

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

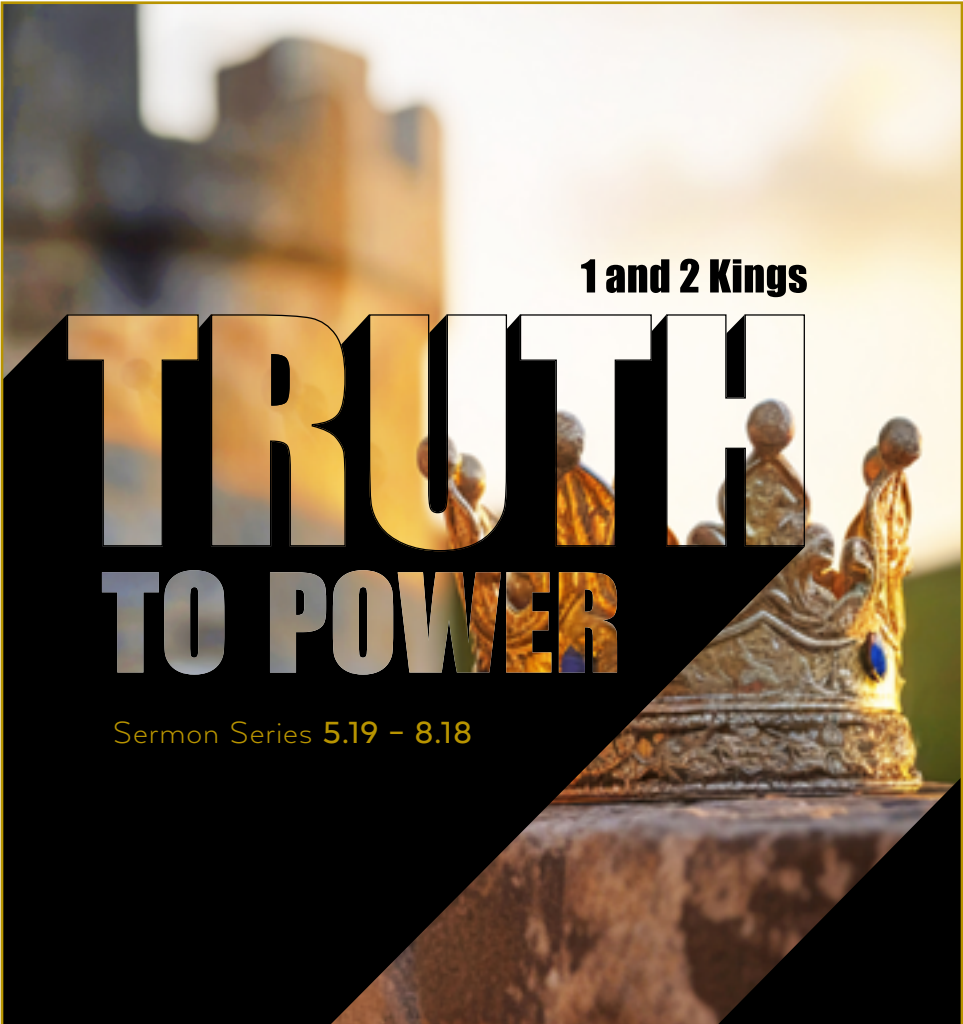
DEVO

AUGUST 12 - 16, 2024

1 and 2 Kings

TRUTH TO POWER

Sermon Series 5.19 - 8.18





Read **2 Kings 22:1-10; Psalm 19:7-14**

Josiah's Dedication to God

Josiah was king of Judah after Israel was split into two kingdoms. His reign is noted for doing what was right in the eyes of God, following in the way of King David (2 Kings 22:2). Despite David's sins, he kept God's covenant and delighted in studying God's law, as we read in Psalm 19. Israel's kings were supposed to follow God and keep the covenant. Yet, of the forty kings who reigned over Israel and Judah, only eight were said to have done this. David and Josiah are among these few faithful rulers.

Josiah's story is particularly striking because, despite his commitment to God, he faced a significant disadvantage. The Book of the Law, outlining Israel's legal, moral, and religious obligations, had been lost for some time. This loss posed a critical challenge: how could Josiah keep the covenant and lead the nation per God's laws without having the laws to reference?

Today's passage shows that Josiah's heart was inclined toward God. Clearly his upbringing played a crucial role in his faithfulness. Verse 1 mentions his mother, Jedidah, who likely instilled in him a love for God. Josiah's story is also told in 2 Chronicles 34:3-7, where we learn that young Josiah sought after God and purged the kingdom

of idolatry by tearing down the altars to other gods. Josiah's actions demonstrate that even without the written law, he had a relationship with God that guided his decisions and leadership.

In 2 Kings 22, we learn that Josiah initiated repairs to the temple, during which the high priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law. This discovery was monumental. The Law had been lost and forgotten for an extended, unspecified period of time. Based on the historical context, it is plausible that the book had been missing for several decades or even longer.

Today the Book of the Law for the people of Israel is often referred to as the Torah, which includes the first five books of the Bible penned by Spirit-inspired Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Book of the Law discovered during King Josiah's reign is generally understood to refer specifically to Deuteronomy or parts of it.

QUESTIONS

Reflect on your journey of faith. Who has most influenced your spiritual walk? Reflect on Josiah's dedication to God, even from a young age. Have you ever felt such eagerness to follow God? What difference did that eagerness make in your life?

PRAYER

African Enterprises (AE)

Pray for Brian Mugwidi and the AE Zimbabwe Team as they prepare for an evangelistic mission to the capital of Harare in September. Pray that pastors would be united and that people's hearts would be open to receiving the Gospel and putting their lives in the hands of Jesus.



Read **2 Kings 22:10-13**; **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

The Centrality of God's Word

In year eighteen of King Josiah's reign, high priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law in the temple. When the book was read aloud to Josiah, he was profoundly moved. Josiah tore his clothes in anguish, realizing how far the kingdom had strayed from God's covenant.

The rediscovery of the Law illuminated the true condition of Judah. It was a mirror reflecting their disobedience, a beacon guiding them back to righteousness. For Josiah, it wasn't enough simply to hear the Word; it compelled him to action. He sought further understanding, immediately implementing reforms to align Judah with God's statutes.

Josiah's reaction underscores the centrality of God's Word in instructing and guiding our lives. The king's immediate response to hearing the Law was deeply sorrowful repentance. His torn garments reflected his inner turmoil and recognition of how far they had strayed from God. This is a powerful reminder of the reverence we should hold for God's Word and our appropriate humility when confronted with our own shortcomings.

This story also illustrates the transformative power of Scripture when it is central in our lives. As Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3, God's Word serves not only as instruction, but also as a guide for our

daily living. Like Josiah, we must approach Scripture with hearts ready to be changed. It is easy to become complacent, to allow the noise of the world to drown out God's voice. Yet, Scriptures provide the wisdom to navigate life's challenges, the strength to overcome struggles, and often the direction for our lives.

In a world of distractions and conflicting messages, the Bible remains our unwavering foundation. It calls us to examine our lives, to recognize where we have strayed, and to return to Jesus with sincere repentance. Josiah's story is a testament to the impact of rediscovering God's Word and the revival it can bring to our hearts and communities.

May we, like Josiah, be deeply moved by God's Word, allowing it to transform us and guide us back to faithfulness. Make the Bible central in your life, not just as a book to be read periodically. It is the living Word of God that instructs, convicts, and leads us into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

QUESTIONS

When was the last time you felt convicted by God's Word and how did you respond? Paul says in 2 Timothy that Scripture is useful in teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training. How is Scripture useful in these ways?

PRAYER

African Enterprises (AE)

Pray for the AE South Africa Board to have wisdom about the way forward in a country that is 80% black and has been rife with corruption but has just experienced an encouraging breakthrough election where the formerly dominant African National Congress party lost its 30-year-long majority.



WEDNESDAY

Read **2 Kings 22:13-20; Psalm 103:6-12**

God's Justice and Mercy

King Josiah, deeply troubled by the words of the Book of the Law, sent his officials to seek God's guidance. Here we encounter a profound moment of prophecy through the prophetess Huldah. God's message was twofold: (1) a declaration of judgment due to the people's persistent disobedience and (2) a promise of mercy for Josiah because of his genuine repentance and humility. This passage beautifully illustrates God's justice and mercy (2 Kings 22:13-20).

This prophecy conveyed that God's justice is inevitable. This is music to the ears of those who have experienced injustice, but worrisome to the unjust. Judah had forsaken God and the life they were called to live—not only once, but continually. The consequences of their disobedience were imminent, reminding us that our God is a God of Justice.

Yet, intertwined with this message of judgment was a profound promise of mercy. Because of Josiah's heartfelt response—his tearing of clothes, weeping, and humble spirit—God would spare him from witnessing the disaster. Josiah's humility and repentance were not merely external acts but a deep, sincere return to God. His actions reflected a heart that was truly broken over idolatry; he earnestly sought to restore the people's covenant relationship

with God. Josiah's genuine repentance moved God's heart. God promised Josiah peace during his lifetime, showcasing that while God's justice is firm, God's mercy abounds for those sincerely seeking Him.

This balance of justice and mercy recurs throughout Scripture, as we see in Psalm 103. God is just, and God's love and compassion are boundless. For us, this duality offers assurance. We will not always get everything "right." We will mess up and fail, but if we ask for forgiveness and try again, God is faithful to extend mercy and grace.

As we reflect on 2 Kings 22:13-20, let us be reminded of the importance of humility and repentance in our walk with God. Let us not take God's grace for granted but approach God with reverence and a sincere desire to align our lives with the way God has called us to live. Our God is always ready to extend mercy to those who earnestly seek Him.

QUESTIONS

How does the idea of God's justice influence your understanding of God's character? What are some ways you see God's justice being upheld in your life or in the world around you? Reflect on a time when you experienced God's mercy in your life. How did that impact you?

PRAYER

African Enterprises (AE)

Pray for Benson Baguma and the AE Team in Uganda as they are uniting church leaders for an evangelistic mission to the city of Soroti at the end of September this year. Please pray for sufficient funding for this mission and AE's other outreaches through the rest of this year.



Read **Jeremiah 1:4-9; Deuteronomy 18:18-19**

The Role of a Prophet

The job of God's prophets is not to say what the kings want to hear, but to speak God's words to the people.

The role of a prophet is often daunting, requiring the courage to speak truth to power. We have seen the way prophets were called upon to speak important truths from God to kings throughout this sermon series. We also see the role of a prophet outlined in the call of Jeremiah to be a prophet of God in today's reading.

In 2 Kings 22, prophetess Huldah delivered a sobering message of impending judgment due to Judah's disobedience. This could not have been easy! But she did not shy away from conveying the full weight of God's word. This is central to the role of a true prophet, truthfully relaying God's message, regardless of the consequences. Prophets are not fortune tellers, but are called to be God's mouthpieces, delivering messages enabling repentance, transformation, and restoration.

God's word through Huldah was twofold: a warning of imminent judgment and a promise of mercy for Josiah due to his humble and repentant heart. This balanced message highlights the complex nature of prophetic ministry—addressing sin and guiding the community back to faithfulness. Prophetic voices are essential

in helping communities navigate the complexities of life, calling them back to God's standards while also offering hope and a vision of God's mercy.

Today the importance of prophetic voices remains vital. In our communities, churches, and nations, we need individuals who, like Huldah, are deeply connected to God and committed to speaking God's truth with boldness and clarity. These voices help guide and correct us, calling us to examine our ways, repent, and return to a faithful relationship with God. They remind us of God's justice and mercy, urging us to live lives that honor our commitment to Jesus.

As we reflect on Huldah's story, let us be inspired by her faithfulness and courage. May we seek to be attuned to God's voice, ready to speak God's message of love and humility. May we value and heed the prophetic voices around us, allowing them to guide us closer to God's heart.

QUESTIONS

Reflect on a time when you received a message that required you to change. How did you handle it and what was the outcome? How do you perceive the balance of God's justice and mercy in your own life? In what ways can you emulate this balance when interacting with others, especially in situations requiring correction or guidance?

PRAYER

African Enterprises (AE)

Pray for AE's Gospel outreach in North Africa via local partners there. Pray that people who have grown up as Muslims would be eager to hear of Christ's love for them and about the grace and forgiveness that He offers them. Pray that they would be safe once they become Christians.



Read **Galatians 3:26-28; Joel 2:28-29**

Women in Ministry

When the Book of the Law was found, King Josiah instructed his priests and officials to inquire of God about it (2 Kings 22:12-13). Although renowned prophets of the time included Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:2-3) and Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:1), Josiah's priests and officials sought Huldah the prophetess. Huldah's selection reveals her esteemed position and renowned faithfulness among the people, illustrating a profound truth: God calls both men and women to public ministry.

Huldah is one of many female prophets found in the Bible, including Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Anna (Luke 2:36-38), and the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8-9). In addition to female prophets, we see numerous examples throughout Scripture of women who were called and used significantly by God: Esther saved God's people from genocide, Mary Magdalene was the first to preach the Gospel (John 20:1-18; Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:1-12), Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus as the Messiah (John 12), Mary of Nazareth birthed the Savior (Luke 1-2), Tabitha a disciple was known for her good works (Acts 9:36-42), Priscilla a pastor corrected false teaching (Acts 18:24-28), Lydia and Nympha hosted house churches (Acts 16:11-15; Colossians 4:15), Joanna and Suzanna were disciples who traveled with Jesus (Luke 8:1-3), Junia was an apostle (Romans 6:7), Phoebe was a deacon (Romans 16:1-2). There are many

more. These examples, along with Huldah's story, demonstrates that God calls both men and women to diverse and meaningful ministries.

Today we often hear discussions about "biblical manhood" and "biblical womanhood," implying that Scripture prescribes distinct and rigid roles for men and women. These conversations often have the goal of convincing us that women are not called to leadership as men are. However, the diverse, and multifaceted callings bestowed upon the women of the Bible offer a richer, more nuanced perspective. Their varied roles and contributions reveal that God does indeed call both women and men to ministry. A truly biblical view of womanhood is actually broad and varied.

As we reflect on Huldah's story, let's encourage and support one another, recognizing the unique contributions each person brings to the body of Christ. May we strive to create a community where all can serve and lead according to God's call.

QUESTIONS

How does Huldah's story challenge or affirm your understanding of women's roles in ministry? How have you seen women's diverse gifts and callings recognized in your church or community? How do the various ministries of women in the Bible influence your view of gender and ministry today?

PRAYER

African Enterprises (AE)

Pray for AE's South Sudan Team Leader, Alex Billal, and for their mission to the capital of Juba at the end of October. Pray that peace would remain in this war-torn country and that AE's Team would be able to bring the Gospel and the healing that comes with it to people who have been traumatized.



Sources

- The Junia Project advocates for the equality of women in the church, home, and society. Information can be found at www.juniaproject.com.
- Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) “exists to promote biblical justice and community by educating Christians that the Bible calls women and men to share authority equally in service and leadership in the home, church, and world.” (CBE Mission Statement) Information can be found at www.cbeinternational.org.

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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