

2 CHRONICLES 34:3-33

Last week we were introduced to Josiah, who at the age of 8 came to the throne of Judah. His dad, Amon, was incredibly wicked. Josiah was born when Amon was 16; which means that Josiah was raised by a godless 16-year old dad, who at the age of 22 became king and did everything evil he could possibly do. Everything about Josiah's environment was against him believing in, loving and worshipping the One, True and Living God. Every thing around him in his first 8 years of life pressed, pushed, and pulled towards following in the steps of his incredibly wicked, idol-worshipping dad. This boy was the least likely candidate to even know, love and worship the true and living God, **let alone** be the instrument of God in turning an entire nation from worshipping and idols to worshipping and serving the true and living God. But here's the deal — in the midst of the wickedness and brokenness of Josiah's world there was ONE greatly humbled, broken man — his grandfather, Manasseh. I believe that with great brokenness and humility Manasseh took his young grandson and instructed him about the amazing grace of God. Because of that ONE man's influence, this ONE boy was used by God to change a nation; bring one last revival in the southern kingdom of Judah before it fell back into idolatry and was carried away into captivity by the Babylon.

The Holy Spirit set Manasseh and Josiah before us to challenge each of us; to say to each of us as individuals, that ONE life matters. ONE life can change the course of your world (your neighborhood, your city, where you work, where you go to school, where you shop and where you just hang out), maybe the course of a nation.

I want to share with you something that a man named John Wesley said. The Holy Spirit has been bringing it up in my mind time and time again recently.

QUOTE: John Wesley (1703-1791) — He was asked — *“What is your secret? Why do so many people come to hear you preach?”* Wesley answered — *“I get alone with God in prayer. He sets me on fire. The people come out to watch me burn.”*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones listed a few things that start to happen when God sets us on fire.

QUOTE: Lloyd-Jones — *some of the general characteristics of revival: a sense of the majesty of God, of personal sinfulness, of the wonder of salvation through Jesus Christ and a desire that others might know it.*¹

FIRST — It has challenged **me** to **my** bones. When people look at my life what do they see? You know, when a fire goes out it smolders, and the smoke stinks up everything around it and irritates the eyes of everyone near it. Is that my relationship with Jesus? SECOND — I've been wondering about Metro — and especially the young adults. Who are the young men whose lives are being ignited by God, who are on fire with a love for Jesus; whose lives beg people to come and watch them burn as they study, work, and simply live for God in culture, on mission? Who are the young women whose lives are being ignited by God, who are on fire with a love for Jesus; whose lives beg people to come and watch them burn as they study, work, and live for God in culture, on mission?

I really pray that I can articulate my heart to you here. When I say these things I say them as a man charged to look well to the state of his flock — a man charged to take heed to himself and to the flock the Holy Spirit has called him to watch over. Shepherds see things sheep can't see. It's who they are and what they do! I have to tell you that since we began Monday Night @ Metro I never dreamed that I would even think of saying this — but things have been looking and feeling a bit sleepy on Monday nights — a bit like a fire that's beginning to go out. Something has diminished in the sense of anticipation that God is going to meet with us — God is going to do something; something has diminished in the sense of pressing into the heart of God in worship — the sense of leaning in as we study the Word. Not everybody — not every night — but it's happening. Metro has NEVER been about “what works” or “that's not working — let's try this.” Metro has always been about Jesus. Yes, God has blessed us with some pretty amazing places to meet in. Yes, God has blessed us with being able to

Lloyd-Jones, D. M. (1987). *Revival* (105). Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books.

have amazing meals together week after week. But Metro has been something that transcends all of that. It's been a collection of people who were longing to know something real, something more than church and buildings and programs, something more than where's the new place Christians go to. It's always been about hearts full of faith and love for Jesus — gladly joining to worship and exalt our redeemer. In that, and from that, souls have been saved, marriages healed, lives committed to service, and others, whose hearts the Lord has been stirring, have been invited to join in this amazing thing that we feel so privileged to be a part of.

I'm so glad that the Holy Spirit has been guiding us in our pace through the Scriptures. He always has us in just that chapter and verse we need for the state of our hearts. And tonight we find ourselves coming to the close of 2 Chronicles and the record of an incredible move of the Holy Spirit in the life of ONE young man that overflowed into a nation.

Between the age of 8 and 16 Josiah *did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left (v.2).*

We pick up in verse 3

³For in the eighth year of his reign,

At the age of 16

while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father,

At the age of 16 he says, *Lord, it's not sufficient for You to be David's God; You must be my God.* The first thought that comes to my mind is how THAT is so very much like the heart of king David. Time and again David spoke of the True and Living God as **his** God

***Psalm 5:1-2** Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.*

² Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God:

***Psalm 7:1** O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge;*

Psalm 63:1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

The next thing that struck me is how a man who has been dead for over 400 years is a powerful reference point for this guy! This 16 year old wanted to know the God who David the teen-age shepherd boy trusted the day he slew Goliath — the God that David worshipped and wrote songs to and songs about; the God that walked with David through the valley of the shadow of death. What an awesome legacy David left to this boy who would sit on his very throne 400 years after his death. How I pray that by the grace of God I will have such a legacy. Legacy's are built NOW — while we are living.

One more thought here — It's amazing to think that you and I can be a "Jesus" reference point for someone whose life has nothing that points them to Jesus. By the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit someone (our children, a friend, classmate or co-worker) could say — *I want to seek _____'s God. I want _____'s God to be my God.*

So this 16 year old says — *You can't just be the God of David that I read about. Lord, you need to be my God. And I need to know you, and this can't be religion; it has to be relationship, that relationship has to be reality in my own life.*

At the age of 16 he makes a decision that will set the course of a nation: *I am going to seek the face of God.* God set Josiah on fire and his sphere of influence watched him burn — and those around him found their hearts ignited!

and in the twelfth year

That means that he was seeking the Lord for four years — from his eighth year to his twelfth year. For a 16 year old to do anything for four hours is almost unthinkable. But for four years Josiah sought the face of God. That doesn't mean that he did nothing but pray. There is no way he packed off and went to a monastery for four years. He was king.

QUOTE: Martin J. Selman — “*Seeking in Chronicles describes the habit of looking to God in every situation, and also the attitude which God looks for in those who pray (2 Chronicles 7:14; 30:19).*”

DON'T MISS THIS METRO — There were surely times that were dedicated to prayer — but his life was not compartmentalized. He didn't put on his “seeking God” hat and then take that off and put on his “King of Judah” hat.

It means that over the course of the next 4 years of his life he sought the Lord in everything he did; everywhere he went. It was from those four years of seeking the Lord, acknowledging the Lord in all his ways, that the Lord stirred his heart to a course of action.

and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images and he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. ⁵He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their ruins all around, ⁷he broke down the altars and beat the Asherim and the images into powder and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

The variety of idols shows *how deep* idolatry was in Judah. 2 Kings adds to this inventory — Besides the idols dedicated to Ashera there were idols dedicated to Baal (2 Kings 23:4) and to *all the host of heaven* (2 Kings 23:5) in the *very temple itself* (2 Kings 23:4). From the 2 Kings account, it seems that Josiah began to tear down idols at the center of the nation and worked outwards. That's always the way life works. What sits at the center of our lives works it's way outward. If idols are at the center of our life there will be systemic failure that reaches outward into every area of our lives — resulting in brokenness and death. When Jesus is at the center of our lives there is systemic salvation and redemption that reaches outward into every area of our lives, producing wholeness and life!

BY THE WAY — Christianity is an inside out transformation. Religion is mans attempt to transform and save himself from the outside in

Again — ONE young man was used by God to change the course of a nation. Charles Spurgeon was 16 years old when he preached his first sermon and began to affect a nation. George Whitfield was 20 years old when he began preaching to coal miners. He was forced to preach in the open air because he had been thrown out of the Church of England for talking about the new birth. So he stood on a soapbox and spoke to the miners — 100 the first day, 200 the second day, 500 the third day, thousands the fourth day, 20,000 by the end of the week. When he was 22 years old he traveled to America. He went up and down the Eastern seaboard preaching. The professors at Harvard said that when Whitfield spoke there (and I think he was 24 years old at the time) that 93 out of every 100 students gave their lives to Christ. That was **before** 1770. From those men who got saved came some of the framers and signers of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. The course of Britain affected by a 16 year old and a 20 year old — America by a 22 year old.

⁸Now in the eighteenth year of his reign,

26 years old now — getting old. At this point in time Jeremiah's ministry has been going on at least five years.

when he had cleansed the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the Lord his God.

⁹They came to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the keepers of the threshold, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim and from all the remnant of Israel and from all Judah and Benjamin and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁰And they gave it to the workmen who were working in the house of the Lord. And the workmen who were working in the house of the Lord gave it for repairing and restoring the house. ¹¹They gave it to the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone, and timber for binders and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had let go to ruin. ¹²And the men did the work faithfully. Over them were set Jahath and Obadiah

the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to have oversight. The Levites, all who were skillful with instruments of music, ¹³were over the burden-bearers and directed all who did work in every kind of service, and some of the Levites were scribes and officials and gatekeepers.

Godly men; entrusted with the money — and the restoration of the house of the Lord goes forward — the house is being rebuilt. Of course that is a picture of the church — people giving generously to the Lord's work in the repair and the building up of the church.

DON'T MISS THIS — The Holy Spirit gives us all these names (that you really didn't want to read through and I really didn't want to read through) **because** they worked faithfully and repaired the House of the Lord. God took note of them and wrote their names down.

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do.

What's your task in Metro? *I'm a He-brew/She-brew (coffee ministry).* Be faithful! God sees!

¹⁴While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given through Moses. ¹

THIS IS HUGE — As far as we know this was the only surviving copy of the Old Testament Scriptures. According to **Deuteronomy 31:24-27**, there was to be a copy of *this Book of the Law* beside the ark of the covenant, beginning in the days of Moses. But there had come a time when the people had become so carnal and cold that they had LOST the Word of God. Evidently, Manasseh and Amon had destroyed, or attempted to destroy all of the copies of the Law. This *Book of the Law* was no doubt **lost** during the rule of Manasseh and Amon when they took it upon themselves to change the location of the ark of the covenant (2 Chronicles 35:3). They thought they could invent the way worship was ordered in the house of the Lord — thought they could rearrange what God had arranged.

DON'T MISS THIS — The Word of God was LOST in the House of God. What a picture of a large segment of church culture in the 21st century. People meet in churches weekly, but there is NO place for the Word of God. It is lost amongst the crowded order of service — buried under social commentary, lost by man's attempt to make the Bible say something less than what is in it; or by man's attempt to make it say something more than what is in it.

HERE'S THE PICTURE — The Word was uncovered and rediscovered in the day of Revival. I see this happening in a number of lives today. There is a newfound love for the Word of God. (Young lady — *not just concepts* — *but THE WORD!*) We have people that drive one hour each way to be here three times a week because they have rediscovered the Word of God.

People are amazed to hear that we have so many people gathering on a **Monday** Night @ Metro to worship for 30 minutes, share a meal and then study the Bible for 60-70 minutes. They are amazed that we have nearly 800 adults here on a Sunday to worship the Lord for 30 minutes and then study the Bible for an hour. They find it hard to believe that so many people are interested in Bible study.

How can **you** know if you are in a state of revival? Is there a rediscovery of the Word of God? Is there a newfound love for the Word? Do you want to know what the Scriptures have to say? That is what excites me about Monday Night @ Metro — Sundays at Metro .

BY THE WAY — There's a portion of the Bible that is in our hands tonight that came from the copy they found here in this chapter. Aren't you glad they found it?

⁵Then Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶Shaphan brought the book to the king, and further reported to the king, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. ¹⁷They have emptied out the money that was found in the house of the Lord and have given it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen." ¹⁸Then Shaphan the secretary told the king,

“Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it before the king. ¹⁹And when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes.

As the Old Testament was read to Josiah he came to a great sense of his own sinfulness, and the sinfulness of the Southern kingdom.

FIRST — We can only know that we are missing the mark when we know what the mark is. We can only that when we read the Word of the Lord.

***Psalm 119:9 KJV** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

***Psalm 119:11** I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

THIS IS HUGE — When the Word of God was rediscovered in the house of God, Josiah exposed his own heart, and the nation, to the LIGHT of God’s word! The truth of God’s Word identified the idolatry in the nation. He was convicted by the Word. He was so grieved that he tore his clothes.

HERE’S THE PICTURE — When God is working revival in your heart you will expose yourself to the truth of the Word. It will identify the idols in your life — the things that have been grieving the Holy Spirit — hindering the flow of the Spirit in your life.

***Psalm 19:7** The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;*

***Hebrews 4:12-13** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

Are YOU having personal revival? The answer to that question is found in your answer to these questions — Are you *REDISCOVERING* God’s Word? Are you *RECOGNIZING* the sin and idols in your life when the Word reveals them?

This IS the Word of God. It's alive and it's sharp and it's powerful. God is not only smart enough to inspire it; he's smart enough to preserve it. He was able to preserve it in the wicked times of Manasseh and Amon, and He's preserved it and handed it to us today. ***This IS*** the Word of God, and if you try to live in sin and stand in the light of it you'll know it's the Word of God too.

²⁰And the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, ²¹“Go, inquire of the Lord for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book.”

DON'T MISS THIS — Josiah, who is 26 years old at this moment, was not content to merely HEAR the Word. After he HEARD the Word, he said that he must APPLY that which he had been taught from the Word. Paul the Apostle did that very thing after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus

Acts 9:3-6 KJV *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, **what wilt thou have ME to do?***

HERE'S THE PICTURE — When revival happens in our hearts it causes us to ACT UPON the Word of God — there will be a response in your heart to ask — “*What will you have ME to do?*” Not some legalistic response loaded with dread — but a humble, willing response, born out of love for the Lord who has been so gracious to reveal Himself to you and begin to stir in your heart the desire for personal revival.

²²So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah,

keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect.

THIS IS SO GREAT — At this very moment Jeremiah's ministry is just starting to gather momentum. Zephaniah is running at the end of his ministry. Yet the Lord was going to speak to this godly king by way of this woman who had no public forum. Her husband was the king's tailor. She's a woman who loves God, and when the nation was in crisis God found in this woman a heart that could receive and faithfully declare a radical word from the Lord.

²³And she said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Tell the man who sent you to me, ²⁴Thus says the Lord, behold, I will bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah.

²⁵Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched. ²⁶But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, ²⁷because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the Lord.

The God of the Word said to Josiah — because you've listened to My Word; because you heard the pain and the anguish of My Word as I pronounced the judgment that My people would reap if they served idols — I have heard you!

²⁸Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.” And they brought back word to the king.

Josiah will die in peace. He died on the battlefield at the hand of Pharaoh Neco in 609 B.C. But he died with a great heart for the Lord. Peace is not

the absence of conflict — it is the presence of the Lord in the midst of conflict. It is experiencing peace from the prince of peace.

Even though Josiah would not live to see the certain judgment of God upon Judah he would not sit by idly and say, *“Well, judgment’s coming and I’m gonna miss it — and there’s nothing I can do to stop it — So why do anything!”* He didn’t sit back and do nothing. He continues to spend and be spent in seeing the heart of the entire nation repent and seek God — even though he himself is promised deliverance.

He gathered the nation and he said this is what the word of God says. And this is how we’re going to live

²⁹Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰And the king went up to the house of the Lord, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the Lord. ³¹And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. ³²Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. ³³And Josiah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel and made all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God. All his days they did not turn away from following the Lord, the God of their fathers.

FIRST — When revival takes place you are ready to take your stand. You are ready to OPENLY consecrate your life to the Lord — walk after the Lord. You are no longer playing the “cool Christian,” or the “silent saint”. That kind of cool Christianity MELTS in the fire of God’s Spirit as He works in your life. You are ready to openly make your stand with God and for God WHATEVER it takes. Do you have a sense that you need to take a stand outwardly and openly?

SECOND — Your heart is knit with other likeminded men and women who have made the same stand.

DEFINITION — *A covenant is a promise by which men and women obligate themselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other*

I believe that this is what the local church is supposed to look like — People who are willing to obligate themselves to one another in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. They obligate themselves to one another in serving the vision and mission of the local church. That is a far cry from the contemporary church culture in which men and women use church for their own ends — come for goods and services — at their convenience.

ONE LIFE. ONE HEART. SET ON FIRE BY GOD. That's what such a life looks like.