

I. Introduction

- A. You are a steward, that is, a manager of the resources of God. He has invested in you, and he expects a return. You are “You, Incorporated,” and today I’d like to talk about your Prime Directive.
- B. We were watching a nature show on TV with our kids: Wildebeests in Africa. Those things are amazing. They look like cattle with little hips, except they’re deer, beefy-looking deer. Thousands of them migrate together in these giant flowing herds.
- C. There was this scene where they crossed a river, and it was brutal. The opposite shoreline was steep, and the wildebeests had a hard time lunging up the other side.
- D. Pretty soon, they’d torn apart the shoreline so much it was all slippery and muddy, and the animals started falling over.
- E. And once they fell over, the ones behind them climbed up on top them.
- F. My kids were mesmerized, and I’m trying to decide when this thing gets too intense for a 7 and 8 year old; and then with no warning, and before I could change the channel, a gigantic crocodile lunges up out from the river, totally out of nowhere, totally unexpected, and clamps down on a poor, mud-covered wildebeest.
- G. My kids are sitting there with big eyes and I’m lunging for the remote control.
- H. They thought it was cool.
- I. I’m thinking what a great picture of real life in troubled times. You’re clipping along with the everyday struggles of life and then, BAM! Out of nowhere—a crocodile.
- J. What kind of crocodile is snapping at your heels: a financial, relational, medical crocodile or perhaps an educational, marital, or parental crocodile or maybe a legal, psychological, or emotional?
- K. We’re all swimming across this murky river called life, and we’ve all got crocodiles snapping at our heels.

II. Faith

- A. My message today is number two in a series called You, Inc. You, Incorporated. Your life has a bottom line. You are a steward. God is the shareholder, and you have a fiduciary responsibility to Him.
- B. One day, you will settle accounts with Him. He’ll go over the books with you. Your everlasting compensation is a function of your effectiveness as CEO of You, Inc.
- C. Translation: eternal riches depend on temporal stewardship.
- D. That’s the big idea for this month of sermons.
- E. And I want to be super-clear NOT to imply that heaven is a reward for good performance. It is not. It is, instead, a gift to those who have embraced Jesus the way that God tells you to embrace Jesus in the Bible.
- F. The bottom line of You, Inc. isn’t countable. God’s not counting your good works; He’s weighing your faith. And when you are acting in good faith toward God, you are guaranteed a return in heaven, even if you fail on earth. That is why we have a prime Directive, and here it is:
- G. God never gets upset when we fail; but He hates it when we don’t try.
- H. God loves faith.
- I. We have one of the best stories of faith in the whole Bible to look at today, the story of...

III. King Jehoshaphat and the Bad Guys

- A. *It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar” (which is En Gedi) (2 Chronicles 20:1, 2, NKJV).*
 - 1. Let’s call this a very big problem. A big strong enemy declared war on the people. They have become a target.
 - 2. Plus, you get the feeling that this came out of nowhere. King Jehoshaphat never saw it coming. Like the wildebeests never saw the African crocodile rising up from murky waters.
 - 3. Let’s jump right into this story and put ourselves into it. We can let the vast army of bad guys represent all the trials and adversities in our lives. What does that look like for you? What crocodiles lurk around you?
 - 4. You’ve got problems maybe with: Health. Money. Love life. Your spouse, your marriage. Your sex life or lack of a sex life. Your mom and dad. Your children. Your job. Grades are falling at school. Maybe you suffer from depression. Or you’ve given up on God.
 - 5. Sometimes you feel like a target. Sometimes you can see the dark shadow of a giant crocodile gliding through the waters toward you.
 - 6. Then what?
- B. *And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. 5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, (2 Chronicles 20:3-5, NKJV).*
 - 1. Reaction one: Jehoshaphat feared. I really like that. He’s normal. Anybody brought some fear with them into to church today? You don’t have to answer. I’ll just assume it. And look what King Jay did with that fear.
 - 2. He set himself to seek that Lord.
 - 3. That one sentence would save all of us a whole lot of grief. He set himself to seek the Lord. She set herself to seek the Lord.
 - 4. The Hebrew says he gave his face to seek the Lord.
 - 5. Every time you hit a tough time, you either turn your face to God or your back to God.
 - 6. Fear will drive you to God, or from God. You’ll pull back on praying. Pull back on reading your Bible. Pull back on worshipping him. Pull back on church. Pull back on giving.
 - 7. We’re talking about You, Inc. We’re talking about your bottom line before God. Does your life give God a return on investment or not?

8. For so many years of my life, I labored under a false illusion. I thought God was counting my good works. I thought the only way I'd get a good final performance review was by tons of good deeds. So I scrambled for Jesus all the time. I served in church, worked in church, and pedaled as hard as I could. Busy, busy, busy for Jesus.
9. And I didn't feel one bit closer to God.
10. And it hit me that the main thing God wasn't looking at my outward performance as much as He was looking at my heart.
11. You, Inc. is a successful enterprise to the extent that you set your face to seek the Lord. It's that simple.
12. They did this through fasting and prayer.
13. They did this corporately, together as a nation.
14. And they did this in the Temple, in the courtyard.
15. In that wildebeest documentary, they showed a lion chasing down its dinner: One lion vs. a thousand wildebeests. The wildebeest are bigger. They're stronger. They have horns. They have hooves. And they way outnumbered the lion, by a factor of maybe 10,000.
16. I said to my kids, if only those wildebeests were smart enough to come together, they could kill the lion.
17. But they don't operate that way.
18. They don't come together. They don't fight shoulder to shoulder. When they fear, they scatter. When they fear, it's every beast for itself and the lion eats one of them—too bad.
19. When one of them falls, the others climb on top and use him as a ladder to reach the other side.
20. Wildebeest are a lot like some church people I know.
21. Let's not be wildebeests.
22. When we fear, let's come together.
23. When we fear, let's seek God together
24. That's how Jehoshaphat, Inc. handled his crocodiles, and that's how You, Inc. can handle life's crocodiles also.
25. Here is Jehoshaphat's amazing prayer:
 - C. *6 and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9 'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' 10 And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them— 11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." 13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD (2 Chronicles 20:6-13, NKJV).*
 1. There are about 30 features to talk about in this awesome prayer, but I will restrain myself—you should be proud of me—and just talk about two.
 2. The first feature is that Jeshoshaphat prays the promises of God. God, You promised this land to us and now, You've got to protect us—You promised. You're stuck.
 3. He anchored his life in the promises of God.
 4. About 850 years later, one of Jesus' disciples named Peter would encourage you to do the same thing.
 - a) *[God's] divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:3, 4, NKJV).*
 5. If your life is a corporation, your shareholder is God, and your capital assets are the promises of God. That's your money in the bank. That's your principal resource.
 6. For every situation of your life, God has made a promise. And You, Inc. works best when you stand on God's promises.
 7. That's why when you leave today, I've collected some of my favorite Promises from God into a four-page sheet, and I'll give it to you today. Tuck it in your Bible and periodically read it, and pray it back to God. We'll also put it online as part of today's sermon at ncredding.com.
 8. Here's just one example:
 - a) *God's Promise: And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19, NKJV).*
 - (1) Your Prayer: God, you promised that you would supply my needs, and I need to pay my rent this month.

9. You've got over 80 promises like that on this sheet and they'll do you no good as long as they only live on paper. You have to tuck them into your heart.
10. God wired You, Inc. to function on supernatural resources, and the Mother of all supernatural resources is the Promises of God. These are the ABC's of your whole life.
11. And here's why: because you will either claw your way to the top on the people around you, or you'll climb to the top on the promises of God, lovingly bringing other people with you.
12. When You, Incorporated is standing on the promises, You, Inc are invincible because God's power flows through God's written Word into your life.
13. But there's a deeper dynamic going on here.
14. King Jay goes deeper than the promises of God.
15. *He says, (v. 6), "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?"*
16. This is why I chose this story from the Bible.
17. Because at this point in his life, King Jay's whole operation is based on a single, simple, all-encompassing, world-defining premise. Every business plan has its assumptions. And here is King Jehoshaphat's assumption. Are you ready for it? Can you handle it? Three words:
 - a) God will succeed.
18. Is your God a good God? Yes.
19. Does He have a good plan? Yes.
20. Are all your days written into His plan? Yes.
21. WILL HE SUCCEED? Yes.
22. Then what are you worried about?
23. In fact, that's exactly what God says next to the King:
 - D. *14 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you." 18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. 19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high (2 Chronicles 20:14-19, NKJV).*
 1. Verse 15: Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's!
 2. Verse 17: You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you!
 - a) A cautious life...
 - b) A self-protective life...
 - c) A self-centered life...
 - d) A wimpy life...
 - e) An anxious life...
 - f) A random, pointless life...
 - g) A little, restricted, clenched, nervous, analyze-everything-to-death life...
 3. These are de-facto professions of faith in a God-Who-Can't-Get-It-Done.
 4. Put yourself back in this story. The orders come down. Position yourselves, standstill, and see the salvation of the Lord. What is your first comment to your spouse or friends? What do you say?
 5. "This is ridiculous! We're going to get slaughtered! Who's running this outfit?"
 - a) OR
 6. "I can't wait to see what happens!"
 7. Listen: if God never fails, you can't lose. Let's personalize that.
 - a) If God never fails, I can't lose.
 - (1) *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* (Romans 8:31, NKJV).
 - b) If God never fails, I can't lose.
 - (1) *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* (Psalms 27:1, NKJV).
 - c) If God never fails, I can't lose.
 - (1) *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea* (Psalms 46:1, 2, NKJV).

- d) If God never fails, I can't lose.
- 8. But you say, "Bill, a whole lot of people have stepped out in faith, and they have crashed and burned! Didn't they fail?"
- 9. NEVER! You have a false perspective. You see through the lens of time, and God sees through the lens of eternity.
- 10. And in eternity, it isn't success or failure from an earthly perspective that gets reward, it's FAITH!
- 11. And that's why God never gets upset when we fail on earth because earthly failures and losses and heartbreaks, initiated and endured by faith, are heaven's crowns.
- 12. You, Inc.—God never gets upset when we fail, but He hates it when we don't try.
- E. *20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established [mentally stable]; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper [emotionally whole]." 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever." 22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. 24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. (2 Chronicles 20:20-24, NKJV).*
 - 1. So the king assembles the army and puts the worship team out front. They sing the national anthem of ancient Israel (v. 22), and it should be yours to! Give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy [hesed] is unto eternity.
 - 2. Everything rises and falls with how you see your God!
 - 3. Look at verse 22. Question: when did the enemy armies start to fight each other? At what precise moment?
 - a) When they began to sing and praise.
 - 4. And when the smoke cleared, there was a battlefield of dead bodies; no one had escaped and God's people never fired a shot.
 - 5. That must have been some awful singing!
 - 6. Or that must have been some awe-inspiring God.
 - 7. Who did it? Who worked? Who made it happen? Who expended the effort? God!
 - 8. Who just stood still as an expression of faith? The people.
 - 9. Problem solved, right? Enemies defeated, right?
 - 10. What do we call that? We call it grace, and that's what they sang about. But it gets better.
- F. *25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. (2 Chronicles 20:25, 26, NKJV).*
 - 1. Problem solved—that's grace.
 - 2. Riches added—that's amazing grace.
 - 3. Berachah means blessing—a free gift from God. They named that place the Valley of Berachah—The Valley of blessing.
 - 4. The place of battle became the Valley of Blessing.
 - 5. And when you see God the way He is, you know deep inside that your whole life is lived in the Valley of Blessing— even your bad days.

IV. Conclusion

- A. When you stick your neck out for God, you are telling God you believe Him. You prove what A.W. Tozer said:
 - 1. "True faith rests upon the character of God and asks no further proof than the moral perfections of the One who cannot lie. It is enough that God has said it" (Tozer).
- B. You can't out-faith God, because God can't out-promise Himself. What God has promised, He is able also to perform.
- C. Hudson Taylor, missionary to China when there were no missionaries to China, wrote:
 - 1. "Many Christians estimate difficulties in the light of their own resources, and thus attempt little and often fail in the little they attempt. All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His power and presence with them" (Hudson Taylor).
- D. God has a plan.
- E. He will succeed.
- F. If God never fails, you can't lose.
- G. Invest your life, your time, your talents, your treasures. Give yourself away. Don't hoard your life, put it on the altar and let God use it or consume it or waste it as He sees fit.
- H. Remember your Prime Directive! God never gets upset when we fail, but He hates it when we don't try.