



August 9,
2014

ADVENTIST YOUTH AND PATHFINDER DAY

Powerful in Prayer

Introduction

IN the 2012 devotional, *Give It to Me Straight*, Dr. Fernando Zabala tells the story of Roldan, the most courageous and famous of Emperor Charlemagne's soldiers.

One day, the emperor decided to give a gift to his brave commander. It was an ivory horn that had belonged to his grandfather Carlos Martel.

"Do you think that you can blow it?" Charlemagne asked Roldan.

"Let me try."

And he tried. The sound was so loud that Charlemagne had to cover his ears.

"It is yours," the emperor told Roldan. "If some day you find yourself in trouble, just blow the horn."

That day arrived. It is believed to have been August 15 of the year AD 778. Roldan was crossing the Pyrenees at the head of a battalion of a few hundred soldiers. His mission was to cover the rearguard troops of the emperor. Suddenly, they were attacked by a much larger army. Immediately, Oliver, his companion of a thousand battles, realized that they could not prevail.

"Blow the horn, Roldan! Blow it!"

"We can defeat them without help," replied Roldan.

When Roldan realized that they could not prevail against their enemies, he blew the horn, but it was too late. When Charlemagne arrived at the scene of the confrontation, he found only the dead bodies of his brave men. Among them was Roldan, still clinging to the horn that could have saved his life, *if only he had used it in time*.

- We have in our hands a resource more powerful and effective than the Roldan's ivory horn: it is prayer. Let us remember that "prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence" (*Steps to Christ*, chap. 11, p. 94). However, while God Himself invites us to communicate with Him, it is alarming the way in which we often forget to pray.
- Today we will study a story that reflects the human tendency to make decisions without consulting God, with its inevitable and disastrous consequences.

2 Kings 3:1-24

1. You will reap what you sow (2 Kings 3:1-3).

- a. This passage has the story of King Jehoram, who, following the example of his father, "did evil in the sight of the Lord" and dragged the people of Israel into idolatry. This malfesance brought him immediate consequences (vv. 4, 5), since King

**OPENING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal*,
no. 468

BIBLE TEXT:
Deuteronomy
30:20

**CLOSING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal*,
no. 602

SERMON

Mesha rebelled against him, and Jehoram had to go out at the head of his army to confront the Moabites.

- b. Through the ages, God has placed in front of His people two options: that of good and that of evil, “life and death, blessing and cursing” (Deuteronomy 30:19). This promise was given to the people of Israel, “‘Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today. . . . The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways’ ” (Deuteronomy 28:1, 7). However, disobedience would also have its consequences. The people were warned, “‘If you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, . . . the Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies’ ” (Deuteronomy 28:15, 25). In the light of these promises and warnings, we can say that the problem of King Jehoram was not military, but spiritual. Divine help was available, but . . .

2. Neglecting prayer has its consequences.

- a. Instead of seeking God, Jehoram worked out his own plan. He would crush the rebellion! The Scriptures tells us that the king prepared his army and invited King Jehoshaphat to support him in the war against Moab (2 Kings 3:6, 7).
“And what about God?”
“I do not need Him! I have a solution for the situation.”
- b. By the way, who was Jehoshaphat? He was the king of Judah, and the Bible describes him as a king who did “what was right in the sight of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 20:32). That is, the evil king (Jehoram) invited the good king (Jehoshaphat) to participate in the consequences of his sins, and the latter let himself be taken in. And the worst thing is that Jehoshaphat inexplicably forgot to consult God. He forgot to pray!

- c. Putting the Lord to one side, they drew up the battle plan (2 Kings 3:8), intending to surprise the enemy by attacking from an unexpected place. The result was a completely absurd plan. As absurd as trying to live a Christian life without prayer.

“Which way should we go?”

“Through the desert of Edom.”

- d. The expedition almost turned into tragedy. The armies “marched on that roundabout route seven days” (2 Kings 3:9), and faced extreme temperatures in a barren and rocky place. They were about to die of dehydration. Try to imagine those poor soldiers, enduring a dreadful heat and a desperate thirst. Symptoms of dehydration include: headaches, decreased blood pressure, increased body temperature, dizziness, and fainting upon standing, delirium, unconsciousness and, in extreme cases, death. So is the life of the man who, ignoring the Creator, tries to do things his own way. Life without God is empty, barren, and hopeless.
- e. At that critical moment, King Jehoram, the primary person responsible for the situation, appears on the scene trying to blame God for the military disaster. “‘Alas! For the Lord has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab’ ” (v. 10). The nerve! It is now God who is to blame for everything! King Jehoram: May I remind you that you made plans without taking God into account. You got yourselves into this mess. You deserve it!
- f. However, we should recognize that Jehoram is not the only one who tries to blame God for the problems he is facing. It is a very common symptom in humans. Have you ever complained to God? Have you ever blamed Him for the consequences of your own actions?

3. Our attitude is important when we pray.

- a. Do you remember God only when you are facing difficulties? Apparently, that happened to Jehoshaphat. When all seemed lost, and when the

wicked King Jehoram mentions the name of God, even if it is to blame Him for everything, that is when King Jehoshaphat remembers that he has a powerful God.

“It cannot be! I forgot to put in the hands of the Lord this expedition. I forgot to pray!”

“Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?” (v. 11).

Fortunately, Elisha was close by. And God was near. God is always there, within the reach of a prayer. The only barrier is our carelessness and neglect.

b. Both kings went in search of Elisha, but the way in which the prophet received King Jehoram tells us that the monarch was not seeking God for the right reasons or with the proper attitude. His conduct was insolent, irreverent, and defiant. Still blaming God for the situation they faced (verses 12, 13).

“We are in trouble because Jehovah brought us here in order to deliver us into the hands of the Moabites,” claimed King Jehoram.

“The Lord lives!” said Elisha. “If it weren’t for respect to King Jehoshaphat, I would not even look at you. But. . .”

4. God is always willing to bless His children.

a. Throughout history, the presence of the righteous has benefited everyone around them (verse 15), and this time was no exception. Even the evil King Jehoram received a blessing by the company of Jehoshaphat. The presence of a just person, a child of God, of a Pathfinder, should always make a difference in the community, in the field, or in the classroom. We can always share what the Lord gives us.

b. God’s solutions are not always in accordance with human logic (verses 16, 17).

“What? Make ponds in the sand? With this heat and the thirst I have? Nonsense! Where are we going to draw water from in this desert? Or is it perhaps going to rain torrentially?”

“No, it will not rain. There will not even be wind. But there will be water!”

If you have ever felt frightened by difficulties, or if you think the future looks bleak or menacing, remember that our God is not bound to human logic. His power is infinite and beyond our comprehension.

c. In addition, the Lord is not “stingy” with His blessings, but He gives in abundance to those who trust in Him.

Giving them water “is a simple matter in the sight of the Lord; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand” (2 Kings 3:18). All that power and blessings were available to the people of Israel from the outset, but because of his carelessness and indifference, they were dying in the desert. Never forget that “God has a heaven full of blessings that He wants to bestow on those who are earnestly seeking for that help which the Lord alone can give” (*Prayer*, chap. 5, p. 48).

Conclusion

“Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water” (2 Kings 3:20). It is interesting to note that God’s blessing came during the morning offering. We can call this special moment “the hour of prayer.” Every morning, the Lord desires to be with His children, and this is not exclusively for adults. Pathfinders can also have a special appointment with Christ every morning. We can have a life of prayer and power. We have at our reach the greater power of the universe. However, we may be ignoring it.

In a textile factory, new workers were trained to handle the production machines. At the end of the training, once they were placed in their working assignments, one final recommendation was made to them, the most important of all, “If wires become entangled, call the foreman.” With this instruction, the workers began their work. One of the newcomers was soon in difficulties. Threads began to become entangled in the machine that

he was in charge of. He immediately stopped production and took a look at the problem. It did not seem very difficult to fix, and although he clearly remembered what he had been told, "Call the foreman," he proceeded to solve the situation. However, the more he tried to fix things and put them in their place, the more the threads became entangled. Giving up, he finally called for the foreman. When he arrived, he was met with a real disaster at the machine.

"You tried to fix it, didn't you?"

"Yes, *I did the best I could.*"

"No!" replied the foreman. "The best you could have done was to call me."

Pathfinder: don't leave prayer as a last resort. Don't wait until you are totally entangled by your bad decisions. The Lord desires to guide you and give you victory in all aspects of your life. You and I can be "mighty in prayer." As you get up every morning, as you study, as you play, as you make decisions, at home, at school, on playing field, in every moment of your life, don't forget to pray. God is always near!

Oscar Rivera Mendoza
is director of the Youth Department
of the North Mexican Union.