

Josiah's Joy

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Date: 02 August 2018

[0 : 00] Take your Bibles if you would and turn with me to 2 Chronicles chapter 35 and verse 24. I don't know that you ever think about your funeral or dying. I always think about mine.

I teach young people to write their obituary. I tell them you need to write down what you will have accomplished with your life. The Bible says that you ought to count your days. You ought to number your days.

You ought to realize how fragile you are. And the passage of Scripture tonight is a beautiful passage. We don't have a lot of time. We're going to cover two chapters. Sunday night, Lord willing, we finish the book of 2 Chronicles.

But Josiah dies in these two chapters. He's born and dies in these two chapters. And when he dies, if you look with me at 2 Chronicles chapter 35 verse 24, this is the kind of stuff you'd like to hear.

And I'm going to give you seven things to write down to, I believe, arrive at Josiah's joy. The Bible says in verse 24, His servants, therefore, took him out of that chariot. He had just gotten shot.

[0 : 56] He had gone into a battle he did not belong in. He had been warned he should not go into that battle. But he was a little bit young and impetuous. And he went into that battle. And when he got hit, he said, hey, guys, I've been shot.

You need to get me out of here. And he had a second chariot there. He's a king. So he got a second chariot. They put him in that chariot. And he died. And he died. And was buried in one of the sepulchers of his fathers. Look at this.

And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Now, you've been watching kings. Some of them dying. It's basically like good riddance. Glad you're gone.

And all of Judah and all of Jerusalem are mourning for Josiah. Well, I really like verse 25. Jeremiah the prophet lamented for Josiah. And the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day.

And made them an ordinance in Israel. Behold, they're written in the lamentations. So when he died, they wrote songs about him. They went to church. They sang about him. They went to their worship. They sang about him.

[1 : 58] He had been a great king over Israel. Father, I pray tonight that you'd help us to live a life that will leave a good testimony. I pray, dear God, that you would do a work in our hearts.

Help us to prepare ourselves for the end of this life. And I'll give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, years ago as a kid, I started counting down the number of days I had left to live.

I know at this present time, if 70 is my age, I'm already in that last 10%. And I'm well into it. My battery is flashing. I have gone into low power mode because I don't have that long.

And you could say, somebody said, you're awful morbid. That's not morbid. You were told to count your days. And one day you're going to die. I was at a funeral this week. And this lady died. It was Charles Blackstock's mother-in-law.

And everything was fantastic, buddy. I mean, this lady must have been great. I asked my wife. She knew her. She said, oh, she was everything they said. One day you're all going to die. We're all going to die.

[2 : 55] And I want to have a testimony like old Josiah did. He becomes a king when he's eight years old. He'll rule 31 years. That means he'll be dead at the age of 39. He had a wicked father.

At 16, he began to seek the Lord. At 20, he decides to clean up the country and get rid of all the idols. Then he repairs the temple. And he wants to make it real clear to everybody, I am telling you, I'm the man that's different.

I am not like my dad. I'm not like a lot of the people you've known as kings. So he took all the idols that were all over the place and he broke them, burned them, broke them down, ground them up into powder, and spread them across the graves of the people that used to worship them.

Then he went and dug up all the bones of the guys who wished to lead the worship of the idols, dug up their bones, and burned them on their altars before he decided to destroy their altars. So basically, the headline reads, King takes new step in opposite direction of all of Judah here recently.

And so he has taken a massive stand. He has made it clear, I'm serving God. They found the Bible. They found the books of the law. And he told them, he said, I need you guys to go clean up the temple.

[3 : 58] When they went in there and found the Bible and they cleaned it up, found the books of the law, they brought it back to him. And he said, well, read it to me. And when they started reading it to him, it tore him out of the frame. He started crying. He started weeping before God.

And he realized that judgment was coming. So he humbled himself and he cried and he prayed. He ripped his clothes and he begged God for help. And God said, I promise you this. I won't bring the punishment on the country while you're alive because of the way you have bowed down to me.

But at 39, he stuck his nose in another man's business and he died early. Maybe you ought to keep your nose in your own business. Amen. Let me give you seven things that you might write down.

Number one, live for an audience of one. Live for an audience of one. Please God from now on. Look at 2 Chronicles 34 too if you have your Bible open there. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

Should I underline that? Not right in the sight of the people. Not right in the sight of the country. Not what he thought was right. But he said, I want to do what God wants me to do. And he walked in the ways of David his father.

[5 : 00] And he didn't go left or right. He stayed on target and did the job he was called to do. He started at 16. I love that for you young people. I don't know how many of our young people are in here. But at 16, this kid walks in and says, I'm breaking the tradition of my dad who was king before me.

We're going back to serving God. And he began to purge the place where he was. But he lives to please God. Look at what it says. That which was right in the sight of the Lord.

And he didn't get off target. And you and I need to make up our minds that we're going to all the time be thinking, what's the father think about this? What's God think about this? I want to please you.

I'm not as worried about pleasing Vision Baptist Church as I am about pleasing you. I'm not as worried about pleasing my wife as I'm about pleasing you. I'm not as worried about pleasing me as I'm pleasing you. I want to live for you.

I ought to preach for him. I ought to sing for him. I ought to give for him. I ought to have my whole life built around this. I want to do what God says is right. And what God says is good. That's a good one. That'll get you the right kind of funeral.

[5 : 58] That'll get you people thinking you really did something with your life. Number two. 2 Chronicles chapter 34 and verse 3. I'll write this down somewhere. Clean up the temptation. Clean up the temptation.

He waits until he's in the eighth year he gets saved. And in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places and the groves and the carved images and the molten images.

So at about 20 years of age he's like I have proven that I made a decision at 16. I am the man of God. I've been living like who I ought to be. And right now I'm going to clean it all up.

And he steps out into the country and says all these idols and all this garbage that's all over this country and under the leadership has been allowed to be here. It's gone. Look if you would at verse 7. When he had broken down the altars and the groves and beaten the graven images into powder and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel he returned to Jerusalem.

He went all over the country. I just don't know if you can imagine Gideon becomes the man of God because he tears down his daddy's idols. This guy is tearing down idols all over the country. He is cleaning up the country.

[7 : 07] And then he... Cleaning up won't be enough will it? Cleaning up won't be enough. If you throw the devil out and don't put anything in his place that won't do good. Next step he took was to replace wrong with right.

Look at verse 8. And now in the 18th year of his reign when he had purged the land. When he had gotten through purging the land. Skip down to repair the house of the Lord his God.

He said alright we got rid of the idols. We got rid of the garbage in our country. We've gotten rid of all the mess. And now it's time to build the temple back. Get the temple built back. Look down at verse 11.

Chapter 34 verse 11. But even to the artificers and the builders gave they it. To buy hewn stone and timber for couplings in the floor of the houses. Which the king of Judah had destroyed.

So he went in and he said you know what? I've decided to serve God. But you can't keep serving God unless you get rid of temptation. If you got stuff that just keeps taking you back to where you used to be. And getting you to do what you used to do.

[8 : 03] And you're not pleasing God. You ought to clean the place up. And his country had a big problem. When they saw an altar. When they saw a grove. When they saw those. They kept going back to it. He said let's clean that junk out of here. Then he said get rid of all the sin.

Get rid of all the invitations of sin. Get your iPhone under control. Get your communications under control. Get everything cleaned up. And then make sure you fix the house of God.

Clean up all that temptation. By the way. You can't clean up the external and fix the internal. That's a big lesson through all of this story. A king can clean up the external.

But the next chapter we come to in chapter 36. Which you're going to hear from on Sunday night. They're going right back to it. They're going right back to it. Because you can clean up the external. And parents can remove all the stuff.

And parents can shelter their kids. And parents can pull them out and say. My kids won't do that. And they won't while you keep them in the corral. And they won't while you don't let them do it. But if they don't have something changed on the inside.

[9 : 00] They're going to go right to that other stuff. Go with me if you would to 2 Chronicles chapter 34 and verse 4. The third thing. He took a clear stand. He took a clear stand. I think one of the biggest differences.

And this guy who dies at the age of 39. Is he didn't take a private stand. He didn't say I want to be tolerant. I want to be friendly. I want anybody to like me. He was basically. I could care less what this country thinks.

We're tearing those groves down. I don't care less what if they were rebuilding the temple. And this jumps off the page at me. Because he takes it to a whole other level.

Look at what he says in verse 4. They break down the altars of Balaam in his presence. Any of them close to him. And then he cut down the groves and the high places. And the carved images and molten images.

He break them in pieces and made dust of them. He ground them up into powder. You remember when Moses caught that golden calf. He had that golden calf ground up. Made them drink it. Look what he does.

[9 : 57] He says. And he strode it upon the graves of them that had offered sacrifice unto them. He said. Their gods are worthless gods. And I'll prove they're worthless gods. Because I'm going to break them down. Tear them up. Grind them up.

And we'll spread the ashes of their dumb little gods all across their graves. Well that's bad. Look at verse 5. He really takes it to another level. And then he burned the bones of the priest on their own altar.

And that's how he cleansed everything. He burned their bones. He made it clear. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have no intentions of turning back. I have no intentions of going back to sin.

I have no intentions of doing wrong anymore. I fully mean this. Catch this. If you think I'm just doing this for a publicity stunt. If you think I'm just doing this so people in the country know about it. He said.

Watch this. That's true. I'm making a clean stand. Fourth thing I want you to write down. And I think it will give us a good life. And help us get ready for dying. Because we're all getting there.

[10 : 52] We're all getting there. You don't have to get there at 39 like old Josiah. But you're all getting there. They're going to have your funeral a lot quicker than you think they are. I'm sure Josiah might have thought to himself. I won't die when I'm 39.

A lot of the kings live a long time. But not Mr. Josiah. He found the book. And he got in the book. Look if you would in verse 14. And when they had brought out the money that was brought in the house of the Lord. He'll count the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.

They're cleaning in the building. They come across some scrolls. They come across the book. They look at the book and they say my goodness. This is a copy of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

This is the Pentateuch. This is the books of the law. These are the books of Moses. And they found that book. Now the sad problem is that every king, when he got put into office, was supposed to get a copy of the book and write his own personal copy.

So there should have been copies everywhere. But there are no copies. And these kings lately hadn't been making copies. And when they found the copy of the book, they brought the copy of the book. And they said, I found the book in verse 15.

[11 : 55] I have found the book of the law in the house of God. And he carried the book to Shaphan. And in verse 16, oh, Shaphan said, carry the book to the king. Let's get the book to the king. And this guy's life will be forever changed because he gets in the book.

And he gets the book in him. He reads it in verse 18. As Shaphan read it before the king, they brought the book in and he said, all right, read to me. And you know where they probably started?

They probably started with, you know, this whole world came into place because God made it. Genesis 1.1. In the beginning was, in the beginning, how does that go? In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. Somebody ought to preach around here.

So he said, read the Bible. And they read all of Genesis. They read about Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the 12 tribes. They read about Egypt. And they read about the Passover. And they read about all those things.

And they read Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. And he had them read in the Bible. And when he got to reading the Bible, he had to respond to the Bible. Look at verse 19, if you would.

[12 : 53] And it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the law that he ripped his clothes. Which, in our world, in our place, that's pretty out of place. We don't understand that.

But that was the way you expressed great sorrow. That's the way you said, hey, man, this has gotten to me. We might cry.

When Will told me he was going to, Will Hill back there told me he's going to say amen. And for all the brothers, I was supposed to do this number. He said, you've got to respond. I have to help you. I have to prompt you, right?

Hey, glory to God. So he wanted me to do a little black preaching there for him. All right. So, but he heard it and he responded in the way he knew to respond. He was like, I am not believing this.

I thought the idols were a problem. I thought the temple being in disrepair was a problem. But the truth of the matter is, God's upset with our country. God's upset with our people. And it broke his heart to find that out.

[13 : 52] And so he said, wait a minute. I need to find out. Is that really true? Look out if you would in verse 21. He said, let's go find out. Go inquire of the Lord for me. Somebody. Now, they don't have a privilege you and I have.

You and I get to talk straight to the Father. We don't have. We get the Holy Spirit living in us. We don't have to go to the temple. We are the temple. Things are very different from the Old Testament to the New Testament. And we can find in the Bible and know what's right and wrong.

But he couldn't do that. He said, I've been listening to it. And it sounds to me like if what I'm hearing, if what I'm hearing is true, man, Judah's in trouble. If what I'm hearing is true, our country's in trouble.

If what I'm hearing is true, God is very angry. So he said, somebody go ask the Lord. So he sent the people to ask the Lord in verse 21. He says, go inquire of the Lord for me and for them that are left in Israel and Judah, concern the words of the book.

We found the book. We read them. I didn't even know if they mean it. 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's written in the book.

[14 : 56] He said, I want to get in the book. You know, the truth of the matter is most churches aren't in the book. Look, very few people have ever paid attention to 2 Chronicles.

Very few people have ever paid attention to many books of the Bible. But it's not just about us reading through the Bible and preaching through the Bible, and we've gone through so many books. It's not about that. It's not about us getting into the book. It's about getting the book into us.

And it is about us responding. Something inside of us ought to say, without the preacher, without any fancy stuff, without me trying to be eloquent, the Holy Spirit ought to be saying to you, that verse is for you.

Because you know how he got all that concerned about it? The guy was just reading to him. The guy was just doing Bible reading. And as he heard the Bible read, he was like, Read that verse again, would you?

Repeat what you just said. My goodness, I think he's upset. I think God's angry. And he realized that judgment was coming. We need to be in the book.

[15 : 55] You know, we don't have a guy that we send to talk to God for us that comes and brings us a message. I don't go speak to God to find out what God wants to say to you because God's already written down what he wants to say. You don't have to come here to find out what God wants to say.

He's willing to talk to you at the house. He's willing to talk to you in family devotions. He's willing to talk to you personally when you get in the book. We ought to be seeking the Lord. We ought to let it touch our hearts.

It ought to affect us. It ought to affect us. Number five, realize judgment is coming. Thus said the Lord, chapter 34, verse 24, Thus said the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants of even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah.

And so what that means is they got over there into some of those passages of Scripture where God said to his people, I set before you blessing and cursing today. If you obey me, I'll bless you. You don't obey me, I'll curse you. And he got to reading that.

As they were reading that to him, he's going, We're doing all that cursing stuff. We've been doing all the stuff where God says he's going to get angry. And he said, That's what we've been doing wrong. Look at verse 25. And so the Lord's telling him, Yep, it's right.

[17 : 03] It's coming on you. Because they have forsaken me. And they have burned incense unto other gods. The people have turned away from the God of heaven. They turned away from the creator God.

And they had made other gods. And they were burning incense to other gods that they might make God angry. They were doing stuff they knew would make God angry. With all the works of their hands.

Therefore, my wrath shall be poured out upon his place, and it will not be quenched. God said, You mark this one down. Josiah, if you'd like to know, I'm fixing to rip the country from one end to the other.

What you don't know is, I mean, you probably do because you read your Bible, but in the very next chapter, before we finish chapter 36, the walls will be broken down of the city, the temple will be destroyed, the good riches of the city will be taken off, and all their people will be in Babylonian captivity, and for 70 years, the nation of Israel and Judah and Jerusalem will suffer and pay the price.

But when he found out what God was going to do, he immediately said, Man, I need to humble myself. Look, if you look at verse 27. So God's speaking to Josiah now, and he's telling Josiah, Because your heart was tender, and because you humbled yourself before God, and because you heard his words against this place and against the inhabitants thereof, and you humbled yourself before me, and you tore your clothes, and you cried, I have heard thee, said the Lord.

[18 : 34] I wish you'd look at the verse here. Tender. You should circle the word tender. This guy's heart was tender. This guy's heart was tender. He heard the words, and he said, Man, I want to be receptive.

I want to be open. I want to be sensitive. I want to know what God's got to say. I want God to deal with me. Are you keeping a tender heart? Are you keeping a tender heart?

The thing that scares me about us is, since we hear the Bible read and all the verses hollered at us, that we could just get like, Ah, we heard that last week. Not tender anymore. And then that says, you need to circle around the word humble.

He humbled himself. And over and over it says that. And when did he humble himself? When he heard the word. When he found out what God was going to do. He could have shook his fist in the face of God and said, I don't believe you.

I don't acknowledge you. And I don't care what you say. And I don't care what a book we found in the dirt and dust of a place where idols have been. I don't care about any of that. But that's not his attitude. His attitude is, You read me the book and I'll humble myself.

[19 : 36] You read me the book and I'll cry. And as he heard the word of God read, he cried before God. And so here's what God told him in verse 28. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers and you'll go to your grave in peace.

And your eyes won't see all the evil I'm going to bring on this place. I don't know if you have any idea, but every king and every president and every pastor and every dad and every leader wants to think that under his leadership, things will go well.

You want a prosperous economy. You want to have accomplished something with your life. The last thing you want to do is see that everything fall, slap apart under you. And so Josiah humbled himself and God said, Well, Josiah, I see what you've done, buddy.

And my wrath is marching this way. But for you, but for you, I'll put it off. But for you, I'll hold it back. And you will die in peace and everything will be great the whole time of your life.

And then I'll bring it on. Now that's a pretty powerful thought. Then you try to get others to get humble with you. Look, if you would, at 2 Chronicles 34 and verse 30.

[20 : 44] Get others humble. Get others into the book. The king went unto 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. And he said, Let's read the book.

I love that. They came and read him the book. And then he said, Get up by together. We're going to read the book. Get up by together. We're going to read the book in their ears. All the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of God.

That's a pretty wild thought. Now, if you get over to Ezra and Nehemiah, you know those boys can start reading in the early morning and read till noon. They can put in six hours of Bible reading with everybody still standing up. That's basically what's going on here.

Open your Bible to Genesis chapter 1, verse 1. I know none of you got a copy, but we got a copy. Read it, brother. And they started reading, and everybody's listening. Verse 31. And the king stood in his place, and he made a covenant before the Lord.

He said, God, we're going to honor you while I'm king. We're going to do right. We're going to honor your word. We're going to do the right thing while I'm king. And we're going to walk after you, and we're going to keep your commandments.

[21 : 47] And we're going to do this with all of our heart and with all of our soul. We're going to perform the words of the covenant. And he made them stand to it. That's what you'll see in just a second.

But he said to them, you heard the book, and I promise to God it's what we're going to do as a nation, and I expect you people to stand up and say amen and say we're going to do the same thing. Look, if you would, at verse 32.

He called for a commitment that would last. And he caused all that were present to stand to it. You should have a line to stand to it. He said, all right, stand up. Raise your right arm.

Promise. Give your word. You're going to do it. But verse 33, he took all the abominations away. And all of his days, in verse 33, they departed not from following the Lord, their God, the God of their fathers, under old Josiah.

31 years, a little less than that because of him getting everything cranked up. They followed God. Next thing he did, he called the people to worship. In chapter 35, they're going to have the Passover.

[22 : 49] Amazingly, people have forgotten the Passover and they have gone generations and they've not been doing the Passover. But while they were reading Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, he heard about the Passover.

And when he heard about the Passover, he said, man, that is great. That's celebrating what God has done. That's celebrating God having power over Egypt and over sin and over the devil and how great God is.

It's celebrating a substitute dying in our place. We're going to have this Passover. Look at verse 1, 35.1. Moreover, Josiah kept a Passover unto the Lord in Jerusalem. He killed the Passover on the 14th day of the first month.

He sent the priests in their charge. He encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord. I don't have time to preach on this because my time is gone. I'm going to kill the Passover. They kill the, you know what that means? They kill the lamb. That kill the lamb.

They're going to eat the Passover, celebrate the Passover, and they kill the Passover. They brought that lamb out there. By the way, you'll hear this on Sunday. But they had to pick that lamb on the 10th day. They had to keep it until the 14th day in their homes back in Egypt.

[23 : 53] That means they got four days for their kids to fall in love with a little lamb. That's four days for them to see that cute little one-year-old or less. Had to be like 10 days old and up to one. And they had that little lamb there.

And he called everybody to do their part in worship. He encouraged them, the Bible said. And they brought their offerings, and they sang, and they worshiped. And it was a worship service like nobody could remember.

Look, if you would, at verse 17. 35, 17. And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel.

From the days of Samuel the prophet, neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept. Josiah said, it's been since the days of Samuel, but watch this.

We're going back to the old-time worship. We're going to bring out the Passover. We're going to do what we used to do. We're going to honor Jesus. We're going to honor the lamb that died for us. Last thing. You've got to mind your own business.

[24 : 53] You want to have a good funeral, you probably ought to mind your own business. Or you could have a good funeral quicker than you were going to have it. So look, if you would, at 2 Chronicles 35 and verse 21.

And he sent ambassadors, Egypt sends ambassadors to Josiah, and he said, what have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war.

God commanded me to make haste. So don't be meddling with God, who's with me, that he destroy thee not. If you've been doing any Bible reading, you know God raises up nations to fight other nations, and God's doing this, and so God brings this king up.

And the king even writes and says, Judas, stay at the house, buddy. Don't come out and fight with me. The Lord God of heaven is telling me to come fight with you people, not you, with your neighbor there, and stay at home so you don't get hurt.

He was asked not to meddle. But he refused to listen. He's 39. But I've seen 79-year-olds that wouldn't listen either. And I know a 63-year-old that has that problem.

[25 : 56] Look, if you would, at 2 Chronicles 35, verse 22. Just circle the word nevertheless. That sums it up. He said, stay home. And he said, nevertheless. I don't care what you've got to say. Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him.

He disguised himself that he might fight with him. And he hearkened not to the words of Necho from the mouth of God. And he came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at King Josiah.

And the king said to his servants, have me away. I'm sore wounded. Last one. Last one. Mind your own business.

Mind your own business. So here's some principles for you to consider. Number one, let's live to an audience of one. I want to please God. As a leader of my home, I ought to please God. Clean up the temptation.

Get rid of all the visible idols and the junk in your life. Take a clear stand for God so no one doubts who you are. Or where you stand. Quit being 007 secret agent James Bond Christian.

[26 : 53] Tell somebody you love Jesus. Take a stand so no one doubts. Get in the book and get the book in you. Realize judgment is coming. Right now judgment is coming. Do you not know that people die every day and they go to hell?

Do you not know that all over the world millions are dying and they've never heard the gospel? We ought to get, we ought to realize judgment is coming. Call people to worship. And last, stay on target.

Stay focused on what you're supposed to do and don't meddle in everybody else's affairs. You know, independent Baptists are the greatest. We ask prayer as we gossip. Maybe if we stayed in our own business, it might help us.

Or that is, we don't have time for us. Or that is, we don't have the mai■■■■ followers. Or that by the way, the mat week from relocating. It will be helpful. Not just waiting.

Have a good night. Let us böyle. Let us buy that. I'm just wanting to come there as we do. Expect everything that comes near and I'm waiting for you. Margot keinen blow. But I don't think we might hold. I don't know what happens. If I want so many people. Of course there for money.

[27 : 51] Up great. So we're going there. I don't know. Motion to buy a bow■■■. Other way, I just want to try any of gentlemen between...