

# Sitting Under the Word

*The Word of God, Pt. 2*  
*2 Kings 22:8-20, 1 Timothy 1:3-7*

Allan McCullough

*Grace Hill Church*

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## I. PRAYER

- i. Would you give us a posture of humility and faith as we think about your Word and its role in our lives.

## II. INTRODUCTION

**a. So, after what happened on Thursday night...I told myself...I have to find a way for this to be a sermon intro...just so we can celebrate.**

- i. What happened on Thursday night?
  - The CAPS won the Stanley Cup!
    1. The first major sports championship in DC in over a quarter century!

**b. As I was watching the Caps hoist the cup in the air after the game...I thought, there really is two great story lines with this.**

- i. First, just all of the loyal DC Sports fans who have been longing for a championship.
  - It was fun to see how excited this city was for the Caps.
  - And the parade on Tuesday is going to be big.
- ii. Second, was Alex Ovechkin, the Captain of the team and the best player in hockey over the last decade.
  - We drafted him 13 years ago and he has worked so hard for this moment.
  - So, to see him lift that cup and to see the elation on his face was special.



**c. Here in DC, it has been a longtime since we celebrated one of our sports teams in this way.**

- i. And when you go so long without something and then when you finally experience it again, I think the magnitude of the moment can be overwhelming.
  - I mean, the images of 10's of thousands of people gathering in the streets of DC, not to protest, not because their upset about something...but they're hugging, giving high fives, dancing...
  - That's a rare sight in Washington DC.

**d. And as we pivot away from celebrating the Caps and to the Word of God...**

- i. I was reminded of a similar moment in the Scriptures with King Josiah.
  - King Josiah rules in Judah.
    1. Remember, after King Solomon, Israel split into two kingdoms.
    2. Northern Kingdom - Israel
    3. Southern Kingdom - Judah
    4. Josiah rules in Judah.
  - And during his reign, King Josiah discovers something that had been missing from his Kingdom for generations.
    1. And when he finally is in possession of it, it is completely overwhelming.



### III. SERIES PLUG

- a. **We began a sermon series last week called “The Word of God” where we are diving into the doctrine of the Word of God.**
- i. Asking important questions like:
- What is the Bible? Why do I need the Bible? How can I trust the Bible? Who wrote and put the Bible together? How do I read the Bible?
- ii. Last week, we started the series by talking about how God designed us to need the Bible.
- That we need special revelation from God to know who we are, what our purpose is, and who God is.
  - Without the Word of God, we are left in the darkness with no light to show us the way
    1. Psalm 119:105 - *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*
- iii. **And this week, I get a bonus week.**
- Next week, my plan is to talk about the inerrancy of Scripture. How we believe the Bible is without error.
  - But, since I get a bonus week this week, I felt that the Lord was compelling me to talk to us about our posture towards His Word.
    1. How do we approach the Word of God?
    2. How much authority do we give it in our lives?
  - When we hear and receive the Word of God, what is our posture?



**b. Because, the thing that King Josiah discovered that was missing from his Kingdom for probably more than 75 years, was the Word of God.**

- i. And I want all of us to observe King Josiah's posture and his response when he encounters the Word of God, which they had been missing for so long.

#### **IV. 2 KINGS 22:8-20**

**a. Quick context:**

- i. King Josiah became King over Judah when he was 8 years old in about 628 BC.
  - He was preceded by several evil Kings who did not follow God, allowed the Temple to be profaned, and also led Judah into paganism.
- ii. King Josiah was different. He was a godly king who desired to return Judah back to faithfulness to God.
  - And so, one of the things Josiah did in his 18<sup>th</sup> year...so he was about 26 at this time...was order that the Temple be restored and proper worship to God be restored.
  - So, it is in the midst of this repair and cleaning out of the temple...where we pick up the story in our text...

**b. Read 2 Kings 22:8-11, 16-20 (Set scene after v.8 using info from 2 Chron. 34)**



- i. **So, you have this powerful King over the Kingdom of Judah...someone who commands armies.**
- And upon hearing the Word of God read aloud...what posture does he immediately take?
    1. He tears his clothes. He puts his face into the ground. He humbles himself under the Word of God.
- ii. **My family and I used to have a dog...a Rhodesian Ridgeback.**
- She was a great dog, but she was a very active dog and a very strong-willed dog.
    1. Every once in a while, to get her under control, I needed to get real aggressive and loud my voice.
    2. And when I would do that...her posture would change.
    3. She would sink her head low. Her ears would fall back. And as I approached her, she would lay down on her back.
  - She was humbling herself literally under me.
    1. She was, with her posture, communicating, you have authority over me.
- iii. **This was King Josiah at the reading of the Word of God.**
- God, I do not rule this land. Your Word rules this land. And we have ignored it for generations.
    1. The only response I have is to get my face to the ground in humility.
    2. It is the only proper response.
- iv. **And when God responds to the discovery of his Word...he responds harshly.**



- We see God declare that he is going to bring judgement upon Judah for ignoring His Word.
  1. And all God is doing here is saying that he is going to do what he said he is going to do.
  2. If you go to Deuteronomy 28, God makes it very clear the blessings that his people will enjoy if they obey His Word and the curses they will endure if they do not obey His Word.
  3. God tells his people that if they ignore His Word, he will send an enemy nation in to conquer and carry them into exile.
  4. Well, if you keep reading in your Bible, this is what happens.
  5. God sends the Babylonians in to defeat Jerusalem and carry God's people into exile.
- But, in our text this morning, God takes notice of Josiah's posture towards His Word.

1. Read 2 Kings 22:19-20.

**c. It is safe to say, that King Josiah is an example to us about the posture that God expects us, as His creation, to have towards His Word.**

## **V. 1 TIMOTHY 1:3-7**

**a. I want to contrast what we see from King Josiah to some of those who belonged to the church in Ephesus.**



- i. If you turn in your Bibles to 1 Timothy 1, the Apostle Paul is going to give us a picture of a different posture that some have.

**b. Read 1 Timothy 1:3-7.**

i. **V.3-4.**

- So, here in v.4, Paul immediately demonstrates to us two different kinds of postures towards the Bible.
- There are some who teach things that are contrary to the Word of God and they promote speculations.
  1. They are forming a theory about what the Word of God says without firm evidence.
  2. In essence, they are standing over the Word.
- Then, there are those who are good stewards, by faith, of the Word of God.
  1. They have the same posture as Josiah.
  2. I sit under the Word and when I am knowledgeable of the Word, I have a responsibility to steward that knowledge well.

ii. **V.5-7.**

- In v.5, Paul gives us three different indicators of our posture towards the Word of God.
  1. Pure Heart, Good Conscience, and Sincere Faith
  2. And in v.6-7, he says that when we are missing one or more of these indicators, when we swerve from them, we are susceptible to mishandling the Word of God.
  3. We are susceptible to speculations, to vain discussions, to wrong doctrine.



4. It probably means that our posture towards the Word of God is that we see ourselves as over the Word.

**c. So, I want us to think more deeply about these three indicators of our posture towards the Word of God.**

- i. When we have these in our life, we probably approach God's Word like Josiah.
- ii. If we are missing some of these, it might mean that we are approaching God's Word like those in this church in Ephesus.

## **VI. THREE INDICATORS OF OUR POSTURE TOWARDS GOD'S WORD.**

### **a. A Pure Heart**

- i. Any time you hear the Bible talk about the heart, it is referring to our real self, our real motivations, our real thoughts.
  - It is the part of us that generates the true reason behind all of our thoughts and behaviors.
- ii. So, when Paul refers here to a pure heart, he is referring to having pure motivations. We all know what it means to be pure in heart...
  - If I go buy my wife flowers, just out of the abundance of my love for her and for no other reason than because I was to express that love.
    1. I would be pure in heart.
  - If I buy my wife flowers because I'm trying to soften her up so that I can ask her for something...



1. Well, that's not pure in heart. I have an agenda.
  2. The flowers are just a part of the scheme, right?
- iii. **So, when it comes to having a pure heart in regards to the Word of God, the question we must ask is if we approach God's Word with the motivation of wanting to know God more, obey his commands, and glorify him with our life...or do have a different agenda attached in our study of God's Word?**
- Because if there is any agenda that we have for studying God's Word other than worshipping Him...then that will affect our posture towards God's Word.
    1. If we are using God's Word for our own purposes and not God's purposes, then we are not sitting under God's Word, we are standing over it.
- iv. **Here in 1 Timothy 1, one of the motivations that we see here is that these people who were caught up in these speculations wanted to be teachers. (v.7)**
- They wanted to study the Scriptures, come up with these speculations and myths, and teach others.
    1. And since they were teaching these speculations and myths, they could claim to have discovered something in the text that no one else had discovered.
    2. They could distinguish themselves.
  - It certainly doesn't seem that their heart was pure...like the heart of Josiah.



1. Who when he is confronted with God's Word, he goes down.
  2. He doesn't speculate, he submits.
  3. These guys in Ephesus, they want to use God's Word to create a platform for themselves.
- v. **You know, I think there is a challenge for us in here.**
- With the rise of smartphones, social media, and the fact that all of us have cameras in our pockets...
    1. We have become trained to see every significant moment or profound thought in our life as something that must be captured and shared.
    2. Instead of cherishing these moments in our life we must let others know that we had the moment.
  - This isn't all bad but I think this has seeped into our spiritual lives.
    1. Where our study of the Scriptures, our thoughts, our profound moments...aren't sufficient to be just between God and myself...I must let others know that I had such a profound moment.
    2. We all want to be seen as spiritually mature.
    3. We all want others to think of us as being well-read, faithful, consistent...
    4. I want you to think that of me.
  - But, is it possible, that our hearts aren't pure in our approach to God's Word because we want to use it to influence what others think of us?
    1. Is it possible we are more concerned about display than we are devotion?



vi. Maybe for some of us, we don't use God's Word in this way...but maybe another way that we approach the Word with a heart that is not pure is by reading it with the aim of finding loopholes.

- John Newton once said: "Read the Scripture, not as an attorney may read a will, but as the heir reads it..."<sup>1</sup>
- Like a lawyer is looking for technicalities, we can sometimes look to the Word to find excuses for our behavior or to try and find the boundaries that we can press up against without crossing into the realm of sin...or maybe inconsistencies so we can criticize the Word.
- This kind of approach to the Bible does not mirror that of Josiah.
- This kind of approach would indicate that we see the Bible as a book to be mastered, not special revelation from our Lord.

vii. **But I love that charge to read the Bible like an heir reads the will.**

- Expectantly. Wanting to hear from God.
- When we read the Scripture like an attorney, we place ourselves over the Word of God.
- But, when we read it like an heir, we read it like a child listens to his or her parents give them faithful and loving instruction and teaching.

viii. **How would you evaluate your heart as you approach God's Word?**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mobile.twitter.com/mattsmethurst/status/994571001773088768>



## b. A Good Conscience

- i. The conscience is defined as “the inward faculty of distinguishing right and wrong.”<sup>2</sup>
  - But, innate, within this word is how one distinguishes between right and wrong.
    1. The Greek word for conscience carries the literal meaning of “joint knowledge.”
    2. To quote Bryan Chapell: “...in Biblical culture [this word] meant the sense of one’s moral actions as part of a group. The “good conscience” sensed inner moral approval from God and God’s people.”<sup>3</sup>
  - A key to having a good conscience when it comes to how we think about the Bible is by studying the Bible in community and allowing our thoughts about the Bible to be sharpened by our community.
- ii. When we begin to read the Bible and formulate thoughts, doctrines, and speculations and we are unwilling to allow those speculations to be corrected and scrutinized by our community, then we are not reading the Bible with a good conscience.
  - It might be an indicator that we have placed ourselves over the Word of God and not under the Word of God.
- iii. It is critical, that every week when I teach from this pulpit, that I teach with a good conscience.
  - And I do! For two reasons...

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<sup>2</sup> BDAG

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, R. Kent, and Bryan Chapell. *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000.



1. (ONE) I always make sure that the assertions I make about the Word of God are backed up by good, trusted, scholarly resources.
  2. I'm not comfortable with just relying on my own thoughts when it comes to teaching the Bible.
  3. I want to be in good company when I teach.
  4. (TWO) We have elders in this church. And they have just as much responsibility for the ministry of the Word here as I do.
  5. And they have a responsibility to not only listen to what is being taught from the pulpit but also ensure that what is being taught is sound doctrine.
  6. And if something other than sound doctrine is taught...they need to correct it.
- So, I always preach with a good conscience because we strive for what is taught here to always pass the test of the approval of God's people.
- iv. **In 2 Kings 22 after Josiah heard the Word of God read, do you know what he immediately did?**
- **Read 2 Kings 22:12-14a.**
    1. Look at all of the people involved when it comes to determining the will of God and the interpretation of the Scriptures.
  - When we have a posture of being underneath the Word of God, we are motivated to seek a good conscience about the word by allowing our thoughts about the Word to be tested in community.



## c. A Sincere Faith

- i. When Paul refers to a sincere faith, he is talking about the exact thing that James is referring to when he says that faith without works is dead.
  - A sincere faith is a faith where we not only say with our mouths that we believe in God...but that reality also impacts the way we live our life.
  - We don't have sincere faith when we say we have faith but that faith is not lived out in our lives.
- ii. **And the Scriptures have a lot to say about the way that we should live!**
  - And so, I think, one of the most obvious indicators of our posture towards the Word of God is how seriously we take obeying God's Word.
  - Back in the Kingdom of Judah, most people did not take obeying God's Word seriously...except Josiah.
    1. And we know this because of Josiah's reaction to hearing God's Word.
- iii. **So, when we read something like Ephesians 5:4...**
  - "Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking..."
  - Is that an instruction from God that we are sincere about putting into practice?
    1. This is one of those verses I feel we've become lax about.
    2. We say we believe and live by God's Word, but the Christian who really is sincere about only allowing what builds others up come out of their mouth is considered to be the weird one.



- iv. Or 1 Corinthians 6:18...which tells us to flee sexual immorality. Literally run away from it.
  - Yet, it's become completely normal to watch movies and TV shows with sexual explicit content.
    1. Especially now with streaming...where companies like HBO, Netflix and others can get away with much more than can air on live TV.
    2. And we justify it because we love the shows.
  - Are we sincere about God's Word?
    1. Do we believe it is true and good?
- v. So, these are just simple examples of how when we identify areas of our faith that we may not be sincere about, we discover where our posture towards God's Word is one of standing over God's Word and not under God's Word.

**d. I desire to have the kind of reverence for God's Word like Josiah.**

- i. Humbling myself underneath it.
  - Not reading it with an agenda.
  - Not trying to find loopholes or technicalities.
  - Not reading it in isolation.
  - And taking the entire thing sincerely.
- ii. Where are you? How would you evaluate your posture towards God's Word?



## **VII. CONCLUSION**

- a. But let me just say, having a humble posture towards God's Word does not mean you can't ask difficult questions of God's Word.**
- i. This is why we are doing this series.
    - We want to answer some very good questions about God's Word.
  - ii. I think it is good to wrestle with hard questions about the Word of God...
    - But I think we can do that with a pure heart, a desire for a good conscience, and a sincere faith.
- b. And do you know why Paul is so concerned about false teachers in the church and the risk of wrong doctrine and speculations being spread around?**
- i. Because it is the Word of God that teaches us the way to life and salvation in Christ!
- c. In 2 Kings, Josiah and the people of God had the law.**
- i. And the law was clear about the blessings you would enjoy if you obeyed and the curses you would endure if you disobeyed.
    - But as we will learn in this series, the Scriptures unfolds a grand narrative that culminates in Jesus Christ.
    - And the message that Paul and the early church was charged to preach faithfully was that the law was not sufficient to save us from our sin!



1. We deserved all the curses that we are warned about in the law.
  - But, God sent us a Savior, Jesus, who lived his life worthy of the blessing from God for obeying the law.
    1. We deserve the curses, he deserves the blessings.
    2. But it gets switched.
    3. God gives us the blessing of Jesus' righteousness and Jesus takes the curse we deserve on the cross.
- ii. **This is the Gospel that unfolds as we read throughout our Bibles.**
- And if we don't humble ourselves underneath the Word of God, we just might miss the greatest, most life-transforming news that is contained in it.
  - If we read the Scriptures like an attorney, we might miss all that has been left to us as heirs.

## **VIII. PRAY**

