

KING JOSIAH –A RIGHTEOUS LEADER

Objective

To learn about the characteristics that made Josiah a righteous man, accepted by God

Scriptural Verse

“Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you, says the Lord.” 2 Kings 22:19

References

Holy Scripture - 2 Kings Ch 22, and 23:1-30

Exposition on the books of Kings by Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty

Exposition on the book of Kings by Matthew Henry

Lesson Guidelines

1. An eight year old king

- He was eight years old when he became King.
- At twenty six he worked on rebuilding the temple.
- We may feel ill-quipped to deepen our walk with God because of our age, our schedule, different situations in life. We make excuses saying “I will get closer to God when I graduate and get a job” or “When my kids leave the house”, “when my business is established and I can work less”, etc.
- The reality is that that day will never come because life will continue to provide us with challenges, situations, and opportunities that will push us deeper into the business of life.
- “Seek the Lord while He may be found” – God will always be there but we have to seek Him before it is too late.
- Our youth is the prime time to serve the Lord, later when we are old we will enjoy a deeper relationship with God based on the activities of our youth.

2. “His heart was tender”

- He was spiritually sensitive.
- The word of God immediately touched his heart and he took action.
- This can only be achieved with a sense of humility, a sense that we really don’t know as much as we think we do and that we can learn not only from the Word of God but from others as well.
- St. John Climacus said: “Those who wish to discover the will of God must begin by mortifying their own will. Then having prayed in faith and simplicity, all malice spent, they should turn humbly and in confidence to their fathers or even their brothers and they should accept their counsel as though from God Himself”

3. Leaving the external behind

- He left the external work that needed to be done in the temple and concentrated on the inner self.

- We need to ask ourselves every once in a while “Are we getting carried away with rituals?” Am I coming to church every Sunday, having Holy Communion, praying daily and then moving on with my life – is this becoming a routine, a checklist that I go through but without any real spiritual meaning?
- Am I encountering God in all these experiences?

4. He didn't have a “Lost Cause” attitude

- Even though his salvation was guaranteed and the people's punishment guaranteed as well, he cleansed the land and worked for the salvation of others.
- We so many times give up on situations or others because we develop this attitude that they have become a lost cause.
- God doesn't want us to have such an attitude because it means a loss of faith and hope in what God can do even if it takes a long time for us to see results.
- Our concern should not be when we will see results but to work with a positive attitude aiming for a change.
- He conducted an all encompassing purification.
- He also cleansed parts of the land of Samaria that were bordering on his Kingdom.
- When we resolve to end a sinful habit or situation in our lives, we must make sure we don't leave room for that sin to enter again.
- We must kill sin at the source; for example ending a sinful relationship, etc.

5. A discerning heart

- He heard the word of God plainly and clearly yet he still made sure that he verified this with the prophetess Huldah.
- Even though the Word of God is the ultimate authority in life, it is subject to personal interpretation which may or may not be correct. Therefore, in order to make sure that our understanding of the Holy Scripture is correct, we must read its interpretation from trusted sources like the writing of the early church fathers. We shouldn't leave room for the devil to convince us of our personal interpretation making us fall into the great sin of pride”

Conclusion

Josiah had many acceptable qualities that made him pleasing to God. He sought God at an early age, he was spiritually sensitive to the word of God and he exercised discernment in understanding the Word. He aimed for a deep, inner experience with God for himself and others. He was a true servant as he cared for the spiritual lives of those around him.

God rewarded him by preventing him from seeing the destruction of Jerusalem. Although He allowed for him to die by the sword, this was a far better outcome than being captured, tortured and sent into exile.

Discussion Points/Activities

1. What characteristics do you like most about Josiah?
2. Do you think that these characteristics are important for our walk with God?
3. How can we develop these characteristics?