

Friday, August 17, 2018

Confirming

2 Kings 22-23

The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant. 2 Kings 23:3

Josiah is impacted by the words of the Book of the Law (22:11). He repents and begins to seek the meaning of what has been read. When he is told, he begins to obey all that is written, as he understands it. That begins with the reading and the renewal of the covenant from the nation's side. Josiah confirms the words read and the people pledge themselves anew to the covenant. It becomes very clear in the reading of this chapter that Josiah is serious about his commitment for himself and his people. He removes everything he can find that has any form of false worship. His repentance leads to action that sets him apart as being a king like no other, in the way that he turned to the LORD (23:25)—with all his heart, soul, and strength (see Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37). His actions to keep the words of the LORD confirmed that His heart was truly turned to God and God alone. I long to be like Josiah, that it could be said of me that my actions confirm the truth that I love the LORD with all my heart, soul, and strength.

Lord, only You can make this true in my life. You know my heart LORD—You know I love You. Give me the strength to confirm it with every one of my actions. Amen.

Saturday, August 18, 2018

Released

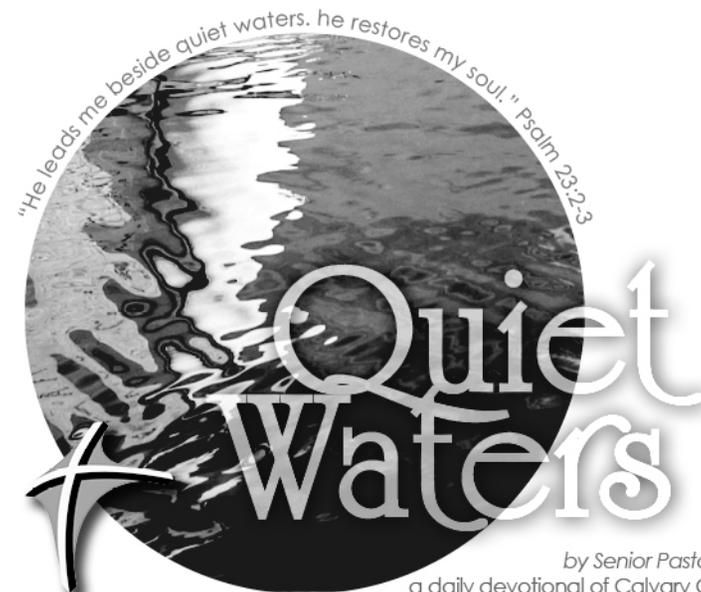
2 Kings 24-25

In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin from prison on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month. So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. 2 Kings 25:27,29

God's wrath is just. The sins of the kings have been great and they have led the people of God away from Him. Judgment must come. Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. I weep as I read of the destruction of the temple, remembering the celebration of the dedication. Just as I imagined that glorious moment, I imagine this moment of devastation, as the items that Solomon had constructed were taken away and as the temple was turned to rubble. God's hand of protection has been removed and Jerusalem is quite exposed. Jehoiachin is dethroned. A new king is installed by Nebuchadnezzar. Yet Jehoiachin is alive in captivity. He has been thrown into prison, where he stays for thirty-seven years. And then, quite unexplainably, he is released and brought around the table of the king of Babylon. Even though the sins of the kings brought the righteous judgment against Judah, yet the covenant to Israel remains. God is faithful to the promise made to David. The account of the kings ends with the absolute hope that can be found in the faithfulness and the promises of God. I have no hope apart from the grace and the promise of God. I know the judgment I am due, yet I see that through Christ I have been released into the hope of the promise of God.

Dear God, remind me often that Your grace alone has allowed me hope. Your covenants are true and You are faithful. I am undeserving of Your grace. I am grateful. Amen.

August 13 - 18, 2018



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, August 13, 2018

Fulfilled

2 Kings 14-15

So the word of the LORD spoken to Jehu was fulfilled: "Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." 2 Kings 15:12

God had spoken to Jehu and told him that he would have a descendant on his throne for four generations. Zechariah the king was the one who would be the last and his reign was not very long. God is true to His promises. I can't help but wonder if Zechariah had any clue that he was the last of the kings in the line of Jehu, his great-grandfather. Did he know what Jehu had done? Was he aware? Will my great-grandchildren be aware of what I have done in my life? Am I careful to consider the legacy that I am leaving behind? Am I tempted to step into shortsightedness and, in so doing, lose perspective on my purpose? Do I consider the legacy that has been handed down to me? God fulfills His word. What are the words of God that impact my thoughts and attitudes? In the accounts of the kings, it is only fitting to stop and consider how my decisions and my life will impact the generations to come. Will I take the intentional steps needed to tear down the high places, realizing that, for me, the high places are any places that draw me from intimate and exclusive worship of Almighty God, as He has declared it should be?

Dear God, help me reflect often on the footprint I am leaving. May all those who follow me be able to see true worship of You in spirit and in truth in my life. May I not allow myself to be involved in anything that would dishonor Your name or Your fame. May I be telling of Your greatness often and may my story declare Your glory. Amen.

Tuesday, August 14, 2018

Worship

2 Kings 16-17

All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods, and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. 2 Kings 17:7-8

God heard the cry of the Israelites and brought them out of Egypt so that they could worship Him (Exodus 7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3). This is a people that He loves. His love is extended toward them so that they can in return extend love toward Him. In essence, that is worship. Yet in this verse the word translated as *worship* actually refers to *fear of the LORD*. The Israelites chose to worship (or fear, be in awe of) everything above God. They chose to worship other gods and follow the other nations in adoring what they feared. They chose to follow the detestable practices that other worship required, even to the point of offering their children on the altar as sacrifices. God throws the Northern Kingdom into exile. Assyria has come and has scattered the people of Samaria, repopulating the land with people from other nations. God has rescued me. He has heard my cry and He has released me from the prison of sin that held me in captivity. He has set me free from my captivity through Jesus Christ so that I may now worship Him and Him alone. I must not—I must not—allow anything or anyone else to capture my heart. I am His alone. He is my Redeemer!

Dear God, Thank You for loving me! Thank You for setting me free from all my sin and my captivity. You have won my heart and I adore You. Amen.

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

So that

2 Kings 18-19

"Give ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God. It is true, O LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by men's hands. Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God." 2 Kings 19:16-19

Hezekiah comes as a king like no other (18:5). He trusts the LORD. This prayer reveals that to be true. Assyria is ready to overthrow Jerusalem. There is no way that Jerusalem can stand on its own. Sennacherib knows that and so does Hezekiah. But Sennacherib makes a grave mistake. It is the same mistake made by each person who does not recognize the sovereignty of God. He thought that *he* had gained all of his victories, not seeing that it had been God who had allowed it (19:25). Hezekiah calls on the LORD and in his prayer declares that Sennacherib is speaking truth. He has indeed overthrown the gods of the other nations, but he then calls on the LORD to give victory so that everyone everywhere may know that God is God. He is not at all like the other gods who do not live. He is the Living God who is over all there is. I must often ask God to defeat the enemies in my life so that He can be seen in me!

Dear God, help me remember that You alone are God and that You are greater than any enemy that comes against me. Deliver me so that all may know that You are God. Amen.

Thursday, August 16, 2018

Evil

2 Kings 20-21

The LORD said through his servants the prophets, "Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols. Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle." 2 Kings 21:10-12

Manasseh did so much evil. He filled Jerusalem with the blood of innocent men. Many believe this refers to him slaughtering righteous men and killing prophets daily, as affirmed by Josephus. God's patience has run thin. This evil must not go unpunished. The depth of this vile corruption is hard to read. To consider that a nation set apart for the worship of a great and compassionate and good God would allow itself to fall into the worship of evil is amazing. This man is capable of deep evil. He places extremely offensive items of worship to false gods in the temple of God. He sacrifices his son. Manasseh led the people to be worse than the people God had destroyed before them (21:9). God is provoked to judgment. The fate of Judah is sealed. My heart aches when I read this. My heart aches for God. His love is unrequited. His patience is stretched and He is moved to action. I must keep myself free of evil. I must be responding to the love that is expressed to me so that I never cause my God to think that I do not love Him.

Dear Lord, search my heart and know of my love for You. Keep me from all evil in my life and cause me to be leading others to follow You so that they do not turn away from the One who loves them. Amen.