

## Getting Vertical Part 2

### 2 Chronicles 15 - King Asa

**When you think about God – do you view Him more as the author of the Story – the one writing the script or do you see Him as the Hero!**

**A) That is an interesting question: Now technically we know that He is both the author & the Hero**

**B) But how do you see Him most often. Important !**

**C) See if my view of God is primarily that of the author –when things are going tough / times are hard**

**1) When there is a crisis – He can seem aloof , detached. He is indifferent to our plight**

**D) One can start to think that God is unfair – maybe even mean!**

**That is why I think it would be good for us if we viewed God a little more often THE Hero**

**A) Our Rescuer – One who is completely wrapped up in the Story that is our lives**

**B) To understand this correctly – we need to start from the Beginning**

**1) Too often when we start at man's beginning we start in Gen 3 with the fall.**

**C) Adam & Eve – Blow it, they rebel – they ate the forbidden fruit – Sin enters the human race**

**1) Man is banished from the garden**

**Now when that is our starting point – Here is how we see ourselves: We are these wretched depraved sinners – Pond Scum – traitors**

**A )And God had mercy on us – showed us grace and provided a way for us to be saved.**

**B) But we need to go back further than that – to really understand the picture correctly**

**C) If we go back to Genesis 1-2 Back to Creation**

**1) God makes the world – and when He does He saves THE BEST FOR LAST**

**The last thing He creates is Man! Man is His greatest creation. – Made in the image of God**

**A) Man is capable of experiencing what no other part of creation can experience – Relationship**

B) Love, intimacy, friendship and communion with God

1) Which is why God reserves for man the distinction and honor of the **TITLE: HIS BRIDE**

C) It is meant to convey a picture of deep love/ of intimacy/ of Sweet communion.

**And that is the picture that the Bible gives us of the relationship between God & man in the Beginning**

A) **There is a sweet communion** – they are lovers – best friends – soul mates taking long walks together hand in hand in the garden in the cool of the day

**B) The picture that comes to my mind is one of a Prince who has just found his princess**

1) He is taking her to show her the beauty & grandeur of the Kingdom.

C) That is the picture that I have of God walking with Adam & Eve in the garden

1) Showing them the beauty the grandeur of the creation –

2) **Talking about the animals / sea creatures and why He made them the way that He did.**

D) I picture them laughing together and enjoying each other's company.

**That is where we need to start before we get to the fall!**

A) Ch.3 brings us to the tragic end of the picture – A villain enters the story – **Satan, disguised as a serpent**

B) He is a **seducer and deceiver** – who leads man down the road of doubting God's love

1) Doubting God's heart – He convinces man that God has not shown/ told you everything

C) He gets man thinking that the garden is not a Palace full of blessings but a prison – where man is kept from experiencing **real Joy and happiness**

**The result: Man turns on his love- believes the lie, becomes the adulterer**

A) And God's love is forsaken

B) And the thing that makes matters worse is that mankind over the years turns his back even further from God and goes **whoring after other lovers**

C) **False lovers** – running further and further away from the one who loves them so much

**D) And yet the whole time God has been pursuing man – He has been wanting to restore the intimacy**

**1) When we turned our backs on Him – He promised to come for us!**

**He sent personal messengers to us / and Beauty and affliction to recapture our hearts**

**A) After all of us failed, He conceived the most daring of rescue plans**

**B) Under the cover of night He came into the enemy's camp **incognito** – **disguised as a NEWBORN****

**1) Christmas is about an **INVASION** into the enemy's Camp – **RESCUE PLAN****

**C) God Himself invading the camp of the enemy to rescue His bride.**

**1) Who in many ways doesn't know she is in bondage to the deceiver.**

**The plan of the deceiver is to keep man enticed just enough to keep us in his system – chained to seeking fulfillment in thrills or in things**

**A) Because in the end – His ultimate satisfaction is man's death without ever being reconciled to God**

**B) If more of mankind – perishes with him in Hell – than go to heaven – somehow in his warped mind – He wins – **His hatred of God is strong****

**C) And so in God's rescue plan – the baby would grow to a man – who would lay down his life to redeem His love – to rescue His beloved**

**1) The price to redeem would be His own shed blood**

**D) And then He beat the enemy's biggest weapon by coming back to life again – after 3 days**

**1) His Resurrection paved the way – opened the door for our relationship w/ Him to be restored**

**E) But He wouldn't force it on us – Instead He invites us to be joined to Him**

**1) He wants to restore our beauty and to forgive and rekindle the romance of our relationship – but the choice is ours**

**F) He will not force it upon us at all. – That is the heart of our Hero!**

**Now with that as a backdrop I would like us today to consider the word that God gives to**

## **Asa**

- A) Recall Asa became king in Judah after the death of his Father Abijah.**
- B) For 40 years the kingdom of Judah has been away from God – gone after idols**
  - 1) Started with his great grandfather Solomon – grandpa Rehoboam – dad Abijah**
- C) 40 Years of decline – 40 years of wickedness in the land**

**Asa changes all of that – we saw last time where he comes to the throne & did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord**

- A) He removed all the idolatry and wickedness – and charged the people to seek God passionately**
- B) God blessed him with 10 years of peace –**
- C) Asa used those 10 yrs –to build up and strengthen the kingdom / Cities Walls / gates / The Army!**
- D) After those 10 years of peace – He faced his first test**
  - Zerah the Ethiopian comes with an army of 1 million**
    - 1) Asa passes the test – turns to the Lord – for Help**
- E) It is after that Battle that we read in Ch.15**

## **2 Chronicles 15:1-2**

**“Now 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.”**

**Note several things**

- 1.) Spirit comes on us for service. God had a job for Azariah – message for the King -**

**Azariah would need a supernatural empowering to deliver it!**

**If we want to be God’s messengers – we need that same empowering!**

- A) Disciples were given a commission to go preach**
- B) Before they could go preach they had to go wait**
  - 1) Wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit - Same is true for us.**

C) God's vessels need to be filled with God's spirit – in order to do God's work

D) Crazy week – Busy – lots of meetings about the building – Tuesday nite – Visits to the hospital

1) A memorial service – I can feel spent – good

E) **God, you have got to fill me ! Fill me afresh**

Listen, if you never feel spent – probably an indication that you have learned to function quite nicely on your own!

**2.) V.2 tells us And Azariah went out to meet Asa**

A) Now the idea here is He went out to find him – Asa wasn't in the Palace –

B) Point: God knew where Asa was at – physically and in his heart – sent his messenger with a word

C) Application for us – God knows where you are at too.

1) Your heart –

**This really underscores the fact that God is in control of our lives.**

A) We wake up, check our PDA's / day planners – make our plans

B) But God knows where we are !

1) So He sends a person or a circumstance to touch our hearts

C) Proverbs 16:9 **“A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.”**

**3.) Notice when God sent this message to Asa.**

A) It wasn't during a time when He was struggling – it wasn't in a time of great Crises

B) No, the message comes to Him after a great victory

1) Just had victory over an army of 1 million men

2) At a time when Asa had been seeking Him

**I find it very interesting that God would send this message at this time!**

A) Asa is doing great – and God is going to continue to bless him for a number of years

B) This is God's way of saying: Asa, you are doing great – I am blessed by you – but I want to remind you of something

**“I am with you while you are with me – If you seek me I will be found by you, but if you**

**forsake me I will forsake you.”**

**C) That last line means – That God would lift his hand of blessing from off of Asa’s life!**

**Why does God send this message at this time: He is smart – He knows that our times of success can be our down fall.**

**A) Times when we are doing really well – times when we have just had a major victory**

**B) Those are times when we can start to think – I did something –**

**1) I had something to do with the blessing –**

**2) Very subtly we can move to a place where we are no longer seeking God like we once did**

**C) No longer dependent upon Him – we start relying on our own strength**

**I think that is a good picture of what has happened to America – Statistics on our heritage Did you know that 24 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence held what we would refer to as Seminary or Bible college degrees?**

**Many were ordained Pastors – The majority were godly men – who loved God – loved His word**

“It’s been said that it’s easy to lose touch with who you really are when you forget where it is you have come from.”

**I believe that there is one only living and true God, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance equal in power and glory. That the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a revelation from God, and a complete rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.”--Roger Sherman, who signed the Declaration of Independence**

**"I have carefully examined the evidences of the Christian religion, and if I was sitting as a juror upon its authenticity I would unhesitatingly give my verdict in its favor. I can prove its truth as clearly as any proposition ever submitted to the mind of man." – Alexander Hamilton**

**"The future and success of America is not in this Constitution, but in the laws of God upon which this Constitution is founded." – James Madison**

**"The reason that Christianity is the best friend of the government is because Christianity is the only religion that changes the heart." – Thomas Jefferson**

**"We shall not fight alone. God presides over the destinies of nations, and will raise up friends for us. The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave . . . Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"--Patrick Henry, in a speech March 23, 1775.**

**You don’t have to look very far to find that this country was founded on Christian principles found in the Bible by men who loved God**

**A) But as a country we have moved so far away from that – even to the point of rewriting**

history in order to make it less God focused

B) We are a nation that has been blessed because we started with a good foundation

1) But we are crumbling – because for years we have stopped building on that foundation

C) We started thinking – that we were the reason for our success and blessing

**The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were . . . the general principles of Christianity."**

--John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson,

"If we make religion our business, God will make it our blessedness." *John Adams*

**They believed that – The problem is we don't believe that anymore**

A) So as a nation we have declined and will continue to decline – unless we get back to seeking God

B) What is true of us as a nation is true of us as individuals

**So God comes to Asa in this moment and basically says – Asa you can have as little or as much of Me in your life as you want.**

A) Same is true of all of us here. – We can have as little or as much of God in our life as we want.

B) Ever play hide/seek with a little child – Crack up – they are so easy to find

1) Under a blanket in the middle of the room –“YOU CAN'T SEE ME”

C) That is what God is saying to us – I am easy to find !

**This ought to challenge us – How close are we to Him!**

A) If we are honest – if there is a lack of God's presence in my marriage – it is because I want it to be there

B) God says if you seek me you will find me !

C) Jump over to Ch.16 – V.9 is one of the most popular verses in all of the Bible – Cards/posters/ songs /plagues

2 Chronicles 16:9

**“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.”**

D) Now in our study on wed nite we are going to look at the context of this statement which is really interesting

1) But for today we will take it as a statement of God's heart – Our hero's heart

E) *I am looking for people to rescue – I am looking for people to show Myself strong on their behalf*

**Interesting, the Bible describes Satan as going to and fro throughout the earth – looking for who he can destroy**

A) God's eyes go to and fro – He is looking for those He can rescue, those who He can give strength to

B) One criteria – Who's hearts are loyal to Him –

1) Loyal = fully His – fully belong to Him

C) SO here is what this means to us. – We cry out, Lord I need your strength – your blessing

1) Just don't ask me to love that person / don't ask me to be nice to him/ nice to her.

D) Here is what we are saying: Lord my heart is not fully yours!

**God would say: Give me your heart – here is what is going to happen**

A) God says I will help you to love that person and I will blow your mind with what else I will do

1 Corinthians 2:9

**But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."**

B) I have seen God do this time and time again – hurt by people – He has helped me to love

1) With some I have even become good friends – I never would have dreamed that could happen

C) Starts with saying: God, here is my heart – I am tired of feeling this way – Make this right whatever it takes

**We say: Lord I want strength and blessing – just don't ask me to tithe –**

A) Here is what we are saying: My heart is not fully yours – God says, trust me – with your finances, give – I don't need your money, but I want your heart – and where your treasure is your heart will be there also

B) I want your treasure to be my Kingdom – so give and watch what happens –



### **Malachi 3:10**

**“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”**

**We say: Lord I want your strength and blessing but just don’t ask me to give up that area of my life**

**A) Here is what we are saying: Lord my heart is not fully yours**

**B) Precious people – listen: He is your Hero – your love – He says – give yourself to Me fully –**

**1) Watch what happens – watch how I bless you beyond belief.**

**C) Toes in the water on a hot day – refreshing – but it doesn’t compare to full immersion**

**Listen, you have as much of the Lord in your life as you want to have – He is not going to force Himself**

**A) But give Him your heart fully you will not be disappointed**

**B) That was God’s message to Asa! Seek me Asa and you will be found by Me ! –**

**One more word V.7**

### **2 Chronicles 15:7**

**“But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!”**

**A) Be strong in Me – you will be rewarded –**

**B) In other words continue to find your strength in Me and you will not be disappointed –**

**Galatians 6:9**

**“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”**

### **Hebrews 6:10**

**“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”**

### **Result of this word to Asa**

**C) Asa took courage – instituted further reforms – talk about on Wednesday**

**1) Revival broke out – Here is how it was seen**

**D) Worship got more intense**

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**They got back to giving God their first fruits instead of their leftovers**

A) God in His word – laid – our first fruits – the best – the tithe – also in New Testament

B) Result was more growth – more peace – 25 more years of peace and blessing

C) It wasn't until the 36<sup>th</sup> yr of Asa's reign that there was a problem –again – look at more on Wed nite

**Application for us – as a Church – As much of God as we want**

A) Sometimes we come to Church looking for our weekly shot in the arm / shot of espresso – that is Okay

B) But God has so much MORE for us - Here at CCV – God is looking for a group of people who's heart is to say *Lord we are hungry for you.*

C) You have been our Strength – Lord you have done so much – but Lord we still need you

1) Need you to do more – Still need a Hero

D) Lives individually – Marriages / families / walks - Church Corporately – Building

1) We need a Hero

**So Lord, as Your eyes go out, may You find in us – loyal hearts**

A) If we have gotten self dependent, forgive us

B) If only our toes are in the water... want to take plunge

1) If we are holding back – Show us !