

Josiah - The Revival King

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[0:00] And God bless you, one and all tonight. Let's go to the Word of God, 2 Kings 23. 2 Kings 23, if you've got your Bibles. Our story tells tonight of a teenager used of God to bring revival.

Are we got any teenagers here today? Josiah, one of Judah's best kings, if not the best. And of King Josiah it is said, in 2 Kings 23, verse 25, it says of him, of Josiah, And like unto him was there no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him. What a description of a man. No one like him before, no one like him after him. A rare find among the kings, King Josiah. And Josiah found himself in a dread period of idolatry. His nation was in an evil day. His culture was on the brink of God's judgment. His grandfather Manasseh had been the most wicked king in Judah's history.

[1:35] Manasseh had plunged the nation of Judah into the worst sins than the Canaanites. Israel had conquered centuries before. And in the midst of all of this, Josiah stood up for the Lord in an evil day.

When Josiah was born, his grandfather Manasseh was still king. And Manasseh had been the most wicked, ungodly king of Judah.

But late in his reign, the Assyrians came and took Manasseh with hooks, dragged him with hooks in his body to Babylon as a slave in shame and reproach.

Taken captive to Babylon. And there in his distress, Manasseh repented. And he prayed and God brought him back to Jerusalem where he finished his reign. Upon returning, Manasseh actually commanded Judah to worship the Lord and attempted a restoration.

But even though Manasseh himself repented, he could not undo the damage that had been done, that he had done. It's much easier to lead people into sin than it is to lead them out again.

[2:48] Manasseh failed. But later, Josiah reversed things as he responded to God's law, the word of God.

God postponed his judgment against the entire nation of Judah. We'll see that as we look at Josiah's life, as we turn to 2 Chronicles 34. 2 Chronicles 34.

So just a bit later on in your Bible, after Kings, 2 Chronicles 34. Josiah was one who made a noble attempt to bring the people of Judah and Israel back to the Lord.

Now we know, despite his efforts, there was only a kind of half-hearted, just a momentary restoration that was very shallow.

Josiah was sincere, but the people by and large were not. But the good thing about Josiah was, he did manage to keep one generation from judgment.

[3:57] And as such, we can learn from Josiah as an example for us. As we seek in our day, in this evil culture, in this evil nation, in this evil day that we live, we can be like Josiah.

We can learn from what Josiah did and take note and take action like King Josiah. We see King Josiah listen to the word of the Lord. He humbled himself and he obeyed.

So let's go there to 2 Chronicles 34 from verse 1. 2 Chronicles 34 verse 1. It says, Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign.

And he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. Josiah, eight years old. Who's eight years old here tonight?

We've got a bit of a gap there. We've got some younger than eight and some older than eight. But I can remember when I was eight. I came to Australia when I was eight.

[5:00] I used to talk funny when I came here. But I've since been converted to Australian talking, just about. I've almost mastered the accent. But when I was eight, I came to this fair nation of Australia.

And I can't remember much before I was eight really. Only just some scattered thoughts there. And only a few things since then too. Here's Josiah.

He's only eight years old. Only eight. Wow. Can you imagine that? To be the king of the nation of Judah. His grandfather is dead. And his father had been murdered.

But both of them had been unrighteous kings. They had failed largely. And the saying goes, like father, like son. Thankfully, Josiah broke the mould.

He wasn't like his father. He wasn't like his grandfather. Imagine that. At eight years of age, stepping up to that responsibility, that immense responsibility, that position of the king of the nation.

[6:12] And it goes on of Josiah verse two. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.

Interesting here, it doesn't relate of his actual father, or of his grandfather, but of David.

That he was of the line of David, who was, I guess, his great-grandfather, or certainly in that line.

So, he was still reckoned as walking in the ways of David his father.

He declined neither to the right nor to the left. Verse three. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father.

And in the twelfth year, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves and the carved images, and the molten images. Here he was, eight, in the eighth year of his life.

[7:21] Then we pick up the story again, eight years later. It carries on to tell of the eighth year of his reign. So now, he was sixteen, or thereabouts.

He was still a youth. And it says he began to seek the God of his father David. This is verse three. In the eighth year of his reign. So he was king at eight.

Now it's the eighth year of him as king. He's sixteen. When he began to seek the Lord. Now, Josiah, notice this, he was not from a godly home.

And that's true for some of us here tonight. Our mother, our father, may not be particularly godly. But God can still use you, if you're in that state.

Amen. You can break the mould. You don't have to be like father, like son. You can be like King David. While he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his ancestor, Father David.

[8:25] Notice it says he began to seek the God of his father David. Not the gods of his father Ammon, or grandfather Manasseh, but the one true living God. And he was just sixteen.

The tender age of sixteen. What's a sixteen-year-old interested in these days? Well, even in my days, you know, yonks ago. And yonks ago before that, a sixteen-year-old.

They wouldn't be thinking very maturely. You wouldn't think. Maybe interested in just entertaining themselves, and just having a bit of fun and enjoyment in life. Josiah could have pursued these things.

Sure, he's the king. He could have had anything that he wanted. But one thing is clear about Josiah, what Josiah did. The word of God says, he began to seek God, the God of his father, David.

He began to seek God. At sixteen. And four years later, he began to take action, it says, and purge out the idols in Judah and Israel.

[9:29] Notice again, he was not born from a godly home. That needn't stop you from being a Christian.

All the rather. It's got nothing to do with that. You know, some people think, oh, just because my parents were Christian, I can kind of inherit their Christianity. They think that they get into heaven because they've got Christian parents.

That's a very big mistake too. It's an individual, soul by soul, man by man, woman by woman. We must trust the Lord for ourselves. And so, it was not a hindrance to him that he was not from a godly home, from godly parents.

And against him too, he lived in an evil day. The whole society, the culture, was heathenistic. It was pagan. It was evil. Through and through.

What of our day? Of our time? Of what the government of our day allows and celebrates? It needn't stop us from standing for Christ.

[10:34] More so. It should make us want to. He began to seek the Lord during his teen years and he never turned away. The Lord wants us, like Josiah, to begin to seek the Lord and to keep on seeking the Lord.

It doesn't stop. Amen? We seek the Lord in our younger days and we begin to seek the Lord in our younger days and it goes on. We don't stop seeking him.

We continually seek after God. Seeking the Lord is a lifelong process. You don't just try it for a few months and then, you know, change whatever you fancy might be.

It's not a fan. It's a lifestyle to seek God. It's a lifetime process to seek after God, to learn of God, to learn of his ways, to seek his face, to seek to find and do his will.

In Josiah's day, the people were totally given over to idolatry and he knew he would have to destroy the sin of idolatry and renew his obedience to the Lord in this evil day.

[11:39] So we read on, verse 4, of Josiah. As he led the nation, it says, they break down the altars of Baalim in his presence and the images that were on high above them he cut down and the groves and the carved images and the molten images he break in pieces and made dust of them and strode it upon the groves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

What did he do? He tore down the altars. He cut down the images. He smashed the idols, the statues, the images of worship.

He smashed them. I just saw lately, I was quite horrified to see that the Catholic Church has just made some contribution of a statue of St. Francis of Assisi to some Buddhist centre to join there for veneration.

Having a statue of St. Francis of Assisi for veneration. And the Buddhists just love that. Oh, I've got another statue to bow down and worship and put flowers on and say mumbo jumbo too and smoke some incense too.

This is the madness that goes on. And I saw not long ago too where they've got some veneration of the blood of some Pope who's died years ago and they've got it in a vial with a monster surrounded.

[13:07] Some big kind of decorated image. And in the middle of that image is a kind of little vial of the man's blood and the people coming up to it and touching it and praying to the blood of this dead Pope.

God help us. That's what's going on in the world today. They're still doing such things as they did back in the Baal worship. And verse 5, And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars so he desecrated their altars.

Verse 6, And so he did in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon even unto Naphtali with their hammocks round about. So they got these axes and they were just going ballistic chopping down these idols and images.

And it's like in the times of Reformation that they did the same thing in these churches where there's all these statues and images and icons.

They smashed them to pieces because they obeyed the word of God where it says we should not venerate such things. Verse 7, And when they had broken down the altars and the groves and had beaten the grove and images into powder and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel he returned to Jerusalem.

[14:28] Now in the eighteenth year of his reign when he had purged the land and his house he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah and Masaiah the governor of the city and Joah the son of Johaz the recorder to repair the house of the Lord his God.

What did Josiah do? He smashed the idols he broke down the altar of Baal he removed the idols and next he repaired the house of God.

He restored the house of God. Here was Josiah about 20 years old here. He took it to the next level. He was 8 16 now he was 20.

He wanted to repair the house of the Lord his God. He had removed all the idol worship of Judah and of Israel it was a big job. There were so many high places and idols in all the cities.

In Jeremiah chapter 28 it says where then are the gods you made for yourselves? Let them come if they can save you when you're in trouble. For you have as many gods as you have towns O Judah as Jeremiah 28.

[15:31] When Josiah was 26 he started restoring the temple. It was then while they were restoring the temple that Hilkiah found the book of the law.

Verse 9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Anasseh and Ephraim and of all the remnant of Israel and of all Judah and Benjamin and they returned to Jerusalem.

So here they were starting the work on the house of God. Verse 10 And they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord to repair and amend the house.

Verse 11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they it to buy hewn stone and timber for couplings to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.

they were intent on restoring the house of the Lord the temple of God by renewing the timber and the stone and the floor what had been destroyed and they got these craftsmen these builders to build it.

[16:39] Verse 12 And the men did work faithfully and the overseers of them were Jehath and Obadiah the Levites of the sons of Merari and Zechariah and Meshulam of the sons of Kohathites to set it forward and others of the Levites all that could skill of instruments of music they restored the worship they got the instruments of music out.

Verse 13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service and of the Levites they were scribes and officers and porters everybody was involved all kinds of rank and file of overseers of musicians of bearers of burdens of overseers people supervising building craftsmen verse 14 and when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses they must have uncovered it in the kind of wreckage that was left of the shambles that the house of the Lord was in they found the book maybe it was hidden under some pile of rubbish under some dust in some obscure place they were restoring the house and they found the book verse 15 and Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe I have found the book I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord and Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan so they found the book and they said look this is something exciting this is something significant Judah had drifted so far from God they had forgotten his written word existed between Manasseh and Josiah 60 years had gone by without righteous leadership and only a small number of God fearing people were left most of them elderly Manasseh had brought in much pagan worship of many different gods and it's like the living God the true and living God was forsaken and his word was forgotten only a few remembered would have remembered what it was like to worship the true and living God and much less how to worship you can imagine as someone has kind of pictured how it could have gone the conversation when they thought hey what's this not that it was looking like a book like this because it was a big long scroll but we found the book the book of the law what book is it it is the book the book of the law the book of the law what law the law

God gave Moses who is Moses yeah it's like that would have been kind of it's almost like they'd forgotten they'd forgotten the book they'd forgotten the workings of God they'd forgotten the significance of the written word of God the book was certainly one or all of the books of Moses it was that Pentateuch it was the first five books of the Bible after generations of pagan worship the people had forgotten God they'd forsaken God and they'd neglected the holy book the Bible our generation likewise we need to rediscover the book amen we need to rediscover the book we recover the book the word of God it's central in any awakening of the faith through reformations through revivals of past history the book of God is central critical to that devotion to restoring that reviving of that worship of the true God verse 16 and

Shaphan carried the book to the king and brought the king word back again saying all that was committed to thy servants they do it so it goes on here that they gave the king the book and verse 19 it goes on and it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the law that he rent his clothes Shaphan read it before the king it says verse 18 and it came to pass the king heard these words and he said he rent his clothes in other words he tore his clothes it was a sign of shame of humility of repentance personal revival right there he was re-bibled revived Josiah was so humbled that as the king of such prominence of such authority he the king of the land tore his clothes what a

shame what a humiliation what a humbling what a sign of repentance that was the holy scriptures had been for so long forsaken neglected and to all practical purposes lost hidden away now found oh the reproach of an unused bible oh the reproach of a bible covered in dust gathering dust the reproach of that it sounds like our world today it sounds like many who call themselves believers today that the bible is a neglected book there's a disregard of the book a disregard for god verse 20 and the king commanded helkiah and hackim the son of shaphan and abdon the son of micah and shaphan the scribe and asaria a servant of the king saying go inquire of the lord for me and for them that are left in israel and in judah concerning the words of the book that is found for great is the wrath of the lord that is poured out upon us because our fathers have not kept the word of the lord to do after all that is written in this book oh the wrath of the lord we've not kept the word of the lord we've not done what the word of the lord tells us to do josiah recognized the value of the book do we recognize the value of this book men's blood has been shed that we can have this book in our hands in the english language in our native tongue people have been persecuted and and brutalized because of the words of this book you know men and women have had the words of this book hung around their necks as they were tortured and torched in flames at the stake because they dared to have the word of god in the english language oh the value of this book josiah recognized the value of the book and we notice the vital place of the word of god in effecting revival there's a man who wrote a book called revival in 1990 i'm going to quote from this man of this book called revival i quote this total acceptance of scripture as the word of god and instant obedience to it commands has characterized those whom god uses in revival there is no escaping this fact the reforms that took place under the leadership of both hezekiah and more than a half a century later josiah were all stimulated by a love for the word of god and obedience to it a study of the lives of the leaders in revival will reveal the same thing if we long for revival we must begin here with the book jonathan goforth was greatly used in china and elsewhere in revival from 1908 onwards and looking back at those years jonathan goforth said this we wish to affirm too that we can entertain no [24:19] hope of a mighty globe encircling holy spirit revival without there being first a back to the bible movement and goforth certainly practiced what he preached for in 19 years he read through his chinese new testament 55 times he goes on the reason for this essential acceptance of scripture is that in revival god uses his word to change and correct his people and there is always a renewed love and acceptance of scripture god will not trust leadership into the hands of those who deny the very weapon he is going to use more effectively than any other end quote we need a fresh love for the word of god to value it to esteem it to honor it as he does he honors it even above his name the word of god josiah took the words he heard to heart and he sent the priest to inquire of the lord for him and verse 22 through here we can see through 27 it tells of that inquiring of the lord as he inquired of the lord and he sought the word of the lord and verse 27 he is told because thine heart was tender and that is humble thyself before god when thou heardest his words against this place and against the inhabitants thereof and humbled thyself before me and it's rend thy clothes and weep before me i have even heard thee also saith the lord josiah had a tender heart the message the word from god was you've humbled yourself before me and i have heard i've heard you his conscience was tender towards god josiah recognized guilt and coming judgment that's all that we can do when we come to a place where we don't recognize our guilt we're out of sorts with god recognize your guilt recognize his coming judgment recognize the wrath of god and find the refuge of god for your soul josiah did that he was sensitive to the fear of god what is it that josiah did when he heard the word of god he called the people together he had them hear the law of the lord and renew their covenant with god in verse 30 it goes on the king went up into the house of the lord and all the men of judah and the inhabitants of jerusalem and the priests and the levites and all the people great and small got some great and small people here tonight that's what we need don't we it's not an age restriction we need the great and the small sometimes the great ones are the little ones i think

and he he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the lord it's good for families to come and hear the word of god thank god for that it's a blessed thing bring your children to church amen i wish my children were in church tonight here josiah shows for us the importance of the diligent earnest prayerful study of holy scripture the need of preaching and bible proclamation the value the authority of the bible of divine revelation verse 31 and the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the lord to walk after the lord to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and with all his soul to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book and he caused all that were present in jerusalem and benjamin to stand to it and the inhabitants of jerusalem did according to the covenant of god the god of their fathers and josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of israel and made all that were present in israel to serve even to serve the lord their god and all his days they departed not from following the lord the

god of their fathers what a testimony of josiah he got the people to stand and covenant he caused the people to stand and commit to commit their heart to commit their soul to commit their service and it says they departed not from following the lord he walked in the ways of david his father he declined not to the right nor to the left what a testimony may we make this our great business to do business with god to please god to please him josiah gave the rest of his life to following god's will and the cause of restoring god's people back to him god stayed his hand of judgment for a season against judah until josiah died josiah held back god's judgment for a time and verse 35 verse 1 of chapter 35 2 chronicles 35 1 moreover josiah kept a passover unto the lord in jerusalem and they killed the passover on the 14th day of the first month they restored the worship they restored the reverence they restored the acknowledgement of calvary to come josiah purged the land of idolatry and immorality the last good king of judah sadly after him the people's hearts were still astray from god he restored the temple he re-established the worship the passover he led the people in the greatest passover that had happened in hundreds of years someone has commented that josiah's passover was greater than the one led by hezekiah because all israel participated and because it was observed in more accordance with the mosaic law he saved a generation from god's judgment josiah eight years old eight years old became the most godly faithful king judah had ever seen 8 16 20 28 in those different stages of his life he grew stronger and stronger and stronger he made more and more reforms and god used him in revival as he grew stronger in god god wants that for us doesn't he but we won't stay where we are but we'll move on we'll move up we'll grow heart heartier and and fervent we'll grow more flourishing more fruitful for god you know it's sad to see when some are stuck in the mud they don't grow in their faith they're making all those foolish things put it behind you and be like josiah he graduated as it were as the king of judah he was faithful in an evil environment despite having ungodly parenting despite having that legacy of a father of a grandfather who did not follow the lord or scarcely he was faithful josiah was faithful in an evil environment and he was tender-hearted towards the lord if only we just have that tender heartedness before the lord you know we can get religious and get hard-hearted can't we there's people that are so hard-hearted that they've lost that sensitivity to god we can make that mistake too can't we that we think we've just got it all sorted and we've got it all together and you know i'm i've got it i've got my doctrine just perfect now and uh you know i've i've done the course i've got the i've got the letters after my name i've got the certificate on the wall i know it all now i've been fully trained you

know and i'll i'll correct everybody else and we can get hard-hearted in that pridefulness let's we're always learning aren't we we should be continually learning growing in that knowledge of god having that tender-heartedness towards him don't lose your tender-heartedness towards god keep that sensitivity of your spirit and and that that humility of heart that you can exhort one another it's two-way amen and when i come to church i come thinking i might actually learn something amen you know not that you that i'm always the teacher that that i'm learning from you and we're learning from each other to keep that humility of heart you know i'm the assistant pastor here he he's the the chief he's the he's the senior pastor and he's teaching us god willing god helping us through his

