

Teaching for 9-24-08

Seeking the Real Answers

Our world is seeking. Seeking answers and seeking peace. We are seeking solutions for personal problems and for the ills of our society, our country and our world. On a human worldly level, we seek for peace with our resources, our political platforms, through legislation and a myriad of other attempts to try to “build” that peace ourselves. Others seek to draw attention to their needs through demonstrations and protests. However, our track record is not very encouraging when it comes to establishing peace through our own human initiatives.

An Historical Example

Often we talk about revival and the need for revival in our own country. One of the greatest examples of a national revival is found in 2 Chronicles 14-15. It is an amazing and encouraging story of King Asa who, through his faithfulness to the Lord, called his nation to repentance and is an example to those who desire solutions to the many needs of our society. The story of Asa is a story of dealing with the evils of society (14:3-4;15:8) and building up the cities to be strong and safe places (14:5-7). But most of all, Asa is an example of a leader who led his people to seek the Lord. He led by example resulting in peace and revival for his county.

A Word of Encouragement

In 2 Chronicles 15, the Lord sent the prophet Azariah to Asa with a word of encouragement. Azariah said to Asa, *The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you* (vs. 2). *But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded* (vs. 7). This word encouraged Asa. Verse 7 says he took courage and continued the work of cleansing the land of idols and repaired the altar of the Lord (vs.8). Asa assembled the people together and challenged them. Verse 12 says that they *entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and soul. Then, those assembled, took an oath to the Lord with loud acclamation, with shouting and with trumpets and horns. All Judah rejoiced about the oath because they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the Lord gave them rest on every side* (vs. 14-15). Can you imagine what it would look like if we were to trust the Lord in that way? The Lord would give us peace on every side.

Taking It Seriously

The principles are the same for us today. The Word of God gives us clear examples and teaching regarding how to deal with our present circumstances. Asa was told, *If you seek him, he will be found by you*. The New Testament gives us the same truth. In James 4:7-8 we read, *Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you*. That passage in James is a clear call to serious repentance and commitment. The context of the passage is the fact that fights and quarrels come from our own unrepentant selfish hearts. It is a clear call to, *Grieve, mourn and wail, change your laughter to mourning and*

your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up (James 4:9-10). God is looking today for those who, like Asa, will have hearts that are *fully committed to the Lord all his life* (2 Chronicles 15:17). This call to repentance and commitment to the Lord is not *Plan B* for us to fall back on in case our other political and social plans don't work out. It is a real time call to the people of God today, to make up our minds regarding the allegiance of our hearts. It is a call in this hour of our lives and of our history to be *fully committed to the Lord* .

Guard Your Heart

Unfortunately, the story of Asa does not end well. 2 Chronicles 16 records that later in his life, Asa compromised and fell back into the efforts to try to make peace with human, fleshly efforts. Even when confronted, Asa became angry and lashed out in the flesh. It was a sad ending to the life of this otherwise great king. In verse 12, we read, *Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians*. This is a sobering reminder for us to guard our hearts from straying away from that wholehearted trust and commitment to the truth that the Lord is our only strength and help. It was in the context of this sad ending of his life that we read this amazing word in verse 9, *For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him*.

God is looking for hearts that are fully committed to him so that He can strengthen them. Will you be one of those that He finds? Are you willing to join the ranks of those who totally commitment to return to the Lord, trust Him fully, and follow Him completely? The promise is still true, *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sins, and heal their land* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Believe Him, trust Him, and commit yourself to Him today. Then pray that our leadership will do the same. This is **the real answer** to the needs of our lives, our families, our cities and our country.