

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 24 Oct 2021

Sermon Title : Turn Around!

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : 2 Chronicles 7:14

INTRODUCTION

In this 'Turn Around' series there will be four sermons anchored by God's Word found in 2 Chronicles 7:14. God placed this verse on the hearts of different ones, at different times, in our church in the midst of COVID-19 last year. The sermons on this verse will be built upon three specific pointers – Power, Possessions and Pride – which God wants us to be reminded of, so they should not snare us and we should not fall into. This first sermon will focus on God's message in this scripture reference which is a call and invitation to return to Him.

Context

King Solomon had spent 7 years building the Temple of God. It had taken even longer to prepare for this as even in David's time, he had already wanted to build the Temple but God chose his son to build it instead. In 2 Chronicles 5, when the Temple was finally built, King Solomon and the priests and Levites brought into the Temple all the holy vessels which are all the holy instruments of worship and the Ark of the Covenant. As they were going in with all these instruments, they were all singing and praising God in one united voice and heart, this one line, "For He is good and His steadfast love endures forever". As the words were sung, God's glory filled the Temple. The glory was so strong, real and tangible that the priests and Levites could not stand to minister to God.

- In that moment, God did not say anything to Solomon or His people.

In 2 Chronicles 6, King Solomon prayed and dedicated the Temple to God. At the end of his prayer, God's fire came down and consumed all the sacrifices and offerings. His glory again filled the place to the point that the priests and Levites could not enter to minister or worship. The people outside saw what happened and in response, they bowed down and worshipped God with these words again, "For He is good and His steadfast love endures forever."

- Again, God did not say anything to them at this point.
- It was only after fifteen days of temple dedication, celebration and feasting that God spoke to Solomon when he was alone at night that:

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

But why would God speak to king Solomon in the stillness of the night, after all the splendour, celebration, and pomp, instead of earlier when His glory filled the Temple and all the people could feel His presence so heavily they had to bow down and worship Him?

Perhaps God knows that in this golden age of Israel when the Israelites have experienced the power they had at that time with people from Ethiopia visiting king Solomon because he was known to be wise and powerful, they had possessions of gold and silver that had gone into building the Temple, they had every reason to be proud.

So, in the midst of all these celebration and noise, God kept quiet to allow them to pray but after that comes this heartfelt reminder from God:

- In those days when the fruit of your success is so near to you, do not push the source of success to a distant place.
- In those days when the accompaniments of success are so visible, do not forget the invisible God who graciously granted us and blessed us with that success.

The Call

There will come a time when God’s people do not seem to experience the blessings that they are worshipping Him for and celebrating about, then they are to remember this call.

Conditions

“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways ...” (2 Chronicles 7:14a)

In this verse, God is speaking to a people who might have gone astray. Yet God is still calling them ‘His people’. God is calling His people out of love for them. In Christ, we are not just His people but sons and daughters of the Most High God. The Holy Spirit comes and seals us for God. He resides in us and we are in Christ. It is with this understanding that God is constantly calling for us and invites us to return.

1. **Humble** – Humility is critical because it is the first step to admitting we are wrong. When we are so full of ourselves, God cannot pour in more grace into us.
2. **Pray** – This is not referring to prayers that must be carefully crafted and designed, eloquent and long. Prayers will reach God’s heart as long as they are

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

heartfelt, sincere, genuine and authentic. We should not take prayer as a duty but as a way of spending time with God.

Sometimes when we acknowledge we are not right before God, the tendency is to be embarrassed and run from Him, like Adam and Eve. The call from God is always for us to go closer to Him and not push us away. So, after we have humbled ourselves and acknowledged our sins, we must pray and talk to God.

3. **Seek** – As we spend time with God to speak our hearts with Him, we are actually seeking His face. Seeking God's face is about seeking what He wants. Asking God to grant us only things He can grant such as grace, empowerment, strength, refreshment, forgiveness and for Him to guide and direct everything according to His perfect will. To seek to know what is on God's mind and heart.
4. **Turn** – After humbling, praying and seeking, we need to turn or repent from our wicked ways. Wicked ways refer to anything which is not of God's will, not just big sins, but anything which is not right before God. Repentance is not just acknowledging we have done wrong and feeling guilty about them but to turn around. It is an action word - to turn away and stop from things that pain God's heart, not just feeling bad, sorry or even crying for doing wrong.

God's loving promise

"... then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14b)

5. **Hear** – God will always hear our prayers when it comes from a sincere heart, even when we may use the wrong words sometimes, when we have not yet been transformed enough to perfection, or when we are still prone to doing the wrong things.
6. **Forgive** – There is nothing so big that God will not or cannot forgive
7. **Heal** – The spiritual which is forgiveness of sins comes before the physical. God's priority is the spiritual; He wants the spiritual to be right by forgiving our sins first before making the physical right by healing our land. Often times, many things that we see in the physical are symptoms of the spiritual even though it is not a formula that when something is wrong with us physically, we must have sinned. This truth is not for us to use to judge others but to ask God to reveal to us our own spiritual condition.

CONCLUSION

Each of us, called by His name, will need to respond to God according to where we are in our journey with God. May we be quick to humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways, so as to please the heart of our Father and be constantly walking in alignment with His will, as individuals and as a church.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read 2 Chronicles 7:14 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, what is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Turn Around!"?

- b. How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. Why do you think God has to remind us not to:
 - (i) push the source of success to a distant place when we are successful?
 - (ii) forget the invisible God who graciously granted us and blessed us with that success?

- 2b. Which of the 4 conditions in 2 Chronicles 7:14a do you find challenging to fulfill in times when you do not seem to be experiencing God's blessings in your life?

- 2c. Wicked ways refer to anything which is not of God's will, not just big sins, but anything which is not right before God. How has this impacted you?

- 3a. How does knowing God's promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14b give you assurance when going through a tough time or COVID-19?

- 3b. As part of God's people, what is one thing you can do to receive this promise of healing?

- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b above for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your personal testimony on how God has called you back when you strayed from Him and granted you healing whether spiritually or physically. Include how you sought God's and how God drew you back to Him?

OR

Give thanks to God for calling us His people, sons and daughters of the Most High God in Christ, even in times when we may stray away from Him and always drawing us back to Him in love.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 3b and 3c to God asking for His grace to see you through your commitment to God and one another.

As a group seek God's face and ask Him to reveal what could be 'wicked ways' that individuals and our church could be guilty of and need to turn around from. Share God's revelation with one another and pray for God's forgiveness and the Holy Spirit's empowerment for us to truly turn around so we can receive His promise to us.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7