

WEEK 1: JEHOSHAPHAT

"We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help." – 2 Chronicles 20:12b

2 Chronicles 20

Some 40 years ago, John Lennon sang "Nobody told me there'd be days like these, strange days indeed." Kind of feels like he might have been talking about 2020, doesn't it? Every day we hear overwhelming life-and-death statistics. We're told the stay-at-home order will begin to be lifted in phases, but we have no idea when that will happen. We can't go out to eat or go see a movie in the same way we used to. Some of us have had to adjust to working at home while also quickly learning the art of homeschooling. On top of it all, it's unclear how long these extreme conditions will last. Is there an end in sight?

In this week's Bible story, King Jehoshaphat was facing his own set of overwhelming circumstances. He had just recently renewed his commitment to the Lord, only to find himself facing an attack by his enemies. The Bible tells us Jehoshaphat was terrified (2 Chronicles 20:3).

Have you felt terrified lately? What do you do when you're terrified? It can be tempting to either bury our heads in the sand, or to try to talk ourselves out of being scared. But Jehoshaphat did something different: he turned immediately to the Lord. He fasted and prayed and called on his people to do the same. He begged the Lord for guidance and help understanding the plans God had in store for him.

During these strange days, it would do us well to follow Jehoshaphat's example. When the news is reporting a new scary statistic, or you or your spouse is laid off or furloughed, don't panic. Don't start spinning your wheels trying to figure out how to solve everything. First, pray. Tell God what you need. Sometimes all we can muster when we're overwhelmed are one-word prayers: "Jesus." "Help." "Please." That's okay. Don't be afraid to ask him to help you understand what he is doing and how is working in times of trouble. The most important thing is that we turn our hearts toward God first, before we begin to panic or fear.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. What is your default reaction when faced with overwhelming circumstances? Does this reaction typically help or make things worse?
2. Are you currently doubting any of God's plans?
3. Read through the full story of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20. List out specific things Jehoshaphat did that you can do, too.