

2 Chronicles 34:1-21

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[0 : 00] In 2 Chronicles chapter 34, we're going to look at verses 1-21 this evening. Verses 1-21, I'll go ahead and give you the title. I want you to see a final attempt to restore faithfulness.

A final attempt to restore faithfulness. And the reason we say it's a final attempt to restore the faithfulness of the people of Israel is because Josiah is the last quote-unquote good king before the Babylonian captivity.

So this is the last good king that we have in the lineage of the kings of Judah before the Babylonian captivity. And I would say, I would dare say, this is the last good king you have of the people of Israel until King Jesus sets up on the throne.

So if we know anything about the history of God's people, and we even know coming out of Babylonian captivity, not that anyone was desperately wicked, but as far as how we define good, this would be the last one that we will see until Christ sets upon the throne.

So we'll see kind of the beginning of that, how we come about to trying to restore that faithfulness among the people of God because much has been declared in the chapter prior to this, how faithfulness and obedience was destroyed.

[1 : 13] So now we want to try to restore that, rebuild that. And we see it hopefully here in the passage before us. It tells us that Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem. He did right in the sight of the Lord and walked in the ways of his father David and did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David. And in the twelfth year, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the ashram, the carved images, and the molten images.

They tore down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars that were high above them he chopped down. Also the ashram, the carved images, and the molten images, he broke in pieces and ground to powder and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem. In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali and their surrounding ruins, he also tore down the altars and beat the ashram and the carved images into powder and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel.

Then he returned to Jerusalem. Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah, and Messiah, an official of the city, and Joah, the son of Jehoahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the Lord his God.

[2 : 35] They came to Hilkiah, the high priest, and delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the doorkeepers, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel, and from all Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Then he gave it into the hands of the workmen, who had the oversight of the house of the Lord, and the workmen who were working in the house of the Lord used it to restore and repair the house.

They, in turn, gave it to the carpenters and to the builders to buy quarried stone and timber for couplings and to make beams for the house, which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.

The men did the work faithfully, with four men over them to supervise. Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, the son of Merari, Zechariah and Meshulam, the sons of the Kohathites and the Levites, all who were skilled with musical instruments, they were also over the burden bearers and supervised all the workmen from job to job, and some of the Levites were scribes and officials and gatekeepers.

When they were bringing out the money, which had been brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. Hilkiah responded and said to

Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and Shaphan brought the book to the king and reported further word to the king, saying, Everything that was entrusted to your servants they are doing. They have also emptied out the money, which was found in the house of the Lord, and have delivered into the hands of the supervisors and the workmen.

[4 : 03] Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest gave me a book, and Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king. When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes.

Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikim the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Eshai the king's servant, saying, Go inquire of the Lord for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book which has been found. For great is the wrath of the Lord which is poured out on us, because our fathers have not observed the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book.

2 Chronicles 34, verses 1-21. I want you to see a final attempt to restore faithfulness. This last faithful or good king of Judah before the Babylonian captivity.

We are rapidly descending down the path which will lead to the exile of the people of God. By the time Josiah reigns, historically the Assyrian Empire is falling off the scene. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, has already fallen, and the Babylonians are beginning to rise in power.

[5 : 13] It is kind of a time caught between. That is why we can see Josiah go into the remnant and the rubble of the lands that the Assyrians had already raided and led the captives away, and he does some work there.

But God's declaration of judgment upon the Assyrians through the prophet Nahum have already come about by the time Josiah is really in the height of his reign working these reforms. We do know that biblically the prophets Jeremiah, Hosea, Nahum, and a few other minor prophets prophesied during the reign of Josiah.

So if you know Jeremiah, speaking of the imminent downfall of Jerusalem, he has already began his prophetic ministry during this time and this reign of Josiah.

But we also know that he is a king who does what is right in the sight of the Lord as the ways of his father David, not his father Amon, because Amon reigned two years, did wickedly, as his father Manasseh had done, and they arose against him and killed him and slew him, and they appointed his son Josiah king in his place.

So Josiah came to the throne in an unlikely manner. He came really unprepared. But yet the Lord uses him and works in his heart and his mind, and it is really astounding because he does so apart from the way in which we would think that it should happen, but that is the latter part we'll get to in just a moment, in that he works mildly and uses him kind of as a catalyst to continue the reign and to continue moving.

[6 : 36] Now, if we want to approach this accurately in doctrine and theology, we need to understand that the heart of every man is desperately wicked. We looked at that last week. We looked at the depravity of man, that man is a depraved individual, that we do wicked by nature, not necessarily by choice.

But we also need to understand the reality that, as Paul would say, there is none righteous, no, not one, but that God draws us to himself, that he woos us, if that is a way of putting it, that he compels us to have a desire for him.

So any spiritual longings we have, any desire we have for the things of the Lord are not natural to us. Rather, they are implanted and imparted to us from the Lord.

That is, he is drawing. So when we look at it that way, and we understand that we are not surprised when people do bad things, right? We're not surprised when kings do wickedly and they live selfishly.

But it should surprise us a little bit when we see one who does what is right, even though the standards that were set for him were not right. He would have only been six years old when his father became king, and he saw the two years of his father bringing in all this wickedness, and then his father dies, and now he is made king.

[7 : 50] He's put into the spotlight at age eight. We know that much happens there in the first eight years of his reign. We'll get to that in just a moment. But the reason we look at this is because this reality that God is raising up a good king at this point historically in the nation of Judah is a further display of the patience and the loving kindness and the mercy of God.

That God is still raising up good kings. Even though his people, not just the kings, but the people as a whole, have walked in rebellion, disobedience, and wickedness, the kings, when the good king is removed and the people are allowed to have their own way, so to say, they continue to live as the other nations around them live.

But God's mercy is displayed in that he raises up another good king. He doesn't have to, but he draws Josiah and puts him in place in spite of all the circumstances that were against him and uses him as one more, if you will, merciful call to the people of Judah and the people of Israel to repent and turn of their desperate ways.

So what we see for just a moment, if you look at the prophetic ministry, much of the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah is done in the kings which followed Josiah. We understand that. And you remember, you know, if I ever need encouragement in pastoral ministry, I just go read the prophetic writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

And, you know, nobody's throwing me in a pit and leaving me there. Nobody's starving me.

Nobody's, the Lord's not telling me to lie naked on my side for a certain number of days and to eat my food cooked over dung.

[9 : 35] So I'm like, I rejoice no matter where I'm at in ministry because I'm like, I'm not that guy, right? So, but Josiah is kind of the last call. So if you think about it, you couple of these guys, Jeremiah's ministry of the word with the ministry of the life of Josiah, which he has lived before the people right about the time Jeremiah is rising up declaring the word of God to them.

God is really merciful calling his people back to walk in faithfulness. So that is why we say God is just in the Babylonian captivity. You know, God is just when he allows his people to be led away into captivity because time and time and time and time again, they reject him.

They turn away from him. Not only do they slay the prophets, they ignore the standard that is being set from the throne. They just do whatever they want to do. But yet God in his mercy raises up a Josiah in this time.

And so what does it look like? How does it operate when we want to restore faithfulness or this one cry? So first of all, we notice that restoration starts with a concern.

It tells us Josiah is eight years old when he became king. We don't know anything that he does, but we do know he reigns for 31 years. We don't know what he does the first eight years because it bypasses this. By the way, everything that happens before we get to the 18th year of his reign is unique to the book of 2 Chronicles.

[10 : 59] So 2 Kings chapter 22, maybe 21 or 22, gives us the ministry or the reign of Josiah. And it immediately goes to the 18th year of his reign when they're refurbishing the temple.

But there's something that happens before Josiah decides, well, let's rebuild the temple. Though we want to get there, I love it when they rebuild the temple or not rebuild it, but refurbish it, I love when they're doing the restoration work because it is then that they find the book, right?

We want to get to where they find the book. That's a good thing. But something happens in the way God is drawing, right? In the way God is moving in Josiah's life before they find the book. And what is it?

It says that he's eight, but in the eighth year of his reign, while he is still a youth, that is 16. It's amazing. Scripture refers to him still as a youth at the age of 16. But in the eighth year of his reign, he began to seek the God of his father, David.

So what we notice here is the first thing that happens for a kind of a longing for faithfulness and a longing to live obediently is there is a concern for the things of God.

[12 : 06] God imparts and implants within his heart this desire to know. It says when he is 16 in the eighth year of his reign, he began to seek the God of his father.

Now, notice the transition when we make our way through the passage. He is seeking the God of his father, David. So he's seeking David's God. And, you know, historically, if he is sitting up on the throne of David and he looks back throughout the past events, I mean, how much more so to go back to the root of faithfulness, right?

David is a man after God's own heart. He doesn't have before him the word of God. But what he would have is the chronicles of the kings, right? The writings, these extra biblical accounts that scripture always refers to is it's written in the chronicles of the kings and it's written in the books of the prophets.

So there are all these records that are written. So I'm sure that as he's looking through this now for eight years, he's been upon the throne. And for the first eight years, it's been relatively quiet. He is

not old enough to making decisions, probably has counselors around him.

But what he is doing is he's learning and he's growing and God is using this reality, this discernment to know that there are those who did right. There are those who did wrong. And we can look back and say, well, David seems to have done it right.

[13:20] And if you want to look at a king to model your kingdom and thrown over, I mean, David would be a good one for David has slain his tens of thousands, right? He was a great warrior king. He could fight. He was a man of bloodshed.

He had mighty men around him. He did all the things, but he was also a man after God's own heart. So now in the eighth year, he has this concern, this spiritual concern, and he begins to seek the God of his father. Don't ever disregard or dismiss that spiritual concern because restoration starts there.

When people begin to think about, and it is not natural to the individual. We know that it's not natural that Josiah would think about this. So now God is doing something because that longing, that concern is a supernatural thing.

Think of your own life. When you begin to first be concerned about the things of God, you say, well, I've always known about them. I mean, really concerning. You begin to get real serious about it and begin to think about it.

That's a supernatural event that God is drawing you to himself. We're like, well, I really want to know this. And if we think that scripture is true, and we do, and if Paul tells us the heart of every man is desperately wicked, and we have to acknowledge that, okay, Paul's not just saying something flippantly there, then the concern for the things of the Lord are unnatural to us, and therefore it is God imparting it to the heart and the mind of the individual.

[14:44] So don't dismiss someone coming to you. This morning I had someone come to me, one of the young men who's attended church just a couple of times, and at the back door, and by the way, this is one of the reasons I like standing at the back door.

I love talking to people because that's my personality. I don't stand back there so everybody can tell me. There was some old line pastor who said, Pastor, don't stand at the back door because it puffs you up when everybody tells you your sermon's good.

It doesn't, I don't get puffed up because, believe me, God has told me when my sermon was bad long before anybody ever tells me my sermon's good. So I appreciate it, but sometimes I think the Lord just really tells me.

But anyway, this is why, because you begin to see how God is working in people's lives. I had a young man walk up to me and go, I have a question for you. I said, sure, go ahead, shoot, which he said, in the Old Testament, I said, oh yeah, good, good, I love to have Old Testament questions. It's not someone who's ever been with us on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. He said, are the civil laws applicable to people today? The civil laws of the Old Testament, and I said, no. The civil laws are unique to the people of Jerusalem, or not Jerusalem, but to the Jewish people in particular because God was separating them and setting them aside from everybody else around them and had purpose.

[15:51] I had to give him a back door answer, right? There's always the back door foyer answer, and then there's always the, hey, let's sit in a pastor's office for about two hours answer. So I tried to give the condensed version. I said, but now the moral laws, they matter.

They have a standard. He goes, oh, right. I said, because there's a purpose behind it. He said, is it because the civil laws are all pointing to Christ? I said, you're exactly right, right? It's pointing to Christ, and it's showing who he is and how he's set apart and he's different. Don't dismiss questions because anytime someone expresses a concern for the things of the Lord, that is, the Lord is drawing them and wanting them to grow, those are not natural things, right?

Those are not natural things. Fuel that concern. And don't, I had to try to do this in my own life. I try not to give an easy answer. Sometimes I try to give probably an overcomplicated answer because I want them to think about it.

I don't want them to go home and go, I don't know, is he really right in that? And because God is doing something, the gospel is so easy, sure. But we also understand that restoration and reformation starts with concern.

Every great movement we've seen of the Lord is because someone had a concern for something. So in the eighth year of his reign, and we don't want to, you know, just dismiss this by reading over it so quick.

[17:08] He began to seek the God of his father, David. What he saw was in David a testimony that appealed to him and he said, I need to know that God.

But concern has to transition because if we're concerned about something and really nothing happens of that, but concern enough is not enough to change us. Concern enough is not enough to cause us to want to change our circumstances.

I am concerned about some things, but I'm not necessarily that concerned about it, that I'm going to change how I live or change how my life operates, right? Because concern has to transition to the second thing, and that is commitment.

When we commit to something, all of a sudden we have to begin making changes. So he was concerned about the things of his father, the God of his father, David. But he took that concern and that concern kind of, he wrestled with it for a number of years.

As a matter of fact, it tells us it is four years because we have this transition. In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father, David. And in the twelfth year, so for four years he had a concern.

[18:08] I want to know about the God of my father, David. Four years later, he shows his commitment. Just in case you want to know how deep-seated was this concern, four years later he begins to do something.

So now, you know, he's 20 years old. As a 20-year-old young man, he is committed to this way of the Lord God Almighty. And the reason we know he's committed because it says in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the ash from the carved images and the molten images.

Now, we say, well, there have been people who have done that before. People have cast them in the valley. People have cast them out. I mean, even his wicked grandfather, Manasseh, had a time of renewal and revival where he took all the altars and everything out of the temple and he threw them in the valley.

Right, but if you want to see how committed this 20-year-old young man was, look at the extent of this purging. Now, he chopped them down. He cut them up. He ground them into powder. He poured the ashes over the bodies of the priest. He burned the bones of the priest who offered. I mean, he dug up bodies and burned them and then ground them back up because what he was doing was showing the defilement of the land.

[19:12] And he didn't just do it in Jerusalem and Judah. He began to go into the other regions of Israel. He began to go into the regions that the Assyrians had already laid captive. He says among the ruins.

So here's the picture. Josiah was so committed to the ways of God by this time, just four years later. He says, I'm going to go into the region of the northern kingdom.

And when the Assyrians have caused that city to fall and all the rubble, I'm going to find those places of idolatrous worship, and I'm going to grind them up even among the rubble. You say, well, those cities have already been judged.

Right, but they've been judged by the wicked Assyrians. They hadn't been judged by the Lord God Almighty. They had been judged by God, but not by God's people. So he would go there and burn. And he showed his commitment by the extent of his actions because commitment is always revealed in the actions we take.

And what we find is Josiah doesn't say, well, I'd like to know God and think about it for a while. He does. He takes his time. But four years later, we find him doing something because of the things he thought about.

[20:10] Because if we are concerned about things passively, we never commit to them. But if we're concerned about things intentionally, we will make commitments to ensure they happen right.

I was doing pre-marriage counseling earlier and asked a young couple, where do you want to be in 10 years? What do you see your marriage looking like in 10 years? And just as all, you know, lovey-dovey people do, they paint this wonderful picture of what 10 years from now is going to look like.

And I looked at them, and there was all this stuff, and there was all this wonderful thing. And I said, everything you've described had happened to me by the time we were 10 years in marriage, but do you know what also happened to me before we got to there? They said, well, we'd like to, you know, we're going to have a house built.

We're going to have all these kids. I said, we'd have, everything you're saying has happened to us. But unless you're prepared for that, you're going to find yourself in the middle of that and be like, whoa, what happened? You say, oh, that sounds good.

That's a great, that's what we were looking at. But you've got to be committed to make sure that when you get there, you're prepared for all the craziness and the chaos that's going on in the middle of that. And so it was a commitment on the front end to make sure that your dream has some feet to it.

[21 : 17] And that's exactly what was going on here, is we see that Josiah is so committed to what he was concerned about, what he wanted to see happen, just a few years into his reign that he began to go around, and he was purging the land.

In a rather extensive manner and a rather extensive way, and he was cleansing the land of the defilement that had been upon it, not just in his city or even in his nation, even his region, but in the extended region of the people of the Lord God Almighty.

Now keep in mind, he was doing all of this without the word of God, which again shows us the drawing and the leading of the Lord God Almighty in his life.

So he wasn't even responding. So now we have a concern, a commitment. Third, there's correction. Because any time we restore something, we have to correct a problem or a neglected aspect of society.

And that takes us to the 18th year of his reign. Now in the 18th year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah, Messiah, the official of the city, and Joah, the son of Joah, as the recorder, to repair.

[22 : 33] Now look at this, look at this transition, to repair the house of the Lord his God. In the 8th year of his reign, he began to seek the God of his father, David.

10 years later, the 18th year of his reign, he is sending them to repair the house of the Lord his God. It's no longer the house of the Lord of his father, David.

This is his God. Why? Because he's made a commitment. So now he wants to correct what has went wrong. And this is still just a desire that's within his heart.

So he sends these men, and we even notice here, he begins to use the high priests and the Levites, even the musicians, right, the skilled and musical instruments who are leading the workmen. They have a place within the temple. They have a place within the house of the Lord. That's not the king's place. That's their place. And so he's sending them there. It tells us in the book of 2 Kings that the money they give them, they require no accounting of the money, for they entrust the people doing the work.

[23 : 31] And everyone is doing everything wholeheartedly and right and accurate. And they're trustworthy individuals. They have no accountability with the contractors. It's not like, hey, turn in your receipts and make sure that beam costs that much money.

No, they say, this is what it takes. We're going to give it to you. We trust you. And there's this wonderful work of accountability. But the reason they had to do it, it tells us that they were doing this because the kings of Judah had let them go to ruin, it tells us in verse 11.

Now, Hezekiah, which would have been the great-grandfather of Josiah, had done extensive temple renovations. Hezekiah had opened the door in the first year of his reign. He repaired the house of the Lord, but that was the first year of his reign.

And Hezekiah reigned a number of years. But then we have the problem of Manasseh and Ammon reigning after Hezekiah, who neglect the temple. So evidently, since Hezekiah's reforms and restorations within the temple, nothing had been done.

Time had had its way. Now, by the time of the 18th year of Josiah's reign, the temple was still in disrepair. So, he takes on the responsibility of what other kings had neglected, and he wants to correct the problem.

[24 : 35] And the problem is, is it's not enough to remove the temples and the idolatrous altars and even all these ashram poles and these bells. He said, we have to have the place where the name of the Lord dwells, and that is the temple, and we want to ensure that we have a proper manner and way of worship.

And he's working extensively to do this. Now, God honors these three things. The reality that he had a concern to know the Lord God, he was committed to what he saw revealed as the way of God, and he wanted to correct the problem among the people of God, is rewarded because while

they're doing this work, they find the book.

Many Bible scholars believe that probably during the reign of Manasseh, because if you remember, Manasseh filled Jerusalem with the blood of the saints. That during the reign of Manasseh, he was so resistant to the things of God that he destroyed many, many of the scrolls, if not all of the scrolls that he could find.

And he didn't want any offensive thing. This is in the first half of his reign. This is before the Lord humbled him, and he was led away by hooks by the Assyrians. He wanted nothing to do with the word of God.

He wanted nothing to do with the people of God. So not only did he kill the prophets, not only did he displace the priests and the Levites, but he also, many believe, destroyed the scrolls, because there was one scroll, and it was probably the original scroll, that was hid in the temple.

[26 : 03] And it was hid until a time such as this. And we, again, we praise God for the preservation of the word of God, the testimony of Scripture, and the reality that we can put full confidence in the pages that we hold before us, the 66 books from Genesis to Revelation.

History testifies to the reality that not only in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, even in the centuries that followed, that many, many, many people have tried to destroy the word of God. And what we don't trust only is this oral tradition of being passed on, but God would hide bits and portions of his word, and he would hide things, much like when a shepherd boy is walking through the Sheffala, and he throws a rock into a cave, and he hears a weird sound, and he goes and finds all these clay jars that happened to be in the caves with the perfect climate that the scrolls would never break down.

And they were hidden there, more than likely, when Jerusalem was besieged in A.D. 70, and they were carried away by the Essenes, you know, those people who died out because they were a bunch of men. They were carried and put there, so don't, by the way, don't give no love to the Essenes.

We've got to be thankful for them because they, you know, preserved what we call now the Dead Sea Scrolls, which we could go back, oh man, our scripture was right. And we see all of these things, and it's tucked away and hid there, and God was doing it.

And by the way, by the time they're found, we already have an English translation of scripture, right? And we're like, but what text are we basing upon? But now all of a sudden, we find even older versions of it, and now we look at this, and we're like, wow, and I could spend just a long time talking about Bible translations, but I'm not going to do that.

[27 : 37] And we can just be so thankful that at the right time, God says, here's my word. You know, the preservation of the word of God is so astounding. And Josiah's life is the same way because now that he has this concern for the things of God, and now that he has demonstrated four years later, he's committed to it, and then 10 years after the concern is there, he has shown that he wants to correct the problem.

God says, now you're ready. And all of a sudden, here comes the priest out with, I found this book, right, this scroll that has been hid in the temple. All the workmen are in there replacing the timbers and the stones.

We found the book, and he gives it to the scribe, and the scribe goes, and this brings us to the fourth thing. How do we restore faithfulness? Well, concern and commitment and correction are all good, but we need to have the fourth one, and that is conviction.

Conviction. Conviction. Because nothing really happens until a conviction of sin takes place. No work of man can do a spiritual renewal because the work of man can only affect men.

But renewal and restoration is a work of the Spirit, and that comes only by conviction. And that's why God is so faithful, even when he's working in the life of Josiah, that we know that Josiah is not doing these things on his own, but then we also see that when God really wants to change the heart and things are ready for that moment, conviction comes because it says, Shaphan, the scribe, told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest gave me a book.

[29 : 13] And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king. And now look at this. This king who now for 10 years, because he's in the 18th year of his reign, for 10 years, has had a concern and a commitment.

He's beginning to correct the problems. So for 10 years, he's walked faithfully, so he thought. But when the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes. Because now the weight of sin is resting upon him, not his own sin, but the sin of his people and the sin of the nation.

He tore his clothes, and the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam, and the son of Shaphan, Abdon, the son of Micaiah, Shaphan, the scribe, and Esaiiah, the king's servant, saying, Go inquire of the Lord for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah.

By the way, look at this. He doesn't say just for people of Judah. The chronicler does a wonderful job of reminding us that when God is doing great work, he is always inclusive.

Not only did Josiah go destroy all the temples and all the land of all of Israel, not just Judah, but also when restoration in the temple took place, it was the money gathered from all of Israel, not just Judah, and now when the word of God is heard, it is a repentance and it is a calling out for all of Israel, not just Judah.

[30 : 33] When God's doing something right, he doesn't see divisions, he sees unity, and he is working it out for all the people. He says, Go inquire for all those left in Israel and in Judah concerning the words of the book which has been found for great is the wrath.

Conviction acknowledges the rightness and the justice of God's wrath. Great is the wrath of the Lord which is poured out on us because our fathers have not observed the word of the Lord to do according to all that is written in this book.

Conviction says God is just and we are deserving. then God can do a great spiritual work.

And he did it in the life of one who had spent the last ten years of his life wanting to know this God.

And now God brings him to a point of conviction. How does conviction come?

By the word of God. Right? By the word of God. We sang a song this morning, a hymn this morning. By God's word I learned.

[31 : 41] Right? I learned the sin in my own life. That he has shown us. I have learned how his word I've spurned and I've cast aside and cut off and we learn our deserving of the judgment of God.

But it brings us to a point now where he can restore and he can call us back. We'll read on and we'll see that judgment is spared during the life of Josiah. We'll see Josiah lead to the celebration of the Passover.

We'll see all these things coming. God is merciful. But those things, those celebratory things don't come until we get to this place of conviction where we say, yes, God, you're right. I was wrong. I thought we were doing good. Maybe we could fix it. But when we hear your word, it's going to take more than just tearing down some altars. It's going to take more than just rebuilding a building. It's going to take us falling on our faces and saying, yes, God, we deserve this. And so now conviction comes. And conviction is this thing that God uses to bring about a call to faithfulness.

[32 : 53] Conviction is never something that is set there just to let us set in our shame and set in our ugliness. It is there to spur us and to lead us to this place when God brought conviction.

Notice, have you ever noticed when you read the Old Testament that conviction never comes to the prideful? Conviction never comes to those who are just walking in outward disobedience. Like, conviction doesn't come until God humbles them and gets them to a place where they can respond properly to that conviction.

Right? God, in His grace, in His mercy, does not just want us to feel bad. He wants to get us to the place and He waits until we get to the place where when the conviction comes, now we know how to respond.

And we can say, yes, Lord, You are just and You are worthy and we acknowledge that because it's His way of calling us back to Himself for restoration. There will be a day where we stand before Him in judgment, but until that day, there's a day where He's trying to restore faithfulness in our hearts and faithfulness in our minds and He's calling us loving kindly back to Himself and saying, this is what is coming towards you if you continue on this path.

Won't you fall on your faces before Me? And we see God is doing it among His people. Ultimately, we know the nation of Judah will not respond because we do know that Babylonian captivity comes because we know that though God in His mercy continues to rise up to Josiahs and Jeremiahs and all the other prophets, the heart of man is desperately wicked and it will take great judgment to purge them of this evil of idolatrous worship.

[34 : 25] But that shouldn't surprise us because we still find that same reality today. Yet we praise God for His final attempt to call the people to restored faithfulness and He's doing it through the man Josiah here.

Let's pray. We'll be dismissed. God, we thank You so much. We thank You for Your mercy. Thank You for Your kindness and Your goodness. And we thank You that even in the Old Testament we can see how You work.

We know that there is no good King, no perfect King until we come to the person of Jesus Christ. So we praise You that in our weaknesses You meet us where we're at.

You bring us to a place where we're prepared to respond to You. And like Josiah, we may be doing the best that we can but You bring us to that moment where You highlight Your Word before us and it is Your Word that brings conviction and we know that that conviction comes so that we may come not by our works and not by our efforts but we may seek a word from the Lord and Lord Jesus, we know that You are the final Word of God and we come before You and we say that all of our worthiness is found in Christ.

It's not found in our efforts or our abilities or our work. It's found in Christ alone. So Lord, I pray that You would help us to draw closer to You each and every day and I pray as we do that that we would restore faithfulness not even in our own lives but in the lives of those around us that we would be those who rise up others that we would encourage them to walk in a manner pleasing to You.

[36 : 07] may we be the Josiahs in our communities setting the example for others to follow. Be with us as we leave here.

Walk with us in the week that we have before us and may it be for Your glory and Your honor and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you guys. Really appreciate your time.