

The Weekly Word
March 12-18, 2018

This is the week we celebrate the birthday of the great missionary, Patrick. Oh, I know most don't think of him as a great missionary but he was. He built his life on the Lord and His Word. A pretty good foundation for a life well lived. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, March 12: 2Chronicles 32- Faith and wisdom...

Hezekiah showed an incredible balance of faith and wisdom. When an enemy advanced Hezekiah kept his faith but he also sought counsel and employed wisdom against the enemy.

When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to wage war against Jerusalem, he consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him. They gathered a large group of people who blocked all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land. "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" they said. Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. He built another wall outside that one and reinforced the terraces of the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields (2-5).

I love the balance of Hezekiah. He never boasted or let his preparations go to his head. Instead he applied all his wisdom and counsel to preparing for the coming attack. When the attack came his defenses held off the attackers from immediate victory. And when Assyria resorted to intimidation Hezekiah kept the faith and encouraged the people. Eventually the Lord came to Judah's rescue.

Faith and wisdom are a dynamic duo!

It is important to maintain faith. God is our ultimate defense and protector. But the Lord also gave us minds to use in conjunction with our faith and King Hezekiah is a great example of these two qualities molded into one person.

Lord, thank You for people like Hezekiah, who are examples for me.... May I follow in his example to be ever faithful and to use the gifts, intelligence, wisdom and godly counsel as I live life and face issues of life. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, March 13: 2Chronicles 33- A prodigal comes home...

Manasseh is a bad dude and uber-unfaithful king of Judah. In 2Kings 21 his reign is painted as one of the worst of Judah's kings.

As I was reading today I was going to write about verse 10, *The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention* and how Manasseh wouldn't listen to the Lord. But then the Lord brought an army against Manasseh. *In his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed to him, the LORD was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God. Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher. He stationed*

military commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah (12-14). This account of Manasseh's repentance is not told in 2Kings.

What a tremendous story it is because it offers hope for every wayward son, daughter, father or mother. No matter how far from the Lord one may stray, God is standing there waiting with arms open wider for you to turn for home. Manasseh is the poster child for Jesus' prodigal son (Luke 11) parable.

I sat and thought of all the prodigals I know, men and women who have walked away from Christ and their faith. And I began to pray for them, that they would turn for home and discover the embrace of the Lord!

Oh, God, bring Your prodigals home, please. Send whatever is necessary to draw them back to You. And if I can be a witness to them, a link in the chain pulling them back to You place me there. I pray this for the spiritual sake of every prodigal I know and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, March 14: 2Chronicles 34- Children in service for the Lord...

Josiah is one of the great kings of Israel and Judah. He was crowned king at age 8 and began to make notable changes by his 8th year at 16 years old! *In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles and idols (3).*

Too often today we write off children, youth and teens as members of our churches and impact creators for the kingdom of God. Josiah's example should bring us to a halt the next time we are tempted to write off younger people.

A couple of years ago my wife and I attended a church outside of Denver. They offered prayer ministry and my wife went for prayer. What she didn't realize was it was children's week and her prayer team was made up of 3 or 4 elementary age children with one adult supervisor, but it was the children who prayed and prayed powerfully. Apparently the children in this church are trained in prayer ministry and one Sunday a month the children are the prayer teams. POWERFUL!

Children and teens can have significant ministry if we will only trust them and train them! Josiah began to reign at 8 and by 16 was leading spiritual reforms throughout all of Judah and beyond.

What is your view of children/youth and ministry? Has this story challenged your thinking at all? It has mine...

Oh, God, thank You and bless You for every person who is part of your family, young, old and everywhere in between... May we serve You and the world by living for Jesus every day and using the gifts and training You provide. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, March 15: 2Chronicles 35- Are you leaving a faith-filled legacy...

Death comes to everyone, even great and faithful kings like Josiah or great spiritual leaders like Billy Graham. It is hard to tell from the account whether Josiah died for a good cause or out of ego. It seems he didn't have to fight Necho, king of Egypt but there may have been extenuating circumstances that we don't know about. For example, maybe Necho was after someone else, but after winning that battle was coming back after Judah and Josiah thought he had the best advantage to fight now. Anyway the text is silent on Josiah's motive.

Whatever the case, Josiah dies as a result of an archer's arrow. We all die. The good, the bad and the ugly all die.

While Josiah may have had hopes and dreams unfulfilled, he had lived a good and meaningful life honoring the Lord and living faithfully. His life touched many others for good and for God.

Sitting here I am wondering if the same could be said about me and my life. How about you and your life? Since our lives are not yet over, we can work at touching others for Jesus... We may not have a famous poet write a lament upon our death, but if we live faithfully then we will hear the words 'well done good and faithful servant' when we enter eternity. And that will be worth much more!

Think about it...

May the words of my mouth and the deeds of my life be pleasing in Your sight, Oh God, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

Friday, March 16: 2Chronicles 36- We all need a savior...

And the end for Judah comes... with a rapid fire narrative Judah moves from the faithful days of Josiah to the punishment of its captivity.

The Lord will be avenged and He will punish the faithless. Writing those words can make the Lord sound harsh. But sin will be judged.

Judah knew better but continued to sin over and over again. Finally the Lord determined it was time to punish. Sin will be punished.

The situation of Judah causes me to appreciate all the more Jesus and the forgiveness and righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus. Judah needed a savior. I need a savior and God provided what was needed when He sent Jesus in the incarnation.

I sit ever thankful for Jesus and the gift faith in Jesus brings...

Have you put your faith in Jesus? Tomorrow we begin reading Romans which is possibly the best explanation of the wonders faith in Jesus brings...

Thank You, Lord God for Jesus and the gift of faith, forgiveness, righteousness and all the blessings that come through knowing, believing and following Jesus as Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Saturday, March 17: Romans 1- The sad exchange people have made...

It feels so good to have my eyes read and my heart listen to Romans. I understand 2Chronicles is God's Word and therefore is profitable to read and study. However, some books of the Bible breathe spiritual life into me better than others. However, after spending almost 2 months in 1&2Chronicles Romans is a breath of life for my soul.

Paul paints a sad picture of much of humanity. We have looked every way for spiritual value except to the Lord. Verse 25 sums up the situation: *They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

They exchanged... this suggests that they made a willful decision not to follow the ways of God. Consciously or unconsciously most people choose to go their own way rather than the Lord's way.

As the popular Frank Sinatra song put it, "I did it my way..." This sentiment sounds good, but when we stop to parse what is being said, it is a lyric about captaining ones' own ship... no need for God and potentially no need for others. It is the lack of need for God that is the real problem spiritually because the message of the Bible is that no one can save themselves. We need a savior, who is Jesus Christ the Lord.

Looking back to verse 25, Paul notes people maintained a spirituality but they choose to follow any number of gods but not the Lord. That remains so true today... 'self help' books, gurus of this and that offer people a path, but it is not the Lord's path they are following. Ultimately this will lead to their destruction... (We will read about this in coming chapters.)

For today, I am thankful for the Lord and His way and I pray that I live faithfully before the Lord day by day.

Thanks be to God for Jesus... the way of salvation. With Paul I say, I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes... (16). Lord, You brought salvation to me and for that I am eternally grateful. I pray this and all my prayers in my Savior Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, March 18, 2018, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.