

Asas Reign

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 April 2009

Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[0 : 00] Let's turn back to 2nd Chronicles chapter 16 and verse 9.

Verse 10.

Perhaps don't know where they come from. Well, here's where they come from and here's who they refer to. Asa was a king of Judah. He was the great grandson of Solomon.

And amongst all the kings that we read about in Kings and Chronicles, he was one of the best. He's one of the great unsung heroes of the Christian faith.

He was a good man. And let's not allow his pride and his sinfulness in later life to cloud the fact that he was a good man.

[1 : 20] And when we criticize and when we look critically at some of the characters of the Bible, we have no right to do so with any kind of complacency and pride in our own hearts.

Because he was a human being, a sinful human being, just the same as every one of us. But I don't want us to look at him in a bad light this evening. I want us to look at him in a good light.

The Bible makes very clear that this man, Asa, he did right. Verse 2 of chapter 14. He did good and right in the eyes of the Lord.

And that's it. That's all we should. That's enough for us to be able to conclude what kind of a king he was. I would say he's one of the best kings that ever reigned in Judah.

He was a good man. And he was a good man not because he was a good man in himself. No one in the Bible was ever good in themselves. Just the same as no one is ever anywhere good in themselves.

[2 : 19] What made him good was simply this, that he sought the Lord. He loved the Lord. And as far as he was concerned, God took the first place. And he had a heart that was open to seek the Lord with all his mind and his heart.

That's what puts him on one side of the dividing line in the Bible. Old and New Testament. There are only two types of people. Those who are followers of the Lord.

We would call Christians. People who come to Jesus in faith. And those who are not. And Asa was certainly a person who followed the Lord.

But that did not mean he had no faults. And I want us to look at four words this evening that I think describe the various phases in Asa's life. And we're going to look at them in terms of learning from his life.

Doing what he did right. And avoiding what he did wrong. That's the way we're supposed to come to men who are brought before us in the scriptures.

[3 : 24] And the scriptures are never afraid to describe to us both what they did as examples to us. What we should learn from. And what they did wrong and sinfully that we should avoid.

And that's how we're going to look at Asa's life this evening. Asa. We're going to look at his good things and we're going to look at his bad things as well.

But we're always going to keep in mind that this is a man who God says did right in the eyes of the Lord. Even the very best. Even the most notable men in scripture.

They all had their weaknesses. Like David. Like Abraham. Like Moses. Like Jonah. Who you were looking at this morning. All of these men had their weaknesses. And yet. They were men of God. And women of God. And people who God honored and loved and helped. And it was because they lost sight. Sometimes momentarily. Of their trust in the Lord.

[4 : 21] That they failed so dramatically. And the Bible doesn't try and cover that up for us. The Bible is very realistic. And it's good that we're able to come to. It's for our encouragement.

So that when we discover our own faults. And our own sinfulness. And trying to follow Jesus. And discovering that we're not able to do so perfectly. And sometimes we go astray.

Just in the same way. Or in a similar way to some of these men and women. The Bible encourages us. As we're going to see in a few moments time. To come back. That God is a God who is plenteous.

In redemption. And in forgiveness. And who loves to forgive. And who loves to receive back to himself. There's four words I want us to look at. Very, very briefly. This evening.

I'm not going to take long this evening. First of all. I want us to look at the peace. That was characteristic of Asa's reign. He had peace for years and years.

[5 : 17] For ten years. He had peace. Asa started as a young man. And his heart was full of the Lord. However he was brought.

We don't know what his background was. We don't know much about his background. Or which influences. Shaped and molded his character. And his intentions. But when he became king. Everything else was put to one side. Except the Lord. And the Lord became center of his decision making. And his rules. And his kingship.

And his lordship. Everything revolved around the Lord. He set his. And that's because he himself. There's no point in expecting the kingdom. To follow and obey the Lord.

Without he himself. Everybody was looking to him. Just the same way as they looked to David. And Solomon before him. And if he didn't follow the Lord. Then he couldn't expect his kingdom to do so. And that's what made him a covenant.

[6 : 13] Catch what was so important. About a covenant king. God had set him. As covenant mediator. And so that through his kingship. God could make himself known.

And lead and rule. And guide his own people. And so that through him. They could learn. How to obey. That's why. That's why when you had a bad king. The whole country. The whole kingdom. Would fall to pieces.

As it did for example. Through the reign of Ahab. And that's why God was so concerned. To send his prophets. To rebuke people like Ahab. But Asa was not like Ahab.

Asa reigned righteously. And he was a good man. And we're told at the very beginning. That the Lord gave him peace. Ten years of peace. And prosperity. Now I want you to notice this evening. Not simply that God gives. That God rewarded him. For seeking the Lord. That's not just. That's not the only point that's being made here. But I want us to notice.

[7 : 10] What. How. Asa. The use. That Asa made. Of the peace. And the prosperity. That God gave him. In other words.

Instead of. Patting himself on the back. And saying. Look how good I've been. Which is always the temptation. Isn't it? Instead of doing that.

He did the opposite. It. And he made use. Of the peace. And the prosperity. That God gave him. To prepare. For times of difficulty. What do we read here? He first of all.

Took away the foreign altars. And the high places. And broke down the pillars. And cut down the Asherim. And commanded Judah. To seek the Lord. The God. Of their fathers.

Now what he's doing is. He's doing. A spiritual. Spring. Cleaning. Throughout. Through his own house. And throughout the whole. Of the land of Judah. At this time of year.

[8 : 05] And I suppose. Particularly in this kind of weather. The kind of weather. We've been enjoying. Over the past few days. Which is quite remarkable. Isn't it? Makes you feel so different. It lifts us all.

Doesn't it? To be able to. Open up the curtains. In the morning. And to see the sunshine. But one effect. Of the sunshine. At this time of year. Is to show. The dust.

That has. That has accumulated. And the way. In which we've allowed. And that's why. Of course. We've come to think. Of this time of year. As a. As a spring. Cleaning time.

Isn't it? And it's something to do. With the fact. That things are so bright. And the mornings are so bright. And the days are so bright. And we see things. In their true colors. And we see. The things that need to be done.

In the house. And it's a great opportunity. You feel. So much more. You feel. So much more. Like. Like opening up things. And tidying things up.

[8 : 59] Don't you? At this time. That's what we call. Spring. Spring. Cleaning. It's very important. Isn't it? But it's also important. To do spring cleaning. In our own lives. And it's when the sun.

When the light. Of God's. Sunshine. Shines. In our hearts. We love it. We love that light. And yet. You can't have the light. Without being exposed. For.

For things. That shouldn't be there. And there were things. In Asa's reign. That shouldn't be there. There were a shem. These were all different types. Of idol structures. That people had. Over the years. Put up. For one reason. Or another. Mostly because. They lived. Beside Canaanites. Who worshipped other gods. And within a short time. They would become like them. And it was far. It was far easier. To make peace. And to have friendly relations. With your neighbors. Than to make a stand. For who you believed. And what you believed.

[9 : 53] And so you became like them. And before you knew it. You had an Asherah pole. Or you had a shem. Or you had. You had images. And you were worshipping other. Oh you made sure you worshipped the Lord.

At the same time. But hey. What's the harm. In having a few idols. Here and there. It's not going to. They're only. They're only images. Aren't they? That's the way that the people. That's always the way. That things began to wander.

And began to get dirty. And accumulate dust. And here was a man. Asa said. No. This is an opportunity. God has given us peace. And prosperity in our land.

It's not for no reason. And here's an opportunity. To really throw out everything. Everything that shouldn't be there. And there are opportunities in our lives.

When God gives us. The chance. And he brings us to see. Through the light of his. His own word. And his presence. And we were brought to see. Hey. There's things in my life.

[10 : 50] That have to be cleared away. It's an opportunity. And for too. Too often. We do. What Asa could have done. And we become complacent. And lazy.

And we don't bother. But what we should be doing. Is we should be looking. Always looking. As we just sang. In Psalm 139. That's. Lord. You have searched me. And known. How many of us. Make us. Make that prayer. Regularly. Lord. Search my heart. And know me. And bring out anything. That is. Anything at all. Anything that means. More to.

Me. Than you do. God must take the central place. The first commandment is. You shall have no other gods. Beside me. Between us. Except me.

That's what it means. We shall have no other gods. And anything can become a god. Anything at all. It doesn't have to be necessarily sinful in itself. To become a god. Anything can become a god.

[11 : 43] If something in your life. Has become. Has become more important to you. Or as attracting. And bringing your attention. And you're giving more of your attention to.

And you're pushing God. To the sidelines. It has to be. Put to one side. It has to be. It has to go. Because God says. You must love the Lord your God.

And him only. You shall serve. That's what Asa did. He made. And he started with himself. He was personally involved. In what he did. And what he did. Was an example.

To everybody. Around him. He took away the high places. And broke down. The pillars. And cut down. The Asherim. One of the things about Asa. One of the things that makes him such a hero. In the Bible.

There were plenty. Of good kings. In Judah. At that time. But not all of them. Went to the extent. That he went to. In clearing out.

[12 : 38] The rubbish. And all the stuff. That are accumulated. All the wrong stuff. That are accumulated. That was going to spoil. Is Judah's relationship.

With God. See that's what happens. When you let the wrong stuff. Accumulate. In your heart. You spoil your relationship. With God. Your peace with God. Is disrupted. And your conscience. Begins to. You begin to. You begin to go astray. Because you've let the wrong stuff. Influence your heart. And your mind. And your mind's been. Distracted. And the wrong things.

Now. I'm going to. I leave that to you. You have to ask. How God is. Is speaking to you. In this respect. It's not for me. To start giving you a list. Of all the things. That need to go. So that's not. I have no right to do that. But you have to search the Bible. You have to ask the Lord. Lord. Show me. Shine your light. Inside my heart. Now. One of the things that Asa did. Which is really interesting.

[13 : 32] Was. You'll notice here. You might not have noticed. The verse three. Got rid of the high places. The high places. If you compare him. With the rest of the kings. In scripture. You find that very few of them.

Go to the extent. Where they actually. Remove. The high places. Why was that? Because the high place. Wasn't just an image. You see. You've got these images. You've got these Asherah poles. Well. They were easy to get rid of. You just burned them. No problem. You just chucked them into the river. That was no problem. But the high places. Were not so easy. To get rid of. Because they were massive. Great. Either mounds of earth.

That had existed. In the villages. And the towns of Canaan. And there were places. Which were used typically. To worship. False gods. And they always became. A snare. To the people of Israel. They always became. A snare. And as long as. As long as it stood there. As long as it existed. In time to come.

[14:27] The chances were. That it would become. A snare. And it would become. It may not be at the moment. But it would become. A snare to them. A sinfulness to them. And whilst it was easy. To get rid of the images. And the idols. It was not as easy. To get rid of these massive. Great mounds. You would have needed. In our day. A bulldozer. To get rid of them. And in those days. It was all the more difficult.

Because there were massive. Mounds of earth. Or they could be rocks. Literal rocks. That were kind of. Flattened. In order to make a platform. As a place of worship. As long as they were there. They were a danger. To the people of Judah. He. Asa. Removed them. That was no. Mean feat at all. That was no easy task. He had to set about.

And he had to. Physically. Get rid of all these places. That's the extent. To which. He loved the Lord. And wanted to put the Lord. First. And that's the extent. To which he. He used.

[15:26] His prosperity. He made use of this prosperity. That God had given him. The peace that God had given him. In order to prepare. For perhaps. A different day. And a harder day. That was soon to follow.

Sure enough. That's exactly. What happened. Because whenever. You set your heart. To trust in God. And to put God first. That will be tested. You might think. It's strange. That after all. He did for the Lord. That this. Massive army. One of the. Biggest armies. That we ever read about. In the Bible. Came against him. This Zerah.

Verse 9. Chapter 14. Verse 9. Zerah. The Ethiopian. Came out against him. With an army. Of a million men. Now that's the translation. The ESV gives it. It could mean that.

The Hebrew word. Apparently. Is a little bit uncertain. We're not. Absolutely sure. Whether it was. Whatever it was. It was. A massive army. And it could have been. As it's translated here.

[16:21] A million. Can you imagine. How scary. That would have been. For any king. To. March out with his men.

He hears that. Zerah. The Ethiopian. Is marching. All the way. Up north. From Ethiopia. He would have heard it beforehand. He would have got all his men. Ready together. He would have heard. That the army.

Was a big one. So he would know. That this was going to be. A big war. And he would make sure. That all his resources. Were gathered together. All his. How many men. Did he have? 300,000 from Judah. 280,000 from Benjamin.

You would think. That that would be enough. To face any army. That kind of number. So he gathers together. He marches with them. To the place of battle. And he comes. Perhaps over a hill. And he sees. Can you imagine. What a million men. Must look like. It's unthinkable. Isn't it? It really is. Quite astonishing. It's extraordinary. And I can tell you. His heart would have.

[17:17] Sank. Because he. Despite the size of his army. Here is an army. That is double. What you've got. In human terms.

A catastrophe. A disaster. Waiting to happen. How in the world. Is he going to face. Such a situation. And you know.

Looking at it. Theologically. Looking at it. Spiritually. You would think. Well after all. That he's done for the Lord. How. Is the Lord. Why is the Lord. Allowing such. An impossible. Perplexing. Disastrous. Situation. To occur. Something similar. By the way. Happened in the. In the reign of Hezekiah. And after all. Hezekiah was a man. Who was similar to. To Asa.

He was very similar. He too. Made every effort. In his life. To put God first. And to worship God. And to love the Lord. With all his heart. And after all. He had done. Sennacherib. This man.

[18:12] Sennacherib. The king of Assyria. He too. Surrounded Jerusalem. With his mighty. Unbeatable army. And with every intention. Of destroying Judah.

And that's where. The second word. Comes in. Prayer. Because here. You have one of the most. Magnificent prayers. In the Bible. Here is a prayer. That's not. Calculated. Or prepared. He doesn't have time. To go into his room. Now. I'm not saying. I am not saying. That. This prayer. Is the way. That we should pray.

You know. There are two occasions. There's the regular occasion. Where we absolutely. Must. Make prayer. A priority. Every day. We must spend time. With the Lord. And that time. Is non-negotiable. Some of us heard this. Some time ago. That's. That's one kind. Of prayer. But here is.

[19:06] The emergency prayer. The prayer. Which arises. Out of a. Dire situation. And many of us know. What that's like. Don't we? Perhaps not in a battle. Like this. But in a situation.

That we feel. That we have no control over. And that we feel. If the Lord doesn't help us. Nobody can. That. That everything's been taken. Out of our hands. We have no power.

We have no strength. How are we going to face. This utterly impossible situation. Zerah. The Ethiopian. Who imagined. I'm sure. That his army. Was invincible.

And that. Judah. Was just simply. Another statistic. In his. Success. Story. In his history. Zerah. The Ethiopian. And the. Is a cry.

To the Lord. His God. Verse 11. Oh Lord. Listen to his prayer. It's a magnificent prayer. Oh Lord. There is none like you to help.

[20:00] It's the kind of prayer. That should be. On every person's. Mantlepiece. Oh Lord. There is none like you to help. Between the mighty. And the weak. Help us. Oh Lord.

Our God. For we rely on you. We rest. In you. And in your name. We have come against this multitude. Oh Lord. You are our God.

Let not man. Prevail against you. Now. We may not have been. In that exact situation. We may never have experienced. That kind. Of circumstance. Literally.

As Asa. But we've. We've been. Or. Believe me. If we haven't been there. We will be. If we're following the Lord today. We will be. In situations. Where this prayer. Will be bang on.

Where this prayer. Will. Will. Accurately. Describe. Our needs. Oh Lord. There is none like you. To help. Between the mighty. And the weak. Help us.

[20:55] Oh Lord. Our God. For we rely on you. And I reckon. That tonight. Amongst us all. There's got to be. Some of us. This evening. For whom. That prayer.

Is the very thing. They need to hear. For whatever situation. You're in. And it becomes yours. And you love it so much.

Because. It just so accurately. Describes. What you need. At this moment in time. And if you don't. You will. At some point. Asa's prayer.

And then in chapter 15. You have another phase. In his life. And of course. We all know what happened. We've read it. We know that as a result. As a consequence of that prayer. God heard his prayer. And the Lord defeated the Ethiopians.

Before Asa. Despite the size of their army. God. Defeated the Ethiopians. We're not told. Exactly how he did that. And the Ethiopians fled. And Asa. And the people who were with him. Pursued them.

[21:50] As far as Gerrard. It's an awfully foolish thing. To imagine. That we are able. To go against God. And his people. It's a very.

Very foolish thing. Whoever you decide. To oppose this evening. Make sure. That God is not. On the side of your opposition. Make sure that God is. On your side. And we can only do that.

By trusting in him. Well the third word. We're going to look at. Is the promise. That God gave. To Asa. In chapter 15. Through Azariah. The son of Oded.

This was a. I guess. A prophet. And he went down. To meet Asa. And said to him. Hear me. Asa. And all Judah. And Benjamin. Now I could go into this. In detail. I really don't have time. This evening.

Because what we're doing. Is we're just. Overviewing. His reign. And just in terms. Of these four words. But the word now. We're looking at. Is promise. The Lord.

[22:43] Is with you. While you are. With him. If you seek him. He will be found. By you. Now that is a fact.

That is true. For every generation. Of God's people. And it's a fact. That should. Encourage. Us tonight. Just the same way. As. It encouraged.

Asa. And verse 8. As soon as Asa. Heard these words. The prophecy of Azariah. The son of Oded. He. Took. Courage. He took courage. And that courage.

Developed. His faith. For too many of us. Were to content. To stay. And to reside. At one stage. In our Christian lives.

But the Christian life. Is a development. It's absolute disaster. When you decide. In your Christian life. Well that's it. I've learned everything. There is. I don't really want to. Experience.

[23 : 37] Experience anything more. I'm quite happy. The way I am. Well you know what. God is not happy. The way you are. God's intention. Out of his love. For his people. Is to.

Make sure. That we develop. In our Christian faith. And our understanding. And he does that. By stretching us. Further and further. So. We should never ever.

Be content. With the stage. That we're at. In the Christian life. But that we should be. Seeking God. And a greater understanding. Of the Lord. And this promise here. Is that.

When we do so. He will be found. By us. God is always open. To the prayer. Lord. I'm seeking. That's why we sang. In Psalm. Psalm 27.

You have said. Seek my face. What that means. Is that we're asking. That we may come. To a closer. And a better. And a deeper. Understanding of God.

[24 : 31] Is that your prayer tonight? That we will come. To a closer. And a deeper. And a. And a more profound. Understanding. Of who the Lord is.

And you know. The Lord does that. Not simply by us. By us. Understanding his word. But by our experience. As well. And by being able. To apply the Bible. As we go. From day to day.

In his. In his providence. And that's what Asa. That's what Asa. Did. The result of. Of his encouragement. Was. A promise. That Asa made.

To seek. And to serve. The Lord. And with all his heart. And everyone who was with him. This was a great festival. That took place. In chapter 15. It was a time. Of great revival.

In Judah. Where it appears. That every single person. I get. That's what it appears like. Anyway. As one voice. They committed themselves.

[25 : 26] Because they wanted to. Commit themselves. To the Lord. That's how they felt. They felt such a sense. Of encouragement. In what God had done for them. Such a sense of God's presence.

That they wanted to. Give themselves. Completely. To the Lord. God. And that's. I would hope that. Every one of God's people. Wants to do that.

It's. It's either. It's all or nothing. That's what God demands. Through Jesus. He demands. Our all. For him. And I hope that that's. Our promise.

This evening. And that's our. That's the way. In which we respond. To what he has done for us. In the person. Of his son. Jesus Christ. Now we come on to. Now we come on to.

The downside. Of Asa. I'm going to close with this. After all that God. Had done for him. And after all. He had experienced. It's hugely disappointing. Isn't it? In chapter 16.

[26 : 21] And I guess. If the Bible. Had only wanted to paint. A nice picture. Of these men. They would have stopped. Perhaps at the end. Of chapter 15. It wouldn't have said. Any more about it. They could have done that. The writers. Could have done that.

If that had been their intention. But no. They want us to. They want us to understand. The downside. As well as the upside. Of Asa. And here we. Here we have it. In chapter 16.

Let me explain. What's going on. You remember. That Israel was in the north. Judah was in the south. The country was no longer. One kingdom of Israel. It was two countries. There was a king of Israel.

In the north. And his name was Basha. And the king of Judah. In the south. And this is Asa. That we're talking about. Now Basha. Was a wicked man. And just like his forefathers.

Had been before him. They were. They were idolatrous. In Israel. But the interesting thing was. I'll read this in chapter 15. That the people living in Israel.

[27 : 16] And yet to the south. They heard of what God was doing for Judah. And they wanted to move. They wanted to defect.

They wanted to emigrate. From the northern kingdom. Into the southern kingdom. And the reason they wanted to do so. Was because. They knew. That God was with.

Their relatives in the south. There was something attractive to them. And compelling. About the fact that. God was working amongst them. And so they all. So many of them began to emigrate. From the north to the south. And Basha was. Was completely. Outraged at this. When he heard about it. So. He gathered an army. And they positioned themselves. On the border. And they started building this.

City called Rama. On the border. To stop people defecting. From the north to the south. Now that in itself. Was a wicked thing to do.

[28 : 12] It was a completely unnecessary thing to do. Because it wasn't going to. It wasn't going to ever work. But nevertheless. That's what he tried to do. Now. As a response to this. Asa. Asa.

Who we're looking at tonight. Instead of trusting in the Lord. As he had done before. With Zerah. With his million men.

Instead of trusting in the Lord. He made a deal. With Ben-Hadad. Who was a heathen king. The heathen king of Syria. And he took gold and silver.

Out of the house of the Lord. And the king's house. And sent them to Ben-Hadad. And he cut a deal with them. And he said will you please. If I pay you this amount of money. Will you go.

And threaten Basha. In the north. And make sure you threaten him. In such a way. That he removes his men from the border. So he removes the threat from my border. So he took the gold and the silver.

[29 : 11] Out of the house of the Lord. And he went. And he made this deal. With Ben-Hadad. Ben-Hadad. For his part of the bargain. He gathered his army. They went. They threatened Basha. And they sent them packing.

And Asa. I guess. As a result of that. Must have thought. Very well of himself. He had acted really successfully.

And he was. He must have been really pleased. With this act of diplomacy. And strength. In which he had achieved his ends. Presumably without. Without shedding much blood.

Through the diplomacy. That he had made. Through. Through. His neighbor. Ben-Hadad. The king of Syria. The whole thing was one. The whole thing was. Was achieved.

His end was achieved. And it must have come. As a massive blow. When this man Hanani. The seer. Or the prophet. In verse 7. Of chapter 16. Came to Asa.

[30 : 06] And he said to him. You might think. You've done the right thing. But let me tell you. You have not done the right thing. Because you have relied. On the king of Syria.

You did not rely. On the Lord your God. The army of the king of Syria. Has escaped you. Were not the Ethiopians. A huge army. With many chariots. And horsemen. Yet.

Because you relied on the Lord. He gave them to your hand. For the eyes of the Lord. Run to and fro. Throughout the whole earth. To give strong support.

To those whose heart. Is blameless towards him. That means to those who trust him. With all. Their heart. Now Asa had heard God's word.

In the past. Chapter 15. The previous chapter. God. God came to him. In Azariah. The prophet. And he had said. That God was with him. Your work shall be rewarded.

[31 : 03] And he was hugely. Massively encouraged. That's just what he wanted to hear. And it was such. A huge boost to his reign. But the same God. Was speaking to him now.

But he wasn't saying. The same thing. This now was God showing him. Not. The wrongs of his people. But his own wrongs. It's one thing. To listen to God.

Either. Encouraging you. Promising you. His own strength. Or. Describing how other people.

Have done wrong. It's another thing. All together. To accept. When God. Rebukes you. For something. That you. Have done wrong.

Yourself. That's what's happening here. And Asa. Flipped. He went nuts.

[31 : 58] He lost it. See what he does. As a response. To God's word. He was angry.

Not just angry. He was raging. That's what it tells us. Then Asa was angry with the seer. And put him in the stocks of prison. For he was in a rage with him. It wasn't Hanani's fault. He was just doing his job.

It's quite strange isn't it. How many of the prophets. In the Old Testament. Have to suffer. Because the kings. Don't listen to them. Because they're so angry at God. That they take it out on him. That's exactly what Asa did. He put him in prison.

Therefore. For so doing. Shutting off the voice. Of God. So making sure that he'll never hear that voice again. Because as long as Hanani's in prison. Then God can't get to him.

In imprisoning Hanani. He was imprisoning God. God's voice. God. Why was that? Because God threatened his pride.

[32 : 54] That was the last challenge. That he has to. Had to face. And it's probably the biggest challenge. That any one of us. Will ever have to face. Certainly when it comes to our dealings with God.

The gospel. Challenges our pride. That's what it challenges more than anything else. It challenges this notion that you have. That somehow or other. Everything will be all right.

That your good deeds will outweigh your bad deeds. That somehow or other. Yes. There are bad things in your life. But yet things could be a whole lot worse. And when. At the last day.

When you stand in front of God. Then surely God will weigh up the good and the bad. And surely God himself will see. That the good outweighs the bad. That's pride. That's because you think of yourself more highly.

Than you actually are. What matters is not what you think of yourself. But what God thinks of you. And what he says of you. And he's gracious enough to tell you in the gospel. But as soon as we hear it.

[33 : 50] As soon as we hear it. And as soon as we hear. God's demands that we. That we. Come to him repentant. Asking for his forgiveness.

It's the worst news in the world. Isn't it? It's the one thing we can't cope with. There's something in our nature. That simply cannot cope.

With God coming to us and telling us. And if this is true for someone who knows. And loves the Lord like Asa. How much more true is it for someone. Who doesn't know the Lord like you.

It's the one thing isn't it? The one thing that sticks in your throat. Is when God gets personal. And when he shines in his life. Oh it's okay. It's okay. When we criticize other people.

To compare ourselves with the scum of the earth. But when it comes to me. I don't want God. Shining his light in my life. I don't want. To have to say. God you have searched me.

[34 : 47] And known me. And brought out all this filth. And the stuff that's in my life. Don't tell me. I need to repent to God. Don't tell me. Because I've worked hard in my life.

I've come through many struggles. I've done many good things. I've been a decent chap. I've done so many. I've helped so many things. When we've painted a picture of our lives.

That is such a rosy one. In which. Yes we admit to our faults. But we want to admit to what God says about us. That we are dead in trespasses and sins.

And nothing can be done. Until we come to the point where we admit that. And where we confess it. And where we say. Lord. I am a sinner. There's something within us.

You know it was brought to me. Very recently. And I know it's a little bit of an amusing story. But it's true. We have a two year old grandson. I'm just going to explain to you. How there's something within. Human nature.

[35 : 43] Sinful human nature. You don't even have to be. Have to be taught it. It's not something you have to be taught. We have a two year old grandson. Who was up last. Last Christmas. Or thereabouts. As they come up on every holiday.

And as usual. They get up very early in the morning. And the two of them came in. To our room. As they did. To give their. I'd like to encourage them to do that. To give their mother a wee rest. As though they're mucking about. Early in the morning.

And they're just. The highest kites. The two of them. Him and his big sister. And in the excitement. He slapped his sister on the face. There was no malice. Or anything like that. But of course this hurt her.

See. And so we knew. We had to do something about it. Because we can't let a wee boy. Behave like that. Hurting someone else. He's only two. Right. So we sat him down.

And we said. Look Samuel. He's done something wrong. And he's looking. And we said. Please. Say. I'm sorry.

[36 : 38] And I tell you. His face. I have never seen. Such a transformation. He's normally got the face. That butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He's got this cute.

Innocent face. Like any two year old has. His face literally turned black. And everything just strained. And his face screwed up.

His eyebrows. Went. Went haywire. And he totally refused. And I've rarely seen such a picture of human nature.

In a two year old. Thankfully he did. He was persuaded after a while to apologize. But you know. It's true isn't it. It's not just him. That's where it begins.

It begins. It begins. I was. I was conceived. In guiltiness and sin. Says the psalmist. And it's true isn't it. There's something within us. That will not accept.

[37 : 40] When we do wrong. Now you can. Deal with a two year old. But what can you do. With a 42 year old.

Or a 62 year old. Or a 22 year old. Only grace itself can bring us to see. What. How much we need. God's forgiveness. But it's only by seeing. By discovering. Our own sinfulness. And the extent of our own sinfulness. That we will be.

Poor. Asa. I don't understand. From one level. You read about him. You say. Why did he not just. Ask God's forgiveness. He didn't. Because of his own pride.

There's no accounting for pride. Not only that. He shut out. The voice of God. You know. It's impossible. For you to shut out. The voice of God. When you don't like it.

[38 : 34] It's possible to do that. Not only that. He acted cruelly. He acted. He inflicted cruelties. Upon some of the people. At the same time. These people are saying.

We love this man. We love this man. Why is he doing this? Why is he all of a sudden changed? He's acting so irrationally. Do you know. That some irrational human behavior.

Can be put down. To the man. Or the woman. Who is running from God. I believe that. I believe that.

That's how some irrational behavior. Much of irrational behavior. There's no reason. No rhyme to it. Here's this man. He's ruled over his people. For who knows how long. They loved him. They made a funeral.

Fire for him. In great honor. And yet. He kills his own people. Why? Because of an issue. He has. With God. If you don't.

[39 : 30] Sort your issue. Out with God. You don't know. How. Your future. Will shape. There's no accounting.

For human pride. And you either. Come and have God. Deal with it. And have God. Change your life. Or you try and deal with it yourself. And you can't. These are the things then in Asa.

The good and the bad. Let's. Let's copy the good. Let's love the Lord. With our whole heart. From day one. But let's. Let's also recognize.

The awfulness. And the stubbornness. Of man's pride. And pray that the Lord will intervene. And forgive us. And cleanse us. And open up our hearts. And so that in case.

We suffer any more. From our own foolishness. Let's pray. Father in heaven.

[40 : 29] We ask that you will. Bless your word to us. Afresh this evening. And we pray that it will apply. To each one of our hearts. And that it will do us good. To come round your word. And to see how much it affects us.

And how much it's. And how much it speaks to us. And how much it deals with us. Uncomfortably. Lord we pray. That in our discomfort. We will run to you. In whom alone is life eternal.

And in whom alone there is forgiveness. In Jesus name. Amen.