

1 Kings 8

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[0 : 00] If you will, take your Bibles, turn to the book of 1 Kings chapter 8. A lot of you are already smiling. You can wipe those smiles off your face. I'm not doing anything like that again for a while.

Calm down. It's all right. 1 Kings chapter 8, just a little bit of history of what's been going on here before we get into the actual part of it is Solomon has just got done building this magnificent temple.

The temple, everything revolved around the temple in Israel. It's where people went to get right with God. It's where they went to stay right with God. And everything revolved because the blood had to be shed at the temple. The temple was kind of like a mediator between a sinful man and a holy righteous God.

He finally gets this temple built and as he begins to pray, he's going to open up in a prayer and he's going to make a prayer and he's going to talk about this amazing God that we have. As I've traveled around in several different places in children's ministry now as a missionary on deputation trying to raise support to get to the country of Taiwan, I've noticed that a lot of Christians nowadays, we really take for granted the God we have.

And we have an amazing, an amazing God. And so few of us really can grasp just how wonderful he is and how truly amazing he is.

[1 : 14] We sing about it. We talk about it. But do we ever just stop and just think about how good this amazing God that we have? Before we get into, we're starting verse 22.

But before we get there, for those of you who do not know my story, I was born with a problem called spina bifida. My spinal cord was wrapped around my backbone. The doctors told my parents I would never walk a day in my life.

But we serve a big God. And as I was growing up, I struggled with conflicts of arguing with God. And I accepted the Lord as the age five years old. At seven years old, I knew that the Lord wanted me to do something for him.

And so at seven years old, I surrendered to full-time ministry. I remember my parents putting it into words for me, Adam, if the Lord ever tells you to do something, say yes the first time. It makes life a whole lot easier.

The older I got, the more I realized God told me what he wanted me to do. I just need to say yes the first time and it makes life a whole lot easier. But all the way up until that point, around the age of seven years old, I argued with God. And I know you're thinking, seven years old, arguing with God?

[2 : 12] What are you, a moron? I didn't say I was smart. That's why I got married, y'all, okay? That's why I needed it. But I argued with God. God, why would you make me this way? I mean, I'm the one trying to do what you want me to do.

I'm the one that gave my life to you. I'm the one that wants to do amazing things for you down the road. And you give me the problems. Why do I have to have the problems? Why not the neighbor down the street that cares nothing about you?

And I argued with him. And seven years old, Christmas time came around and I got my very first ventriloquist puppet. And for those of you who have no idea what ventriloquism is, it is a job you get when you want to be single for the rest of your life.

I didn't know that at the time. But we have a big God, amen, and she saw past my faults. When God said, never mind. Anyway, we're going to get past that. But then I get this ventriloquist puppet.

And I'm thinking, no. No, God, this ain't happening. I told you I'd do anything, but I didn't mean anything. I'm not going to be known as the homeschool boy that played with dolls. It's not happening. As I pouted, though, and I started to whine, my dad made me pick up this ventriloquist puppet every time I started to complain about how God made me.

[3 : 22] And he said, I want you to pick that up and start practicing with it. And you don't tell your dad no. So I picked up this doll and started practicing with it. And every time I touched that darn thing, I argued with God.

God, if you wouldn't have made me this way, I wouldn't look like a fool. God, if you wouldn't have made me this way, I would be able to go outside and tackle people and have a lot of fun. And you're all thinking, where do you come from?

I just run out and tackle people. I wanted to be normal. But God didn't have that for me. Three years went by for me complaining about how God made me.

I was 10 years old. My pastor came up to me and said, Adam, I'd like you to go to camp this summer. You're old enough to go now. Yes, I can't wait to go to camp. He said, I heard you're a ventriloquist. That was a lie. You didn't hear that. He said, I'd like you to go to camp.

I want you to bring the ventriloquist puppet. I'm going to have you do ventriloquism for just a handful of people, just a handful of kids. And I'll buy you a bottle of Coke. Well, you can buy a kid's soul with a bottle of Coke. And so I said, yes, I'll go.

[4 : 19] Well, what he failed to tell me was that handful of kids was 500 kids. They were all my age. And he said, get up on stage. You're next. And so me being the people pleaser that I am, I got up on stage.

And people's faces were kind of like how you're looking at me right now, judgmental people that you are. And they stared at me like I had lobsters hanging out of my ears. But my dad had put skits together for me.

And all the ventriloquist skits I ever did, they pointed to God in some way and somehow. Because I believe when God gives you a talent, you use it for him. So I still argued with him all the way up until this point until I got up on that stage.

And it looked like an earthquake was happening because I'm shaking. The puppet was about as tall as me. Not much has changed. But we're all shaking. And then finally I start doing the skit. And faces started turning to smiles.

Smiles turned to laughing. And I had people come up to me afterwards. Kids that were my age, even older than me, said, I'd like to serve the Lord like you do. Because that's cool. At that moment, the Lord made it even clearer to me.

[5 : 18] Adam, have I ever used a normal person before? Have I ever used anyone that can get the glory for themselves? I made you the way I made you for a reason.

I allowed circumstances to come into your life for a reason. So I can get the honor and glory from it. So at seven years old, I said yes because my parents told me it would be a good idea.

At ten years old, I told the Lord, whatever it is that you want me to do, that's what I'll do. And I did it with my entire heart. And then I got to go. I got to learn more about them.

That was the beginning of a journey for me. At 16 years old, I started traveling as a traveling evangelist with someone that took me under his wing. And I went all across the United States. I got to go to other parts of the world.

Here I was, a country boy out of the sticks of Logan, Ohio, that had back problems like crazy, that was told you'd never amount to anything. You'll never do anything with your life.

[6 : 18] And then God said, well, watch this. We have an amazing God. I got to go to Ukraine for the first time and my eyes weren't really adjusted to the fact that the world needed the gospel.

I was just excited to be on a plane going somewhere that wasn't in the United States. I was excited about that. And then the gentleman that I traveled with said, I'd like you to go to Taiwan with me. Let's do it. We were able to go and preach the gospel at a school there in Taiwan.

And I was excited about it. And then it was there when God really got a hold of my heart and my eyes to see a world that didn't know who he was. And as I was there, I was preaching the gospel and using the ventriloquism, all these different things to grab people's attention, to use it and then just show them what Christ has done for their life.

I had a young lady. Her name's Kathy. I still talk to Kathy on occasion. Kathy came up to me and she said, you kept talking about someone I've never heard about before. And I'd like to know more. I said, okay, sweetheart.

I've been talking about a lot of people in the Bible. What's his name? I'd love to show you more. And she said, well, you kept calling him Jesus. I have hundreds of different gods. My parents are Buddhists, but we have to serve all these different land gods and sea gods.

[7 : 28] You mentioned something about this God that you have that I've never heard about in my life. I said, what is that, sweetheart? She said, you just told me about a God who did something for me. And I haven't heard about that before.

Because Kathy, her entire life, just all the way up until 12 years old, she heard of gods that she had to worship. And she had to do things for. And she had to please. And she had to honor. She never once heard of a God who did something for her.

And she didn't even know who he was. Verse 22, I want you to take a look. We have a privilege to get to know this amazing God that we have. Taiwan have hundreds of different gods. I can't get to know one of them.

Take a look at what the Bible says about our amazing God. And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the congregation of Israel. And he spread forth his hands toward heaven.

And he said, get this, Lord God of Israel. Underline this next phrase. There is no God like thee. Just stop and ponder that for a second.

[8 : 29] Just stop and try to grasp how amazing that phrase is right there. Out of all the gods in the world. Not one of them compares to you, God.

Solomon understood this. There was nations surrounding Israel. Hundreds of different gods. All these different gods demanded child after child. And sacrifice after sacrifice. And different things.

And cutting yourself. All these terrible things that these gods demanded. And Solomon says, God, out of all of them, not one compares to you. In children's ministry, I love.

One of my favorite things to do is to go to restaurants and watch parents with their children. Because to me, it was funnier than America's Funniest Home Videos. It really was. Then I found out we're having a kid. I wish I would have prayed for those dear people.

You watch a child. And if that child gets a food he's never eaten before, you just watch the face. What is that? What is that? Garbage. And moms and dads, completely different people entirely.

[9 : 25] I've watched dads. You're going to put that in your mouth and you're going to eat it. You understand me? I want to shove it down your throat. Listen to what I'm saying. You ain't going to embarrass me. That's always the dad. Moms, a lot more sweeter. A lot nicer. Honey, that there, that's called shrimp.

You're just going to love it. That there, it tastes just like chicken. Nine times out of ten in the United States of America, it's always going to taste like chicken. I don't care who you are or what you do. Why do we do that?

So our little ones can understand. They get the idea. I've had chicken. I've never had shrimp. But if it's like chicken, I think I could like shrimp. You understand what Solomon just said? You can't do that with our God.

Out of all the gods. Hundreds of gods. Tons of gods. You can't do that with one. It's our God. That's an amazing God. And that's a God worthy to be served.

And that's a God worthy to be praised. Last time I met those doctors that told my parents I would never walk a day in my life. Those doctors told me, Adam, you've got until you're about 40.

[10 : 27] And your back's going to go out. And you won't walk again. They've been wrong before. So that doesn't scare me. But if they are right, I've got 15 years from today to do something for God.

And He's worthy of it. Because there's no God like my God. So if He gives me 15 years, I'm going to use it for Him. If He gives me 10 years, I'm going to use it for Him.

And if I have to have my little girl push me in my wheelchair all across Taiwan, I'm going to do it. Because He's a God that can't be compared to.

And He's worthy of it. Thank you.