



Good morning church family!

Today we are continuing our **Choose Wisely** sermon series. And this morning we are going to look at the life of **King Josiah** (King of Judah) from the context of 2 Kings chapter 22 & 23.

And what I want to highlight this morning is what made Josiah one of the BEST King's Judah ever had was that he **Broke the Cycle** of idolatry and wickedness that came before him.

What is truly amazing about Josiah's story is that he became the King of Judah when he was **only 8 years old**. *When I was 8 years old I was only responsible for keeping my room clean, and I couldn't even get that right 😊.* Imagine ruling an entire nation at 8 years old. Josiah was thrust into the position of ruling with zero experience, and all he really had to rely on was what was modeled before him by his forefathers.



And if you know anything about the book of 2 Kings, Josiah did not have good role models. You see Josiah's father **King Amon** and grandfather **King Manasseh** who led before him were **Evil King's**.

Sometimes when people use the word **evil** to describe other people they are being hyperbolic, but not here.

These guys were evil.

Manasseh (*who is considered by many to be one of the worst King's to ever reign*) followed foreign gods to the extent that he authorized **child sacrifice** ☹ in Judah. He even sacrificed his own son by fire. Josiah's father **Amon** wasn't much better. He largely followed in Manasseh's footsteps and was so terrible that he was murdered by his own servants. And so from this we see that Josiah didn't have godly examples to follow. However it was necessary for **someone** to step into this mess and **break the cycle**. But you know it isn't easy to break deeply entrenched cycles, is it? In fact it is much easier to **GO WITH THE FLOW**.



Illus:
How many of us here like White Water Rafting? I have been many times and I really enjoy it! One of the things that they tell you during the safety talk is that if you fall out of the raft (*as the man on our screen is about to do*), you should **not swim against the current** trying to get back to your raft. Instead swim across the current to the shore or to another raft.

They tell you this because if you choose to swim **against** the current, you will grow tired quickly because the river is always going to be stronger than you.

There have been many people who have died swimming against currents, and so it's safer to **go with the flow**...it is the wiser choice, always.

Swimming against the current is too hard.



JOSIAH BREAKING THE CYCLE

And while this notion of going with the flow, and not swimming against the current is wisdom in the white water rafting world, or if you are in a rip current, it ***doesn't*** quite work that way in our relationship with God. Because God often calls us to swim against the current...doesn't he?

What we are going to see this morning is that God calls Josiah to be different than his forefathers, to not swim in their stream, but to break their cycle.

And for us today, many of us have sin cycles that we are caught up in. Some of this is due to our own poor choices, and the cycles we have forged on our own. For others of us we have inherited these cycles from our family of origin. Whatever the case may be WE ALL HAVE negative cycles that encircle our lives.....and what we are going to explore this morning is how to break free of them in Jesus name.

PRAY:



Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 22, if you haven't done so already. To set up the context of the passage we are diving into, as I said earlier Josiah becomes King when he is only 8 years old. The text tells us in verse 2 that Josiah *"did right in the sight of the Lord"* and that he *"walked in the ways of King David."*

The story picks up in the eighteenth year of his rule, where Josiah took action to repair the temple of the Lord. He sends the High Priest Hilkiah into the temple treasury so he can pay the laborers who will repair the temple. And while the High Priest is in the temple...he stumbles upon the Book of the Law, which apparently had been lost and forgotten by the people.

This situation sounds so crazy...the High Priest during this time of the nation's history didn't even know where God's word was located. He happened to stumble upon it while gathering up some gold in the temple.



This would be like me telling you when I came out here this morning, that... *“There is good news everyone, after misplacing it for 20 years...I have stumbled upon my Bible while rummaging through my basement.”*

If any of our Pastors said that it would be time to find a new church!

[Pause]

You see the people of Judah had abandoned God to the extent that the temple was falling apart and the Book of the Law was lost, no one was reading it, let alone obeying it.

2 Kings 22:11, 13

¹¹ When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes... ¹³ “Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found.

Shaphan one of the scribes begins to read the word of God to Josiah and in verse 11 we read about the king's reaction.

Read: 

2 Kings 22:11, 13

¹³ Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us."

Continue Reading: 

Clearly Josiah is haunted by the fact that **God's law, God's words, God's will**, was recorded and available for the people to know and live by, but his forefathers willingly/purposefully ignored it.

Josiah recognizes that God's anger burns against the people because HE HAS BEEN IGNORED.

Josiah knows that this cycle of ignoring God's word must come to an end, and he must be the one to swim up stream and break this cycle.

Discovering God's Word is the first step in breaking cycles of sin.

And that brings us to our first truth for this morning.

Discovering God's Word is the first step in breaking cycles of sin.

Church family, the culture in which we live is moving closer and closer to what we see happening here in 2 Kings, where God's Word is an after thought in our lives.

A recent LifeWay Research study found only 45 percent of those who regularly attend church read the Bible more than once a week.

Over 40 percent of the people attending read their Bible occasionally, maybe once or twice a month.

Almost 1 in 5 churchgoers say they never read the Bible.

Discovering God's Word is the first step in breaking cycles of sin.

And so, we see even amongst church goers there is a waning interest in ***Discovering God's Word***.

But if **The Word of God** is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (as Psalm 119 proclaims). How are we to break the cycles of sin in our lives if we don't know **The Word of God**?

The simple answer is we won't break the cycle, we will linger on and limp along in our lives needlessly, while we have a ***treasure*** waiting to be discovered right within our reach.

Illus:
Just this week the news reported on a Kentucky Farmer who found millions of dollars worth of Civil War Era gold coins on his family farm.

Discovering God's Word is the first step in breaking cycles of sin.

The farmer's identity has been kept anonymous for obvious reasons. But I imagine he couldn't believe what he found. Likely generations of his family have worked and played, reaped and sown on that same land, not ever knowing the treasure it held.

But now he knows, and he can put those funds to good use to bless his family, friends, and community.

You see church, treasure that is kept buried does us no good.

And if God's Word is to be treasured...when we fail to know it or read it, it would be like this farmer knowing he's got a ton of past due bills with creditors calling, and yet he chooses to leave the treasure still buried in the field. No one would do that (2X)...when it comes to money.

But how about when it comes to the Word of God.

Discovering God's Word is the first step in breaking cycles of sin.

Friends can we have such a high view of the Word of God that we are eager to dig up its truths with even more excitement than the Kentucky Farmer had digging up his millions?

Because the truth is, the farmer will use his millions, hopefully wisely, but then it will be gone.

Whereas the treasure we have in the Word of God is an eternal treasure, that will not only bless our lives, but as we create positive new cycles in our family it will continually impact future generations for the cause of Christ.....and those positive cycles will ripple into eternity.

Church I want to challenge you. If you are not regularly in the Word of God make a plan.



The Navigators Ministry have developed several different approaches to regular Bible reading. Visit navigators.org and find the plan that works best for you. This is just one of many free Bible reading plans online.

Google Bible Reading Plans and I am certain you will find one you like.

Another great idea is to download a bible app and listen to God's Word. The one I use is Bible Gateway, you can listen while you are driving, listen while you are waiting to pick your child from sports, or in the Doctor's waiting room.

If we are honest even in the midst of a busy day we all have time to prioritize hearing from the Lord.



Back in our text...Josiah realized how far the nation had wandered from God, and so he sends five officials to find out what the Lord thinks about this, realizing that the wrath of God must be hovering over Judah because they ignored God for so long.

And so you see *[what is happening in Josiah's life right now]* as the Book of the Law was read out to Josiah, he's listening like, we didn't obey that, we didn't obey that, we really don't obey that, and as he hears all of this he knows that God's wrath must be over the nation.

And so these 5 officials go to the Prophetess Huldah and she confirms *[yup you guys are in BIG trouble]* that God is going to punish Judah soon because of the corruption of the people. But she added that it would not happen during Josiah's life time **because he sought to break the cycle of sin.**

2 Kings 22:19

¹⁹ Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse and be laid waste—and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the Lord.

Let's pick back up in our text....verse 19

Read: 

And so you see here God recognizes the genuine repentance that Josiah is bringing here.

His ***heart responded to God's Word***...and because of this Josiah ***humbled himself before the Lord***.

Church I cannot tell you how important this biblical concept is...but I am going to try.

You know something happens when we open our hearts to ***receive*** the Word of God. To open our hearts means that it doesn't necessarily have to communicate what we want it to, or what we expect it to. To open our hearts to the Word of God means to surrender our will...to receive HIS TRUTH.

2 Kings 22:19

¹⁹ Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse and be laid waste—and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the Lord.

Josiah's open heart to God is what then gives him the ability to be humble before God.

THIS IS WHAT HIS FOREFATHERS LACKED. THEY WERE GRIPPED IN A CYCLE OF CLOSED HEARTS AND ZERO HUMILITY.

They didn't want to know what God thought...and His Word was left to rot in a broken down temple.

But Josiah is ***Breaking this Cycle***, he is choosing a better path forward, and God is rewarding him for it.

Breaking the cycle of sin requires a responsive heart and humility.

And that brings us to our second truth for this morning.

**Breaking the cycle of sin requires a
responsive heart and humility.**

One of the blessings of being a New Testament Christian is that because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, His body given for us, His blood shed for us, His crown of thorns for us, crucified with sinners for us, because of these things recorded in the Gospels we have such a palpable example of God's love for us to ***RESPOND TO***.

Many of you are here today because your heart responded to the truthfulness of the gospel...and it was irresistible.

When I was 12 years old MY heart responded to the Gospel...the truthfulness of what God had done for ME leapt off the pages of The Gospel of John and into my heart and my life has never been the same.

Breaking the cycle of sin requires a responsive heart and humility.

And because the posture of my heart changed, I was able to humble myself before the Lord.

Now clearly I am not perfect, but I know that I have been redeemed. And church it is the knowledge of our redemption that drives us towards humility.

[Pause]

You know God creates opportunities *[all the time]* for us to gain a responsive, humble heart.

Often because we are hard-headed these opportunities come in the form of trials.

Sometimes when hard times come, our hearts remain hard, we remain in our prideful state. But what God is inviting us to do is to soften, listen, hear from Him in humility.



I love testimonies...and this woman has a mighty powerful one of learning soften her heart to the will of God no matter what.

This is Joni Eareckson Tada, she is an Author, Artist, Singer, Radio personality, an advocate for the disabled, and she has also been a Quadriplegic for over 55 years. Joni doesn't have the use of her arm or legs.

She was in a diving accident during high school.....this diving accident crushed her C4&C5 vertebrae severing her spinal cord.



In an interview Joni reflected on the event that changed her life.....the event that forced her to decide whether she was willing to humble her heart and truly follow Jesus.

She started by recounting that (before the accident) as a 14-year-old, she had embraced Jesus as her savior, but in her words she had "confused the abundant Christian life with the great American dream."

Joni said: **[quote]**

"I was a Christian and would lose weight, get good grades, get voted captain of the hockey team, go to college, marry a wonderful man who made \$250,000 a year, and we'd have 2.5 children. It was me focused: What can God do for me? I almost thought that I had done God a great big favor by accepting Jesus



She continues.... "In April 1967, I came home from a sordid Friday night date with my boyfriend ... and cried, "Oh God ... I'm staining your reputation by saying I'm a Christian, yet doing one thing Friday night and another Sunday morning.

I'm a hypocrite I want you to change my life ... Please do something in my life that will jerk it right side up because I'm making a mess of the Christian faith in my life and I don't want that. I want to glorify you." Then I had the diving accident about three months later.

Immediately after the accident, Joni told God, "**You'll never be trusted with another one of my prayers.**" 😊



After the accident, while overwhelmed with depression and anger towards God.....**GRIPPED WITH A HARDENED HEART**, Joni while lying in her hospital bed whipped her neck back and forth trying to snap her neck at an even higher level in order to end it all.

In the grief of that moment Joni cried out to God, **'Oh God, if I can't die, show me how to live.'**

And in that moment, God came into Joni's life, and Joni exchanged her heart of stone, for a humble, surrendered heart.

And now her life is dedicated to helping others experience the same peace she has found in Jesus.



And you know the reason why I love hearing people's stories of transformation is because often we can think that our problems are too overwhelming, that our issues are too insurmountable, that God isn't interested in us.

But when you hear a story like Joni's it helps remind us that God is in every valley with us, He will walk with us through every pain, He will help us **break any cycle** we are in.

But we have to ask...as Joni said, "**God if I can't die, show me how to live?**"

Church as you open your heart, and humble yourself, **God will show you how to live** in any circumstance.

And as we move back into our text, Josiah [*equipped with a humble heart*] is going to reform the lives of the nation, and set an example of **how to live** with God once again.

2 Kings 23:2

² He went up to the temple of the Lord with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord.

Read: 

2 Kings 23:3

³ The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord—to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.

Continue Reading: 

In these verses we see that Josiah gathers the nation together and reads the Book of the Covenant [*which is basically Exodus 20-23*] to all of the people of Judah.

Josiah does this to ensure that everyone is aware of God's truth/law/word...he wants to ensure that the nation avoids the same mistakes of their past and **stays connected to the Word of God.**

He then makes a COVENANT along with the people to OBEY all the words of the law. You must understand that in the Bible a covenant isn't just a simple agreement.

The Hebrew word for "covenant" is **berit**, which comes from the root word **bara**, meaning "**to cut**" or "**to divide.**"



This root comes from the ancient Near Eastern practice of ratifying covenants by cutting or dividing animals and then passing between the pieces *[that sounds intense]*, this symbolizing the seriousness of the agreement and the potential consequences of breaking it. **[meaning] May I be split in two if I break this covenant!**

So understand here that Josiah is sobered by his experience with God here, and he is inviting the nation to take their relationship with God with the utmost seriousness as well.

In the remainder of chapter 23 we see Josiah put his words into action by reforming Judah. Here he begins to deliver on his covenant promise to God by ordering the destruction of all the idols, altars, and sacred pillars associated with false worship throughout the land. He removed pagan priests and the practitioners of idolatry.



We see in verse 21 that he reinstated the celebration of the Passover, an important observance that had not been properly observed in the nation for generations.

In verse 24 we see that Josiah removed the mediums, spiritists, household gods, and all other forms of occult practices that were prevalent in the land.

You see Josiah is reversing the damage done by his ancestors, he is breaking the cycle of waywardness, and godlessness that preceded him.

Obedience to God's covenant promises leads to abundant living.

And this brings us to our third truth for this morning.
Obedience to God's covenant promises leads to abundant living.

There isn't a person alive who doesn't want to live an abundant, joyous life.

Manasseh and Amon (*Josiah's evil Father and Grandfather*) wanted to live abundant lives as well, however they just went about it in all the wrong ways.

I imagine that there are many of us who are like Josiah, we are descendants of people who sought out the abundant life in the wrong ways, with wrong motives, and now we carry hurts, habits and hang-ups because of the negative influences they have had on our lives.

And while those hurts are real, ***they do not define who we are.***

Galatians 3:26

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

And like Josiah, if we commit to obey God's covenant promises for us, we can overcome any negative cycle from our past because through Christ we are invited into a **new family**, Jesus' death on the cross opening a **new family** to root ourselves to, ***The Family of God***.

Galatians 3:26 tells us... "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith."

And friends if you accept by faith the New Covenant in Christ's blood shed for you. You are a member of the Family of God. And membership into this family is powerful enough to break any negative cycle, any sin of your past, any wrong that has been committed against you.

Membership into this family frees you to leave your past in the rear view mirror and to live in the abundance Christ purchased for you.

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full [abundantly].

Jesus says in John 10:10 that the thief [Satan] has come only to steal and kill and destroy; but he says I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Satan wants your life to be a mess. He wants you to live for short term gains, he wants you to worship the idols of this world, he wants you to repeat negative cycles that have plagued your life for years, and to go with that flow.

And Jesus says, I have come so you can avoid all that.

Covenant with me, place your faith in me, and live abundantly.



JOSIAH BREAKING THE CYCLE

Friends I don't know what cycle you need to break today, but chances are every single one of us has something in our lives right now, a cycle from our past that is lingering in our present that needs to be broken.

As we approach the communion table this morning we have the opportunity to reflect on the sacrifice of Christ, whose body was sacrificed for us, whose blood was shed for us so that we could break free.

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



We celebrate an open communion here at Brandywine, which means you don't have to be a member in order to partake with us, but we do ask that you be a believer in Jesus Christ.

We observe communion here at Brandywine because we see clear instructions from Jesus in scripture to remember Him in this way. In Matthew 26:26-28 we read, "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



These are the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples as he was preparing himself to be our sacrifice. And within the observance of Communion we see several opportunities to reflect and confess.

First, we should look back. We are to participate in Communion in remembrance of Christ. Communion also speaks of the intimacy and fellowship we now have with God. And so we look back. We look back to the cross. We remember what Christ accomplished for us. And we are reminded of His love for us.

Second, we are to look ahead. The Scriptures say to do this "until he comes again" 1 Corinthians 11:26 ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

And so this is a proclamation of what he has done for us.

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



And Third, Communion is a time to look within.

We are to look within and ask the Holy Spirit to show us any areas of our lives that we have not surrendered to God. This morning it would be a great opportunity to take the time to consider what cycles we need to break free of in our lives...to soften our hearts and allow Him in to do that work in us.

***Explain elements**

***Let's take a moment to reflect and confess.**

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



Bread:

Taking the bread Jesus broke it and gave it to His disciples, He said, “take eat this is my body”, do this in remembrance of me.

Cup:

In the same way Jesus took the cup, saying “this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” do this in remembrance of me.

Prayer:

Thank you for your sacrifice
May we live to honor what you have done for us.
May we look forward to your glorious 2nd coming.