

## 2 Chronicles 23-24

I was talking yesterday with Russ and Shannon about the various dimensions of the will of God. And that conversation was spurred on by another conversation that had taken place with regard to the Biblical counseling overview conference that some of us had attended over the weekend. But we realize that mankind has freewill, we also realize there is a general will of God or what might be referred to as God's moral will. Areas of flexibility whereby when it comes to various paths we take, or decisions we make as long as we don't violate the clear cut parameters of the Word of God there's all kinds of freedom to do whatever we may feel so inclined to do.

However there's also a very real aspect of God's will that we might refer to as God's sovereign will, areas of which are non-negotiable with God. Try as we may these particular things are impossible to thwart. For instance God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance; the bible is very clear about that. However that's not in His *sovereign* will or else everyone would be saved. It *is* apart of His moral will, however there's freedom for man to flex with in His moral will so that you don't have to give your heart to Christ and be saved, you can choose to opt out of that. But the plan of God for salvation is non-negotiable; it is in God's sovereign will that salvation comes by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross; period. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and no one come to the Father except through Him. And when it comes to man's freewill Vs God's sovereignty we could spend all kinds of time discussing the various aspects of each of those and how they apply to us as humanity. But for now all I'm seeking to emphasize is that there are areas of freedom in God's will, and there are non-negotiable areas of God's will that in His sovereignty He has established. Some of those things we discover as we simply go through life, we seek to go a certain direction, God closes the door and through that His sovereign will for us in that situation is revealed. The bible says, "*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*" Prov 25:2 We're searching, seeking and sometimes the door is open, sometimes it's shut. But a significant chunk of God's sovereign *will* is revealed to us in God's *word*.

God is not a man that He should lie, if He's spoken it, it's going to happen. And one of the things that God had ordained in His sovereignty was that the Messiah was to come through the line of David. He'd made a covenant with David saying that He would build him a house and that David would not fail to have One established upon the throne forever in reference to Christ. Therefore the lineage of David would be safe and secure until at least the time of Christ. And it's a good thing that God had made that promise to David because Satan was doing everything he could to wipe David's line out and cut short the promise of God. But if God speaks it, it's going to be done. So although Athaliah upon hearing that her son had been killed, immediately rose up and killed off all of her grandchildren (Lovely grandma) so that she could rule and reign as the Queen mother in Judah/Jerusalem; God had made a promise to David. And so one little boy was saved alive; Joash.

A God fearing woman by the name of Jehoshabeath when she saw what Athaliah was doing grabbed young Joash who was only 1yr old and stowed him away in the temple under the tutelage of her husband Jehoiada the priest. They were technically an aunt and uncle to young Joash. So he had an opportunity much like Samuel who was raised in the temple to learn God's Word, God's ways, and from Vs 12 of Ch 22 to Vs 1 of Ch 23 6 yrs have gone by, and we read.

Vs1-7

It's difficult to imagine what kind of atmosphere was in the air here with all this going on. I have no doubt that there was an overflow of emotion in the hearts and minds of these men. For the last 6 yrs they've been under the impression that the lineage of David had been snuffed out, no one preserved to take the throne and so they had no choice really but to stay under the reign of Athaliah, king Ahaziah's mom. Then one day Jehoiada calls in these captains over the hundred's and he presents little Joash before them as a son of David. And he says, "God is true to His Word, and the king's son shall reign as the Lord has said of the sons of David." and I would imagine that these guys' jaws hit the floor, this was a dramatic moment to say the least.

And I don't want to make the spiritual stature of the nation to be more than what it was but this shows us that there was still a remnant in the land that had a heart to serve the Lord, God always has His remnant. Sometimes we get to feeling all alone, like no one else has a heart for God like we do, we get overwhelmed, overcome, you're not alone. God always has His remnant with a heart hungry for Him, seeking after Him, wanting to die to self and live for Him. And this just kinda tells you the wickedness of this lady, there was a minimum of hundreds of people aware of what was getting ready to take place yet not so much as a single person leaked the information to the Queen.

People had been serving under her reign because they didn't really realize there was another alternative, a king ready to rule and reign in righteousness. How often the same is true of this world, people being driven under the dominion of Satan simply because they don't know the reality of the alternative. That there is a King ready to reveal Himself to them, to rule and reign over them in righteousness; the question is how many of us are willing to take the chance becoming a "Jehoiada" as it were presenting to them the rightful King found in the Son of David, Jesus Christ? How easy it would've been for Jehoiada to simply remain in the shadows, not make a big scene, not take a chance, just let things play out.

But he didn't do that. He took a stand for righteousness, shared with these men and showed *to* these men their rightful ruler and king. And once they got a glimpse of him they were ready, willing and eager to serve him, give their allegiance to him. And so Jehoiada devised a plan; on the Sabbath when the temple guard would normally change shifts they were going to retake the throne. And the reason the Sabbath made for a good day is because there would be twice as many guards available (because he wouldn't dismiss the 1<sup>st</sup> guards) and the commotion around the temple wouldn't be suspicious.

And he placed 1/3 of the guards at the various doors, 1/3 to guard the king's house there in the temple (where he'd been staying these yrs) and 1/3 at the Gate of the Foundation. And anyone outside of the priests or Levites who served that sought to breach the parameter was to be immediately put to death. And then in Vs 7 we see the 1<sup>st</sup> secret service detail as the Levites surrounded the king on every side with dark glasses and wireless receivers in their ears. And they were to be with him 24/7, they were armed and ready to roll, and again should anyone enter the house, they were to shoot 1<sup>st</sup> and ask questions later.

Vs8-11

I think it's pretty appropriate (And pretty cool to) that Jehoiada utilized the weapons that belonged to David to form a protective hedge about Joash in restoring the throne to the sons of David. And these were really testimonies to God's past faithfulness; God had granted them victory in the past and that would help encourage their faith for the present moment. And that's one reason that I think it's good to share our testimony with people when the time is appropriate.

Often times on our 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday evening of the month when we set aside a time for prayer, worship, edifying and encouraging one another we'll get to hear not only prayer requests, but praise reports of what God has done, the victories that He's brought people in their lives. (And those of you who stay home that night you're missing some incredible times in the Lord). But be that as it may those things serve as some spears, shields both large and small that are reserved there in the inner chambers of your temple. And occasionally God will have us distribute those things, they remind us of the fact that God brought victory in the past and they arm people, equip people for perhaps a present situation, something they may be facing or will face one day.

So once they armed the guards they brought Joash out, crowned him, gave him the testimony (or a copy of the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of the bible), and then they anointed him and said, "Long live the king!" Now parents I think this is important; the kings of Israel were to always have a copy of God's Word; they were to read it daily and commit it to their heart so that they would remain humble and put to practice God's principles in the nation. But what I want you to take from this is that Jehoiada made sure that his 7 yr old (for all intents and purposes) son was given, and instructed in the ways and word of God. How important it is to be giving our kids a copy of the testimony, to be sharing with them the written word of God. You don't have to read to them in King James, age appropriate bibles are just fine, but get God's Word into them. Paul told Timothy, "*But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*" 2 Tim 3:14-15 That word "Childhood" there speaks literally of being yet unborn. The point being that there was never a time in his life whereby the word of God wasn't in some way, shape, or form being breathed into him, administered to him, prepping him, priming him for God's plan for his life. Get the testimony of God's word into the hands and the hearts of your kids.

I also think it's important to share our personal testimony with our children. Impart to them what it is that God has saved you from, how He made Himself real to you and changed your life, set your feet on solid ground and gave you hope and a fresh start in life. And that He wants to do the same thing for them.

God's not some make believe mythical character or fictitious figure like Santa Clause, or the big Genie in the sky, help them distinguish that. Share the Lord, lead them in the ways of the Lord, give them the Testimony, commit to them the word of God.

#### Vs12-13

Seems rather ironic doesn't it? For the woman who systematically murdered every one of her grandchildren so that she could rule on the throne to be crying out that she's being betrayed and is the victim of treason. In reality she's the one who was guilty of treason; all that Jehoiada is doing is restoring the throne to the rightful ruler. But somehow things appear a little different when the shoe is on the other foot. It's so easy to justify ourselves and accuse or judge others.

#### Vs14-17

Which was the appropriate response according to Deut 13:5 as one who had lead them into a false religion and idolatry. And really the climax here isn't the crowning of Joash so much as the recommitment to the Lord. There's a renewal taking place in the nation, and we see here some very practical things that go along with renewal. And the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that was realized/recognized was that there could be a commitment to only 1 who would rule and reign on the throne. And with that it wasn't even a simple *dethroning* of Athaliah and an *enthroning* of Joash. Athaliah was put to death, she was no longer an option, after this commitment to the king there was no looking back, no "I think I want to reconsider" she was dead.

And with respect to our commitment to Christ as the King of our lives there's to be no looking back. Jesus said, "*No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*" Luke 9:62 Once you commit to Christ you're to plow straight ahead, we're not to look back and wonder, "What if" or, "I wonder what would've..." we follow Christ; the end. There's no room for speculation, or conjecture with regard to other avenues, we belong to Him, we're committed to Him completely and whole heartedly. They put her to death, remember Paul told the Galatians that the world had been crucified to him, and he to the world. It was a non-option, that life/lifestyle was dead to him and he to it. And so in Vs 15 they dethrone and destroy what they were once given over to, in Vs 16 they commit to the Lord, and in Vs 17 they rid themselves of the reminders that might lead them astray, they're completely cleaning house. These are practical steps toward renewal in the Lord. If something has committed treason in your heart, taken the throne from the Lord, get rid of it, commit to Christ, crucify the flesh and clean house, do away with those things that seek to jockey for the priority of your heart.

#### Vs 18

2 Key phrases in this Vs pertaining to renewal. #1 "...as it is written in the Law of Moses," #2 "...w/rejoicing and with singing." What does that mean to you and me, #1 There was a return to God's Word, #2 There was a return to worship. If you and I are to be renewed when we've given the throne of our heart to another, or our heart has been usurped by another. It's got to be cast out and done away with, we've got to commit fresh to Christ, clean house and do away with those things pertaining to the flesh, that would lead us astray from our commitment to Christ, return to His word, re-establish our worship of Him.

### Vs19

Set up safeguards to keep yourself from slipping again, place a guard on the gate of your eyes, the things you're willing to allow in that are unclean. Set a guard on the gate of your mind, those things you're willing to entertain, the gate of your ears, what you're willing to take heed to and to listen to. Unhealthy, unedifying conversation or even outright slander and gossip, set up gatekeepers so that nothing that is in any way unclean should enter. You are the temple of the Living God, and as such we are to be holy, for the Lord our God is holy.

### Vs20-21

And a song rang throughout the land, "Ding dong the witch is dead, which old witch? The wicked witch, ding dong the wicked witch is dead!" The point here is that when God is on the throne in your heart, it's peace, rest, and rejoicing. When something, or someone else is it's strife, confusion, trouble and turmoil. 6yrs a usurper was on the throne, the 7 yr the true king emerged and rejoicing was heard throughout the land, and the city was quiet, the rightful ruler being on the throne. For about 6,000 yrs now there's been a usurper on the throne of this earth, Satan is the present prince of this world. The results? Strife, confusion, trouble, turmoil, sickness, disease, pestilence and poverty. But soon the rightful King will be revealed, the present ruler will be cast out and destroyed and in that 7<sup>th</sup> yr, that next millennium there will be peace, prosperity, solutions, rightness and wholeness. Rejoicing will fill the land and there will be peace on the earth.

## Ch 24

### Vs1-3

Now although comparatively 2 wives was conservative for kings in that day it still wasn't God's ordained plan. In the beginning He created them male and female, not male and females. So I'm of the opinion that even though Jehoiada was an incredibly godly man, this was a mistake.

I would imagine that in his heart he was making sure that the kind of women he had around him weren't anything like Athaliah, or of pagan persuasion. But to me this serves as another mark of the word of God as genuine because God records the flaws of His followers. It's the natural tendency to "White out" the mistakes of our lives. But God seeks to encourage us with the fact that these guys/gals recorded in His word weren't superhuman or more spiritual than you are or I am. The best of men are at best men. Elijah was used radically of God yet the bible records he was man of like passions to you and me. So Jehoiada grabs him a couple of wives (no doubt a # of yrs later, not when he was 7), but what I want you to see is found here in

Vs 2.

“Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest.” Not, “...all the days of his life.” But, “...all the days of Jehoiada the priest.” Meaning that as long as Jehoiada was around he did the right thing, but when Jehoiada was removed from the equation he didn’t have any fortitude or follow through and he fell from doing what was right in the sight of the Lord.

Vs4

For all intents and purposes the temple had been his home growing up, he was nurtured, protected and strengthened in that place. It’s no surprise then that he should have a heart for that place; want to see it in proper working order. We come here week after week, after month, after year and we’re nurtured and strengthened in this place; it’s only a natural overflow that we’d desire to invest ourselves as unto the Lord into the place that’s invested so much into us. Joash says, “Hey, the house of the Lord is in disrepair, there are needs there to be met, let’s tend to them.” If you see a need in the body of Christ, a place that could use a little (or perhaps a lot) of attention, set your heart on repairing that area, let the Lord use your life and be glorified through your life in that way.

Vs5-10

Joash said, “We’ve got to get this place whipped into shape.” and He told the Levites to take up a collection from the people so that they could reconstruct the temple in the areas it had need. However the Levites were slack, they didn’t do it. But here’s what I want you to see, Joash did say, “Well, fine if no one will do it I guess the need just won’t be met.” He had a burden, so *he* saw it through; he didn’t just slough off the responsibility because those around him wouldn’t enter into the labor with him. I don’t know how many times people have talked to me about their burdens and expressed a frustration because they can’t get *others* to see the need. But that’s because God has shown *them* the need, not others. If we’re all a hand who’s going to be the foot, if we’re all an eye, where’s the hearing? God will place a burden of evangelism on someone’s heart, a burden of discipleship on someone else’s, an administrative burden here, and a helps burden there. And together the body is seen collectively in its members individually. Joash had a burden, the Levites didn’t catch the vision so he pressed on with out them and God did the work.

They made an agape’ box so that people could bring their temple tax that God had commanded of the people there in Ex Ch 30. Which apparently hadn’t been received in a really long time, and we note in Vs 10 that all the leaders, and all the people *rejoiced*, brought their contributions and put them into the chest until all had given. God was moving on the hearts of the people and they were responding with rejoicing. Giving with gladness in their hearts unto the Lord, this is the way God desires that we give. W/gladness and rejoicing, *topped* out, not *bumped* out.

God doesn't desire that you see your giving as a burden, but as a blessing, we get to be apart of God's work on this earth. As we give to the Lord we make eternal investments that are going to pay off in huge dividends. The people rejoiced to be apart of what the Lord was doing.

#### Vs11-14

The people gave generously, the resources were administered diligently and carefully, good stewardship was shown and when it was done there was enough left over to go ahead and supply the temple with additional articles to help serve and make offerings before the Lord. And as long as Jehoiada was alive that's exactly what they did.

#### Vs15-16

The only "non-king" on record to have a royal funeral, this man was a great man and the people honored him and it was no doubt a sad day the day that he died. But in God's mercy He provided him with long life 130yrs, perhaps seeking to prolong as long as possible the inevitable that would follow his death.

#### Vs17-19

Joash seemed to be a very fundamentally weak individual, easily persuaded by whatever "pressure" he was under. As long as Jehoiada was alive, he honored him. When Jehoiada died and the other leaders came to him sought to flatter him, he honored them, no personal conviction of his own. And this is the danger of doing what we do to please man, and not God. Sometimes people want to please someone they consider significant in their lives so they'll do the right thing. Or perhaps a child wants to do right by mom or dad, so they'll restrain themselves, but when mom or dad isn't around there's no fortitude to follow through with what's right. They have what we might call a "peripheral" relationship with the Lord, but not a "personal" relationship with the Lord. They know what's right, and as long as the proper person is in front of them they'll do that, but when that person is removed from the picture, that restraint is lifted and they'll do whatever is necessary to be accepted before whomever stands before them. Charles Spurgeon said this, "All that Joash had done was to give his heart to Jehoiada, not to Jehovah. It is very easy to be outwardly religious by giving your heart to your mother, or your father, or your aunt, or your uncle, or some good person who helps you to do what is right. You are doing all this out of love to them, which is at best but a very secondary motive. God says, 'My son, give Me thine heart.'" He seemed to have great respect for his uncle, but he didn't truly know the Lord, knew about Him, but didn't know Him. So he didn't have the strength to stand on his own apart from Jehoiada. His faith was what we might refer to as "propped up" by his uncle, and when the prop was "knocked out" from under him, he fell. It's so important to cultivate a "personal" relationship with the Lord. Every other foundation will fall, the only one that will leave you standing after the storm comes is the one that's established on Jesus Christ Being a hearer and a *doer* of His Word.

So these guys come and bow before him, start flattering him, and ultimately work ruin in him. Be careful when people start "bowing" before you, working flattery before you. The bible says, "*A man who flatters his neighbor Spreads a net for his feet.*" Prov 29:5

It'll serve as a snare to you; and again, "*A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin.*" Prov 26:28 The prophets came to him, sought to warn him, but he didn't have ears to hear. He listened *not* to the prophets, but to the ungodly.

#### Vs 20-22

Nice way to repay the man who saved your life isn't it? By killing his son. Zechariah comes to him and says, "Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper?" The application seems obvious enough, there's no profit in violating/transgressing the word of God. Nothing fruitful comes of it, draw near to God and He'll draw near to you, forsake Him and He'll honor that as well, He'll with draw from you.

And so bad we want to see Joash repent, but instead he rebels and he has Zechariah murdered in the court of the house of the Lord. And unlike Stephen who asked the Lord not to hold their sins against them as they were stoning him, Zechariah simply says, "Vengeance belongs to the Lord, He'll repay."

So God sent him warnings, repeated warnings, he didn't repent, now what? Judgment. God gives to man a time to repent, how much time is found in the resolve of His sovereign will. But there comes a time when at man's refusal to repent, though the warning has come, judgment must fall.

#### Vs23-24

Not only is it nothing for God to *save* by many or by few, it's also nothing for Him to execute judgment by many or by few. The Syrians came against them with a relatively small army, but they overtook Judah's enormous army because God's judgment was against them.

#### Vs25-27

His own servants conspired against him, killed as it were by his friends. Interesting how he was always seeking to give in to please the people but in the end his weak resolve and willing compliance with any & everything cost him his life. He lost the respect of the people. And so to with us as parents, or as people around our peers. If you're always giving in, if I'm always seeking to give way (even against the grain of my conviction) to simply save face and keep the peace, respect will be stripped away from me. You ever notice that the parent who is always giving in to the demands of the kids and never placing parameters on them or putting their foot down before them are the same parents who have no respect from their children. Now I'm not saying we're to be tyrants for the sake of demanding respect. But I am saying if you have a godly conviction, stick to it and don't compromise it.

Over and over and over again we see the tragedy of people beginning well, but not finishing well. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Jesus said, "Count the cost." Run the race to win, don't look back, don't compromise your walk with the Lord, your convictions *in* the Lord to win friends and influence people, it'll be poison to you in the end. Don't depend on your parent's faith, or your friend's faith, cultivate your own relationship with the Lord and serve Him with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength.

We don't want to hear "Well begun," though that's a wonderful thing, the longing of *our* heart is to hear the words, "Well *done*... Well done."

Prayer Points:

God help us to finish well, to run with endurance this race that's set before us. Laying aside every weight and sin that so easily ensnares us. That you might be the King upon the throne of our heart. Renew us in our commitment to You, that we would love You and serve You and You alone, being renewed in Your Word and in our worship of who You are, crucifying the flesh along with it's passions and desires. That it not be our priority to please man, but to please You. Thank You for Your grace...