

The Letter of Paul to the Philippians Part 10
Working Out Our Salvation part 3a – Philippians 2:12-13
Taking Every Thought Captive to the Obedience of Christ

This morning we are going to do a couple of different things. First, we are going to take a strong review of our lesson from last week. If you were like me last week, and I think most of you were, you were pretty tired. I made the mistake of depending upon my cell phone for my alarm clock and I kept looking at it through the night, wondering if it was going to update itself. Next year or next time change, I will have a battery operated clock so I can sleep soundly.

So last week I shared a story from the Old Testament of a king who took matters into his own hands instead of consulting God. I think most of us can identify with this man. How many times do we take matters into our own hands instead of consulting God? More than we would probably want to confess.

I wanted to share again what the prophet who spoke for the Lord said to this king. Look with me.

2 Chronicles 16:7-8, “7 At that time Hanani the seer (a prophet) 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. 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. 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.”

God reminded this king, Asa, how many times He had delivered him from other armies.

The Ethiopians and the Lubim people had immense armies with very many chariots and horsemen yet because you relied upon the Lord, He delivered them into your hand.

Because Asa relied upon the Lord when he was facing a superior army the victory was assured.

I think each one of us could also identify with Asa. In your life, how many things has God delivered you from? You've heard my story, deliverance from a destructive lifestyle. So many times in so many ways was I delivered. How about you? I bet each one of you could stand up here and testify to the goodness of God and how He has delivered you not once but many times.

Sometimes I think, like Asa, we need to be reminded of the times when God delivered us. I think we need to be reminded because we have spiritual ADD. Once a new thing, a new challenge, a new difficult person comes into our life its like we forgot the previous things God did for us. Its like we are own again, trying to figure how the best way for us to be delivered by ourselves is.

That is what Asa did. Look back again with me at the passage from last week.

2 Chronicles 16:2-3, "Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the Lord and the king's house and sent them to the king of Aram...saying, 'Let there be a treaty between you and me...Behold, I have sent you silver and gold' go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me."

In essence, what occurred was that Asa tried to buy his security and he used not only his money but he dove into the treasuries of the house of the Lord, paying off a neighboring country and their king, King Aram, to create a distraction so Israel and their king Baasham would withdraw their armies.

Asa had forgotten how God had not only protected Him, but He had won the battle for him.

As I was looking back at this sermon and the teaching found there, I dug a little bit deeper into the victories God won for Asa. Look with me.

2 Chronicles 14:8-10, “Now Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, bearing shields and wielding bows; all them were valiant warriors.

Now Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and he came to Mareshah. So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.”

As you can tell, the Ethiopians outnumbered Judah almost two to one plus they had 300 chariots which gave them the advantage.

The fact that Asa was facing a battle he could not win was obvious. Knowing this, look what Asa did.

11-12, “Then Asa called to the Lord his God and said, “Lord, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in You , and in Your name have come against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; let not man prevail against You.”

This is such a powerful declaration and a powerful prayer. Let’s break this down.

First Asa called out to the Lord and said, “There is no one but You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength.”

Several things that are said here. Asa said

1. There is no one else but God who could help.

By saying this he identified that God is the almighty one. There was no one else in heaven and on earth who could do what God could do.

Asa also identified himself as being one who have no strength. This really is where we all should live in our lives in relationship with our God isn't it?

2. In comparison to God we are not just weak in our ability to deliver ourselves from our circumstances, we have no strength at all to do so

This I believe is true humility before our Maker.

Asa goes on to ask the Lord to help them for He is their God. Twice He says that God is their Lord. By him saying this it means God, You are the commander and chief and we are under your command.

3. You are not just God, the only God but you are our Lord, Leader, Deliverer and King

Then I really like what he say in the last part of this verse. **“Let not man prevail against You.”**

Asa didn't say let not man prevail against us. No, he said something bigger than that.

4. Since we are Your chosen people and since we worship and follow You, let not man prevail against *You*

This is a great thing Asa got right. God fights for His people, for His children not just so they can experience the victory but so He, God can experience the victory. When God experiences the victory, He is glorified in such a way that the world knows He is God.

The victories we experience, yes they are for us and God is glad to provide them, but they are also for Him.

Let man know that they cannot prevail against You God. What a great call out Asa did! And what great call out we can do as well. Do not allow man to prevail in our lives. Show yourself to be strong Lord.

Back to our passage where God was reminding Asa how He delivered him many times. After He reminded Asa God said the following.

2 Chronicles 16:9, “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”

I can hear God saying, Asa, your heart was strong. Your focus was right. You saw yourself as weak and in need. You saw Me as strong and willing to fight for you. You came to me in humility and cried out to Me. I heard your cry out, I heard you challenge Me to overcome, to provide a victory for My names sake. What happened? When did you lose your focus and your faith in Me? Why did you decide to take this battle on yourself?

Some of the same questions we can ask of ourselves. Why, after all that God has done for us, why do we still try and take on some of the impossible things we face by ourselves.

How do we tap into a powerful God that accomplish the victory for us? I mentioned it last week and it is something we take very, very seriously and that is,

2 Corinthians 10:5b, “... (we) take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

5. We don't ask for God's help, we ask Him for the victory over our thoughts

We ask Him to take them captive and when we do, those thoughts become obedient to Christ.

I don't believe we cry out for help. I think we have done that too much. It is not help we need, help to do it ourselves. It is the power of the Lord we need to do it for us. That is what God did for Asa and that is what God wants to do for you.

He wants to show Himself strong to you and through You. And He wants to be glorified through you.

This is what we need in light of the unknowns of today and the fears and anxieties of tomorrow isn't it? Amen?

In closing let us say together a Psalm of prayer and the prayer Asa offered up.

Psalm 131. "O Lord, my heart is not proud, not my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me. Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child rests against his mother. My soul is like a weaned child within me. O Israel, (O church) hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever."

2 Chronicles 14:11-12, "...Lord, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; let not man prevail against You."

O Lord, hear our prayer.