDS ready for you in the next couple of weeks...

*Fast reminder ... we have Build Burma shirts for sale. Christmas is over and you are starting to recover, I hope. Now is the time to help out Morris and Sonia (picture) as they attempt to build up Galilee Home Orphanage and Union Bible Seminary in Rangoon, Burma. They need space so they can rescue more children off of the streets of Rangoon... So far we have received \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help out. We will be selling these t-shirts until the end of January ... buy a "Build Burma" T-shirt instead of a Packers Super Bowl shirt and wear A CHICKEN to the Super Bowl Party and start talking...*

When I was a kid, my parents had a little place in Florida (I mean little!) ... my Grandmother and two of my Dad's sisters had places down in this little town outside of Kissimmee ... Intercession City ... We would go down almost every summer as I was growing up ... visit family in NC and on to Florida...

One time when we got there, there was this huge King Snake laying right in the carport as we pulled up. My Mom freaked out! Oh, honey ... kill it! My dad tried to tell her that it was a "good" snake and it kept the poisonous snakes away. My Mom never believed any snake was a "good" snake!

My brother brought home a garter snake for a pet once ... that did not go well...

Do you all like snakes?? Now, I understand the whole good snake/bad snake thing; BUT, I don't want one as a pet ... do you know why?!? You never know where it's going to show up ... they are quiet and sneaky ... you don't hear them running down the stairs or going across your kitchen counter ... they just SHOW UP!! Without Warning!!

Do you remember how Satan first showed up to human beings?? In the form of a serpent/snake ... curse = always crawl on your belly.

I think there is a reason that Satan is described as a SNAKE. Have you heard the stories of snakes showing up in people's homes and they don't know how they got in?? Through the pipes or the smallest crack or a door left open ... they invite themselves in ... without warning! They just SHOW UP!!

Okay, so today we are beginning a series called, "4 Lies Heard at Church". The idea is that Satan is so stinking sneaky that there are lies that float around churches that many people do not even recognize as lies! Remember the story from Genesis 3 where Eve was just walking around the Garden with Adam and she was approached by a Serpent?!? Remember how the Serpent was so devious?!? ...Trying to make Eve believe that God was just hiding information from her because God didn't want humans to be as smart as God??

I believe that Satan still tries to do that with the Church today...

*If you haven't already, I invite you to take out your message notes and merge card if you haven't already... On one side you will see our Scripture for today and on the other you will find a brief outline walking us through our Scripture. You will see that there are blanks to fill in ... I would love to have you take the time to do so. Grab a pen and write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, take this home and refrigerate it. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you watching on-line, you can hit the button for notes and for MERGE CARD and stick with us. If you are watching/listening later, or IPODing; you can download the outline off of our website so you too can take notes.*

Let's Pray and then we will get to the 1ST LIE ... **PRAY NOW!**

The FIRST LIE that is heard at Church is this: "God Will Never Put More On You Than You Can Handle". That is a LIE! Now, this might make you a little uncomfortable this morning because you have said that to someone recently. "You know the BIBLE SAYS ..." It Doesn't!!!! We believe that God is here to SERVE US and so we think that God will only make us HAPPY and if it's not going to make us HAPPY, why would God do that?!? God SERVES US, RIGHT!?

Here's where it comes from ... the Scripture ... I Corinthians 10:13 = <sup>13</sup> *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*<sup>1</sup>

This has nothing to do with PRESSURE in life ... it's about TEMPTATION. All it says is that we do not have to succumb to TEMPTATION ... we don't have to do what we are tempted to do. We will never have to say, "I had to rob the bank ... the money was so tempting that I had to. I didn't have a choice." "I had to commit adultery. Too tempting!" Paul says here that we do not HAVE TO give in to temptation. We have a choice and God will give us strength to overcome TEMPTATION! He never said anything about PRESSURE or LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES...

As a matter of fact, Paul said this about PRESSURE and LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES: II Corinthians 1:8ff (same guy ... PAUL) = <sup>8</sup> *We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters,\* about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it.*<sup>9</sup> *In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.*<sup>2</sup>

Isn't it amazing how quickly we RELY ON GOD when things GO BAD?? Hmmm.... SO, I want to make 3 points about our beliefs around God only giving us things that we can handle...

If you have your BIBLE ... II Chronicles ... Using OLD TESTAMENT Scriptures for this series ... Good stories that reveal TRUTH about God!!

II Chronicles 20 = Background... Israel in the North and Judah in the South ... Things have gone pretty well for Judah anyway ... II Chronicles 17 = New King, son of Asa ... name is: Jehoshaphat (can you even imagine how much he was picked on as a kid?). Anyway, Je-hosh was a good king that loved God ... got rid of many idols around Judah (Jerusalem area and south). Je-hosh was attempting to honor God! Backslid a little in chapter 18, but started to get it back together in Chapter 19 (Next Steps = read II Chron. 17-20)!

Things are going along pretty well for Je-hosh ... no battles to fight ... enemies feared Judah's God... THEN... Three things we are going to talk about today ... 1st one is ... The PROBLEM!

Have you ever noticed that major problems just spring up in life ... no warning, no prep time ... nothing. You cannot plan for life stuff ... "Have time for lunch on Thursday?" "Nope! I'm

<sup>1</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (1 Co 10:13). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Co 1:8-9). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

going to have a car accident that morning and that is going to mess up the whole day ... how about Wednesday?" Here's what happens for Je-hoshaphat...

### I. **The Problem** (II Chronicles 20:1-4; 12)

Let's Read, shall we?!? Remember, things are going well...

- II Chron. 20:1 = *"After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat."* Things are going along just fine ... UNTIL ... What? Our enemies are actually declaring WAR on us?!? BLINDSIDED!! Some of you here today have been BLINDSIDED recently... JOB STATUS, HEALTH STATUS, MARRIAGE or other FAMILY Relationships ... That's a PROBLEM!

- II Chron. 20:2 = *"<sup>2</sup> Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army from Edom\* is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea.\* They are already at Hazazon-tamar." (This was another name for En-gedi.)* <sup>3</sup> Our scouts and Google Earth have shown that your enemies are upon you!! You don't have time to get the armies together. You don't have time to figure out a strategy or call for back-up! You are in TROUBLE right now!!

- Guess what Jehoshaphat figured out?!? He COULDN'T HANDLE IT!! II Chor. 20:3 = *"<sup>3</sup> Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting."* <sup>4</sup> Je-hosh went straight to God!! We do that too don't we ... If things are going well = "I can handle this, God." BUT, when things go BAD = "HELP!!" We do it, don't we...

So, Jehoshaphat is scared by the news and begs God for guidance for what to do. When we seek God, one tool that we are offered is to FAST. This was a FAST FAST because there wasn't much time ... pretty much, "Let's all skip lunch! We've got a problem!"

Do you all remember back in the fall of 2001 when the churches in the U.S. filled up for a couple of weeks?? 9/11 had just happened and people really didn't know what to do, so they went to church... That's kind of what happens here. Jerusalem is The Holy City! II Chronicles 20:4 = *"<sup>4</sup> So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD's help."* <sup>5</sup> Everyone went to Jerusalem (Big walls and they all were seeking God's help!!).

It says that Jehoshaphat stood before all of Judah and prayed. Here's part of his prayer ... II Chron. 20:12 = *"<sup>12</sup> O our God, won't you stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help."* <sup>6</sup> He got it ... "We are powerless..." Jehoshaphat understood finally that even though he had done some good stuff, he was not in CONTROL!!

When we face sudden significant PROBLEMS, most of us react with one of three emotions:

- A. **Anger** ... Some of you today are mad at God! I remember one of many times getting really mad at God ... when I found out that my Mom had cancer--I was up in central Wisconsin and she was in Florida and I felt so helpless. I had no control! I couldn't see her and I couldn't do anything for her ... most of us men are "Fixers" and I couldn't fix it!

<sup>3</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:2). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:3). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:4). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:12). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Here's what I want to say ... I don't blame you all for these emotions toward God ... God can handle you getting mad at Him! I just want us to understand WHY ... AND, that God is God and we're not!!

NewsFlash = You're Not In Control!! That makes us MAD, because we want to be in Control! CONTROL is something we have convinced ourselves we have some of, but in truth; we've got nothing! We don't even know if we will get home today; do we?!? We Are Not In CONTROL! Face It!

The other reason that we get really MAD at GOD is because "It's Not Fair!" ... That was my argument with God when I found out about my Mom! My Mom was a wonderful woman and mother and grandmother and she was NICE! It's Not Fair that she gets brain cancer and all those mean people out there get to keep being MEAN! Don't we all have a short list of people we would like to see God take care of?!? My MOM was NOT on the LIST!!

Here's the thing: We get MAD and we keep screaming at God for FAIRNESS, when that is the LAST THING we should be asking God to BE is FAIR! Do you know why?!? Because if God is fair ... we all end up in Hell for eternity! God is NOT FAIR and I'm thankful!!

The 2nd EMOTION we have in response to sudden PROBLEMS is:

- B. Confusion ... We've been told that if we just LOVE JESUS and keep attending Church and doing the moral and upstanding things: that will prevent bad things from happening to us ... RIGHT?!? That's CRAZY!

We think that if bad things happen to us, there is either SIN in our lives and we have to get SIN out or we LACK FAITH, right?!? Something goes wrong in our lives and people wonder what we did wrong. That thinking is CRAZY as Christ-Followers!!

The only problem with this thinking is the Bible! Jesus NEVER SINNED. Jesus was PERFECT. Do you remember what that got him on this earth?!? Beaten, mocked, arrested and crucified on a Cross!! Good for us, but it hurt Jesus.

Paul, the great man of God served God from the time that He got knocked off of his high horse ... he lost his head to a Roman Axe!

Peter, the great Apostle and Fisher of people was crucified on a Roman cross upside down!

Do you know why Peter and Paul lost their lives? Because they **sinned**? Because they **lacked faith**? NO! It was because they radically and passionately LOVED JESUS and SERVED HIS KINGDOM. If you fall in love with Jesus and start serving ... your life might get worse instead of better ... are you willing to do that?!? Christianity is not for weaklings and pansies...

- C. Despair ... Some of you here are ready to give up on life. I don't know any way out of my situation. Some of you are ready to give up! You got BLINDSIDED by whatever hit ... Cancer ... Your marriage ... your children ... your JOB ... you never saw it coming (some of you in this place or online today are feeling DESPAIR and you are ready to give up). I'm not making light of whatever your situation is; BUT, there is a SOLUTION!!

## II. The Solution

The SOLUTION is this: You have to GET UP AND MOVE! WE have to find ways to keep going in life!

"I feel like God has given up on me!" If God has given up on you, you are not on this earth anymore ... as long as you are here, know that God has not given up on you. Please don't give up on a God that never gives up on YOU!

II Chronicles 20:13-14 = <sup>13</sup> *As all the men of Judah stood before the LORD with their little ones, wives, and children,* <sup>14</sup> *the Spirit of the LORD came upon one of the men standing there. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite who was a descendant of Asaph.* <sup>7</sup> This is so cool ... Jahaziel gets used by God! Let's continue...

II Chronicles 20:15 = <sup>15</sup> *He said, "Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's."* <sup>8</sup>

### A. The Word of God

1. The first thing that you and I need to do in our rough times is to "LISTEN" ... Listen to God! God might be trying to tell us something through the PAIN that we are experiencing. I believe that what God wants and what we want are seldom the same thing. We want physical health and financial security for this life ... God wants us to experience abundant life here and an eternity that we cannot imagine!
2. I'm not saying the cancer isn't real. I'm not saying the relational struggles aren't real. I'm just saying that Jesus gets it and has something so much more REAL that He wants us to have...
3. If you are in pain today ... if you are in DESPAIR ... the best thing you could do is go home this afternoon and get alone and tell God that you are ready to LISTEN to what HIS thoughts are around your life... Tell God ... "I can't handle it!!"
4. Will you do me a favor today, please?? Hear and repeat the words at the end of verse 15 ... "Don't be discouraged ... for the battle is not yours, but God's!!" The job loss is not yours, but God's (God knows all about it); the relationship struggles are not yours, but God's; the wayward child is not yours, but God's ... do you realize that God loves your family members way more than you do?!? Please use this phrase when needed and tell God that you are putting your "battle " in His trustworthy hands!
5. The story continues... 20:16ff = <sup>16</sup> *Tomorrow, march out against them. You will find them coming up through the ascent of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel.* <sup>17</sup> *But you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch the LORD's victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you!"* <sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:13–14). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>8</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:15). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>9</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:16–17). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

6. It gets better ... Listen to what happens the next day: <sup>20</sup> *Early the next morning the army of Judah went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. On the way Jehoshaphat stopped and said, "Listen to me, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in his prophets, and you will succeed."* <sup>10</sup> King Jehoshaphat encourages the people to just BELIEVE in God and the words of God through Jahaziel will come true!!
7. Now, they are headed into battle against their enemies ... <sup>21</sup> *After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the LORD and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang:*

*"Give thanks to the LORD;  
his faithful love endures forever!"* <sup>11</sup>

8. So, they are walking toward the battle and King J has a plan ... let's not put the archers or the swordsmen in the front ... let's put the Praise Band out there!! You guys go first! AND, no slow and somber songs... As a matter of fact, as we march out against these armies that are way bigger than ours, let's sing thanks to God! Let's just WORSHIP!!

### **B. The Worship of God**

1. Let me ask ... are you praising God today whether it's good or bad?!? Do you trust God with your "BATTLE"?!? The battle is NOT YOURS! It's easy to worship God when everything is going well, isn't it?! BUT, do we trust that God has us in the good and bad?!?
2. If God couldn't help you in the good and the bad, what's the use of having this God?!? God says that he has us for ETERNITY ... death in this life is a PROMOTION to the next...
3. If we will praise and worship God in ALL situations, I think our results will be similar to those of the Judeans ... Listen: <sup>22</sup> *At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves.* <sup>23</sup> *The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other.* <sup>24</sup> *So when the army of Judah arrived at the lookout point in the wilderness, all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground as far as they could see. Not a single one of the enemy had escaped.* <sup>12</sup>
4. Guess who got the GLORY in that moment?!? No one could take credit ... Everyone had to say, "THAT WAS GOD!" No one could BOAST after that!! It was ALL GOD! Does God receive GLORY from your faith?!?

## **III. The Decision**

<sup>10</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>11</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:21). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>12</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2007). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. (3rd ed.) (2 Ch 20:22-24). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

- A. How will you respond to this?? When the poo hits the fan ... when the Problems come and blindsides you ... Will you turn to the WORD of GOD and will you WORSHIP GOD in the GOOD and the BAD?!? Will I?!?
- B. When you feel like you have more on you than you can handle; would you take time to find out if God's trying to speak to you?!?

Let's Pray!

*Next Steps: I will go on [bmzchurch.org](http://bmzchurch.org) and choose a Bible Reading Program  
Read II Chronicles 17-20  
I will worship God this week no matter what  
I will support Burma mission with prayers and/or a t-shirt*

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