Series: Binge Reading the Bible

Message: 02 The Historical Books 2 Chronicles 7\_14–22

Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14–22

Theme:

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Last week we began our series, Binge Reading the Bible. In this series we hope to trace some of the main themes, plots and characters of the Bible as well as ask and answer some foundational questions for our faith.

Last week we began by examining the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

We learned that the Pentateuch is the foundation of what we know about God, what we know about ourselves—the human condition, and it teaches is the foundation of everything we read in the New Testament.

What does God want from us? In the Pentateuch we see God’s desire is for people to love and to be devoted to Him.

He created this perfect world and put Adam and Eve in it. They enjoyed intimate fellowship with the creator. But they rebelled and rejected God.

As a result of the Fall in the Garden, this love relationship between the creator and the creature was broken.

But immediately, God promised a redeemer, one who would come and restore this relationship.

The rest of the Pentateuch traces mankind’s continued rebellion and God’s faithfulness as he chooses out of all the people, one, Abraham.

By choosing and blessing Abraham God will bring his deliver through Abraham in order to bless all the nations of the world.

Abraham’s descendent end up in Egypt where they end up in bondage.

God hears their cries and God raises up a deliver, Moses, who will lead his people out of Egypt and back to the Promised Land.

The Promised Land was to represent the Garden of Eden. God made the Garden of Eden to be a place where He and mankind could live in this loving relationship.

The Promised Land was to be where the nation of Israel was to live in a restored loving relationship with their God.

Today, we move on to the historical books. The historical books pick up the storyline with Moses passing away. Joshua is put in charge and leads to new generation of Israel into the Promised Land.

And as we look at this next major section of the Bible there is another fundamental question we can see here.

It’s a question many are still asking today. “When I don’t feel like I am worthy, when I feel like I have gone too far will God still take me back?” In other words, is there still hope even for me?

I know sometimes people won’t come to Christ because of the shame of what they have done or what they are doing and that shame leads them to feel like God can’t accept me because I have just done too much.

But one of the things I love about the historical books is that they tell us a different story.

Not only do the historical books build on what we saw last week about what it means to love and be loved by God but the historical books shows us just what this love looks like.

This section of the Bible is made up of the twelve books that record a historical narrative of events in the lives of the children of Israel; **Joshua**, **Judges**, **Ruth**, 1st and 2nd **Samuel**, 1st and 2nd **Kings**, 1st and 2nd **Chronicles**, **Ezra**, **Nehemiah**, and **Esther**.

So settle in folks, we got a lot to cover this morning!

This history includes the taking possession and loss of the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, the rule of judges and kings, the division of kingdoms into the 10 Northern Tribes Israel and the two Southern Tribes-Judah.

They also include the exiles (Babylon and Assyria), and ultimately a return of God’s people to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple.

To understand the Historical Books, we must look at them as a cohesive narrative rooted in Israel and Judah’s back-and-forth movement between obedience and disobedience.

In a nutshell, the Historical Books contain the cycle of Israel’s rebellion, God’s judgment, Israel’s repentance, and God’s deliverance.

This cycle plays itself out in a very public way in the book of Judges.

The people would start out well, following God. But then they would get lax and start following after other gods, the gods of the people around them, these false gods that looked so appealing to them.

Eventually God would get tired of their wondering and he would give them a wakeup call. He would send some bad people who would come and take them over.

And the people of Israel would cry out and they would say we’re sorry. So God would send them someone to fix it.

You see this cycle though out the books of history. You see this cycle of obedience and rebellion, God’s judgement, Israel’s repentance, and God’s deliverance.

Aren’t you thankful that in your life today you have never been there? That it has always been obedience all the way.

Within the Historical Books, God raised up men and women like Joshua, the judges, prophets, kings, and Queen Esther to share His will and lead His people to repentance.

They were the people God uses to represent Him and tell the His people, look here is what God wants. Here is what you need to do to get back on track.

**If you would, please turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and we will be picking up at verse 12 (p.364).**

The two books of Chronicles recount the underlying context of much of what takes place in the later Historical Books and can be seen as a parallel to much of the history that is recorded.

One thing we have to keep in mind with this passage is the context.

The context for our passage today is that the Lord tells Solomon that He is pleased with the Temple Solomon has just built.

In chapter 6 Solomon lays out this long prayer of thanksgiving for allowing him to build this temple and he dedicates this newly built Temple to the Lord.

In chapter 7 God responses to Solomon’s lengthy prayer in chapter 6.

Starting around verse 12 God tells Solomon, I heard your prayer and I am very pleased.

God is telling Solomon and the people of Israel that if the people keep their hearts focused on Him good things are going to happen.

The promises made here in chapter seven are made to Israel in the context of the temple. However, there are principles here that are valid for us here today.

God’s message is divided into two parts. First, God speaks to Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:11–18) in response to his prayer in chapter 6.

The second part is God’s message to the people (2 Chronicles 7:19–22).

Today we will see that God shows his faithfulness to His word, the promises He has given to Israel, of blessing **and** judging based on their loyalty to or rebellion from Him.

In other words today we tend to think that once we come to Jesus all we have to worry about is receiving all these great blessings.

But what we see in Chronicles and throughout the Old Testament is that God dealt with his people both with the positive things, here are the blessings, but he also warned them and said look if you get off tract her is what is going to happen.

God is faithful to both the good promises as well as the bad.

This message also builds on what the love and loyalty that God wants from us look like in life, not just on paper.

Let’s pick up here in 2 Chronicles 7:12: “**Then the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.**

**13 When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, 14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land**.

**So we see here:**

**I. God’s desire.**

One of the things we have to know about God is that God is not just a God of love, which he is.

But he is also a God of justice. God hates sin. As a matter of fact God hates sin so much that he sent his own son to die so that we could have a way to be forgiven for those sins.

We have become almost flippant about sin. Oh it doesn’t matter, God will understand. It’s only a little sin.

But the truth is God take sin vary seriously. Don’t forget, the moment we commit our first sin, it kills us spiritually and separates us from fellowship with God.

Now, knowing when He created us that we would choose to sin, we can safely say that when God created us, He KNEW we would sin and rebel against Him.

Yet, here we are. God still created us.

So what does that tell us? God is the same God yesterday, today, and always.

God’s desire is simple. We see this in the New Testament, in the book of 1 Timothy 2:3-4:

“**This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth**.

God desires is to have a mutual loving relationship with us. His desire is for us to be in fellowship with Him in spite of the fact he created us knowing that we would turn our backs on him.

God has always had a desire to have a relationship with you!

The love and loyalty we talked about last week is a two-way street.

God offers a path that allows us to be in fellowship with Him.

For us today, the path is Jesus, and 2 Chronicles shows us that before the incarnation of Jesus, God offered a way to have fellowship with Him in spite of the people’s rebellion.

That’s how strong God’s desire is for us to be with him.

So if I ever get to a point in my life where I start to think that I’ve gone too far, God can’t love me, there is no way back…

Well news flash! He loves you. He loves you more than your failure. You haven’t go too far!

And as far as me deciding to live in sin, when I gave my life to Christ, I am no longer a slave to sin…I don’t have to live in that sin any longer. He has provided a way out of and a way back.

The nation of Israel was in a constant state of rebellion, yet no matter how bad it got, God always kept the door open.

Now Israel got disciplined a few times. They got sent into exile because of their rebellion. There are consequences for or sin.

In fact when you look at the context, in verse 13 God is basically saying “look when I discipline you, because you have been misbehaving, if you turn to me I’ll fix it.”

Look again at verse 13: **When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people**…

Consequently, throughout the history of God’s people, 2 Chronicles 7:14 has been recalled again and again to revive hope among broken people.

Verse 13 shows us that when God disciplines, it is to get our attention, to help get us to realize how much we need to be right with God!

Sometimes when our parents disciplined us, we thought it was the end of the world.

When God disciplines, it is not meant to be the end, it is intended to lead us on a path back to Him.

God seeks an authentic relationship. Consequently, God’s forgiveness and healing are conditioned on the hearts of his people.

That path is found in verse 14.

Even though this verse is specific to Israel, the principle is valid today.

**14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land**.

**The first step to getting on the path is humility!**

To be humble means to submit to the authority of another, to reduce your rank and elevate the status of another, in this case, God.

Humble themselves means they acknowledge their wrongdoing and repent.

This is more than just saying “I’m sorry for what I’ve have done”.

Humility means that I am sorry, grieved and moved to repentance over my sin, because of what my sin has done to our relationship.

In order for us to get back on track with God the path begins with humility.

Humility says that you acknowledge that you need God.

Humility says that I KNOW AND I TRUST that God’s ways are the best and I am willing to place myself under those ways.

**The second step is to PRAY.**

This means that I will communicate my heart and sorrow to God. I am going to ask him to work on my heart. (King David)

Prayer means that I am not going to hide from God. After all, he already knows.

**The third step is to seek His face**!

This means instead of seeking your own will and what you want, you are willing to turn away from the sin that has drawn you in, and instead, turn to God and His will.

Seeking his face means I am going to look for God’s will and I am going to follow it. I am going to obey Him—no matter what it might cost me.

**The fourth step is to turn from evil ways**.

This means forsake what you were doing and now start on the path of obedience.

**God says He would do two things in response.** (verse 14)

1. He would hear from heaven, and He still does today.

When we lift our broken hearts to him, he hears us.

2. He also said He would heal their land.

To heal their land means God will restore the land of Israel to its former productivity.

When you turn to God, He will heal your life, He will help your life be fruitful for Him.

In the Gospels, Jesus tells us we are to be fruitful and productive for the Lord!

No matter what, God has always desired a relationship with us built on love and trust!

To follow Him requires that we trust that He always has our best interests at heart!

Let’s look at verse 2 Chronicles 7:14-16: “**if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.**

**15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.** [Speaking of the Temple] **16 For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time**.

We saw God’s desire. Now we see:

**II. God’s disposition.**

We see that God’s disposition is one of openness. He does not allow sin to cause him to turn His back on us or to cause us to be toast.

He is open to repentance and restoration.

In the context of the nation of Israel, they did things that we so bad that God allows some bad things to happen to them; however, He was ALWAYS opened to them turning back to Him even though He knew they would turn away again and again.

When we get mad at someone, we have a tendency to shut down, to turn our back on them.

We tend to not listen to them, and then we are SLOW to accept repentance and offer forgiveness.

On the other hand, God is always open, also hoping for folks to turn back to Him.

We all know how hard it is to be open to someone who has wronged us, hurt us, or taken advantage of us.

God shows us His great love by being open to us. True love, the love that is looking out for what is spiritually best for us is always open to offer forgiveness, to offer a path to redemption.

God’s disposition is one of openness. This is important for us to grasp because it lets us know that God is ALWAYS open to our return to Him!

Let’s examine our final thought.

**III. God’s dependability.**

When you look at verses 17-22, you will a view of God’s dependability, or put another way, His faithfulness to His word.

We start with God’s promise to Solomon, 2 Chronicles 7:17: “**And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules, 18 then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to rule Israel.’**

Verses 17–18 form a conditional sentence. Verse 17 expresses the conditions that Solomon must fulfill, and verse 18 states what God will do if Solomon does what is expected of him.

He tells Solomon, if he walks in the ways of his father David, that God would establish his royal throne.

In this verse, Solomon is assured not only that he will rule over Israel, but that his dynasty will continue permanently according to the promise given to David, his father.

The unconditionality of the Davidic promise, realized from a messianic standpoint in Jesus Christ, is not the subject here.

Instead, Solomon’s royal throne (lit., “your kingdom throne”) is.

The Davidic promise does not fail because Solomon and other kings were unfaithful. The Davidic line is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Verses 19-22 are a promise to the people: **19 “But if you turn** [people of Israel] **aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, 20 then I will pluck you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.**

**21 And at this house, which was exalted, everyone passing by will be astonished and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’**

**22 Then they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore he has brought all this disaster on them.**’”

If the people of Israel were to turn their backs on the Lord and worship other gods, the downfall of both them and the Temple would be so great that it would serve as an example to other nations who saw (vv. 19–22).

The clear message about sin and unfaithfulness would be seen and understood by those who saw such a great downfall of God’s people.

For our purposes, what God says is if the people forsake God, bad things were going to happen.

They were not going to benefit from God’s blessing or protection.

What we see is that God not only can be depended on to keep the good promise, but also the bad.

The balancing act of God’s mercy and justice demand it.

**CONCLUSION**

We can use the Historical Books of the Old Testament to understand God’s faithfulness, his loving discipline, and how our obedience to him can draw others to faith.

We can also see that God is ALWAYS open to us returning to Him.

You do not have to fear rejection from God when you come to Him!

**Benediction**

**“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. 5:23)**