

Hezekiah Cleanses The Temple

2 Chronicles 29:3-19

MEMORY VERSE

2 CHRONICLES 29:11

“My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A small potato for each group (for a large class form up to 4 – 6 groups) and a watch with a second hand.

A “God’s House” template, scissors, construction paper, crayons, and glue.

A Hula-Hoop.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The Potato Shuffle

The temple of God had been neglected. Sin can cause us to neglect the things of the Lord and our lives can become a mess. God is so patient as He works in our lives—reviving, restoring, renewing, and transforming us into the image of His Son. How patient are you?

You will need a small potato for each group (for a large class form 4–6 groups) and a watch with a second hand. Form at least two groups and have these groups stand in lines at opposite ends of the class. Take a potato and demonstrate the following procedure.

Place your feet closely together. Set the potato on top of your feet. Carefully shuffle your feet so you move forward, keeping the potato balanced on the tops of your feet. After everyone has seen your demonstration, give the first person in one of the lines the potato. The idea is for this person to shuffle along to the first person in the opposite line, pass off the potato, and then have that

person shuffle back to the next person in the first line. Keep track of the time it takes for everyone to shuffle with the potato. Allow the groups to race if they like.

If children have trouble keeping the potato on top of their feet, allow them to place it on the floor between their feet and move by waddling with both feet always touching the potato. The younger the children, the closer together you should move your opposing lines. This way it can go faster and the children in line will not get bored.

LESSON TIME!

The wicked King Ahaz had closed the temple doors and set up places of idol worship throughout Jerusalem and Judah (2 Chronicles 28:24). Although Ahaz was wicked, he had a godly son, Hezekiah. When Hezekiah became king, he immediately set out to undo the wrongs of his father. He determined to eliminate the idols of his father and again establish the worship of God. The Bible says, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David, his father, had done" (2 Chronicles 29:2).

2 CHRONICLES 29:3-5

In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them.

Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square,

and said to them: "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place.

Ahaz had devastated the temple. His son, Hezekiah, “opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them.” God desires that His house be open to everyone.

Hezekiah wisely attended to the things of God as his first business (“In the first year of his reign, in the first month,...”); for, if the nation was to be blessed, God must be first. He approached the priests and the Levites calling for them to sanctify themselves and then to sanctify the house of the Lord. To purify the temple, they must first sanctify themselves. Perhaps, the influence of wicked King Ahaz had caused the hearts of God’s servants to become lazy (uncommitted) and even hardened. Certainly, those who serve idols find their hearts as hard and cold as the idols they serve. As we serve the one true and living God, who is full of compassion and mercy, our hearts of stone become hearts of flesh.

To sanctify the temple, the priests were to remove all that was “unclean” from the sanctuary, all the abominations of idolatry. The New Testament tells us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. As God’s temple, we are to sanctify (set apart) ourselves. Through God’s help, we are to keep our hearts clean and sweep away the rubbish that sometimes collects inside of our hearts and minds. We are God’s temple created to worship Him. **Let us not neglect to worship God.**

2 CHRONICLES 29:6-9

"For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned their backs on Him.

"They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.

"Therefore the wrath of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to jeering, as you see with your eyes.

"For indeed, because of this our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives are in captivity.

Hezekiah points out that it was "our fathers." It was not only Ahaz, but also those with him who had been guilty in forsaking God, turning their backs on Him. They had neglected the care of the place of worship--the doors were closed to people, the lamps were not lit, and the incense was not burned.

Christians, today, can be guilty of neglecting the ministry of the church. Matthew Henry says, "There are still such neglects as these, and they are no less culpable, when the word is not duly read and opened (for that was signified by the lighting of the lamps) and when prayers and praises are not duly offered up, for that was signified by the burning of incense." **Let us not neglect to worship God.**

What was the result of this behavior? The wrath of God came on Judah and Jerusalem. As the Living Bible describes it, "He has caused us to be objects of horror, amazement, and contempt, as you see us today. Our fathers have been killed in war, and our sons and daughters and wives are in captivity because of this."

The result of rebellion against the Lord is always disaster. Their disobedience had caused them to be dealt troubles, the sword, and captivity. It is never wise to neglect the Lord. He loves each of us and desires only good for our lives. If we choose to go astray, His long-suffering and goodness toward us will prompt Him to discipline us. Hebrews 12:6 tells us, "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."

Respecting God's House

In today's lesson, we learned that we need to take care of God's house. We should not neglect the worship of God. Use the enclosed God's House template. You will also need a sheet of construction paper for each child, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Follow the instructions listed on the template.

2 CHRONICLES 29:10-11

"Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us.

"My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense."

To turn away the anger of God, Hezekiah determined to make a covenant with the Lord by restoring worship. He became fully determined to worship only God and to worship Him in the way He had commanded. As the nation's leader, he committed himself and the nation to repentance. A leader can only lead where he himself goes. Ahaz led the people into idol worship, but Hezekiah led them to the worship of the Lord.

Hezekiah exhorted the Levites to not neglect the performance of their duty, to no longer be careless in their calling. What a privilege it is to serve the Lord! It is sad when one takes the call of God carelessly. May we examine our hearts in light of Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

2 CHRONICLES 29:12-17

Then these Levites arose: Mahath the son of Amasai and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah and Eden the son of Joah;

of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah;

of the sons of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

And they gathered their brethren, sanctified themselves, and went according to the commandment of the king, at the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD.

Then the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and brought out all the debris that they found in the temple of the LORD to the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it out and carried it to the Brook Kidron.

Now they began to sanctify on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the LORD. Then they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

It seems that his exhortation was received with gladness. The Levites that were there assembled their brethren and set to work--first sanctifying themselves, then the temple of God.

There were fourteen heads of the various families and branches of Levi who brought together the brethren to work on cleansing the temple. The priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it and remove all the uncleanness, and the Levites carried the debris out to the Brook Kidron.

In eight days, they cleared and cleansed the temple; and in another eight days, they cleared and cleansed the courts of the temple. They took their work seriously and set about to do it as quickly and as well as they could.

2 CHRONICLES 29:18-19

Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offerings with all its articles, and the table of the showbread with all its articles.

"Moreover all the articles which King Ahaz in his reign had cast aside in his transgression we have prepared and sanctified; and there they are, before the altar of the LORD."

The priests then let Hezekiah know that all the things that had been profaned were now sanctified according to the law of God. The temple was now cleansed!--fit for the Lord. Jesus has taken each one of us and purified and cleansed us by His blood, making us acceptable in the Father's sight. Now, since we are the temple of the Lord--His habitation of worship--let us worship Him. Let us not neglect to use the gifts or calling He has given us for His glory. **Let us not neglect to worship God.**

What's All The "Hoop"la?

For this game you will need a Hula Hoop.

Have children form a circle, holding hands with those on either side. Give the first child a Hula Hoop. Explain that this child must pass his or her entire body through the hoop, then pass the hoop down the line so it goes over the body of the next person, and so on. What makes this difficult is that the chain of hands must never be broken! It's a challenge for kids to get their bodies through the hoop when they cannot let go of those beside them.

Play several times, timing how long it takes for kids to get the hoop from one end of the line to the other. As kids play, they may realize the hoop will move faster as they help each other. They do not have to stay in a straight line, so those with free hands on the ends of the line could help those in the middle. Do not point this out immediately; see if kids can figure out these tricks themselves. The more they help each other, the faster they'll get at passing the hoop! Application: Just as the people worked together to cleanse the temple, you must work together to get the hoop to the other side. Set about to do it as quickly and as well as you can, just as they did the temple.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to never neglect to worship the Lord. Pray for strength to always keep focused on the Lord and keep Him in first place in our hearts. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

