

Faithful: The Life of Josiah

Faithful to God's Word • Message 5

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Today, we continue the series *Faithful: The Life of Josiah* with a message entitled **Faithful to God's Word...**

I just want to remind you of what we're told about Josiah from 2 Kings 23:25:

Never before had there been a king like Josiah, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and soul and strength, obeying all the laws of Moses. And there has never been a king like him since.

2 Kings 23:25 (NLT)

I was reading about this missionary who was crossing the border into a communist country, and at the border, the guards asked, *Do you have any guns, drugs, or Bibles?*

To them, the Bible was as dangerous as guns and drugs. The Bible threatens more than their religion of atheism. It threatens their place of power and control over the people because it gives the people what no government can. The Bible enriches lives, instills hope and frees the human spirit, which makes it as threatening to an atheistic government as guns and drugs. The Bible is living and active, and it's God's inspired word.

How do you view this book...

History book

Instruction manual (how many of you build something before looking at the manual?)

Road map

If this is your approach, you will never dive into this book...

When Jesus is tempted, He quotes Scripture. The Bible is referred to as a sword of the Spirit. It's referred to as a weapon.

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

- 1. The greatest threat to the church is APATHY for the Word of God, not the animosity of the world.**
(2 Kings 22:8-10. C/R: Joshua 1:7-8; 2 Chronicles 34:21)

There was a survey done talking about items we lose... anyone know the top item that is misplaced?

- The most common lost items (in order) are revealed as – TV remotes (45%), phones (33%), car & keys (28%), glasses (27%), shoes (and some men said children).
- Americans spend 2.5 days a year looking for lost items.
- More than \$2.7 billion a year is spent replacing misplaced possessions.

- Millennials are TWICE as likely as boomers to lose their stuff- (grandmom and granddad look at your grandchildren right now and say, *I might be older, but I'm better than you.* ☺)

In most buildings, there is a place known as Lost and Found.

At my previous church, I saw all sorts of things in the lost and found. Usually, you would find glasses, coffee mugs, and jackets... I found love notes that people were writing during my sermons. I even found dentures once in our lost and found...

But you know what the most common item in the lost and found was at most churches I've been to? It's the Bible.

Listen, you misplace or lose a roadmap, a history book, or an instruction manual... but you don't lose a weapon... it matters so much how you view this book.

But the most shocking thing in studying Josiah was these 8 words... *I have found the Book of the Law...*

Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the LORD'S Temple!" Then Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and he read it. Shaphan went to the king and reported, "Your officials have turned over the money collected at the Temple of the LORD to the workers and supervisors at the Temple." Shaphan also told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll." So Shaphan read it to the king.

2 Kings 22:8-10 (NLT)

- The book of Law was a reference to the first 5 books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch.. *pente* means 5 and *teuch* means scroll...

The very people who were called the people of the book lost the book. And it's not just like they left one of their copies. They lost all the copies...

Now, it's important to note. Manasseh, one of the most wicked kings of Judah and Josiah's grandfather, more than likely got rid of the copies, or destroyed them, or hid them...

It is traditionally identified with Deuteronomy, though probably not the whole book, since it was read twice in one day (2 Kings 22:8, 10). . . One of the strongest links with Deuteronomy is its repeated references to a Book of the Law.

But this was the one thing they were called to keep at the center... Listen to what God told the people and Joshua as they moved into the Promised Land!

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

Joshua 1:7-8 (NLT)

This was the one thing they were supposed to do...

- Notice, *meditate on it day and night...* and *only then...* don't meditate on a road map, history book, or an instruction manual... a weapon...

You ever said the phrase, *you have one job to do!* They had one job: to keep the Word of God, to meditate on it.

The Center for Bible Engagement conducted a study of 650,000 people on how daily Scripture reading affects our lives.

For those who read Scripture only once a week, there was almost no effect or change. The impact on those who read it two or three times a week was negligible. But what they found when someone engages with the Bible four or more times a week was astounding! Those people are:

- 228% more likely to share their faith with others.
- 407% more likely to memorize Scripture.
- 59% less likely to view pornography.
- And at least 30% less likely to struggle with loneliness, anxiety or depression.

When the Word and not the world becomes the majority of your week, your life will begin to change.

Meditation

Eastern- means emptying your mind... you are clearing your mind

Western- is about solving problems. It's intellect.

Biblical meditation is about filling your mind with the words of God... This was the one thing they were told to do... and now, not only are they not doing it... they have lost the Word of God.

And maybe the most crazy thing to me is where they lost it... they lost it in the Temple, in the house of the Lord. It wasn't in a cave or a battle or in a big move... it was lost in God's house.

This is why I say that the greatest threat isn't animosity. It's apathy towards the book.

"Go to the Temple and speak to the LORD for me and for all the remnant of Israel and Judah. Inquire about the words written in the scroll that has been found. For the LORD'S great anger has been poured out on us because our ancestors have not obeyed the word of the LORD. We have not been doing everything this scroll says we must do."

2 Chronicles 34:21 (NLT)

King Josiah exclaimed, "Great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the Word of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 34:21). Josiah understood the Scripture's preventive cure for moral sickness. He began to apply its spiritual truths, and soon, a revival swept the land that restored the nation's spiritual health. When we neglect the reading of God's Word, we invite spiritual illness.

There are churches and homes where Bibles are all around, and they are opened, they are studied, and they aren't central.

Listen, if you are at a church that isn't preaching the Bible, run, and sadly, today, there are churches that aren't. But you must also make sure the Bible isn't lost in your home...

When I was a youth pastor, I had parents who came up to me, frustrated their kids weren't changing. And they would say, *listen, I drop my kid off every week, but he or she isn't really changing...*

The point is, I have to make sure the Word of God is held up each Sunday that it isn't lost in God's house... and you need Sunday time to gather and encourage... but you have to make sure the Word of God isn't lost in your own house.

My wife reads a Bible story right before dinner or bedtime... it doesn't have to be a big thing. It's just saying, *hey, this is central in our house.*

To keep Jesus at the center, we must keep the Bible at the center.

When you find the Word of God, you find Jesus. John 1, *Jesus who is the Word*, is the prime subject of the Word. It's all about Him.

2. The Bible's primary purpose is to TRANSFORM us, not just to inform us.

(2 Kings 22:11. C/R: 2 Kings 23:1-3; Jeremiah 23:29; 1 Corinthians 8:1; James 1:22-24)

When the king heard what was written in the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes in despair.

2 Kings 22:11 (NLT)

Notice that Josiah doesn't just have an intellectual response. Notice what he does: He tears his clothes... This is a sign of repentance; it's a sign of remorse.

See, when you read the Bible, the Bible is reading you... it's shaping and transforming you...

"Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

Jeremiah 23:29 (NIV)

And what's sobering to me is the Bible says Josiah, at 16, had committed to God, but transformation really comes when we get in the presence of God.

But knowledge puffs up while love builds up.

1 Corinthians 8:1b (NIV)

So, if we are reading the Bible correctly, it doesn't give us a bigger head; it gives us a bigger heart. It transforms us...

Most of us understand that we can know the Word of God and not love God... demons are like this; Satan quotes Scripture... but we can love God and not truly know His word... it's a dangerous place to be, but Josiah was there... he didn't know the Word...

But when he got in the word it got in him, it transformed him...

Josiah was transformed when getting in the Word. But here's what's important: when you read the Word, you also have to respond to the Word.

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

James 1:22-24 (NKJV)

It says male because women don't look at a mirror and quickly turn away...

Women hung out with multiple mirrors. There's the bathroom mirror, the vanity mirror... there's a half mirror that allows you to look back at the vanity mirror, there is a full body mirror, and there is a car mirror... I will have to say that I have seen countless women put on makeup at a stop light with a car mirror, but I did see a man the other

day... shaving in the car vanity mirror. He had shaving cream and everything. But women even have a mirror in their purse.

Women don't quickly turn away. They hang out in front of the mirror. James says, when it comes to God's Word, don't be like a man, be like a woman. (I guess women are more godly... self-absorbed, but godly.)

Do me a favor; look at your face right now... go ahead and do it.

The only way to know what you look like is through a mirror. The mirror tells you what you look like... and the mirror doesn't lie... the Bible is a mirror. The Bible doesn't lie to you. It shows you who you are... (I used to work out, and I thought, *this is good*. And then I saw myself, *oh, this isn't good*.)

Because the Bible doesn't just inform you, it transforms you.

So let me give one practical thing to do to allow this book to transform you...

Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. And the king went up to the house of the LORD, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great. 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. And the king stood by the pillar 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 this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant.

2 Kings 23:1-3 (ESV)

I read this to you in the ESV because where in the ESV it says *walk* in verse 3, it says *obey* in NLT...

But I like this word *walk* better. This is a Hebrew *yālak* (haw-lak), and one of its top definitions is to go or walk...

This is important when we read this book. We always focus on his work—and he does a ton... but where does he get the strength and power to do these things?

Here's what I believe: he learned to walk with God...

The Bible helps us walk with God. It helps us know Him.

Did you know it never mentions running with God? It always talks about walking with God.

Our lives are fast-paced and always moving, but we have to learn to slow down and walk with God. This transformed my life.

In fact, I think about it like this... the Bible and our time with God help us to go slow so that we can run fast.

In life, we don't like to walk. We like to run; we like to hurry. Every time I'm at the airport, and I'm on one of those moving walkways, I always look down on the people who are walking slowly... I'm maximizing my time...

But here's the thing, the average person walks 3.1 miles an hour... so let's just say God walks at 3.1 miles an hour... if you are going 7 miles an hour, you are ahead of God....

And, some of you can grab the Bible, and your mind is at 3.1 miles an hour, your heart isn't there... you're ahead of God... and God wants to teach you to slow down and walk with Him...

And if you're meeting with Him every once in a while, and picking up this book occasionally, there you're behind Him. He's not a 2 miles an hour... almost everyone who says they feel disconnected, I will ask them how their time with God is, and you know what I find out? They are stagnant. They've stopped moving...

It's all about getting in this book, letting God speak and learning to walk with Him... You will find more freedom, and you will also find you have more wisdom, and supernaturally, because you are operating in the strength of God, you will get more done.