

Erlo Stegen:

2 Chronicles 34:27, 31-33

"Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Concerning the words which you have heard-- 27because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the LORD.

31Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. 32And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 33Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers.

King Josiah was anointed king at the tender age of 8 years. Josiah's father had set himself to do evil and his grandfather was an evil man too. And yet his son, having such a responsibility at such a young age, and having a lineage of rebellion, chose rather to serve God. His great-grandfather was a man of God, although Josiah never knew him. The Bible specifies that the moment Josiah was made king, he feared God and sought to do good.

At 8 years of age, generally a child can be excused for his actions as he is ignorant. But the Bible stipulates that at such a young age he did good in the sight of the Lord, like David - his forefather. Today, it is common place to find Christians who ask "How can I be a real Christian when I'm faced with such circumstances?" etc. Yet, Josiah longed after God at such an early age, and with such a lineage.

At 16 he sought God in a new way, and at the age of 26, he brought about a complete reformation amongst his people. One is tempted to ask where this boy obtained this uprightness in the Lord... He listened to God's word.

He issued a decree that the temple should be cleansed - as it had become dusty and unkempt; even the temple money had become obsolete. Under all the dirt, they found God's Word.

Both David and Josiah had communion with God, and He with them; and upon this God pronounced that these were men with whom he was well pleased.

If there were changes that had to be brought about according to what God had told them, they were eager and zealous to bring about these changes. Also, their obedience to God was immediate.

There is nobody who is too young that cannot be used by the Lord. If you complain that the circumstances are beyond control, it's because of your own doing. If you are alive spiritually, you will naturally influence those around you and they too will become alive.

We've read God saying of Josiah, "Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God, when you heard His words against this place...and you humbled yourself before me and rent your clothes... I also have heard you."

If the Lord had to speak today, just about you, would he say something like this. The Lord seeks one through whom He can work and display His power.

We need to be like Gideon, a mighty hero for God. God first worked in Gideon's life, and then began to work in the lives of those around him. Then the Lord pointed out to Gideon an idol that his father had built. When he had destroyed it, the men of the city wanted to kill him, but his father defended him, saying that if those were gods, let them defend themselves. God is well able to defend you - irrespective of your circumstances. He used Gideon and 300 men to defeat a whole nation.

If you want the Lord to use you as an instrument to work in the lives of those around you, then you must be cleansed. Have you searched your home, and found things that don't glorify God - throw it out - that it may not be a curse/stumbling block to your home. If you are seeking revival, and there are defiled things in you or in your home, chuck it out - else you are only playing around.

When they had found the scriptures in the temple, amongst all the dirt - he humbled himself before the greatness and holiness of the Lord, and immediately he assembled the people and stipulated how things would be done in future. And he was determined that it should be done in his day. For this, God honoured him because he sincerely humbled himself before the Lord. Firstly, he directed his approach towards himself, and

Josiah - God working in revival power

then toward the temple, and then toward the people.

Are you of such a spirit, where you are continually going forward in your spiritual life? What does God say about you? Can God say you have a tender, repentant heart? Can He say you are a co-worker together with Him?

Revival begins with you...

This is illustrated in Josiah (and should be the same with us). He dealt firstly with the sin in his own life; and the revival that came upon him subsequently passed on to others.

You get preached at Sunday after Sunday but have you ever made a covenant with God as Josiah did - to live in God's way from this point forward irrespective of where you come from, or what your circumstances are - to trust him for every hour and moment of every day for the salvation which He gave you?