

Lesson 70: Josiah, the Eight-Year-Old King

2 Chronicles 34:1 - 35:19 (pg. 140-141, Gospel Story Bible)

Teaching Points:

Josiah had a heart for God — Josiah was only eight years old when he became the king of Judah. Among all thirty-nine kings of the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah, he was arguably the best. He was energetic and determined to rid the land of idols. Even more importantly, he maintained his passion for the glory of God. As other kings grew older, they tended to become more wicked, but as Josiah grew older, he only became more determined to honor God and restore the worship of God to Judah.

The book of the law was found in the house of the Lord — Josiah, as a sixteen-year-old, embarked on a campaign to destroy the idols in the land of Judah. Ten years later, he began to restore the temple. There in the temple, neglected and covered with dust, workers found the book of the law, which had probably been lying there for about seventy-five years. When Josiah heard the words of the law read to him, he tore his clothes because he realized how wicked God's people had become.

The ark of God was returned to the temple — Josiah took a great step forward in returning the true worship of God to Judah. He returned the ark to Solomon's temple. He used the book of the law that had been found in the temple and writings from David and Solomon, so that he could properly celebrate Passover. He and his officials donated more than forty thousand animals to be used in sacrifices on behalf of the people.

Where is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Matthew 5:17-20.

Though Amon forgot the Word of the Lord and it was lost for a season, God ensured that it would not be lost for good. It was God's mercy to allow Amon to be killed and young Josiah to be made king. It was God who gave Josiah a heart for righteousness, and it was God who led him to preserve the Word of God and the promise of a coming deliverer, Jesus.

Jesus is called "the Word" in the Gospel of John. God in his faithfulness would not let his Word pass away because his Word is all about his Son, Jesus. The Word of God describes the sinfulness of man and the promise of redemption by God through Jesus. Not the smallest portion of God's Word will pass away until it is accomplished.

Bible Truth:

God's Word
will never
pass away.

A Little Bit More (grades 3-5) - The Book of the Law

In 2 Chronicles 34:14, Hilkiyah found the "Book of the Law of the Lord given through Moses." Later, in 34:30, it is called the "Book of the Covenant." The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Pentateuch. Jesus refers to them in Luke 24:44 as the Law of Moses. In John 5:47, Jesus emphasizes the importance of believing what Moses wrote by saying, "if you do not believe [Moses'] writings, how will you believe my words?"

Object Lessons:

1. The Law is Found (Any grade)

Supplies:

- Strips of paper with the following passages written one to a strip: Exodus 20:12; John 3:16; Ephesians 6:1; Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 4:1; Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 119:9; Psalm 119:33-34; Psalm 119:105
- Prizes (candy, stickers, etc.)

This is a fun exercise to help the children understand how important it is to remember God's Word.

Fold the strips of paper with the verses printed on them, and hide them around the class.

After reading the story, tell the children that God's Word is hidden all over the classroom. Release them to find the strips of paper and bring them up for a prize. Read the verses and talk to the class about how important it is to keep God's Word in our hearts.

Explain to the class that the kings before Josiah were wicked and did not follow God's Word; therefore, it was disregarded and lost.

2. Tender Heart, Hard Heart (Any grade)

Supplies:

- Clay that can be baked and hardened in the oven (enough for each child to have a small piece), or a hard item like a bead or marble that the children can take home.
- Soft clay or play-doh that each child can take home
- Small baggies for each child

This exercise is designed to help the children understand the benefit of a tender heart.

Prior to class make a small heart out of the clay, and bake it in your oven to harden it. (Or, select a hard item, like a marble or bead).

Read 2 Chronicles 34:22–33. Ask the class how the Bible describes Josiah's heart. Remind them of Pharaoh's hard heart and ask them how Josiah is different from Pharaoh.

Pass out a small portion of clay to each child. Have them form a heart with the clay and then using a pencil, press a design into the heart. Pass around the hard heart (marble/bead) and ask the children to notice the difference and how the hard heart can no longer receive any image or mark.

Ask the class the following questions:

- **What do you think it means to have a tender heart toward God?** (A tender heart toward God allows his Word to make its mark in our lives. That means that when we read something in the Bible, we should make sure that when we walk away from that Word it remains impressed on our hearts, and when people see us, they can see God's Word at work in our lives.)
- **What kinds of things did Josiah do that demonstrated his tender heart toward God?** (He tore his clothes and cried when he realized how they had not followed God, he cleared the land of idols, and he restored the house of God.)

Pass out paper and pencils and have the children write their answer to the following question:

- **How does Josiah's life challenge you to live differently?**

Encourage the children to consider where their hearts are before the Lord and how they treat the Word of God. Give the children ten minutes to write, and then invite some of them to share what they wrote with the class.

Challenge the class to trust that God can do great things through their lives just like he did through Josiah's. Encourage them to read their Bibles and look for opportunities to serve others.