

I. Introduction

- A. Two texts: Ezekiel 37:1 and 2 Chronicles 34:1.
- B. In the history of America, there have been good presidents and bad presidents. I'll leave you to decide who's who.
- C. In the history of God people in the Bible, there have been good kings and bad kings. Fortunately, we don't have to guess who's who because the Bible conveniently tells us. For example
 1. *Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. (2 Chron. 33:1, 2)*
 2. What was so bad about King Manasseh? Well, he built idols, practiced sorcery, practiced witchcraft, consulted mediums and spiritists—which is basically demon worship—and he set up an idol in the temple of the Lord. So a bad king, no problem.
- D. In fact, most of the kings were bad.
 1. In the northern part, the nation called Israel, there were 19 kings total. Of those 19 kings, the number that were bad kinds was... 19.
 2. In the southern part, nation called Judah, there were 20 kings and 1 queen total. Of those 20 kings and 1 queen, the number that were bad was... 12. That leaves 8 good kings.* (*results may vary)
- E. And the best of the bunch was the grandson of this evil king Manasseh. His name was Josiah.
- F. Good King Josiah became the human catalyst for a major revival in his nation.

II. Revival

- A. Beyond anything else that we can ask or think, God's people need to pray into labor right now for a great revival in the land.
- B. When you see the conditions of our country, it feels like we are racing toward a cliff.
 1. Our economy is broken. Our morality is upside down. Our marriages and families are hurting. Our sexuality is traumatized. Our theology is liberalized. Our evangelism is dead. Our brothers and sisters in Christ, and even many of us, or too often conformed to the world, rather than letting Christ live through us. Our hearts are far from God. Our country is divided.
 - a) All of these problems are spiritual problems. They become political problems, economic problems, and emotional problems. But at root, they are spiritual.
- C. The spiritual state of our churches are below what they need to be. We are backslidden and we are fallen.
 1. This means that we are distracted from our supreme mission of helping people find and follow God.
 2. This means that we are not setting our affections on things above, and on eternity.
 3. This means that prayer is neglected.
 4. It means that marriage morality is half hearted.
 5. It means that the word of God is neglected and set to the side.
 6. It means that the cross of Christ is forgotten, the love of Christ is not on display as it should be, and the testimony of the church is weak.
- D. I was reading yesterday about a seminary in North Carolina. A seminary is a school schools that are supposed to equip people for a lifetime of ministry.
 1. One professor stood up and said he was an atheist, and was going to convince very future pastor he could to be an atheist.
 2. Another professor prayed to God, whoever he or she may be.
 3. Another professor said that the serpent in the garden showed the sexual hangups of the authors of Scripture.
 - a) This is the Candler School of Theology at Emory University.
- E. A student there who was already a pastor pushed back. He made biblical arguments. He said the school claims to be a Christian school, so how could the professors say these things?
 1. Do you know what the school said about him?
 2. An administrator said, "I thought your views died out sixty years ago."
 3. Another one told the student he had a mental disorder.
- F. Do you want to know what a mental disorder looks like in a seminary? Probably like this:
 1. HEADLINE: New York's non-denominational Union Theological Seminary held a ceremony Tuesday where members of the community placed plants in the center of the chapel and confessed their sins to them.
 - a) It makes me think of the nucleus of all evil in Romans 1:25: "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator."
 2. The chaplain tweeted: "Today in chapel, we confessed to plants. Together we held our grief, joy, regret, hope, guilt and sorrow in prayer; offering them to the beings who sustain us but whose gift we too often fail to honor. What do you confess to the plants in your life?"
- G. Do you know what I confess to the plants in my life?
 1. I say, thank you, plants, for fattening the cattle who give me meat.
- H. And yet the faithful pastor who stands for truth, stands for the gospel, stands for the historic Christian faith is told *he's* the one with a mental disorder.
- I. We are racing toward a cliff.
- J. As goes the church, so goes the world.
 1. We need revival. There's a vivid picture of what it looks like when the people of God are in great decline. We'll find it in the prophecy of Ezekiel.
 - a) *The LORD took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the LORD to a valley filled with bones. He led me around among the old, dry bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere across the ground. (Ezekiel 37:1-3, NLT)*

- b) Dry bones. Bleached by the sun. Broken. Jagged, cracked, fragmented. A whole valley full of dry bones. Dead. Fit for nothing but burial.
 - c) That's the church. That's the people of God today. Just a valley of dead dry bones.
- K. We need the Lord to come down and great power to restore our land. This is revival.
 - 1. **Revival is a sudden, unusual, and intense work of God in the Church.**
In revival, God purifies, awakens, and mobilizes his own people.
The awakening in the Church results in a cleansing of culture and in unusually large numbers of people coming to faith in Christ.
- L. The United States has experienced three nationwide revivals. These are called the Great Awakenings. They radically transformed the country. They made us into a Christian nation, culturally, though not officially.
- M. I am preaching and praying for revival. This is part two in our series. I am hoping that God will raise up someone or some thing as a new catalyst for a mighty work of God in our churches and in our nation. And I pray revival will spread to the whole wide world.
- N. We are looking at one of the case studies in the Bible and revival. This is the revival under king Josiah. And the title of my talk today is:
 - 1. **It's Time to Go Back to the Bible**
 - 2. Here's how that story begins.
- III. *Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*
For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images.
They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. (2 Chronicles 34:1-4)
 - A. **If revival will ever come, God starts in the humble, tender heart.**
 - B. Can you honestly say your heart warm and tender toward Christ? Toward the Gospel? Toward the Word of God and the things of God?
 - C. Here was a man who grew up with all the wrong influences. A man whose father and grandfather led horrible lives of violence, abuse, wickedness and evil.
 - D. If anybody had an excuse to turn against God, it was Josiah.
 - E. But he had a different heart. He was humble and tender toward God.
 - F. And when he was only 8, he began to seek God. That means to pursue God, and to make God his top priority, and the have the priests and prophets instruct him in the ways of the Lord. His heart was humble and tender toward the Lord. He was bonding with God and learning the grace and love of God.
 - G. Can you honestly say your heart warm and tender toward Christ? Toward the Gospel? Toward the Word of God and the things of God?
 - H. That was King Josiah. But there's more.
 - 1. **If revival will ever come, God looks for a person filled with purpose and resolve.**
 - I. Josiah sought God when he was 8 and when he was twenty, he purged the land.
 - 1. Every competitor to God was eliminated.
 - 2. He tore down all the altars to other gods, all the groves where false worship happened.
 - 3. He burned the idols and pulverized their images and scattered the dust on the graves of the idol worshippers.... Because their evil followed them beyond the grave.
 - 4. Josiah even burned the bones of the dead pagan priests on their own altars.
 - a) As woefully backslidden as the nation was, Josiah believed there was still hope.
 - b) In the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel looked over the grotesque scene of dead dry bones... the national catastrophe... and God asked him if there was hope.
 (1) *And God said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know."* (Ezekiel 37:3)
 - J. As sick and broken as culture is, we can't give up. We can't quit.
 - K. People need the Lord, and we need to believe that in the darkest, bleakest situation, the power of the gospel can still break through. There is hope. There is victory. There is power in the name of Jesus.
 - L. Josiah had backbone. Ezekiel is just starting to get his backbone. Both needed courage, purpose, and resolve.
 - 1. Oh Lord, increase their tribe.
 - 2. I think I'm just starting to get my backbone... Maybe I'm a later bloomer.
 - M. We need today what Josiah had and Ezekiel found.
 - 1. When God chooses some one to ignite a revival, it doesn't matter if they are male or female, young or old, rich or poor. Race, origin, and family tree meaning nothing.
 - 2. God chooses the humble woman or man, with a tender heart and a backbone of steel that can only come from Christ within.
 - 3. Will that be you? Will that be me? Will that be us? Yes, Lord. Use us.
 - N. But Josiah's greatest achievement was yet to come.
 - O. When Josiah was 26, he stood before the temple of God. The last major repair of this temple had been carried out 250 years before.
 - P. Here's what happened:
- IV. *In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. (2 Chronicles 34:8)*

- A. This was the temple. This was the focal point of their mission, of their worship, of their whole way of life.
 - B. It was the palace where the way of salvation was pictured and taught through sacrifices and rituals and a priesthood.
 - C. The whole nation was on a mission for God. The temple was the heart of their mission, and the Ark of the Covenant was at the heart of the temple.
 - D. When Josiah set out to repair the house of God, he was really restoring the heart of the gospel for his people.
 - E. And it needed restoring. Do you know why?
 1. Because in Josiah's day the temple had not been repaired for 250 years, and it had not been used for 75 years.
 - a) That's a lifetime!
 - b) No sacrifices, so no testimony to the cross of Christ.
 - c) No worship, so turning of minds to the character and person of Christ.
 - d) No teaching ministry for the priests, so no construction in the heart of structures of the mind of Christ.
 - e) No fellowship around the things of God, so no muscle, no intentionality, no focus for their faith.
 2. Imagine today no church for 75 years, and all the Christians being okay with it.
 - a) Let's say we call that... a lockdown.
 3. That was Josiah's situation.
 - F. And that is pretty much our situation today. Seminaries that worship plants are an apostate, and Christians who worship a thousand things are lukewarm.
 - G. Seventy five years.
 1. Do you think that the people of God actually said, let's ignore God for seventy five years? No.
 2. They said let's ignore God today. They said it one day at a time.
 - a) Too busy for God today. He won't mind. Too tired for God the next day, I'm sure he understands. Too lazy for God today, I need a "me day."
 - (1) And seventy five years later, here we are.
 3. **The devil is the master of incremental seduction.** He has all the time in the world, and you hardly see him coming.
 - a) This is indifference. It is apathy. It is backsliding. It is the lights going out on the people of God till the whole nation falls under the discipline of God.
 - H. I know I'm not talking about you when I say this, but if church were locked down for 75 years, most Christians wouldn't really care, and some Christians wouldn't even notice.
 - I. Until up stands a 26 year old who calls to anyone with ears to hear, Enough! Fix this!
 1. **If revival will ever come, God looks for a person who rises above the indifference and scoffing of the age.**
 - J. And when Josiah acted, God acted in return. The first thing God did was that when they began to repair the temple, they found a bit cache of money. This was most likely hidden when foreign armies blew through.
 - K. That money would wind up paying for all the repairs.
 - L. But that wasn't the biggest thing. Because they also found something else hidden in the broken down temple. And this is where revival really takes off.
- V. *Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses. (2 Chronicles 34:14)*
- A. They found a book that was lost. They found a book they hadn't seen in a generation. They found a book that was whispered about and spoken about and taught about... a book that had been memorized word for word, but not actually read and not even seen for seventy five years.
 - B. They found a Bible. Specifically, the books of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament.
 - C. It had been hidden in the temple, again to protect it from invaders.
 1. This makes my brain explode and my heart hurt. They lost the Bible. But thank God they find it. In case you didn't know, the Word of God is indestructible. No matter how many governments outlaw it and how many liberals undermine it.
 - a) The workers give it to the priest. The priest gives it to a messenger. The messenger brings it to the king. The king has it read aloud... which would take hours.
- VI. *Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. (2 Chronicles 34:18, 19)*
- A. He tore his clothes because his brain exploded and his heart hurt.
 - B. But ultimately King Josiah had a horrible realization that day.
 1. He realized that most of what the Word of God taught, the people contradicted.
 2. And that most of what the Word of God commanded, the people disobeyed.
 - a) And by people I mean God's people.
 - C. Why was their nation collapsing? Why were their enemies gaining strength? Why the rise of depression? Why the overflow of violence? Why the division and discord and hate?
 - D. Why the casual indifference toward the God of heaven? And why the eager acceptance of demonic lies and satanic infiltration?
 - E. Because the Word of God was the only sword his people had to fend off the horrible evils and immoralities of the world, and that sword had been lost and forgotten, and now shattered.
 1. **If revival will ever come, it will be because the nation returns to the Word of God.**
 - F. Back to the Bible, America.
 - G. We haven't lost our Bibles. But for most of the church they might as well be lost.
 - H. Even for most pastors, sad to say, the source of truth is anything but the Bible.

1. It is new revelations, impressions and prophecies, and cultural mandates and consensus. It is how I feel and what makes sense to me.
 - a) New revelations to displace the Bible. And with that comes a new morality and new sexuality. And with that comes a new breed of religion. And with that comes a new handy mini-sized god. And with that comes delusion from the dark side.
 - (1) And so the incremental seduction is complete.
 - I. Step by step. Inch by inch.
 - J. It's called backsliding. Sliding, not falling off a cliff.
 - K. So yes, Josiah tears his clothes. He's upset. He's disgusted and angry and grieved for his nation—for the church.
 1. We feel you brother.
 - L. The king sent his most trusted men to inquire of the Lord and for the people. He wanted to see if there was any way to avert the judgments of the Lord that the newly found Word warned would fall upon such an evil generation.
 - M. They went to one of the greatest Bible experts of the day. Her name was Huldah and her title was prophetess—meaning Bible scholar.
 - N. She basically said this: yes, God will forgive the nation. He is a gracious God. She warned, but sometimes, scars remain. Sometimes there are consequences we can't come back back from.
 - O. But if the people repent, and return their hearts to God, he can still bless faithful individuals no matter how bleak the corporate consequences.
 - P. So King Josiah gathers the nation.
- VII. *Then the king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up to the Temple of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites--all the people from the greatest to the least. There the king read to them the entire Book of the Covenant that had been found in the LORD's Temple. The king took his place of authority beside the pillar and renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence. He pledged to obey the LORD by keeping all his commands, regulations, and laws with all his heart and soul. He promised to obey all the terms of the covenant that were written in the scroll. (2 Chronicles 34:29-31, NLT)*
- A. *...All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers. (2 Chronicles 34:33)*
 - B. The Bible is read to the king. The Bible is read to the nation.
 1. **If revival will ever come, it is because the people of God go Back to the Bible, with persistence, humility, and faith.**
 - C. Do you want to do something to bring revival to our land?
 1. You're doing it right now.
 - D. The Bible hit them between the eyes with just how much had had ignored God. It awakened them that they had offended God.
 - E. And in one moment, for the first time in decades, their dull consciences woke up. They were guilty before God. They were in danger and humbled before him.
 - F. The Word of God stirred their souls. For the first time in who knows how long, they remembered the holiness of God. And by the light of his holiness, they remembered the corruption of their souls.
 - G. So they confessed and repented, because this is the power of Bible. This is the supernatural divine energy embedded in the pages of Scripture.
 - H. Dry Bones
 1. If we shift scenes back to Ezekiel's prophecy of the dry bones, the prophet sees the corruption and death in the valley of dry bones.
 2. God tells Ezekiel to preach to the bones. Preach God's promise. Preach God's power. Preach God's grace.
 - a) *So I prophesied [preached] as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. (Ezekiel 37:7, 8)*
 3. Picture it. Bleached out Bones start rattling and shaking and moving, and assembling and joining and coming together. They form skeletons, just standing there. Then flesh comes upon them, but they stand there like unanimated corpses.
 - a) *So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. (Ezekiel 37:10)*
 4. Ezekiel calls for the Spirit of God to come, and he comes. And they come to life, and stand to their feet.
 5. And what do they become?
 6. An exceedingly great army. Not a club. Not a fellowship. Not a hundred things people think the church should be.
 - a) **The revived church is God's army to raise the banner of grace and truth.**
 7. An exceedingly great army... from dead dry bones.
 - a) No matter how dead and gone we think our country is, there's hope. No matter how dead and gone we think we are, or our kids are, or the state of California is, I'm here to tell you today
 - (1) **If God can revive a valley of dead bones he can revive us today.**
- VIII. Conclusion
- A. It took only one man, good King Josiah, to call out to God. To cleanse the nation. To restore the people.
 - B. When we call, God hears. Out of his great love for a lost world God sends waves of revival.
 - C. So we pray:
 1. *"Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence," (Isaiah 64:1)*
 - a) The mountains of Washington, and Sacramento, and Redding.
 - b) And the mountains of our own hearts.
 - c) This is the Word of the Lord.