

## Pt. 9 Almost Revival

Acts 8:1-6 & 2 Kings 12:1-18; 2 Chronicles 22-24

### Introduction...I Love Good Story's

1. In June of 1995, after years of planning and research costing multiple billions of dollars, the space shuttle Discovery was scheduled to launch for the first of seven missions which would rendezvous with the Russian Space station Mir, in preparation for the launch of the International space station in 1997.
2. The date had been carefully chosen,
  - weather conditions were favorable but strange noises were coming from Launch Pad 39-B,
  - upon investigation technicians discovered about six dozen holes in the insulating covering of the main external fuel tank.
3. All of the complex planning and high priced preparation were useless as the mission ground to a halt ....
  - because a **family of woodpeckers decided that the Space shuttle looked like a good place to live.**
4. The story of Joash is a fascinating one,
  - his was a reign filled with promise.
  - After a steady decline in the kingdom from the time of David a bloody coup had taken place,
  - upon the death of her son the king, Joash's grandmother had killed all of the royal family and set herself upon the throne.
  - But Joash's great aunt had snuck the infant Joash out with his nurse and they hid for six years in a secret place at the Temple of God.
  - When Joash was seven years old the priest Jehoida staged an uprising against the wicked and idolatrous grandmother,
  - placing the boy Joash upon his rightful throne.
  - The temple of Baal in the city was destroyed, the priest of Baal was put to death,
  - the covenant was re-established and proper temple worship was re-established.
  - It looked as if another golden age was coming to the kingdom of Judah.
  - It looked like revival was coming.
  - **The plans had been laid, the process had begun but then something went wrong, you could say woodpeckers were discovered in the fuel tank of the revival.**

## Interrogative:

The question for us this morning is, "why?"  
Why did such a perfect opportunity for revival slip away?  
What kept God from pouring out his blessing,  
What did Joash do wrong?

## Transition:

- The reason these questions are important to me this morning is that I believe we are in a time that in many ways is similar to the beginning of Joash's reign.
- A time that looks as if we could be on the brink of revival.
- Yes, society has experienced moral decline.
- Yes, terrible things have happened, but there are positive signs, signs that people are growing discontent with the status quo.
- After the tragedy of 9-11 there was a great spiritual hunger.
- Even here in our own community, our own congregation, people have begun to cry out for revival.
- So I think it's important for us to look at the lesson of Joash... of almost, but not quite revival,
- so that we might see the traps to avoid, the things that quench revival.
- In the story of Joash 4 things seem to stand out as roadblocks to revival.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Roadblock....."Follow the Leader" Faith.

2 Kings 12:2  
2 Chron 23: 16  
2 Chron 24:17-18

1. As long as Jehoida was around to guide him, Joash did, OK.
  - a. Not perfect but, OK.
  - b. It seems as if there's little conviction in him,
  - c. It wasn't possible for Jehoida to make a covenant on behalf of the king, the king needed to dedicate himself to the Lord,
    - but I don't believe he ever really did that, and then,
  - d. as soon as Jehoida is gone,
    - Joash is easily led astray by those who wanted him to turn against the Lord, to reinstate Idol worship and to mix it with the worship of the One true God.
  - e. Joash was a follower, and that can be OK as long as you're a follower with conviction,
  - f. Joash seemed to be a follower primarily because He had no convictions.
2. **The same danger exists for us today.**
  - a. It's tempting to follow the crowd or even to follow a charismatic leader, - - but that's dangerous even when the leader is a good one,
    - because you need to have a personal relationship with the Lord,
  - b. if your commitment is leader based it's easy to be led astray or turned around by some other leader.
  - c. it's also dangerous because people will let you down.
    - Dave Trimble will let you down--just ask my wife.

3. I don't believe revival has ever come because a leader desired it,
  - but only because the people desired it enough repent of their sin and seek God in prayer with changed hearts and lives.
  - Now a leader may play some part in imparting a vision under God's anointing of what God wants to do, so that the people are inspired to make those changes,
4. I believe revival has never and will never happen where people seek to ride the coattails of a leader into revival.
5. **For that reason I believe that "follow the leader" faith is a roadblock to revival.**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Roadblock.....Neglecting the Strongholds

2 Kings 12:3 The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

1. The high places were centers of idol worship on mountains and hill tops,
  - Often poles to the goddess Asherah were erected.
  - Altars, similar to the ones in the temple, for animal and even human sacrifice were often found there
  - But they weren't in the cities, and the pagan priests who operated these franchises were often very politically powerful.
2. It sounds as if Joash, once he reached an age where he could have been aware and done something about them, simply wasn't willing to make the effort.
3. Also remember that idol worship had become more prevalent than genuine worship,
  - the stories in the books of Kings and Chronicles make it clear that many of the kings liked to play both ends of the field--keeping a pagan god on the side just in case the God of Israel didn't come through in a tight spot.
  - To destroy the high places would be to give up your insurance plan.
4. Pastor, what does this have to do with us, we haven't got any high places, we don't worship Idols.
  - perhaps we do have places hidden in the hills of our lives, places where God is not sovereign,
  - those habits and practicing sins, inappropriate relationships, temptations we indulge, and what about the plans we've made for our lives that we don't want the Lord Messing with.
  - What about your dignity and your reputation?
  - Are you willing for those to be brought low?
  - Are you ready to surrender every corner of your life to God's sovereignty or are you hanging on to the high places.

- **The story is told of a child ....**
  - who came to school filthy everyday,
  - the teachers, appalled that anyone could let their child come to school that way were discussing the situation.
  - One said "that mother doesn't love her child."
  - Another replied, "I think she does, she just doesn't hate dirt."

**We may say we love the Lord, but until we hate the dirt and tear down the high places, there will be no revival.**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Roadblock ...Surrender of the Sacred....**that which should never be surrendered!

2 Kings 12:17-18 *About this time Hazael king of Aram went up and attacked Gath and captured it. Then he turned to attack Jerusalem. But Joash king of Judah took all the sacred objects dedicated by his fathers—Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, the kings of Judah—and the gifts he himself had dedicated and all the gold found in the treasuries of the temple of the LORD and of the royal palace, and he sent them to Hazael king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem.*

1. When faced with a crisis, Joash doesn't turn to the Lord,
  - he doesn't call upon the nation to fast and pray,
  - instead he surrenders the sacred objects, the things dedicated to the Lord.
  - He uses them as a bribe to get his enemy--and the enemy of the Lord to leave him alone.
  - This is another example of Joash's weakness and lack of resolve.
  
2. What about us?
  - When push comes to shove in your life what gives way?
  - Is it the things that are sacred to the Lord?
  - When the budget is tight, what gets cut?
  - When something really neat is happening on Sunday Morning, where do you find yourself?
  - When your daily schedule is tight does the laundry wait or does the Lord?

**The world around us tells us that the sacred has got to go.**

**Bill Gates, Founder and CEO of Microsoft put it this way in an interview "Just in terms of allocation of time resource, religion is not very efficient. There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning." (Quoted in Chicago Tribune, Jan 13, 1997).**

If we are earnestly seeking a deeper walk with the Lord,  
 If we're hungry for Revival, then all of our resources, Time, Talent and Treasure must belong first of all to Him, and if we surrender the Sacred for the sake of convenience we shouldn't expect revival.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Roadblock .... Ignoring the call to Repentance**

**Read...**2 Chron 24:19-22

1. Even after Joash had strayed far from the path that the Lord had marked out for Him,
  - God in his mercy sent messengers to warn him, to invite him back, to offer revival, restoration.
  - But, Joash didn't want to hear that what he was doing was wrong so he killed the messenger.
2. I believe it is God's will for us to experience revival--I believe that's always God's will.
3. I also believe that unless we as individuals and as a community of faith Heed the call to repentance we will never experience all that God wants for us,
4. I believe the the Holy Spirit has been working in convicting power even as I've been speaking this morning.
5. I believe that people all over this place, including me, perhaps everyone here has felt the heavy hand of God upon them convicting of High places that need to come down, of sacred things that have been surrendered that need to be reclaimed for the Lord.
6. You can choose to ignore God's call to repentance and continue with life as usual, you can choose to kill the messenger by simply choosing never to come back here again, or you can choose to surrender.
7. I believe with all my heart that the Lord is willing and anxious to move in revival power in this community,
  - His plans are made,
  - the shuttle is on the Launch pad.
  - But there are some woodpeckers we need to deal with, the way we deal with them is repentance--genuine sorrow for sin--sorrow so genuine that we change our behavior.