

Look Up! Look Out! Look In!

(An interactive telling of the story of King Jehoshaphat – Key verse: We do not know what to do but our eyes are on you.)

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Jehoshaphat was a king who lived hundreds of years ago – about 900 BC.

He was a descendant of King David – and an ancestor of Jesus.

He was a God seeking, wise King who led His people well – and for many years there was peace under his rule.

He lived in a palace in Jerusalem -and crowned King from the age of 35 – and reigned for 25 years.

The name Jephoshaphat means ‘God has judged’

So what can we learn about Jehoshaphat this morning ?– to help us grow in faith – and to have our eyes opened to see things more clearly.

So I need a volunteer to be Jehoshaphat... Someone who likes wearing a crown and being fed the finest food -and telling other people what to do?

Here.... Come and sit on this throne prepared for you!

Everytime we mention Jehoshaphat – you are going to stand and raise your arms- and we will all bow and say **‘O good and wise King’**

Lets try that. There was once a King called Jehoshaphat...

Now this King live in the land of Judah and he had lots of helpers... we need at this point to appoint judges who will help rule - they will warn everyone not to sin against the Lord and to live good lives.. a few judges then... say **‘Be good’**

And then we also need some Levites – who are known as the priestly tribe -and they really helped out with teaching the people God’s rule... so a few levites please..Every time I say Levite – you respond with **‘Listen up for Gods way’**.

Now we are nearly ready to begin – so lets make sure everyone knows what they are doing...

Once there was a King called Jehoshaphat (J stands with arms raised, everyone - O good and wise King whilst bowing)

In Judah there were judges (Be good) and Levites (Listen up for God’s ways)

One of the Levites was called Jahaziel – and he’s got a few words to say in a while

This is what the Lord says – do not be afraid – the battle belongs to the Lord – March out and stand firm... and your enemies will disappear...do not be discouraged!

And some singing people too - who can sing?

Give thanks to the Lord for his love endures for ever.

Brilliant...

So next is the tricky part...although it was mostly peaceful during Jehoshaphat's reign there were some enemies who lived over the hills – these were the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Meunites... so do we have a few volunteers to be the enemies this morning - its good acting for these parts – as you are allowed to get very angry and start pretend fighting – and then you all fall dead... anyone up for this?

We'll have all the enemies over here – lots of you - looking very ferocious - so on the shout of enemies – you all make a big **Aaagh** angry noise – lets practice...

And now a practice ofhow you are going to die...

Ok so we have all got our parts -and we are all ready to listen out and ask God to open our eyes to whats happening - and what we can learn from it.

King **Jehoshaphat** lived in Jerusalem and reigned over his people. With the help of the **judges** and the **Levites** – the land of Judah was peaceful and a good place to live. The people worshipped God and enjoyed life in all the usual ways – good food, good exercises and good worship.

But one day the Moabites, and the Ammonites and the Meunites starting plotting against Jehoshaphat.

Let's go and conquer Judah and have some fun – we want what they've got!

Some of the people of Judah got to hear about this and went to the King to tell him.

A vast army is coming our way – what are we going to do?

The King was very alarmed – but he called together the people – to seek what the lord wanted them to do. He told them to fast and pray.

King Jehosophat – began to pray – in front of everyone – God you are great – you rule over all nation – all power and might is with you. Whatever happens to us – we will trust you.

We do not know what to do but our eyes are on you.

Can you imagine how it felt – everyone was in awe – and praying out to God when one of the Levites, Jahaziel, felt he had something – the spirit prompted him -and he stood and spoke

This is what the Lord says – do not be afraid – the battle belongs to the Lord – March out and stand firm... and your enemies will disappear...do not be discouraged

Go and face them tomorrow and the Lord will be with you

Jehoshophat bowed his face to the ground -and all the people of Judah did the same.

Then some of the Levites jumped up and started praising God in a very loud voice.

I wonder how well they slept that night – I am guessing they were full of nervous energy – and the children were looking to their parents and finding it hard to settle.

Then early the next morning they set off toward the Desert of Tekoa - and as they set out Jehoshophat stood and said

Have faith in God and you will be upheld

Then he summoned the singers and musicians to lead the procession- proclaiming Gods holiness and singing praise..

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good...

Then just as the praises started the enemies – the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Meunites starting fighting one another – and dropping down dead all over the place

Even before the processing of King J. and his people arrived

By the time they got there – everyone was dead - the vast army had disappeared leaving only their weapons and their goods.

King J. and all the fighters returned joyfully to Jerusalem and taking their harps and trumpets began to praise God

I wonder if they used 150 to praise God with – praise him on the trumpet the psaltry and harp

Then the fear of the Lord came all over the Kingdoms of the neighbouring countries when they heard how the Lord had looked after them.

From then on there was peace – just as it should be...

Thankyou actors Now everyone

What did you notice – how were your eyes opened?

Look up (arms up)

Look out (arms out)

Look in (hands on heart)

Look up to God whatever you are facing – prayer and praise -and worship in song – these were such important moments in this story.

Do you remember King J was alarmed – its ok to be alarmed – but then immediately he called everyone to pray and fast and worship...

When we look up to God our seeing changes – we learn to trust that God has it – even if it's difficult, scary, or just plain ordinary – we can learn to look up..

What are some of the ways you worship ?

Singing songs ~ Music ~ Quiet walks ~Sitting and being in God presence ~ Reading Gods word ~ Praying

Amazing King J. worshipped before, during and after...

How good is your worship? Do you want to learn to worship everyday in all you do – whether it is tidying your bedroom, clearing the table, heading for the office, facing a difficult conversation ?

What helps?

As a church we are facing challenging times – what is our response – to pray, to fast, to worship together.... **And then whatever the outcome we trust God is in it.**

Look out...

We use our eyes to look out to others – notice what is happening around us – and pray and worship together.

I loved that way that King J had helpers and had his people and he called all of them together – he didn't just rely on himself – he trusted God would work through others.

And Jahaziel – was the one to bring encouragement – Do not be afraid – God's got this – Keep your eyes on the Lord.

Who is God challenging you to encourage with morning?

Is there someone who comes to mind that needs to know that word spoken or written -a card, a whatsapp, a call....?

God uses us to encourage one another.

And look out for others – I think of the wars in our world at present, the victims of earthquakes and natural disasters, those who do not know how to move forward..Shall we pray for them now?

Pick up your post card - Write or draw someone or a situation you want prayer for.... hold them up high... let us pray together.. **Your will be done Your Kingdom come – Send your Holy Spirit – Send us to make a difference and be an agent of your love – that peace and joy may reign in our world**

There is so much in this story about the importance of coming together to seek God – King J did it before during and after – we can hear that... how can we as City Life Church intentionally come together to worship, to pray, to hear God?

Look in

King J – learnt how to be a good leader – by looking in and listening to his own heart - God was speaking to him – and then he was humbly leading others. Leaders or not – we all have a responsibility to look in and listen to our own hearts - see what God might be saying to us.

We can learn to see God in the big and the small by starting small. Where do I see God working today?

Develop that attitude of gratitude and start singing songs of praise and thanks

*Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth
Worship the Lord with gladness
Come before him with joyful songs
Know that the Lord is God.*

Remember this week – like King J. to **Look up. Look out. Look in.**