

Stand Firm in the Lord – 2 Chronicles 34:1-13

Lessons from the Life of Josiah:

1. We should stand firm by overcoming our parent's sin – Read vs. 1 & 2

- a. Josiah was 8 when he began to reign. How would an 8 year old run an entire kingdom!?!
 - b. He had a choice:
 - i. Do it like dad did it
 - ii. Do it like God wants me to
- c. Josiah's parents and grandparents passed down to him sin that could have destroyed Josiah's legacy.
 - i. The sin that was being handed down to Josiah started with his grandfather named Manasseh. READ 33:1-5
 1. At the end of his life, Manasseh turned from these practices and came back to God.
 2. But the sin still passed down to his son, Josiah's father.
 - ii. We read about Josiah's dad who was named Amon at the end of chapter 33. We find that Amon did even worse than his own father had done. In other words, Amon never repented and even killed his own kids in sacrifice to false gods. Verse 23 says that Amon increased his guilt so much that his own people had him killed!
 - iii. Josiah could have followed in his daddy's footsteps. His father was so bent on following other gods that Josiah had watched his brothers and sisters die. His parents were serious about their religion. Josiah could have believed that he would be dishonoring his parent's religion if he didn't follow in their practices.
- d. These two men were Josiah's example. They were telling Josiah to just get along with the surrounding nations by doing what they did. Josiah's father and grandfather taught him to be tolerant. Don't judge the people who worship other gods. Don't stand up for these old notions of following God – God to his fathers was just a good story you tell the kiddies.
- e. Josiah had two generations of sin coming at him and yet he chose to overcome this sin by doing what was right in the sight of the Lord. Josiah chose to stand firm by overcoming his father's sin!

- f. There are a lot of things that we pass down to our kids: the color of our eyes, the color of their hair, the size of their feet, etc. But we also pass down the size of our faith, OR the size of our sin.
- g. We have to understand that sin can be passed down generationally:
 - i. God tells us in Deuteronomy 5:9 (Message) - *Don't bow down to the false gods and don't serve them because I am God, your God, and I'm a most jealous God. I hold parents responsible for any sins they pass on to their children to the third, and yes, even to the fourth generation.*
- h. Sin can be passed down. We all know that if a father drinks, then his son is more likely to be an alcoholic. BUT there are a ton of sins that parents pass down to their kids:
 - i. I'm not just talking about the obvious like drugs, alcohol, and substance abuse. Sins that can be passed down include:
 1. Anger problems
 2. Mistreatment of your spouse and family
 3. Greed & Selfishness
 4. Purity and lust
 5. Co-dependency
 6. False or stale religion
- i. These sins and countless others can be passed down from generation to the next. It becomes a cycle – happening over and over again! There is no hope unless one generation decides to not do what their parents did, but to stand firm in the Lord!
- j. I don't know about you, but I don't want my children to struggle with the same sins that I struggle with! In fact, I don't want the sins of my own father to be past down to me. I have enough to struggle with! I want the cycle broken!
- k. How do you do it? How do you break the cycle? It says in the next verse – READ vs. 3a. Josiah was 16 when he began to seek the Lord and this is how he overcame his father's sin! He sought the Lord!
- l. The same choice is yours. You can continue in the sins that were passed down to you, or you can seek the Lord and stand firm!

2. We should stand firm by being offensive

- a. Josiah was 20 when he began to be offensive – Read vs. 3b-7

- b. Josiah got radical! Josiah was not tolerant of these other religions. He saw the destruction that came when people followed these false practices. He saw women used as sex objects in the name of religion, families waste their money and gold on false idols, people cut themselves to get their god's approval, and he even saw his own brothers and sisters die at the hands of these false gods.
- c. You see, in Josiah's time, the very temple of God was desecrated in the name of tolerance! False gods and immoral practices were being set up in God's house. Josiah saw a time when God's temple was being desecrated for the profane. He couldn't take it any more!
- d. Josiah went on the offensive and stood firm!
- e. I want you to know that the word "offensive" has a double meaning:
 - i. Offensive can mean to be aggressive, to move forward – for example: offense in sports
 - ii. Offensive also has a negative light – confrontational, in your face, pushy, get under someone's skin, rub someone's nerves the wrong way, and make people around you uncomfortable.
 - iii. I believe that to stand firm we must be offensive in both senses of the word.
 - iv. Jesus said it best: Luke 6:26 - *Woe to you when all men speak well of you.*
- f. We have to go on the offensive - We just can't wait for people to come into our churches. We have to go out and share the love of Christ!
 - i. There ought to be someone who is sick of you – they leave when you come into the room
 - ii. They are sick of you talking about the church moving forward, holiness, really growing in the Lord, giving, etc.
- g. Who have you offended lately? OR are you busy being liked?
- h. Looked at how they treated some of the prophets of God:
 - i. The prophets were told to tone down their message, to not get all firey in their preaching. The prophets were persecuted for their message, imprisoned, stoned to death, starved to death, beaten to death, and killed in numerous ways.
 - ii. In fact, the prophet Jeremiah was lashed and then thrown into a dirty pit so his sores would get infected.

- i. We must remember that the cross exists not because Jesus was accepted, but because Jesus was offensive!
- j. We must run the risk of being offensive if we are going to be like Jesus!
 - i. We have forgotten our heritage. Our Christian forefathers were burnt, beaten, scourged, mocked, killed, and even thrown to the lions for going on the offensive for Jesus! They were killed because they were offensive to the other religions!
 - ii. We sit in our sanctuaries and wait for the world to come to us! We should go out and tell the world that Jesus saves!
 - iii. Listen, Satan is still ruling, the devil is still busy: sinners are still sinning, souls are still lost, the prisons are crowded, people are still on drugs, alcohol still controls lives! Divorce rates are as high as marriage rates, suicide is too common, and depression seems to be the norm. We need to be aggressive like Josiah was.
- k. Why should you be offensive and aggressive about the message of Christ?
 - i. Because He was offensive and aggressive to get you! God didn't stay in heaven to wait for you to come to Him!
- l. Be disturbing – go forward – don't wait, move – tear up the grown to make it ready for the seeds - make someone wish you had not come – **STAND FIRM IN THE LORD!**

3. We should stand firm by building up God's house

- a. When Josiah went on the offensive, he realized that he needed a defense. He needed the Lord to be His defense, His strong tower. He saw that the Lord's house, the Temple of God was in shambles. Josiah wanted to stand firm, but knew he had to fix this. 2 Chronicles tells us that Josiah was 26 when he began to rebuild the Temple. Read vs. 8-13
- b. Because of his father and grand-father, the Temple, the center of life for God's people, was in a huge mess. It had become a dumb, in ruins, and was on the verge of being a disaster site!
- c. Josiah took this rebuild seriously.
 - i. This passage tells us that he hired: skilled craftsmen, carpenters, stone workers, wood workers, temple-tax collectors, doorkeepers (security officers), priests, accountants, crew foremen, site supervisors, secretaries, scribes, and whole lot more!
 - ii. There were even musicians who were hired that would pace the temple as people worked. It was like having a radio on at work – and Josiah made sure the workers had live musicians instead! He paid a hefty price to build up God's temple.

- d. What is so big about the temple?
- i. Verse 8 tells us that the temple was to be repaired so that the land could be purified.
 - ii. By building up God's house, the people could worship again.
 - iii. By truly worshipping again, the people could connect to God again
 - iv. By connecting to God again, the people and the whole land of Israel would be pure again.
- e. Do you want Cerro Gordo to be pure and right? Do you want the families in Cerro Gordo to have a chance? Do you have hope for Cerro Gordo? Then just as Josiah did, build up God's house!
- i. First: be disturbed that the churches are not full. A whole generation is almost gone from our churches in Cerro Gordo. We need to build up God's house!
 - ii. Second, begin to build God's house up by evaluation what you personally give to the Lord:
 1. Ask God to show you if you should tithe. Ask God to show you if you should give an offering over your tithe. Give so that God's house can be built up.
 2. But don't think that God doesn't want your time and talent too – give 3 hours a week: one hour of Bible Study, one hour of ministry, and one hour of worship – yes, build it up by making it a decision to go to church EVERY week.
 3. Once you have what you will give down, then...
 - iii. Build up God's house by sharing your faith with others! We can not be content that over half of Cerro Gordo does not have a relationship with Jesus. We must stand firm as Josiah did and build up God's house.

Just as Josiah did:

1. We should stand firm by overcoming our father's sin
2. We should stand firm by being offensive
3. We should stand firm by building up God's house

Terry is going to share with you what happened when Josiah began to stand firm.

Josiah found something that was wonderful!

- When Josiah stood firm by overcoming his parent's sin, the Lord brought a direct message that revolutionized an entire nation!
- When Josiah stood firm by going on the offensive, the Lord opened his eyes to what was really going on. The Lord gave him a direct revelation on how to really worship!
- When Josiah stood firm by building up God's house, the Lord stood by Josiah by allowing him to find something special in the Temple.

Here is Terry Leach to share with you what happened when Josiah stood firm!

After Terry:

Take My Life – Favorite Hymns of Praise # 388