Happy Monday everyone.

Today we continue our year-long walk through the books of the Bible with the book of 2 Chronicles. 2 Chronicles picks up where 1 Chronicles left off. King David has died and his second son, King Solomon, has assumed the throne. When Solomon dies, his son Rehoboam takes over and the people revolt, dividing the kingdom into Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Like 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles is almost exclusively about the southern kingdom of Judah and, with few exceptions, its sinful and wicked kings. Their sinfulness would eventually cause the Lord to deliver Judah, its people, its king, and the temple into the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC.

While it is easy to focus on the ongoing sinfulness of Judah’s rulers and its people, nonetheless, another, and perhaps more proper focus, might be on God’s grace and patience with His rebellious people.

For example, despite his God-given wisdom and riches, Solomon disobeyed God greatly by taking 700 wives and 300 concubines, almost all of them foreign (1 Kings 11:3). (I have often wondered how he kept all those anniversaries and birthdays straight!). He did this despite the Lord’s admonition not to do so because of the corrupting influence God knew they would have on Solomon.

In any case, Solomon famously built the Lord’s temple, and despite his ongoing disobedience, God personally favors his efforts at the temple’s dedication:

“As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever” (7:1-4).

I think the lesson here is this: God deeply desires to dwell among His people. And while He cannot abide sin, nonetheless, as the people said that day, “He is good, and His steadfast love endures forever.”

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 5

Grace and peace to you this day.

One of the things that I often ponder is the omnipresence of God. That means that He is present everywhere at all times. We think of His omnipresence in terms of space, that is, He is present in all places in the universe at the same time, including here on earth.

But it also means that God is present everywhere in terms of time. That is to say, because of His eternal nature, He is present back into eternity and forward into eternity all at once. He knows what always has been and what will always be. I know, it’s hard to really grasp His eternal nature.

However, as I consider this, it gives new perspective to me on the Lord’s timing. I have often thought that the Lord simply has no problem making us wait. There are many instances of that in Scripture.

In chapter 6 of 2 Chronicles, Solomon prays at the dedication of the temple. And then he waits, likely for years, for God to respond. After days and months and years, in His sovereignty, and in His timing, God answers Solomon:

“Thus, Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king’s house. All that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the Lord and in his own house he successfully accomplished. Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice” (7:11-12).

Only when Solomon had completed the task of building the temple and the palace, only after the temple had been dedicated, only after Solomon had issued his prayer, and only after the omnipresent, eternal God decided the time was perfect, was Solomon’s prayer acknowledged, and answered.

Note here the first thing God said: “I have heard your prayer…” God had indeed heard, and in His time, and His time alone, responds.

My prayer for you today is this: be encouraged that God hears. Every word, every sob, every cry for help, and every plea. And be assured, just as he told Solomon three thousand years ago, so does He say to you today, “I have heard your prayer.”

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 6

Dear DGCC Family,

As I mentioned earlier, one of the major themes of 2 Chronicles is the ongoing disobedience of the kings of Judah and its people from the Lord and His commands. God desired that He be the true king over His people, and the prophets were constantly telling the kings to consult the Lord in all they did. For the most part, the kings continually failed to do so and took matters into their own hands, always with disastrous results. One such king was king Asa.

One of the consequences of the kingdom being divided was that the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah were constantly at war with each other. During Asa’s reign as the king of Judah, the king of Israel was a man named Baasha. At a certain point, Baasha in effect lays siege to a portion of Judah and prevents anyone from entering or leaving.

Instead of consulting the Lord, as he was continually advised to do, Asa instead takes matters into his own hands and makes a deal with Ben-Hadaad, the king of the neighboring nation of Aram. Asa send Ben-Hadaad silver and gold and, in effect, bribes him into breaking the treaty he has with Baasha, the king of Israel who was warring against Asa and the nation of Judah. Ben-Hadaad accepts the deal and, as a result, Baasha and his army withdraw, and Asa is victorious, or so it seems. This is what happens next:

“At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: “Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war” (16:7-9).

The Lord desires that we rely on Him first and foremost, in the little things and in the big things. And, in fact, His very eye looks for those who do just that, so He can “strengthen the hearts of those who are fully committed to Him.”

So today, be encouraged. No matter is too small, or too large, to place in front of the Lord. Go ahead and talk to Him, place whatever it is into His grace and care. And then, let your heart be strengthened.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
April 7

Greetings to you this day in the name of Jesus the Messiah.

Yesterday we saw that King Asa failed to consult the Lord in his battle against King Baasha, and the results were a disaster. Asa’s son Jehoshaphat succeeded his father as the fourth son of Judah. Unlike his father, when confronted with war with the neighboring tribes of Moab and Ammon, he did consult the Lord. This is in part what he said:

“O our God? Will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you” (20:12).

Because his first instinct was to turn to the Lord when confronted with overwhelming odds, this is how the Lord responded:

“Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. He said: ‘Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you’” (20:14-17).

Sometimes the odds seem overwhelming. Circumstances may seem grossly unfair, and life’s challenges can at times seem to be more than we can bear. But today, be encouraged. As God told Jehoshaphat, the battle is His, not ours. And that battle ultimately is the battle of life and death, most assuredly fought for us completely and victoriously on a cross set into a rocky hill called Calvary. To Jesus the Victor be all honor, glory, and praise.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 8

Happy Friday, everyone!

Here’s your musical devotional for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhNxXBTljfk

IHS,

Pastor Lou