

2 Chronicles 7:14 sermon “called by My name”

9/27/2020

Last Sunday I began a new series entitled “**Conquering Your Crisis**” and we looked at the well know passage of Scripture – Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) *For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.* And two questions we addressed last week.

1. **Does this passage apply to us today**, since it was proclaimed 2,500 year prior to us to the Israelites who were living in captivity in Babylon. And the answer was YES it does apply to us today because many of us have been or are living in crisis today.
2. The second question was: **“do we have any responsibility in making this promise come to fruition?”** And once again the answer was YES, and we find the specifics of that YES in the next 2 verse. **Jeremiah 29:12-13 (NIV)** *Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

Beginning this morning and continuing for the next several weeks, we’re going to be looking at another well-known verse and ask the same two questions.

1. **Does this apply to us today?**
2. **Do we have any responsibility to receive God’s promise?**

The passage is found in **2 Chronicles 7:14** – please turn to it in your Bibles or electronic devices.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV) *“if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

Context: Just like last week, it’s once again important for us to understand the context within which this promise from God was uttered. King Solomon had recently **completed the building of the temple of God**. We first read about the building of it in **chapter 2** of 2 Chronicles where it says, *“Solomon gave orders to build a temple for the Name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself. He conscripted 70,000 men as carriers and 80,000 as stonecutters in the hills and 3,600 as foremen over them.”* That’s **153,600** people working on the building of the temple. That’s approximately the cities of **St. Louis Park and Rochester**, Minnesota combined working on the building of the temple – that’s a lot of people.

And notice, it doesn’t just say he’s building a temple for the Lord. It says he’s building it for the **“Name of the Lord.”** A person’s **“name”** represents their **reputation** and their **character** and saying someone’s name can instantly recall details from their life and produce strong emotions inside of people. **George Floyd** or **Breonna Taylor** call up powerful emotions in people right now. Same thing with the names of **Trump** or **Biden**. (**Dennis and Deanna Molla’s** truck and garage were vandalized and set on fire this last week because apparently they had flags in support of Donald Trump in the back of their pickup.)

God’s chosen people, the Israelites, became identified with God’s name. They were **His** people. God announces this through Moses at Mt. Sinai. God commands them to not take His name in vain and then Moses tells the people this: *“The LORD will establish you as **his** holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in obedience to him. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the **name of the LORD**, and they will fear you.”* (Deuteronomy 28:9-10 (NIV)) People would fear these people not because of how mighty they were but because of how powerful their God was. God had established a reputation of power and that would be carried over to His people.

Little shepherd boy, **David**, claimed the power of that same name when he fought against **Goliath**. After Goliath trash talked David (implying he was small and wimpy and he’d easily kill him), David responded with, *“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the **name of the LORD Almighty**, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”* (1 Samuel 17:45)

And later, **king David**, revealed where his and our strength come from:

Psalms 20:7-8 (ESV) *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the **name of the Lord** our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.*

Solomon, later in life wrote that *“The **name of the Lord** is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.”* (Proverbs 18:10).

In the Bible there are over **200 names and titles** used to describe God. Some are self-given names by God himself and many others are given to God in response to something God has done.

So, Solomon was building this temple for **Name of the Lord**. It took **7 years** to complete the building of the temple and after it was completed there was this incredible dedication ceremony, in which there were lots of sacrifices and worship performed. After all of this, it says that the temple was **filled with the glory of the Lord** in the form of a cloud. The cloud was so thick and God’s presence so powerful that the priests couldn’t continue to perform their services. (2 Chronicles 5:13-14)

After all of this, Solomon offered up a prayer in the dedication of the temple. (You can read it in 2 Chronicles 6). It’s rather long, but the bulk of it involves Solomon **anticipating God’s people sinning** by turning away from God and God’s reaction to that. And Solomon mentions several specific reactions by God and he asks God for his grace and forgiveness when the people turn back to Him. Let me read you one section from this prayer to set the context for God’s response.

2 Chronicles 6:26-31 (NIV) *“When the **heavens are shut up and there is no rain** because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, 27 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.*

*28 “When **famine or plague** comes to the land, or blight or mildew, **locusts or grasshoppers**, or when enemies besiege them in any of their cities, whatever **disaster or disease** may come, 29 and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of their afflictions and pains, and spreading out their hands toward this temple— 30 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive, and deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know the human heart), 31 so that they will fear you and walk in obedience to you all the time they live in the land you gave our ancestors.*

Note: 3 specific conditions Solomon anticipates that happen to the Israelites because of their sins are : (1) drought (from no rain), (2) plague of locusts and (3) disaster or disease.

- **Drought:** As the United States moves into the last weeks of climatological summer, **one-third** of the U.S. is experiencing at least a moderate level of drought. Much of the West is approaching severe drought, and New England has been unusually dry and hot. An estimated 53 million people are living in drought-affected areas.
- **Locusts:** Titanic swarms of locusts resembling dark storm clouds are descending ravenously on the Horn of Africa. They’re roving through croplands and flattening farms resulting in an unprecedented threat to food security. These swarms are most intense in East African countries as well as Australia. The swarms are gargantuan masses of tens of billions of flying bugs. They can cover 100 square miles or more, with 40 million to 80 million locusts packed in half a square mile. A swarm of 80 million locusts can consume the food equivalent to that eaten by 36,000 people a day. And these swarms of locusts that came through earlier this year laid eggs that will hatch this fall, just in time for harvest season.
- **Pandemic and disease:** From the coronavirus there’s been **32,517,537** cases and **989,346** deaths. Over 200,000 deaths in the U.S. alone.

Sometime after Solomon's prayer of dedication. God appeared to Solomon and answered his prayer. Follow along as I read God's response from **2 Chronicles 7:11-16** **Read out of the Bible.**

Did you catch the **transition statements** that are the key to understanding and remembering this powerful passage?

- **When:** God causes **drought**, a **plague of locusts** or **pestilence** (Covid-19)
- **If:** my people who are **called by my name** will **humble themselves**, **pray and seek my face** and **turn from their wicked ways**.
- **Then:** God will hear, forgive and heal.

It's pretty well laid out for us here as what our response to any crisis ought to be and what God promises to do in response to our action. So, over the next 3 weeks we're going to explore what our response ought to be to crisis in our lives. This morning I want to wrap up our time by more fully appreciating the unique privilege we have to be a people who are "**called by God's name**". Because I think it's very important that we remember who we are before we focus on what we're called to do. If we **treasure our identity** and live in the meaning of that, then it should be a **pleasure to do** what God's laying out for us to do in the middle of a crisis. **Our actions ought to flow out of our identity**. And praise the Lord, we have an incredible identity. We are loved and valued by our Heavenly Father who is **powerful** and **personal**.

I spent some time earlier discussing what God's name meant back then. So, what does it mean to be "**Called by His name**"?

1. **It signifies that you have special status the rest of the world doesn't have.** You're a part of God's family, sons and daughters with Jesus Christ. That's why in Jesus' parable of the **prodigal son**, when the son returns home his Father makes a really big deal about it. He throws a party and no expense is spared. While the son hoped that he could come back as a hired hand, his Father would have none of that. His son who was lost has come home and the Father is so excited he can hardly contain himself. It's a powerful image of how your Heavenly Father feels about you. Listen to these powerful words from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah as to how God feels about you and all of His children. *"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you. I've called your name. You're mine. When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you. When you're in rough waters, you will not go down. When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end— Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I paid a huge price for you: all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in! That's how much you mean to me! That's how much I love you! I'd sell off the whole world to get you back, trade the creation just for you.* (Isaiah 43:1-7)
In other words – God's got you! And God did pay a huge price for you, when his own Son, Jesus Christ died on a cross to pay the penalty for your sins.
2. **You have God's undivided attention.** Look at the verses right after our section this morning. Vs. 15 God says, *"Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.* (2 Chronicles 7:15) There's never a time that God's too busy to listen to one of His children.
3. **You have special access to God.** Look at the verses right after our section this morning. Vs. 15 God says, *"For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time."* (2 Chronicles 7:16). Sadly, Solomon's temple was destroyed in 587BC. But the good news is that you are now the **habitation of the presence of God**, through the Holy Spirit. Graham Cooke makes the distinction that the Old Testament was a **visitation culture**, but in the New Testament we've become a **habitation culture**. God doesn't just visit his people, He comes and lives within us and shows Himself to the world through us.

Someone may object and say, but this promise was spoken to God's chosen people, the Jews and doesn't apply to us Gentiles. But listen to this recounting of how God brought Gentiles into His family through Jesus Christ. The context is that Paul and Barnabas have been out preaching and seeing God do some amazing things in Gentiles lives. And so they went to Jerusalem and told the church leaders about these exciting things.

Acts 15:12-18 (NIV) The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up. *"Brothers,"* he said, *"listen to me. Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people **for his name** from the Gentiles. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: 'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who **bear my name**, says the Lord, who does these things'— things known from long ago.* That's you and me and all other Gentiles. The people of God has been expanded to include anyone who chooses to accept Jesus Christ and commit their lives to following Him.

4. **Our lives should be lived in gratitude and praise of God's name: Colossians 3:16-17 (ESV)** *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the **name of the lord** Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* How do you *"do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus"*? You do it by continually giving thanks to God the Father. Thanking God for a new breath every day, for the gift of life. Thanking Him for salvation and for the privilege of being used and empowered by Him to touch others lives with His love.

5. **Our lives should reflect the character of the Father.**

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV) *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit*

Invitation:

Acts 2:21 (ESV) And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the **name of the lord** shall be saved.'

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Two key questions to consider:

1. Does this _____ to us today?
2. Do we have any _____ to receive God's promise?

Context of this passage:

A person's name can represent their _____ & _____

Transition statements to remember this passage by:

W _____

I _____

T _____

Our actions ought to flow out of our _____

Significance of being called by God's name:

1. You have special _____ the rest of the world doesn't have
2. You have God's _____
3. You have special _____ to God.
4. Our lives should be lived in _____ & _____ of God's name
5. Our lives should reflect the _____ of God

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