

DEVOTE YOUR HEART TO GOD

AUG 27, 2023

WORSHIP

Anchor of Our Lives, Lord of
All Creation, What He's Done
Great is Thy Faithfulness,
My Heart is Yours

WELCOME

What was the most precious
thing you've lost and found
again or returned to you?

WORD

2 CHRONICLES 16:7-9
(READ CHAPTERS 14-16)

⁷ At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you have relied on the king of Aram and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand. ⁸ Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. ⁹ For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

As we celebrate our 39th anniversary, we are reminded to bring honor and glory to our Savior Jesus Christ, and of our very important mission – to make Christ-committed followers who will make Christ-committed followers.

Now, how many of us have lost something and we spent a good amount of time looking for it? When we lose something important, we desire to look for it. This is how God is like, He is actively seeking and looking for people that "He may strongly support", especially in times of great uncertainties (**2 Chronicles 16:9**). A.W. Tozer said that "What you believe to be true about God is the most important thing about you". In **Lamentations 3:19,21-23**, in the great discouragement of the prophet Jeremiah, he expressed the great afflictions and bitterness he was experiencing. Yet he was able to calibrate his thinking – he remembers the Lord's lovingkindness and compassions – and that empowers him to have hope.

However, this great promise of God to "strongly support" (Heb. "hesed": gripping and not letting go) is a conditional promise – it is only for those whose hearts are COMPLETELY HIS. The question is, are our hearts completely His? Remember that only God can satisfy the deepest desires of our soul!

The Bible commands (**Proverbs 4:23**) us to watch over our hearts with all diligence because it is the source of our will and decisions and is also easily deceived. The heart is like a compass – where your heart is focused on, it determines the direction of your heart. That is why God's commandment is to love Him with all of our hearts (**Deuteronomy 6:5**)!

In **1 Kings 11:4**, we see the reason why Solomon failed to do this – unlike his father David – the heart of Solomon turned away from God and ran after other gods. David on the other hand had a heart fully devoted to God. David was not perfect, but even in the midst of failure, he knew how to respond and repent, and he was found to be a man after God's heart (**Acts 13:22**). The Christian life is not hard – it is impossible. That is why we need to really be surrendered to the Lord.

In **2 Chronicles 16**, we see king Asa, instead of being completely God's, acted foolishly. Asa started well – he did what was good and right (**2 Chronicles 14:2-4**). He got rid of idols and commanded the entire nation to seek God, observe the Law and commandments. Many Christians today do the opposite – they obey what they like, and don't obey the things they don't like – this is not an example of a heart being fully devoted to God!

In **verses 9-10**, a million Ethiopian army with 300 chariots came out against Asa's nation. We learn from Hebrews 11:6 about what faith is – if we want to please God, not only should we obey and love Him, but we also have to believe and have faith in Him – trusting God that He is, meaning He is truly sovereign and in control; He also is a rewarder of those who seek God.

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King Asa, facing the great threat, ran to God in prayer (**2 Chronicles 14:11**) and declared his complete trust in the Lord. He believed that God was the One able to grant him victory even if they have no strength compared to the enemy. His humility was recognized, and he experienced victory.

The story changes in the 36th year of Asa. Israel (Northern Kingdom) came against Judah (Southern Kingdom) (**2 Chronicles 16:1-2**). Asa's response was now different – he put his faith in riches, and a pagan king!

Success is our greatest danger. The more successful you are, the more pride will set in. The moment pride sets in, you are guilty of idolatry – putting something, anything, over God. What is the source of your happiness? What makes you feel secure? What makes you very angry? It can be people, power, riches, relationships, and the like. Beware of the sin of idolatry!

Ben-Hadad listened to King Asa and they attacked the Northern Kingdom (**2 Chronicles 16:4**). It was a successful strategy. However, this is the danger we all face. We think that because we succeed, whatever we do is okay. God's blessing is different from human blessing. In **2 Chronicles 16:7-8**, King Asa was rebuked by the seer Hanani. God's plan was not only for Asa to be victorious against the Northern Kingdom, but also overpower the kingdom of Aram (Syria). That was the greater blessing, but Asa missed that because he acted foolishly. The cost of obedience and faith may be high, but the cost of not putting our faith in God and disobedience is even higher! You will not know what you have missed out (opportunity loss) if you don't follow the Lord. Learn this great lesson: DEVOTE YOUR HEART TO GOD!

When Asa heard this, he was enraged (**2 Chronicles 16:10**), put the seer in prison, and oppressed some of the people too! In the 39th year, Asa became sick, but still did not seek the Lord. He died without seeking the Lord anymore (**2 Chronicles 16:12-13**). **Hebrews 3:13** warns us not to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, as it did Asa.

Romans 8:31-32 is a great comfort for all of us – if God has given us His own Son, and if He is for us, who can be against us? In the midst of great suffering, challenges, grief and difficulties, God is working all things to work together for good (**v.28**). This means that God is able to redeem even our failures, but the condition is clear – we must LOVE GOD, and our hearts and lives must be devoted to Him alone. Obedience will not be a problem if we give our all to Him.

If He had given His all to redeem us, what is stopping us from fully devoting our hearts to God? May we always choose to commit our lives, decisions, feelings, and actions, to our faithful God.

DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

Why is whole devotion to God important and what does it mean?

2. Setting It Right.

How do you know if your heart is fully devoted?

3. Living It Out.

How do you guard your heart from going astray?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE
IN ACTION

Pray that people living around you will have a longing to devote their hearts to God. Be an example to them of someone who loves God with all of your heart. Share to others why Jesus is worthy of putting our faith in as our Lord and Savior. Share to someone this week how you have experienced God strongly supporting you as you live fully for Him.

WEEKLY
PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's help and comfort for the residents of Lahaina (Maui, Hawaii) who lost family, homes, businesses in devastating wildfire; for thousands of residents of British Columbia, Canada who need to evacuate from life-threatening wildfires
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; conflict in African, East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

2 CHRONICLES 16:9A

⁹ For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His...