

Sermon Series: 2 Chronicles

Sermon title: Rely on God

Scripture reading: 2 Chronicles 16:9

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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S.C. Brown, Pastor

Well, as I studied the next passage in our John series, I realized pretty quick that I needed to wait on preaching Jesus saying, "I am the door" till next time.

I don't want to be a Pastor that is so heavenly minded that he's no earthly good.

With everything that is going on in our city these days, the last thing I can do is bury my head in the sand and come here on Sunday and preach a sweet message that is totally disconnected from our lives.

As Martyn Lloyd Jones said, *"We are to preach with our Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other."*

So, I want to try and give us some help today from the Scriptures into our present situation in Hong Kong.

May God grant us encouragement and strengthen us in our hearts and minds today.

As I contemplated and prayed my guts out and asked the Lord which passage he wanted me to preach on, I landed on one of my favorite passages in 2 Chronicles. In fact, this is one of the first passages I preached here at CBIBC back in 2015, when I came here the first time.

Turn in your Bibles to **2 Chronicles 14**.

This is the story of the life of King Asa. Not a king you've probably heard of much.

I need to tell you that Chronicles was one of the last books written in the Old Testament. It's a history book. It's going back and retelling events that happened long before, so that the people can see God's faithfulness and how they should respond.

The times in which Chronicles was written was really sad and difficult.

The Kingdom has been divided in half.

The tribe of Judah and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and he took people captive back to his country.

After 70 years, Cyrus the Great of Persia (who had conquered Babylon) was moved by God to let the Jews go back home...and they did.

When they returned, they saw a destroyed city. No walls. No temple. No ark of the covenant. No king. This was as bad as it could be. And they wondered if God had forgotten them and his promises.

So, the Chronicler/historian is writing a history book and giving them narratives that will give them hope in God.

One of those is the story of King Asa in chapters 14-16.

Let's pick it up in **Chapter 14 verse 2**.

And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God. **3** He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherim **4** and commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment. **5** He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars. And the kingdom had rest under him. **6** He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest. He had no war in those years, for the Lord gave him peace. **7** And he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the Lord our God. We have sought him, and he has given us peace on every side." So they built and prospered.

8 And Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, armed with large shields and spears, and 280,000 men from Benjamin that carried shields and drew bows. All these were mighty men of valor.

9 Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. **10** And Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up their lines of battle in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. **11 And Asa cried to the Lord his God, "O Lord, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O Lord, you are our God; let not man prevail against you."** **12** So the Lord defeated the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.

Asa was a pretty good king.

He had peace. He experienced a great religious revival. He had building projects and military build up.

But 4 tests come into the life of Asa and the test is this...**will Asa rely on God!**

1. Test number 1- The Ethiopians attack.

Asa has 580,000 men and the Ethiopians have 1,000,000. Would you take those odds?

He is faced with an impossible situation as a young king. What will he do?

2 Chronicles 14:11.

11 And Asa cried to the Lord his God, "O Lord, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O LORD, you are our God; let not man prevail against you."

Did he do the right thing as a young king?

Yeah. He turned to the LORD. He relied on the LORD. He said, "There is none like you to help. HELP!" And God was gracious to him and delivered them.

2. Test number 2- A warning from a prophet.

2 Chronicles 15:1-7

The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded, **2** and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "**Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he**

will forsake you. 3 For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law, **4** but when in their distress they turned to the Lord, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them. **5** In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. **6** They were broken in pieces. Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress. **7** But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.”

This prophet Azariah comes with an encouragement and a warning. He basically says, ‘What kind of king will you be Asa? Are you going to be for the Lord or not?’

How did he do?

He cleansed the land of idols. He re-established the worship of God in the temple and renewed the covenant with God. He even broke his mother’s idols and removed her from being queen mother.

3. Test number 3- The Northern kingdom infiltrating his territory.

1 In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. **2** Then **Asa took silver and gold from the treasures of the house of the Lord and the king's house and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Syria, who lived in Damascus**, saying, **3** "There is a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Behold, I am sending to you silver and gold. Go, break your covenant with Baasha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me." **4** And Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. **5** And when Baasha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah and let his work cease. **6** Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building, and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

Many years have passed now. Asa has a problem. King Baasha just north of him, has started to infiltrate his territory. People have been leaving Israel and coming south to Judah, Asa's kingdom, because it was so good. Well, Baasha doesn't like it so he starts to

build fort cities in Asa's territory. That's a problem.
What will Asa do?

2 Then **Asa took silver and gold from the treasures of the house of the Lord and the king's house and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Syria, who lived in Damascus**, saying, **3** "There is a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Behold, I am sending to you silver and gold. Go, break your covenant with Baasha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me."

This is the classic case of, 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend.' He makes an alliance with Syria, the kingdom north of Israel to get them to leave him alone. And he does it by giving Syria (an old enemy) silver and gold from the temple treasury. Huh?
And there's no mention of the LORD at all.

7 At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you. **8** Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the Lord, he gave them into your hand.

9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.” **10** Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time.

Asa, don't you remember the Ethiopians many years ago. You relied on the LORD and what happened? He delivered you.

Now, you've relied on the King of Syria instead of the King of the Universe.

Asa, God was just looking to give you strong support! But you would not rely on him!

4. Test number 4- disease in his feet.

12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe. Yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but sought help from physicians. **13** And Asa slept with his fathers, dying in the forty-first year of his reign. **14** They buried him in the tomb that he had cut for himself in the city of David. They laid him on a bier that had been filled

with various kinds of spices prepared by the perfumer's art, and they made a very great fire in his honor.

Early on in this king's life, he relied on the LORD in the most difficult of circumstances.

An Ethiopian army twice his size attacks and he relies on God...and God delivers him.

He removes idolatry from the country and they experience a great revival.

But later he grows practical. He uses his relationships. He uses his money. He compromises holiness. And doesn't even ask God to help him with his diseased feet.

What's the writer of Chronicles want us to know? What does God want us to know?

When we experience difficulty, danger, or disease we are to do one thing.....**RELY ON GOD** first and foremost.

When we think all hope is lost, when we don't know what to do, when we don't know what the answers are, when we don't know where to turn.....

RELY ON GOD.