



Unit 2: What Matters Most

Sermon Series Title: Saints Are...

Sermon 1: Characterized by Movement

Bible Passage: 2 Chronicles 14:1-6

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 all the sins his father before him had committed..." (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 destroyed the pagan altars and shrines. Heeding to a message given by the prophet Azariah, Asa continued to reform the nation by leading them to recommit themselves in following the Lord.

The movement or actions of believers are extremely important. Believers are known by what they do and do not do. "A person's steps are established by the LORD, and he takes pleasure in his way" (Ps. 37:23). A believer's movement must be guided by God's Word. Can others identify that you are different by your talk and walk?

A. Clean Out the Wrong
(2 Chron. 14:1-3; 5)

Under the reign of Abijah, Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord. They provoked Him to jealousy by building high places, images, and groves on every hill and under every green tree. They allowed the sodomites into the land and acted in accordance with the abominations of the cast-out nations (1 Kings 14:22-24). Yet, during the reign of King Asa, he removed from the cities of Judah the "pagan altars and the high places...shattered their sacred pillars...chopped down their Asherah poles...removed the high places and the shrines from all the cities of Judah" (vv. 3, 5). Why? The answer is found in the Word of God.

The Bible condemns the making of any images of things above, under, or on the earth (Ex. 20:4). Furthermore, God forbids the practice of giving His glory and praise to graven images (Isa. 42:8). If the goal of a believer is to please the Lord, then he or she must treat idolatry like a cancer that must be dealt with swiftly. When cancer invades the body, it is imperative it be removed so that it does not infect the entire body. Likewise, God's Word contains instructions on dealing with altars dedicated to worshipping idols. "Instead, this is what you are to do to them: tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their carved images" (Deut. 7:5). Believers are called to clean out the things in our lives that take the place of the true and living God.

Application Point: What are things in your life that can be viewed as idols? Why are these idols difficult to remove? We must clean out what's wrong in our lives to make room for what's right according to God's Word.

B. Communicate the Word (2 Chron. 14:4)

Not only did the king cleanse the nation from altars and shrines that were dedicated to idol worship, but he also commanded the people of Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers. He knew from God's Word that the Lord wanted His people to seek Him—alone. Since the citizens had gone through years of idol worship, they needed to be instructed to turn away from their sinful practices and seek the Lord's mercy. The nation needed God's mercy because they had disgraced His name and disregarded His commands.

It is not enough to know you are wrong and to be sorry for your actions. You must also stop the wrong and start doing what is right. With this thought in mind, King Asa instructed the nation to carry out God's law and commandment (v. 4). To do so required them to stop serving idols and start serving the real God. They needed to stop worshipping wood and stones made by men and start worshipping an all-knowing, all-powerful, and ever-present God. They had to stop leaning to their own understanding and start trusting in the Lord with all their heart. Believers must seek the Lord whole heartedly, and not wander from His commandments (Ps. 119:10).

Application Point: How will you communicate this message to those in your circle of influence and outside? Admonishing men, women, boys, and girls to seek and serve the Lord is the responsibility of every Christian. In what ways are you currently admonishing others to stop worshipping idols and start serving the One true God?

C. Construct the Walls (2 Chron. 14:6)

After leading the nation in repairing their relationship with the Lord, the king moved on to strengthen the defenses of the nation. "...Asa built fortified cities in Judah. No one made war with him in those days because the LORD gave him rest" (v. 6).

The Roman general, Vegetius said "If you want peace, prepare for war." Encouraged by the time of peace, Asa undertook a massive construction project in order to prepare the nation for battle. He understood better than Rehoboam the value of these fortifications. He told the people that they still owned the land because they had sought the Lord. Without the Lord's protection, the fortified walls would be useless. While fortifying the walls for protection, God Almighty gave the nation rest and kept other nations from attacking Judah while its defenses were down.

Looking at Asa's actions metaphorically, Christians also must seek to fortify our lives by practicing disciplines of faith. We must constantly look to improve our defenses against sin. It's up to each of us to construct and fortify our faith. We cannot assume an idle position. Just as trouble doesn't last always, neither do good times.

Application Point: What are you doing to prepare yourself spiritually to withstand adversity in your life or in the life of someone close to you? How can you fortify your defenses so that you can stand times of testing? We too need the Lord on our side during personal times of war and times of peace.