



Unit 2: What Matters Most

Sermon Series Title: Saints Are . . .

Sermon 3: Consumed by the Master

Bible Passage: 2 Chronicles 14:9-15

Background/Context

Abijah became king of Judah and reigned for three years. During his reign, he walked in the sinful ways of his father Rehoboam. Abijah did not serve the Lord God with all his heart but walked in the sinful ways of his father (1 Kings 15:1-3). After his death, his son, Asa, reigned in his place. Following the example of his great grandfather, David, Asa sought to promote righteousness. He demolished the pagan altars and shrines. Observing a message given by the prophet Azariah, Asa continued to transform the nation by leading them to recommit themselves to following the Lord.

Asa had a surprising devotion for the true God. He wanted to please the Lord and it showed in his actions. Through the trust he exhibited in the Lord and the Lord's grace, the nation achieved success. Asa learned to remember and rely on God and His power. Unfortunately, this king's reign did not reach its full potential because he ceased to trust God (16:2-4, 12). Although Asa could have been one of the best kings of Judah, his reign became tarnished when he strayed from God.

A. The Problem
(2 Chron. 14:9-10)

Zerah the Ethiopian came to fight against Judah with one million men and three hundred chariots. "So Asa marched out against him and lined up in battle formation in Zephathah Valley at Mareshah" (v. 10). The normal reaction to violent situations is to try to act strong. Sadly, today young men die because they try to act tough. As king, Asa knew it was his responsibility to lead his people, but he also knew that the Israelites could not defeat the huge Cushite army they faced. They could not defend themselves from the enemy of God. Their dilemma was bigger than their defenses. Their circumstance was bigger than their army. Their current situation was bigger than their strength. Seeing the numbers standing against he and his people, the king needed to call on someone who could maximize deficiencies, maneuver through dangers, and manage dilemmas. "A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). The Israelites could not deliver themselves from a force greater than themselves, but the king remembered the omnipotence of God.

Application Point: How has God shown His power in your life? How will you seek God's power and intervention this week? When we find ourselves in difficult situations, we must remember that we can't, but God can!

B. The Prayer (2 Chron. 14:11)

Looking at his situation, king Asa knew that the Israelites could not defeat the Cushite army. He needed to call on the Lord. So, he cried out to the Lord. His prayer focused on God as the omnipotent One. He knew that with the Lord the nation's enemy was no match. He also relied on the Lord's goodness. The king remembered the kindness of God. "Help us, LORD our God, for we depend on you..." By asking for help he relied on the compassion of God. He understood that the Lord opens the eyes of the blind and raises those who are bowed down (Ps. 146:8). He knew that the Lord was their helper and deliverer. The psalmist David declared that the Lord God is full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in mercy and truth (Ps. 86:15).

King Asa also prayed according to who God is. He said, "...in your name we have come against this large army. LORD, you are our God. Do not let a mere mortal hinder you." Asa did not say he was going in the power and might of Judah's army. He told the God of the universe that they were going in His name. He knew "the name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous run to it and are protected" (Prov. 18:10). Looking for safety, king Asa chose to put his trust in the name of the Lord.

Application Point: Prayer should not be complicated. It is simply communication with God for the purpose of enriching our lives for His glory. What does praying "for God's glory" mean to you? How can believers avoid reducing God to just a supplier of gifts, a counselor, or a protector?

C. The Protector (2 Chron. 14:12-15)

After king Asa cried to the Lord acknowledging the Israelites need for Him, he testified of their trust and fixed dependence in the true and living God. The Lord protected His people. The enemy was no match for an omnipotent God. "So the LORD routed the Cushites before Asa and before Judah, and the Cushites fled." The Lord used king Asa and the people to pursue the scattered army as far as Gerar.

The Ethiopians were defeated. The Scriptures testify, "...for they were crushed before the Lord and his army. So the people of Israel carried off a great supply of loot." But the Lord was not finished as He allowed the Israelites to attack "all the cities around Gerar because the terror of the Lord was upon them." Once again, it was the Lord who won the battle, using Asa and his army as the instruments. Not only did the Lord protect His people but through the spoil He provided for them. The Israelites could not defend themselves from their enemy, but God protected them. They could not deliver themselves from a force greater than themselves, but God fought for them. No circumstance can restrict Him. No power can control Him and no enemy can defeat Him. "If God be for you, who can be against you?" (see Rom. 8:31).

Application Point: When have you relied on God to do the humanly impossible? It is clear from the Word of God that no one deserves the goodness of God. Everything we receive is

because of God's grace and mercy. How would you counsel someone who thinks they deserve blessings from God?