

FRIDAY, March 19, 2010:

2 Chronicles 36:21 "...until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths."

Today's verse teaches a very important truth that you and I need to file away for future reference. The background for today's verse goes back to the early days of Israel's beginnings. It was during the time that God was giving them their "constitution" (the way they were to operate as His people). One of the rules that God instituted was that they were to let the land rest once every seven years by not planting anything. We know this as rotating crops today.

To do this would be like taking an entire year off from work and trusting God to provide for you. Well, the people couldn't bring themselves to do this. So for their entire history up until the writing of today's verse, they did not observe this rule.

But here is the kicker - God kept up with every Sabbath year that they neglected to observe and the day came when He allowed them to be taken into captivity. They stayed there until every single Sabbath year was observed.

Here's the principle: *God's people cannot ignore God's rules. They either observe them willingly or God "helps" them.*

For example, everyone tithes – sooner or later. Another example is that no one can ignore taking time to allow the body to rest. You can ignore this Sabbath rest, but eventually you will be on your back, "resting" while sick.

Bottom line, God keeps up with his expectations for us; not because He's mean but because He cares.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 111:7-8

"If I cannot find time for exercise, the day will come when I will have to make time to visit the doctor."

SATURDAY, March 20, 2010:

Ezra 2:36-42 "*The priests...the Levites...the singers...the gatekeepers...*"

The book of Ezra is about people who were vanquished and taken into captivity, yet still kept their identity. Even though there was no temple (or nation for that matter) these people did not allow their situation to define them; they stayed true to their vocation and calling.

Think about it, even the gatekeepers stayed true to their calling. Likewise, just because you don't have a gate to keep right now doesn't mean that you've reached the end. Setbacks are always temporary when our lives are dedicated to being and doing what God has called us to be.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 5:10

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'" _Mary Anne Radmacher



Pastor Kemp's Weekly Devotional

For the week of March 14, 2010

Daily Reflection Questions:

- Reflection: Of what eternal benefit was my day?
- Reflection: What eternal truth(s) did I observe today?
- Reflection: Did my behavior match my values?
- Reflection: What am I thankful for today?

What I am thankful for this week:

MONDAY: _____

TUESDAY: _____

WEDNESDAY: _____

THURSDAY: _____

FRIDAY: _____

SATURDAY: _____



MONDAY, March 15, 2010:

2 Chronicles 16:10 *"Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison..."*

This is a devotional especially for those of us who are in the second half of our lives.

If you read about the life of King Asa you will discover that he fell prey to what so many people do – they stop growing and learning.

There are two times that this attitude is most prevalent. The first is somewhere around the age of 15-20. During this time, we think we know it all. The second time this happens is in the second half of our lives when we know we've got it together. We know what we like; we know what we like to do. We know our politics, our position in life and we know our priorities. Why change? Why learn anything new? Why listen to someone who comes along with new ideas, new visions and new things to do?

We may not do as Asa did and lock the messenger up in prison, but we do just as bad...we tune them out.

Ah my dear friend, please take a moment to examine your life. Have you gotten comfortable with the status quo? Have you stopped learning? Is there not a cause worth growing for? The game is won or lost in the second half. It is one thing to start well, but finishing well...now, that is the key.

SCRIPTURE: I Samuel 17:29

"No matter how talented or how smart a leader may be, an unteachable spirit is the path to certain failure."

_Henry & Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership, p. 234

TUESDAY, March 16, 2010:

2 Chronicles 17:16 *"Amasiah...who willingly offered himself to the Lord."*

There is no denying it, reading 2 Chronicles can be some pretty tough going. One of the things I do to help me stay focused is to highlight the editorial comments made by the writer. In this particular passage, the author is highlighting the different commanders that were in King Jehoshaphat's army. All of them were respected men but I couldn't help but notice Amasiah. The writer added a little footnote beside Amasiah's name. He added, *"He willingly offered himself to the Lord."*

We all get drafted into service sometimes. That doesn't mean that we don't give our best; but there is something special about the volunteer. Volunteers do things because they want to, not because they have to. Jesus described it as "going the second mile." It is the "more than is required or expected" mode of living.

I'm convinced that the happiest people are those that move beyond the "do-what-is-required" attitude and move into the volunteering attitude.

I'm also convinced that they are the most successful people as well. So what are you waiting for...volunteer for something today!

SCRIPTURE: John 10:13

*"There is a difference between giving God your best and giving God the best."*_Henry & Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership, p. 145

WEDNESDAY, March 17, 2010:

2 Chronicles 21:6 *"...for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord."*

A couple of days ago I wrote to those of us that are in the second half of our life. Today I want to write to another part of the human race...you dear ladies.

I want to remind you that your influence is invaluable in shaping the lives of your family. Just as in the life of the king written about in today's bible verse, there is a connection between the moral, emotional and physical condition of your family and your influence. Please do not fall for the trap which we men so often fall for – confusing our jobs with our vocation.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:55

"An optimist? The woman who slips her feet back into her shoes when the preacher says, 'And finally...'"

THURSDAY, March 18, 2010:

2 Chronicles 24:2, 15, 17, 21, 25

24:2 *"Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoida the priest."*

24:15 *"But Jehoida grew old and was full of days, and he died."*

24:17 *"And Jehoida listened to them and they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols..."*

24:21 *"and at the command of the king they stoned Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest..."*

24:25 *"and his own servants conspired against Joash and killed him because of the blood of Zechariah."*

The sad tale that you just read is a brief account of a man that started well but ended horribly. If I had to sum it up, I would list things:

- First: *You become like the people you hang around; choose your friends carefully.*

As long as the godly priest Jehoida was in his life, Joash did well. But after Jehoida died, Joash got in with the wrong crowd and that was the beginning of the end for him.

- Second: *Joash never grew beyond having faith in a man (Jehoiada) to having faith in the God of the man.*

Having a godly heritage is great, but having a personal relationship with the God of your heritage is the ultimate goal. Remember, the great mission of every day is first and foremost, growing in your relationship with God; neglect that and you are heading for disaster.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:2

*"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."*_ Ralph Waldo Emerson