

life is our relationship with God. We cannot get to God by trying harder; we can only do so, by following Jesus. For many that seems too simple. They believe there must be more rules to follow, more requirements to fulfill. There aren't. There is simply the law of love; we are to love God with all our heart soul and mind. 2 Chronicles 7:14 is another statement of what Jesus called the greatest commandment. When we humble ourselves before God, when we pray to Him, when we seek His face, when we repent of our wickedness, then we are displaying that we love God with all our heart, soul and mind. Consider what children desire. Although they love all the toys that they receive, those toys without their mother or father's attention are meaningless. The toys become a constant reminder that they are a substitute for what they really want, attention. What God promised Solomon is that He would give His people His attention when they prayed.

Saturday, January 9, 2010

Daily theme: God chose the temple to reveal Himself.

Questions

Read 2 Chronicles 7:16; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

1. What promise did God make regarding the temple?
2. How could God keep this promise after the temple was destroyed?

Consider

In the Old Testament the temple was a special place. It was where the people came to worship and meet God. Jesus himself identified it as a place of prayer. God told Solomon that the temple had been chosen by Him as the place of His presence, forever. However does that mean that when Solomon's temple was destroyed first by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC and later the rebuilt temple by Titus in 70 AD that God made a mistake. God's presence continues to reside in the temple. On several occasions Jesus and later Paul taught that with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the temple changed. Jesus taught that true worshipers worship God in spirit and truth. Paul taught that the temple was not a building, but followers of Jesus. With the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost, God fulfilled an amazing promise to dwell with His people, personally in their lives. They would no longer have to go to a location to find God and pray to Him, but that God had come to them. God still dwells in His temple, but the temple itself has changed.

God's Solution to a Nation's Problems.

2 Chronicles 7:12-16

New Year's 2010

Devotional Notes January 4 – 9, 2010

Monday, January 4, 2010

Daily theme: God responded to Solomon's request.

Questions

Read 2 Chronicles 6:18-21; 7:12

1. What concerns did Solomon express in his prayer?
2. How did God respond to Solomon's concerns?

Consider

Solomon's prayer in 2 Chronicles 6 was his dedication prayer for the newly constructed temple. The thought of the almighty God dwelling with men through a building constructed by a man was awesome for Solomon to consider. God had already filled the temple with His glory, so that the priests could no longer minister in the temple (2 Chronicles 5:13-14). Solomon would have seen God's response to the worship and considered the absurdity of God dwelling in this structure. However, Solomon's larger concern was that God would consider his requests. Solomon's prayer indicates a desire for a continued relationship with the living God. He requested that God's eye be toward the house (20); that God would listen to the prayer of His servant and His people (21). In response (7:12) God assured Solomon that He had chosen the temple as His place of sacrifice. God's reply revealed that He had not only heard Solomon's prayer, but that He had answered affirmatively. God's answer to Solomon reminds us of the confidence we have before Him because of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:15-16 reminds us that we have a great high priest, Jesus, who understands our condition, therefore we can come with confidence before the throne of God.

Tuesday, January 5, 2010

Daily theme: God uses natural disasters to accomplish His purposes.

Questions

Read 2 Chronicles 6:26-28; 7:13

1. Why would God cause a drought or send locusts to consume all the vegetation?
2. What request did Solomon make of God?

Consider

Solomon's prayer also revealed his understanding of human nature. Men rebel against God. Solomon foresaw this in his prayer. Solomon realized that even with God's presence at the temple, the people would still sin against Him.

Therefore Solomon asked God to forgive them when they repented and confessed their sin before Him. To remind the people of their need for Him, God would permit them to encounter problems that they could not solve. In 2 Chronicles 7:13, God takes responsibility for sending these natural disasters. Among these were locusts and drought, both of which attacked their food supply. Without water their grain would not grow. During seasons when rain did fall, locusts could come and devour all the plant life. Having understood God's response to sin, Solomon knew that the people needed to repent. When they did, Solomon asked God to forgive them, to send the rain and protect them from the devastation of the locusts. Because of technology and the ability to irrigate, we do not have the same problems with drought that once threatened a nation's existence. However, we still face problems that we cannot solve. Hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes and tornadoes still devastate cities and regions. Although we can predict their occurrence, we cannot prevent the devastation that they cause. On a more personal level, God permits us to encounter difficulties that are too big for us to solve: health issues, economic difficulties, relational struggles are several that are outside our control. These difficulties remind us that we need God's help to overcome them. We cannot solve them merely by giving more effort.

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

Daily theme: God desires 4 responses from His people.

Questions

Read 2 Chronicles 6:36-39; 7:14

1. What requests did Solomon make?
2. What does God expect from His people?

Consider

Through Solomon's prayer we see again that he foresaw the rebellion of the people and that they would be removed from the land. In that case, Solomon asked God to forgive and restore them if they repented. Solomon did not ask for unconditional forgiveness, but forgiveness on the condition that the people turned from their sin. In response, God affirmed Solomon's request. In His affirmation, God identified four responses from the people: humility, prayer, seeking of His face and repentance. Faced with drought and locusts, God did not expect the people to figure out some way to solve these problems. According to verse 13, they were from God in the first place. God desires a different response from His people. While the whole nation suffered from these tragedies, God directed His words to His people, not the nation at large. God's words imply that unbelievers are blessed when God's people live in the manner that pleases God. God expects His people to humble themselves, to pray, to pursue God and to repent. God doesn't expect unbelievers to do these things; he desires for His people to do them. Isn't it interesting that when a disaster takes place, we expect the government to respond, to fix the situation. God's desire is very different. When a natural disaster takes place, God expects the church to respond, but not in the way that we would normally think. God didn't expect his people to fix the situation, He expected them to reflect upon their life, to humble themselves before His throne and pray, to seek

a relationship with Him and to repent from sin. Could it be that the problems we face as a nation could be the result of Christians ignoring God and God sending us problems to get our attention? If that is true, then many of our efforts are misguided and missing the point.

Thursday, January 7, 2010

Daily theme: God promises to heal and forgive.

Questions

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14

1. What does it mean to forgive someone?
2. What does God mean by healing their land?

Consider

Upon their fulfillment of God's expectations, God promised to do two things. He would forgive the people and heal the land. The word that is used for forgive is only used of God in the Old Testament; it is never used of men forgiving each other. The type of forgiveness that is identified in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is unique to God. However in the New Testament, Jesus teaches us that we are to forgive each other in the same way that God forgives us. God's forgiveness is when He no longer holds our sin against us; our debt to Him is removed. Furthermore, God also promised to heal their land. He would restore the land from the drought and the locusts. 2 Chronicles 7:14 introduces us to how we should respond to problems. God did not expect the people to solve the problems on their own; He did require them to acknowledge and turn from sin that hindered their relationship with Him. When we face problems in our life, our natural tendency is to come up with a solution; pray more, read the Bible more, work harder, elect better candidates. God mentions none of these. God is more concerned with our relationship with Him. Jesus came to earth, lived, died on a cross and rose again, so that He could bring us back into a relationship with God and for us to allow God to fix the problems we face. As we reflect on the problems that we face, both personal and national, consider whether we are trying to do God's job and neglecting our own responsibility to Him.

Friday, January 8, 2010

Daily theme: God listens to the humble prayers of His people.

Questions

Read 2 Chronicles 6:40; 7:15

1. What promise did God make to Solomon?
2. Why is it significant to know that God hears our prayers?

Consider

When God responded to Solomon, He gave to Solomon what any believer desires to hear. God said that He would listen to the request. In 2 Chronicles 6:40 Solomon asked that God would hear, then in 7:15, God assured Solomon that He had heard and would respond. The gospel reveals that the most important thing in