

A HEART FOR THE LORD

“Listening, Believing, and Responding”

2 Kings 22:1-23:30

Main Idea: A heart for the Lord listens to, believes in, and responds to God’s Word.

Hear, believe, and respond immediately and publicly to God’s Word (22:8-11).

Even in ignorance, Josiah’s young heart was tender towards the Lord. He saw the condition of the temple, and his desire was to do something about it. It was a beautification and maintenance project. The focus was simply on the exterior, but it led to a beautification and maintenance project on the interior: The heart! In the work being done at the temple, the Book of the Law was discovered, and it was brought and read to King Josiah. No doubt, as God’s Word was read, Josiah’s heart was filled with conviction. As the king considered how people lived in the kingdom and how those who came before him had led the kingdom, he realized how far away they were from God’s design for his kingdom! Josiah also heard the words of the Lord related to the curses under the Mosaic covenant. He heard what he and the people of Judah deserved because of their unfaithfulness to the one, true God. Josiah heard God’s Word, and he believed God’s Word! The only response of faith was a response of repentance! The king tore his clothes in a public display of his grief and repentance. He mourned for himself and for God’s people because he knew they deserved the judgment of the Lord for their unfaithfulness. Josiah’s response is a model of a faith response to God’s Word that hears, believes, and responds immediately and publicly to the Lord!

1. They weren’t looking for God’s Word, but they found it! Has this ever happened to you? You weren’t looking for God’s Word, but he made sure that you heard it? If so, how? What does this tell you about God? What does it remind us about even the “accidental” things that happen to point us to and remind us of the Lord?
2. Do you remember the last time you heard God’s Word and belief led you to repent, to rejoice, to cry, to sing, etc.? Why did Josiah believe? How does faith work? Why do some have it and others seem not to have it? Use the Bible to answer the questions.
3. What did you do the last time God convicted you? Did you ignore it? Did you justify and argue? Did you repent? What is repentance? How do you see true repentance in Josiah’s testimony? How have you experienced this in your life?
4. Do you know someone who needs to hear, to believe, and to respond to God’s Word? Pray for them right now, asking the Lord to do what only he can do to bring his Word to them, give them faith, and call them to respond to him!

Seek the Lord for his mercy and direction (22:12-13).

With a heart that was full of repentance, Josiah directed his heart to the Lord. He called on the spiritual leaders in the kingdom to seek the Lord on his behalf and on behalf of the people of Judah. He knew that they deserved God’s judgment, but his repentant heart sought mercy. Josiah’s plea revealed his confession! He confessed that they had not been faithful to God’s covenant, and he assented to the judgment of God that they rightfully

deserved. What a powerful picture of acceptance and repentance rather than deflection and resistance. Josiah could have said, “Lord, we didn’t know!” He could have tried to argue, “Lord, how can you judge us when we weren’t aware of this until now?” But he didn’t. He realized that it wasn’t the Lord’s fault. It was his fault and those who came before him. The Lord had remained faithful. It was his people that allowed his Word to fall into the recesses of the temple to become unread and unknown. So his response was the only appropriate response: Seek the Lord for his mercy and direction!

1. Even though he didn’t realize the sin Judah was committing until he heard the Book of the Law read, Josiah accepted full responsibility for their sin. Why is this important? How does this apply to sin today that’s often unrealized until God’s Word reveals it?
2. How does Josiah confess sin to the Lord? Confession means “to agree,” so in other words, confession is agreeing with God that something is sin. Why does the Lord want us to confess sin? Is there any sin you need to confess today?

Faithfully live for God and lead others to do the same (23:1-30).

Hearing and believing God’s Word not only led to a response of repentance, but true repentance always leads to a response of obedience! Josiah obeyed the Lord’s Word, and in doing so, he was leading others under his leadership to obey the Lord as well. Like the other reforming kings who came before him, Josiah took the lead in removing idols from Judah. He also gave leadership in reinstituting the observation of the Passover. His faith had led him to repentance, and his repentance and faith had led him to obedience. He wanted to obey the Lord! What a powerful statement from the most powerful person in the kingdom of Judah. From the kingdom of Israel to churches today to Christian homes, there’s an important lesson to be learned from the testimony of Josiah: Faithfully live for God and lead others to do the same.

1. Josiah’s repentance led to obedience. Share testimonies of this same experience in your lives. When was the last time you repented and turned in obedience to God’s way in a particular area of your life?
2. Josiah continued to deal with the problem of idolatry, which constantly crept into the hearts of people in Judah. Through this study of these good kinds in Judah, has the Lord identified any idols in your heart or home? If so, what? What did you do?
3. Josiah also took steps to lead God’s people in faithful worship of the Lord. How are you doing this in your life/family? Do you need to order your day or week differently to make sure that you are obeying God’s design for faithful worship of the Lord?