

9.2.25 pm Isles Study Conference

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Date: 09 February 2025

Preacher: Reverend Colin Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Good evening. A warm welcome to the service this evening again. A warm welcome to those who are visiting from the conference and from different congregations this evening. It's good to have Colin with us tonight as he gives his last address over the concert this weekend and we're thankful to both Colin and Sinclair for the ministry here over the weekend. As a church we are delighted to be able to host you and we know the blessing of being able to gather together in this way. After the service this evening there will be a time of fellowship and there will be tea and coffee and cakes and so if you're able to stay behind please do so and you can go and receive some refreshments at the end as you have done in previous nights.

I don't know if the conference, David, are you wanting to give any notices just now before I hand over? Just come in here and you can do that. The two speakers will be given testimony and some questions will be asked of the speakers.

You'll have the chance to ask questions so you can be thinking them up just now. So these I think are all the notices and I'll hand over now to Colin. Thank you David. It's been a privilege to be here this weekend and to join together in the worship of God once more on a Sunday evening. So we're going to begin tonight worshipping the Lord. The first singing is going to be in Gaelic and that is Psalm 111 as usual. For the singing we're going to remain seated.

If they would just give me a moment to read these few verses. Psalm 111, the first three verses. Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart. I will God's praise declare where the assemblies of the just and congregations are. The whole works of the Lord our God are great above all measure.

So I tout they are of everyone that doth therein take pleasure. His work most honourable is, most glorious and pure, and his untainted righteousness forever doth endure.

[2 : 1 6] Verses 1 to 3. We'll sing in Gaelic. We'll remain seated. ■ CHOIR SINGS

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Thank you.

Thank you.

[6 : 2 9] Thank you. Thank you. We'll bow our heads and open our hearts in prayer. Let us pray. Praise ye the Lord.

With my whole heart I will God's praise declare. Lord, we bless you and praise you this evening for this opportunity we have to spend this evening hour together in worship.

And we acknowledge you Lord as a living God, awesome in power, glorious in might, resplendent in holiness, amazing in grace.

And we give thanks for the wonder of the gospel. In the name of Jesus Christ your Saviour, in his name we meet this evening. Giving thanks at the one who was dead and now is alive.

And we thank you that we meet in his name to reflect on his completed work upon the cross. Through which comes the good news of forgiveness and justification and peace with God.

[7 : 31] And may that tonight be the experience in the hearts of one and all gathered here. And Lord, as we worship, as we praise and as we pray, as we open your word in our midst, we pray that we would seek you with our whole heart.

We've been thinking a few times this weekend of good King Josiah. And we've seen there an example to follow, but also a promise to claim.

And we seek, Lord, your presence this evening. That you would come in among us and do us good. That we would be filled anew with a sense of wonder and awe. At your majesty, your glory, your holiness.

And that we would respond in worship and adoration. Bowing in our hearts. Giving you all the praise and all the glory that is due to your name. And may we be people who would acclaim the name of the Lord this night and in the week to come.

For Lord, as we meet in worship and fellowship, praise and prayer. It is a moment in time. It is an oasis. And we pray, Lord, that you would feed our souls tonight. That we would increase our faith.

[8 : 39] That we would grow in grace. And we would be ready to make our stand in the week to come as Josiah did. To stand. To stand for the Lord. To stand in the Lord. To stand not in our own strength, but leaning upon you.

For we know that those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. For all of Josiah's example, he points us to one far greater than he ever was. For in that good king, we are reminded of the great king.

King Jesus. Who came into the world to seek and to save the lost. Who came into the world and gave himself a ransom. For many not to be served, but to serve.

And he gave himself. So be with us, Lord, this night as we worship here together. We do so, Lord, conscious of our need. We pray your blessing on all the families and homes represented over the conference.

And here in the congregation of North Harris. Bless them, Lord. Be with David and the office bearers as they continue the work of the gospel here. Be with those, Lord, who have attended the conference. That there would be a time of refreshment and renewal and a time of vitality in our walk with the living God.

[9 : 47] That there would be an increase in our understanding of the things of grace that Sinclair has led us in these days. And we thank you for these moments where we have been led to think about what Jesus thinks of us.

And what Jesus wants for us, what a joy and privilege to consider our Saviour. Praying as he did the night he was betrayed. For those who would believe in him through their word.

And so it's round that word we meet tonight. And we seek, Lord, your blessing of your word to our hearts. We pray for one and all, Lord, tonight represented here for homes and families. And we remember, Lord, especially tonight the homes in our island that have been visited with difficulty at this time.

We remember especially the Mitchell family on the west side. And, Lord, we commend them to you in prayer. We remember the MacLeod family in Scalpy. And, Lord, again, we commend them to you in prayer.

We pray for those mourning tonight. Those who are going through the valley of the shadow of death. And we pray, Lord, that as that shadow, even as it looms and threatens and attempts to cloud out the light.

[10 : 55] We pray that the light of the gospel of grace revealed in the face of Jesus Christ would burst through. And the hope of a risen Saviour would bring comfort and grace and peace to these families and to us here this evening.

So, Lord, we pray that you would draw near to us. Open your word to our hearts. Cleanse us and forgive our sin. And all this we ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now, we're going to sing again to God's praise.

We're going to stand this time to sing from Mission Praise number 275, which hopefully will appear on the screen. Mission Praise number 275.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest. Lay down, thy weary one. Lay down, thy head upon my breast. We'll stand and sing together. I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest.

Lay down, thou weary one. Lay down, thy hand upon my breast.

[12 : 12] I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad.

I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, behold, I freely give.

The living water, thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live.

I came to Jesus as I was, weary and I drank of that life-giving stream.

[13 : 19] My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.

Look unto me, thy Lord shall rise, and all thy day be bright.

I look to Jesus and I found in him my star, my son.

And in the plight of life I'll walk till traveling days are done.

[14 : 26] The singing all weekend has been remarkable. It's so uplifting and encouraging. And maybe as a preacher I should get my excuse in early.

There's nothing quite like powerful singing to encourage the preaching of the word. So if I overrun tonight, it's your fault. That's my excuse in. But we're going to read tonight two short passages from the scripture.

We've been looking at the life of King Josiah. So we'll read first from 2 Kings in chapter 23. And then just a few verses in 2 Chronicles. I didn't send that second reading in.

I'm just going to sneak it in there this evening. 2 Kings chapter 23. We're going to read from verse 21. We've thought a bit about Josiah over two sessions.

The downward spiral, the spiritual vacuum, the darkness that has descended in Jerusalem, the idolatry that has gripped the nation, and the change in atmosphere with the arrival of King Josiah, eight years old, who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the way of David his father.

[15 : 33] He did not turn aside to the right or to the left. What a tribute that is in scripture of a life well lived. And we've thought about that life well lived. And tonight we come to what the Bible tells us about that life coming to an end.

And we see, sadly, the frailty and weakness and that the best of men are men at best. Josiah, according to the record, doesn't seem to finish well.

So we'll think about that a little bit this evening. In chapter 23 of 2 Kings and verse 21, the account of Josiah's work of ridding the nation of idolatry and the worship he observed is now followed.

When we go from verse 21 down to verse 24 and then come to the last few verses, we're covering 13 years. The last 13 years at the turn of a page.

The king commanded all the people, Keep the Passover to the Lord your God as it is written in this book of the covenant. For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah.

[16 : 41] But in the 18th year of King Josiah, this Passover was kept to the Lord in Jerusalem. Moreover, Josiah put away the mediums, the necromancers and the household gods and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem that he might establish the words of the law that were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.

Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.

Still, the Lord did not turn from the burning of his great wrath by which his anger was kindled against Judah because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him.

And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight as I have removed Israel and I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and all he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In his days Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates.

[17 : 57] King Josiah went out to meet him and Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo as soon as he saw him and his servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb and the people of the land took Jehoaz, the son of Josiah, and anointed him and made him king in his father's place.

Now we turn to 2 Chronicles. We'll read in chapter 35, just a few verses. 2 Chronicles chapter 35, the second last chapter in this historical book because we're given a little bit more information here about what we've just read in 2 Kings.

We're given quite a bit more information. We'll just read a few verses. 2 Chronicles 35, we'll read from verse 20. Again, this great high point of the Passover in this 18th year has been concluded and now the next 13 years are zipped by to this battle.

And we read in verse 20, after all this, after all he's achieved, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho, king of Egypt, went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates and Josiah went out to meet him.

But he sent envoys to him saying, what have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry, cease opposing God who is with me, lest he destroy you.

[19 : 26] Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo.

And the archer shot King Josiah. And the king said to his servants, take me away, I am badly wounded. So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem.

And he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. May the Lord bless to us the reading of his word.

To his name be all the praise. And we're going to sing again to his praise now from Mission Praise, number 528. O worship the king. Mission Praise, number 528.

Worship the king, all glorious above. O gratefully sing his power and his love. And again, we'll stand and sing together. O worship the king, all glorious above.

[20 : 39] O gratefully sing his power and his love. Our shield and defender, the ancient of days.

Pavilion in splendor and girded with praise. O tell of his might, O sing of his grace.

Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space. His chariot of wrath. His chariot of wrath.

The deep thunder clouds form. And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

The earth is stored of wonders untold. Almighty thy power. Almighty thy power hath founded of old.

[21 : 51] Hath established it fast by a changeless decree. And found it hath cast like a mantle the sea.

By bountiful care, what tongue can recite. It breathes in the air.

It shines in the light. It streams from the hills. It descends to the plain.

And streamlines fill in the dew and the rain. Children of dust and feeble astray.

In thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail. Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end.

[23 : 04] Our maker, defender, redeemer and friend. O Lord of all might, how boundless thy love.

While angels delight to him the above. The humble creation, though feeble there is.

With true adoration shall sing to thy praise. Our maker, defender, redeemer and friend.

We'll pray together. Lord, for these wonderful words that remind us of your majesty and grace, we thank and praise you this night. As we turn now together to your word, the book of the King.

May it please you, Lord, to bless us with insight and understanding. That we would take into our hearts by the Holy Spirit the word of God. And that we, Lord, would seek to serve you and frame our lives in such a way.

[24 : 25] That it would be clear and obvious that to us the Bible matters. Because the God of the Bible matters above all. We see, Lord, in this ancient king an example. And we are presented with handrails for our lives.

May we take heed from the lessons and apply them as much as we possibly can in dependence on the Holy Spirit. That we might have a walk that is worthy of the calling with which we have been called.

That we, Lord, would seek and strive to be worthy before you. Leaning on the Spirit, depending on your grace. We are in the name of the Lord and Savior. We are giving your name all the praise and all the glory.

So, Lord, be with us. Grant us insight and understanding. Forgive our sin, we pray. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, in 2 Kings and chapter 23 and in 2 Chronicles chapter 35.

I'm going to try and flick between the two chapters for a few times this evening. Hopefully I won't get confused. Sometimes I do. So I'll apologize again in advance. But I just want to read one of these verses that goes a very long way to helping us understand King Josiah.

[25 : 33] And without this explanation, we'd never understand him. What made this guy tick? What made him such a leader? What made him a good king? 2 Kings 23 verse 25 says, Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.

What drove this man to be the man he was, to be the king he was? We're told in the preceding verse, in verse 24, that he might establish the words of the law that were written in the book.

And we've been thinking about the book of the king discovered in the temple after 75 years of neglect and the book being ignored, the scrolls tucked away as far as we can tell, probably for safekeeping, so that the ravages of Manasseh, Josiah's grandfather, wouldn't get a hold of the Bible and destroy it utterly.

And so we find the Lord protecting his word, preserving his word. There's that wonderful description in Jeremiah where he says in the beginning to the prophet, as he calls him to service, what do you see, Jeremiah?

And in response to him, describing the vision before him, he says, you see well, for I am ready to perform my word. And here we find the Lord preserving, protecting his word.

[27 : 04] And now he provides for the earthly king, a copy of the book of the king. And the successive stories, we just have these four chapters, two in second Kings, and two in second Chronicles, that present us with a quite remarkable life.

This young boy, eight years of age, is brought to the throne. He spends his initial eight years, as far as we can deduce in a regency, the godly influence of his mother, Jedida, and the counselors around him.

While Manasseh has done everything he possibly can to eradicate the worship of the Lord in this ancient city, he has not succeeded. And that is proved by, in the definition we have of Josiah, immediately following the name of his mother, he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

You have a godly mother, influencing her young child, who was going to be a king of the nation when he comes of age, and he walked in all the way of David his father, did not turn to the right or to the left.

What a description, what a tribute in the Bible. And then we find him, literally transforming a nation, and changing lives.

[28 : 17] In 2nd Chronicles, and in chapter 34, and in verse 33, we read, Josiah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God.

All his days, they did not turn away from following the Lord, the God of their fathers. Isn't that wonderful? And it may well have stopped there.

Wouldn't it be handy for us if it had stopped there? But it doesn't. It continues. And the humanity of the story, the weakness and reality that the best of men are men at best, are brought out to us in both accounts, very shortly and very tersely, in 2nd Kings, just a few verses.

And it's staggering. He's, what? We're reading through, and we're stopped in our tracks. What happened there? He went out to battle without a word to the Lord, without any mention of the book of the king, and he's dead.

What? And his reign comes to a shattering and abrupt and bloody end. And it's quite perplexing to read of what happened in the valley of Megiddo after such an inspired and inspiring reign.

[29 : 29] After all the reforms, all the courageous stands for faith, after leading his people out of the darkness, back to the light of the worship of Jehovah God, after reinstating true worship and establishing a Passover, the like of which had never been seen in Jerusalem, we find him here dead on a battlefield, it seems, in a conflict he shouldn't have been involved in.

What's going on here? Well, there is a cloud perhaps, a question mark, there's a bit of a puzzle, and we'll think about that this evening, because as we must, it kind of makes me think of the story of Jonah.

We have in Jonah this remarkable story, and wouldn't it be amazing if it finished with this evangelistic preacher preaching, and an entire heathen city turns to God and repent, wow, what a story, and it finished there, Jonah would be up there as number one in the Old Testament prophets, but then we get the next chapter, where his anger, and his jealousy, and his grumpiness, and his depression, and his suicidal thoughts are all presented to us like, wow, why did we have to get that chapter?

Well, because the Bible is a book that's full of realism, it's full of real people, and it's given to us by the God of gods, that we might rejoice and learn from him.

So I want to look to a few things tonight. First of all, in what happened in this battle in the Valley of Megiddo, we are presented with a bit of a challenging puzzle.

[30 : 57] There's a nice story told of Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War in America, where he was in the situation room, I guess we would call it nowadays, burning the midnight oil, very reduced hours of sleep, and constant influx of messages and telegrams as the war ebbed and flowed, and the weight of the conflict weighing on him, and at one point, he asked one of his staffers to bring him a coffee, and he was handed a mug, and he took a big gulp, and then looked at his staffer and said, if that's coffee, bring me tea, and if that's tea, bring me another coffee.

It was a bit of a puzzle. He didn't know what was in the cup, and it certainly didn't appear to him to be what he'd asked for, and this is a puzzle. When we come to this, this Josiah's death in battle, it just stops us right in our tracks.

Before him, there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his might, according to all the law of Moses. He was driven by the word, and of course brought by the word to the God of the word, but then what happens?

Here in chapters, at the end of chapter 23, it's as if he blows his top. It's as if he just begins to lose his place altogether. Now we need to be careful here, because as this cloud kind of descends around at the end of his life, we don't have all the details.

We just have pointers and indications, so we don't start pointing the finger, we don't start tearing down his character and engaging a little bit of, oh, aren't we good, and wasn't he bad?

[32 : 31] What we need to do is just pause and think of yet another example where someone seems to get things quite wrong. And it's everywhere in the scripture. You go through all these great records we have, you'll find Abraham, Samson, Moses, Miriam and Aaron, David, Solomon, Peter, Paul, struggles, missteps, misjudgments, fallouts, problems, difficulties.

It's easy to stand back and fire bullets, we could all do that. We could all tear each other down in a heartbeat. Words are powerful things and if we're not careful with them, we can do great damage. So we need to be careful.

We need to approach this puzzle cautiously, perhaps with a warning sign. Remember what this young man achieved. By the time he was 26, he had turned a nation back to the Lord.

He had led a feast of the Passover, the like of which had never been seen in Jerusalem. He did awesome and great things and he was driven by a love for the Lord as this verse puts us and if you want to come back to 2 Kings 23, go back to 25 again and again.

Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart. So we pay him due respect and we learn from him but we also ask the question, Josiah, what on earth were you thinking?

[33 : 53] And it does seem that the problem is he wasn't thinking. In chapter 35 of 2 Chronicles, there's a word here that helps us and it's in verse 22.

Nevertheless, that's interesting. Necho is leading his Egyptian forces up the coastline through Josiah's territory so that he can join with his Assyrian allies to fight the Babylonians.

What's that going to do with Judah? As far as we can see, right now, not a lot. But remember, 13 years have passed since the high point of the Passover in Jerusalem and we don't know what happened in those 13 years but it does seem potentially that Josiah was now forming some kind of leaning toward the Babylonian Empire that was expanding rapidly and was about to deal a devastating defeat to this coalition of the Egyptians and Assyrians and so he gets involved.

Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him but disguised himself in order to fight with him. Don't know what's going on there. He did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God.

Isn't this a puzzle? And we think, what's happening here? But don't we sometimes react like that and respond to that when God doesn't act in a way we think he should and we anticipate he will and we step back and we get flummoxed and we question and we struggle and what's going on, God?

[35 : 24] And then we get demanding and we want explanations and we forget who we are when we come to our Creator will worship the King all glorious above.

And so we adopt the posture of humility and I think from this word nevertheless Josiah did not turn away. There was a warning given him as strange to our ears as it is from a pagan Egyptian pharaoh and not were told us he did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God but came proceeded with his plan of attack into the valley of Megiddo to lose his life.

It's a puzzle and it points us to a conclusion that for all his success and his effective service and his undoubted success in leadership probably it seems Josiah had by this stage in his life at 39 years of age had become quite impulsive maybe even stubborn.

Who would have thought? A stubborn man an impulsive man a man perhaps believing his own press enjoying the success of reestablishing things did he get a bit carried away?

Possibly. Nevertheless he did not turn but disguised himself. Now this is the king leading his troops that does not read well.

[36 : 47] No leader of men should go into battle and disguise himself. What's he doing there? He's putting his men in harm's way but not himself. It's a little bit suspect. Maybe he just didn't want to attract attention to himself but in these ancient battlefields in these scenarios of warfare the king was supposed to be instantly identifiable so the men could rally to the cause.

Protect the king. Good to can read. Protect the king. It's still the motto of one of our famous battalions the Queen's Own. They're now the 4th Battalion! Royal Regiment of Scotland. That's their motto. Protect the king.

From when an ancient the Macdonald I think it was it was a Macleod better not claim that one I think it was a Macdonald went to save the kings from a rampaging stag and the cry went up could I can read protect the king?

And so the king is hiding himself. At the very moment the king should be visible rallying the forces albeit we don't think they should have been there in the first place.

So there's suspect difficult decisions going on here maybe stubborn and what we can say is this let's put a handrail in and take from this a lesson it's good not to be impulsive it's good if and when we can to pause to step back to wait make an assessment of situations appreciate the bigger picture ask above all what is the Lord saying to me?

[38 : 10] That's the question that should drive us all. The probability of making mistakes is greatly increased if we rush on meaning on our own wisdom our own understanding now the Bible doesn't say not to use our own it says trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding it doesn't say don't use your understanding but it does say don't lean on it so don't be thinking I've got this I'm alright here I've got a plan I've got the strength I've got the mindset I've got the ability I'll sort this what's God saying to us as situations begin to emerge and develop before us so don't rush into decisions if anything the events in Megiddo remind us of the need to wait upon the Lord and the verses of the Bible should just be flowing through your hearts and minds when it comes to this be still and know that I am God wait on the Lord and be thou strong and he shall strength afford unto thine heart yea do thou wait I say upon the Lord we don't just sing these words we need to live it take the patience of the psalmist into our lifestyle they that wait upon the Lord shall do what renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles but we often get it wrong and think

I'm going to mount up with wings as an eagle I'm going to run and not be weary I'm going to walk and not faint but I've not got time for this waiting business and that's perhaps what's happening here at the end of Josiah's life when he lands in the valley of Megiddo disguising himself getting involved in a conflict rather than stepping back assessing the situation send out a screen of reconnaissance keep your troops safe just protect your borders but what are you doing he loses his life let us then strive to be patient as we face this challenging puzzle second thing these chapters combine very clearly albeit in light of this puzzle to leave us a very fitting tribute to this quite remarkable young king he was a leader who left his mark on history sure he had faults and he wasn't perfect but thankfully remarkably God does not use perfect people as if he did who of us would serve who of us would be fit who of us would be called who of us would be selected who of us would be chosen none because none of us are perfect what are we we're sinners in need of a saviour we are sinners in need of forgiveness we are sinners who need to be justified who need the reconciling power and work of the Holy Spirit to bring us from darkness to light from death to life that we might then serve the Lord but we bring nothing to that transaction other than the plea

Lord be merciful to me a sinner well Josiah does seem to have rushed to battle and though he did the Bible does mark him out as a great leader of men a great leader of people as that verse does and while we might go to the valley and think what are you doing we must remember that there was no king like him returned to the Lord with all his heart he was so driven by what he'd read in the book and what he'd first of all had read to him remember how that transmission occurred it was found hidden away in the recesses perhaps of a money box in the temple to be protected from Manasseh's rage and rampaging idolatry and Hilkiyah says to Shaphan the chief of staff I found a book and he read it to Shaphan Shaphan heard that took it to the king gave his daily report and what did he do Hilkiyah has given me a book and he read it before the king and on hearing the word of God he tore his clothes his heart was soft and he was penitent and desperate for further guidance and he sends his advisors off to find hold of the prophetess that they might know more of what the Lord has done and has to say to him what a way that is to respond to the word to want to know more to have a heart that is soft to the word and I think that's a daily weekly monthly prayer of the church of Christ in Lewis across Harris and across the nation that people's hearts would be soft to the word that they would heed the call as Horatius Bonner famous hymn

I heard the voice of Jesus say come unto me and rest he heard the voice because his heart was soft and I pray tonight friends that your heart is soft to the word soft to the call of God to come to him in repentance and faith so the word tells us Josiah is an example an example to follow while he was still young he began to seek the Lord youngsters here tonight church is not for the grown ups it's for you the Bible is not for old people the Bible is for all people and as a youngster he began to seek the Lord and at 20 he sets himself to the task so what do we find we find a trust a personal trust in God residing in his heart that then we see him giving expression to through giving worship to God hearing about the work of God and framing his life by the word of God and I think when it comes to that we heed the voice of Jesus go ye and do likewise so we worship God we commit to the work of God and we frame our lives by the word of God doing that brings us into the same

I guess track or pathway that we find Josiah walking that's why the Bible presents such a glowing tribute to this young king 39 when he loses his life he's achieved great things but sadly it seems he does not finish well in this rash attack on the Egyptian forces his disguising himself yes he got that wrong but what did he get right he got so much right his worship of God his commitment to the work of God his framing his life around the word of God how do we compare this is the question when we hold the mirror up and start here before looking anywhere else how do we compare the Bible says before him there was no king like him what a tribute that is and if there was a tribute written for you and for me tonight what would it be what would it be I want to share a very famous one with you it's a tribute that's written as a memorial to William Wilberforce a great 19th century politician he died after a lifetime campaigning for the abolition of slavery and in the script above his tomb in Westminster Abbey there's a whole there's a glowing tribute way too long to read but I just want to bring to your attention what it says at the end

[45 : 11] I'm sure many of you are aware of this it acknowledges his public service as a member of parliament his personal faith and his many many achievements but then it says this toward the end that he added to all of these the abiding eloquence of a Christian life isn't that wonderful what a tribute that is he left or he added to all he achieved in life and he achieved many things the abiding eloquence of a Christian life we can all do that how?

because of our gifts and our abilities and our strength no no because of the grace of our God because of the Lord Jesus Christ the King of Kings the King that Josiah in his kingship points us to the New Testament King who came in to seek and to save the lost and who in his in his love and in his tenderness and his grace tonight is calling you here tonight if you're not a Christian you're not being summoned by anyone other or anyone less than the King of Kings you must understand that that the gospel of grace is extended the invitation to life is extended in his name what did Bonner say I heard the voice of Jesus say come to me and rest so listen to that voice tonight friends in the gospel and come to him don't come and impress him don't enter into a debate don't think you're going there for a bit of give and take you go there in the depths of your need and depravity and cry out for the forgiveness of sin and the King of Kings will meet you and he will justify you and what a tribute that would be that any of us could leave behind the abiding eloquence of a Christian life so there is here a challenging puzzle as a fitting tribute and then lastly there's this there's a solemn reality here in the valley of Megiddo we read that his servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb and the people of the land took Jehoah as the son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in his father's place you know what else

Josiah got badly wrong sadly unfortunately and we acknowledge it here tonight he had led the nation he had not led his family his two sons who follow him are disasters they do what is evil in the sight of the Lord what?

we say how is this possible? what an example they had to follow they were up close and personal closer than anyone they chose a different path the son who took his place verse 32 in 2nd Kings 23 did what was evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that his fathers had done not his father his fathers see Josiah's father Ammon and grandfather Manasseh were brutal idolaters and Josiah said I'm not going that way but his sons tragically did go that way and we notice then that after all this that Josiah very much belongs to the pantheon of heroes that we read of in Hebrews 12 therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us also lay aside every weight of sin there's the example to follow look at what Josiah got right and learned from what he got wrong that we might not make the same mistake very shortly after Josiah's death in this needless battle the independence of Judah is gone they are forever removed at this point in its existence

Babylon sweeps through the captivity and exile begins and I want to notice just another thing going back to 2nd Kings in chapter 23 I've read verse 25 a lot but we don't need to notice in verse 26 there's another nevertheless in the ESV still still still or nevertheless despite what he had done the Lord did not turn from the burning of his great wrath by which his anger was kindled against Judah why because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him and the Lord said I will remove Judah out of my sight as I have removed Israel and I will cast off this city that I have chosen Jerusalem and the house of which I said my name shall be there if you weren't here the other day when we were looking at chapter 23 read chapter 23 and you'll see the depths of depravity and profanity that had happened in Judah and it all centres on the temple it's been turned into an idol factory there's all sorts of paganism and profanity going on in the temple courts and through the leadership of Manasseh

[49 : 54] Judah are brought across the tipping point and God's wrath will not be quenched Josiah is spared as the prophetess Huldah tells him he is spared seeing the city destroyed and the people carried into captivity he is given a peaceful burial albeit through a violent and untimely death so what do we take from this it absolutely matters tonight friends how you are living your life that's what we take from this it absolutely matters to all of us how we are living our lives because God is holy and God is just and of pure eyes and to behold iniquity we know that sin is an offence to God to sin is to do what God forbids and not do what God commands sins of omission sins of commission it's to refuse to bow the knee it's to refuse to acknowledge his lordship and his holiness it's to refuse to seek the cleansing from sin that we so desperately need it's to forfeit any right to claim to be justified therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with

God through our Lord Jesus Christ it is only through Christ that that peace with God will come and this is the solemn reality we close with this evening if tonight you are not a Christian if tonight you've not been convinced if tonight you've stood off if tonight you're unconverted you remain under the wrath and judgment of God this is the message of the book of the king not Josiah but Jesus for God so loved the world he gave his only son so that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life you see it's not just about being saved to the Lord Jesus this message of salvation and forgiveness to be saved from being under the wrath and judgment of God that's where we are from birth we don't grow up and then fall into a condition of sin and therefore forfeit the blessing of God and somehow become transferred into darkness we're born in that condition and we need to be transferred out of the darkness into the light and we can't do that ourselves it can't be done the New

Testament is very clear in this we must come to Jesus we must commit ourselves heart and soul will and mind home and life personally and unreservedly to Jesus Christ that's how John Stott answers the question what is a Christian and that friends is what a Christian is someone who has acknowledged the sin of their heart and sought the forgiveness of God and can now take heart and give thanks to God that they're no longer under the wrath and judgment of God but are now a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ and that changes everything St.

Lair led us in John 17 and John 15 to the wonderful reality that grace establishes through Christ's effective work in our hearts by the Holy Spirit taking our sinfulness and giving us his righteousness what a joy what a joy I heard the voice of Jesus say come unto me and rest we are sang tonight from mission praise fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness of the poor wealth that thou wouldst reckon as thine truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness these are the offerings to lay on his shrine we come to him and seek the grace and mercy and peace that is available to us through the forgiveness of sin that is the wonder of the gospel but what happens if we don't do that let's think of that for a few minutes as we close there's a solemn reality here the bible states it in these words it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living

God how do we get there from Megiddo 640 BC how come we're now talking about falling into the hands of the living God well I'll tell you why in the New Testament we read in Revelation and chapter 16 of another place it would seem but it has the same name we read that God's enemies will gather to the battle of that great day of God almighty and they gather themselves together to the place called Armageddon Armageddon is a Hebrew phrase which is translated to mean the hill of Megiddo and so this place where Josiah fell is pointing us to Armageddon that's become a thing we speak of Armageddon as a thing an event a catastrophic world ending event and it's described not as a thing in Revelation but as a place where the final confrontation between good and evil takes place and we're also told what happens there these will make war with the lamb and the lamb will overcome them for he is lord of lords and king of kings and those who are with him are called chosen and faithful so here's the question are you with him are you with him who is the king of kings leading his forces at

[55 : 48] Armageddon unmistakably in front of his people identified clearly here as the lamb and the lamb will overcome them for he is lord of lords and king of kings are you with him are you ready for that final conflict are you ready for that moment as described as the final battle between good and evil where evil will be overcome and destroyed and banished forever that's the place John uses in the revelation to describe the site of this final conflict and those who are opposed the lamb will be defeated and banished for all eternity and that's the solemn reality of Megiddo and Armageddon and so once more on mercy's ground here on this side of the veil the gospel has come to you just to ask you to pause to think to reflect but above all to respond in repentance and faith to come from death to life from darkness to light to come to Christ hear his voice in this summons to you come to him rest in him and receive from him the forgiveness and cleansing we so desperately need this young king points us to

Armageddon in his needless and and timely death but there's a warning here and the warning is are we ready and in the final analysis on whose side do we stand in this ongoing conflict of good and evil are we with the lord of lords and king of kings or are we against him there is no third option let's pray for a moment lord we pray tonight that you'd hear us we ask for your grace and mercy and peace we ask for your blessing lord to open hearts and minds to bless hearts and make them soft to the word that we would respond in repentance and faith to Jesus Christ that we would not make the awful mistake of saying tomorrow next week next month next communion lord so often we rely on a day that is not promised to any of us behold now is the day of salvation may lord any here tonight who are uncertain unconvinced and unconverted be brought to you to the very throne of the king of kings and may the book of the king be blessed to our hearts as we reflect on him this night here as we pray in

Jesus name amen we're going to sing this wonderful psalm in closing for psalm 32 and sing psalms that really does set before us the wonder of the forgiveness we find in the gospel we're going to sing verses 1 and 2 and then verses 6 to 8 how blessed the one who has received forgiveness for his sin whose sins are covered from God's face whose debt is cancelled in God's grace there's no deceit in him we'll stand and sing together I bless the one who has received forgiveness for his sin whose sins are covered in God's face who's dead is cancelled in God's grace there's no deceit in him so let the

God pray to you while you are to be found surely when waves are sweeping past and mighty waters rising past you'll keep safe and sound you are my hiding place oh Lord my true security you keep me safe in troubled days you circle me with joyful praise when you have set me free

I will instruct you occupy my word I guide you in my way my counsel I will give to you my eye will keep your path in view and watch you day by day may the grace of the Christ the love of God the Father and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more Amen