

Week of Prayer
Holy Week of April 2-8, 2012



The Cross and the Godly Life

Explanation of Contents

This short guide is intended to help you prepare your heart and life for an encounter with Christ during this most holy of all weeks. The readings are divided into personal prayer instructions for the mornings, family prayer instructions for the evenings (to be done if possible with the entire family), and special corporate gatherings of the entire church or churches together. May this week result in a fresh experience of the words of 2 Cor 3:18:

We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. *2 Cor 3:18*

Remember the two key events this week

Wednesday night

Prayer and Praise at 7:30pm King Bible Church, 1555 King Road.

Friday night

Good Friday Joint Service at 7pm U of T Convocation Hall.

Four congregations and friends remembering Christ's death together.

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Theme

Sovereign Grace
Josiah as an 8 year old child (part 1)

Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 33:21-25

Josiah did not come from a godly home, yet he was an exceptionally godly person from his youth. His father was an ungodly man and then he was suddenly murdered when Josiah was just 8 years old.

How does Josiah's story give hope to those who have come from a troubled home life?

Pray the Scriptures

Pray for those in our church who have come from a difficult home life.

Praise God for His wonderful sovereign grace in bringing us to Himself. Use Romans 9:11 and Eph 1:4-5 as your "praise-fuel".

Ponder the Cross

The cross of Christ accomplished so many things for believers. One of the little known accomplishments of the cross is the way we were ransomed (a price paid to bring a slave to freedom) from the sinful way of life handed down to us from our families. Note this provision in 1 Peter 1:18-19; then, using this verse, thank God for ransoming us from the slavery to sinful values and patterns that can come to us from our upbringing.

Theme**Sovereign Grace**
Josiah as an 8 year old child (part 2)**Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron. 34:1-2**

Why did Josiah walk in obedience at such a young age? We are not told. Perhaps he had stories told to him of his grandfather's wickedness and repentance by a faithful believer in the service of the King (2 Chron 33:10-13, 15-16). But one thing is clear –it is possible to live a devoted life at a very young age.

Pray the Scriptures

Pray for the children in your home and in our church. Pray that God would pour out His grace on them so that they too might be unusually godly at a young age. Pray that God will raise up some of them to be godly leaders in the future. Use these verses for your prayers:

May our sons flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants. May our daughters be like graceful pillars, carved to beautify a palace.
Ps 144:12

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them". *Ecc 12:1*

The Lord who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. *Ps 103:5*

Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man. *Luke 2:52*

Ponder the Cross

Jesus died on the cross for children. This is something we can forget. When He said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 19:14), He said this not because children are innocent and get into heaven without needing the cross. Rather it was because Jesus would die for their sins too, that they are invited to come to Him and "enjoy His company". Jesus welcomes them because His death is for them too, not just adults.

Theme**Setting Biblical Priorities
Josiah as a 16 year old youth****Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 34:3-7**

“Seeking in Chronicles describes the habit of looking to God in every situation, and also the attitude which God looks for in those who pray.”

Martin Selman in 2 Chronicles Tyndale Commentary

Note verse 3. This seeking is not passive. When a young man “seeks” a young woman, he thinks about her constantly and makes time for her in his schedule, even at cost to himself. At 16 years old Josiah began to seek the Lord. What do you learn practically about seeking the Lord from the following verses?

The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him shall praise the LORD! *Ps 22:26*

The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. *Ps 34:10*

When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive. *Ps 69:32*

Pray the Scriptures

Use the following two promises of Scripture to encourage you to seek God in prayer right now.

I publicly proclaim bold promises. I do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner. I would not have told the people of Israel to seek Me if I could not be found. I, the LORD, speak only what is true and declare only what is right. *Isa 45:19 NLT*

But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find Him, if you search after Him with all your heart and with all your soul. *Deut 4:29*

Ponder the Cross

Amazingly, we need prodding to seek God, the only perfect being in the universe and the source of all our ultimate good. Yet God needed no prodding to seek us, even though sinful and rebelling against Him!

No one understands; no one seeks for God. *Rom 3:11*

The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. *Luke 19:10*

Theme**Purging Our Sinful Practices
Josiah at 20 years old****Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 34:3-7**

Purge: “To free from moral defilement” *Webster’s Dictionary*

High Places: Idolatry on a high hill

Asherim: Fertility goddess and consort of Baal

Baal: Fertility god, pagan “Lord”

Definitions of Idolatry related to us

An idol is:

- Anything we must have in our life other than the true God.
- When we make good things ultimate things; that is, we define meaning by it. It is when we place such a high value on something that it in effect replaces God as the center of our affections.
- Something our heart clings to, relies upon, loves, and serves above all else.

“Idolatry is an attack on God’s exclusive right to our love... As keeping the first (of the 10) commandments was expected to lead one to obey all the other commandments, so idolatry was thought to lead to all other sins.”

B. Rosner in New Dictionary of Biblical Theology

In the New Testament, greed is singled out as a particular expression of idolatry:

Covetousness, which is idolatry. *Col 3:5*

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. *Eph 5:5*

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. *Matt 6:24*

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” *Heb 13:5*

See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!

Ps 52:7

Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf. *Prov 11:28*

The rich think of their wealth as a strong defence; they imagine it to be a high wall of safety. *Prov 18:11*

Are any of the following aspects of greed to be found in your life?

- Worrying about material things and money.
- The desire to acquire possessions and money for status.
- Putting your trust in money or possessions as your security.
- Treating possessions and money as “yours”.

Pray the Scriptures

Pray that God will give you the heart of Josiah, who removed idols from his life (and the lives of those under him), so they would no longer dominate his life or theirs. Are you able to genuinely pray the prayer of *Prov 30:8-9*?

Give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny You and say, “Who is the LORD?” And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God’s holy name. *Prov 30:8-9*

Ponder the Cross

Jesus gave up untold wealth and security to rescue us. He descended from the only legitimate “High Place” (*Phil 2:6-7*) that we might be freed from the idolatrous high places of our lives. The Scriptures say “though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich” (*2 Cor 8:9*). He valued our salvation from idols, more than He valued His own comfort. He left untold riches, so that our hearts wouldn’t become slaves to money and greed or idolatry.

Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction... You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. *1 Thess 1:5,9*

Theme

Rebuilding What We Have Lost

Josiah at 26 years old

Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 34:8-21

After dealing with the false worship obstacle, Josiah started to work on the true worship of God's people. He started to repair and restore the Temple (vs 10). Because of the large scale drift into idolatry, the people had lost God's word (When the world is pursued in the hearts of God's people, the word is always neglected). But God allowed them to re-discover His word (vs 14). Notice the response of Josiah to the reading of the book (most likely the book of Deuteronomy) in verses 19 and 21.

Pray the Scriptures

Part of rebuilding a church is a new response to His word. Josiah trembled in the presence of the word because he believed it. Faith is always necessary to rightly respond to God's word. Using Isa 66:2, pray for God to restore the tremble to you and our church whenever we encounter His holy Scriptures.

This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. *Isa 66:2*

Ponder the Cross

The Scriptures are a powerful vehicle of God's grace to us. It is through them that we hear the authoritative good news about God's saving plan to rescue us!

And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. *Acts 20:32*

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. *1 Thess 2:13*

Special Night of Praise and Prayer
Please join us at King Bible Church
7:30pm

Theme

**Living In Humility Before God
Josiah in his prime at 26**

Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 34:22-28

According to verse 27, what kind of response to God's word brings God's favour?

How long has it been since you felt deep sorrow after being exposed to God's word and its declarations about sin's seriousness? What do you think this reveals about your heart?

Here is a sample of some of the words that Josiah heard that day. Do these words affect you the way they did Josiah?

Deut 8:10-14, 17-18; Deut 15:7-10; Deut 17:17-20; Deut 23:19-20

Pray the Scriptures

Pray that godly sorrow would mark your life and the life of our church using 2 Cor 7:10-11. Pray that each aspect of genuine repentance in verse 11 will be found in your life.

Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. *2 Cor 7:10-11*

Surprisingly, It requires one to take sin seriously and hate it, before one can experience true Holy Spirit given joy. Pray for this from *Ps 45:7*

You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. *Ps 45:7*

Ponder the Cross

Before we can receive the grace and comfort of the gospel, we need to receive the awful verdict about our sin's seriousness that makes the gospel necessary. Because there is bad news, the gospel is good news indeed!

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. *1 Thess 5:9*

Theme**Consecrating Ourselves To God
Josiah in his prime at 26****Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 34:29-33**

The leaders and people together hear God's word and consecrate themselves to Christ in a renewed commitment. They did this together, not as individuals. Josiah's godly leadership had a profound impact on those he led during his entire lifetime. (2 Chron 34:33b)

Pray the Scriptures

In the Bible, corporate consecration of God's people often precedes God's powerful activity among them. See Joshua 3:5, Josh 5:10-12, and Joshua 6. Consecrate you and your family to the Lord in prayer. Here is a sample consecration prayer:

"Our Lord and God, our family bows before you and we offer ourselves to you once again. We consecrate ourselves to you this day, knowing that we are totally dependent on the grace that comes to us through Jesus Christ our Lord to follow through on this commitment. We desire to live for you and to separate ourselves from everything in our lives that is getting in the way of our relationship with you. We want to follow you with all our hearts and soul and strength. We want you to be at the center of our affections with no competing rivals. We give ourselves to you this day, to do with us as you wish, for your glory and the fame of your name. Amen"

Ponder the Cross

Before Jesus offered Himself for the sins of the world on the cross, Jesus consecrated Himself to God. Contemplate what He said in Hebrews 10:7,10 and the impact of that consecration on your life! Note especially the way Christ put Himself under the authority of God's word.

I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book?... And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. *Heb 10:7,10*

Theme

Rediscovering The Cross Josiah's greatest act of leadership

Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 35:1-19

Note verse 18. Not only had the Scriptures lost their place in the life of the people, but the practice of the Passover had been lost for generations!

Read 1 Cor 5:7-8. This is the true and only answer to Josiah's earlier distress in 2 Chron 34:21. It is the only solution for our sin problem as well. Our repentances and consecrations cannot take away sin—only Jesus' death can do that.

Pray the Scriptures

Spend some time thanking God for "Christ our Passover Lamb"!

Pray over Ps 130. Note especially the question in verse 3 and the powerful answer given in verse 7-8!

Ponder the Cross

No atonement? No hope. Know atonement? Know hope!

What is your connection to Jesus death on the cross?

**Special Joint Good Friday Service
at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto
7pm**

Theme**Leaving A Godly Legacy
Josiah's death (part 1)****Read the Scriptures: 2 Chron 35:20-27**

Josiah made the mistake of getting involved in a fight that didn't involve him and it cost him his life (Prov 26:17). Our Lord got involved in a fight that was properly speaking not His own either and it cost Him His precious life as well. Yet it was His greatest legacy to us.

The prophet Jeremiah prophesied during the reign of Josiah (Jer 1:1-2) and wrote a sad song remembering the godly life of Josiah (see 2 Chron 35:25). Josiah's life was summed up in this song as one of "good deeds"(vs 26).

The New Testament says that good deeds are to be the mark of every believer in Christ. Read Titus 2:14, Titus 3:1, 8 & 1 Tim 5:9-10.

Pray the Scriptures

What good works do you want to be remembered for? What will your legacy be after you are gone?

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them!" *Rev 14:13*

Pray that the present generation of believers in our church will have a legacy of good works to leave for the next generation.

Ponder the Cross

We are not only redeemed FROM lawlessness but redeemed TO good works.

Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works. *Titus 2:13-14*

Theme

**Leaving A Godly Legacy
Josiah's death (part 2)**

Read the Scriptures: Romans 5:6-8, 1 Corth 11:24b, 25b

Think of the legacy that Christ left us. His many good deeds culminated in a good deed that was staggering in its scope—the giving of Himself for the sins of the world on the cross. Christ wanted to be remembered for that. That is His lasting legacy to each of us.

Ponder the Cross

Consider where you would be if Christ had held on to His glory, position and riches. Consider the magnitude of fruit that came from the self-giving of Christ on the cross. “Ponder anew what the Almighty can do if with His love He befriend thee.”

Celebrate this happy day of Christ's resurrection

Read, Ponder & Praise:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. *Isa 25:6-8*

I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. *Ps 16:8-11*

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! *Job 19:25-27*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. *1 Peter 1:3-5*

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. *1 Thess 4:13-18*



**SOVEREIGN
GRACE CHURCH**
T O R O N T O

Meeting at King Bible Church,
1555 King Road,
King City, ON L7B 1L4