

God's Call to be a Part of a Greatly Significant Church

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Date: 10 October 2021

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[0 : 00] that's my friend Jeff he's got a he's got a better memory than me and I uh man I'm enjoying seeing those days through his eyes that was 1992 1992 we were both young single guys and wanting to follow the Lord wherever he lead us and God gave us wives and children and now he's a grandpa good grief uh isn't that amazing I hope y'all love Jeff uh you treat treat him well he's he's a treasure and uh I'm I'm so glad to be here to get to see him again and I'm really privileged to see all of you too thank you for letting me come I hope you like me and I hope I like you and if not we're just you know we'll just go away from this day going never again we're never again but uh it really is a privilege to be here with you to to encourage your hearts uh and and also to spend time with these missionaries you realize what a what a what a what a special thing that is that the Lord would uh gather them here to be with you that you might hear and be a part of their ministry and pray for them and and and and just have this moment with them so uh anyway thank you for for this opportunity and I know the other the other guests that are here for the uh conference are also very thankful I thought I'd start with a scary something to tell you because it's October right so you ready to be scared let me say something that'll give you shivers up your spine you ready for this little girl's like what's he gonna say the scariest thing I could tell you is that you could waste your life and do nothing of real significance with it you could waste your entire life and and dedicate yourself to this or that and and pour your whole being into it and it be of no significance whatsoever you could waste your entire life and that should terrify us your life is a mist the word of God says the word your life is a mist you know what mist is mist is h2o that's what mist is it's h2o right and uh uh you know it's it's it's it's just a vapor hero of alexandria in the first century he saw a pot boiling with a lid on it and he saw that the the the pressure of that vapor that steam was actually moving this heavy lid on this pot there's there's something to this he actually was the first to formulate a a very primitive steam turbine by kind of funneling that steam into a little thing that goes around circles it didn't it wasn't very useful and it wasn't until 1698 that thomas savory uh using the work of geronimo de hyens they they formed a steam-powered pump to get floods out of mines in 1705 that same thomas savory invented the first steam engine that james watt the scott improved upon and by the 1800s the whole world was powered by steam your life is a mist if you are a saved h2o then your life at the end of your life will just be a mist and it'll be a vapor and it'll be a steam and it'll just evaporate up into the clouds and that's where you'll go after your life if you are not saved h2o if you're not having accepted christ jesus as your lord and savior well you'll go down like water down to the lowest place you'll go to some stagnant pool somewhere and

there you will pull for a whole eternity but those aren't the only two options we have because we could be pressurized steam we could be missed with a purpose your life is a mist but your mist could be focused your mist could be utilized for the years and days of your life in your generation and so that is our prayer today what does god want to happen here today what what is the purpose of this that god would mobilize me and you encourage these missionaries to continue and that this church would become a great mobilized mission church for him and so let's pray for that right now lord we thank you for this day and we thank you for this opportunity to be together the holy spirit is here in the midst of us god as we've gathered in the name of jesus we the holy spirit is here in the midst of us and he's delighted at the fellowship and he's eager to speak words of change and transformation and god he he wants our lives to be power packed in our generation and so god thank you for this time we pray that you encourage our missionary brothers and sisters to continue the good work to not grow weary in doing good we know that if they don't grow weary they will reap a harvest if they don't give up god encourage them and god please we pray now that you speak to this church that you are making into the church that you want it to be i know lord that they're at a time of transition but i pray god with all my heart and they pray together god that you will have your way in this body and so god now speak to us we pray we thank you again for what you're going to say in the name of jesus amen second chronicles second chronicles we're going to focus on chapter 19 it's a short chapter but as i talk to you about chronicles i just want to tell you that boy this this path this part of the scriptures that doesn't get a whole lot of attention not not too many people know much about the kings that are listed here there's a lot the lord can teach us about leadership principles for the church and for god's people that are here and today we're going to focus on one of the kings in in this book in chapter 19 second chronicles uh the the king that we're going to look at he's the seventh king of the 20 kings of judah and he's one of the good kings and in fact uh those of you who grew up about the same time i did or maybe a little before me you would like this king just for his name because when you hear his name you'll think of the great theologian that we grew up with on saturday mornings yosemite sam yosemite sam who would say great jumping jehoshaphat right remember that we're gonna we're gonna talk about jehoshaphat king jehoshaphat today okay okay yosemite he'd also say great horny toads say your prayers marmot right i hate that rabbit jehoshaphat was a good king who lived 60 years on earth and made a powerful impact in his generation and these principles that we will learn about and from his life will are are important i think that god wants us to hear them today and in fact i think god really gave me this message for this moment i actually looked through old sermons to try to come up with something good that you know let's give them one of my best you know it wasn't what god wanted this is something i've never preached before

but these principles are so important i i give you an example of of just the the beauty of this part of the scriptures chapter 20 jehoshaphat is told that a vast army is coming against them from edom coming towards jerusalem in fact he's the army's already 25 miles from jerusalem when they hear about it some spies let them down didn't they so they're that close and they're terrified and he calls for fasting and prayer across the nation please come help come pray and children and women verse chapter 20 verse 13 says that the women and the children and the men all gathered at the temple to pray and they prayed this desperate prayer and in fact verse 12 he says joseph at and leading the prayer says we do not know what to do but our eyes are on you that's a great prayer isn't it we don't know what to do but our eyes are on you and god speaks to them and says you just wait you just stand firm i'm going to deliver you you will not have to fight this army he said just march out just march out and face them i will do the fighting for you and when and when they went out uh they uh joseph at he says okay god said this let's believe him and he sent some men up to to lead in singing as they marched out all the women and the children and the men going to face this army and they sang give thanks to the lord our god and king his love endures forever that's what they sang isn't that great we sing that one well they sang it too and when they got to the the desert of jeruel i guess that's how you say it and they saw this vast army they were surprised to see that they were already dead all of them they had turned against one another as they marched towards jerusalem and they all fought with one another the ammonites fought with the boabites and the edomites and they all just they did each other in and when they got there nobody was left alive which makes me wonder how the last guy standing died he must have fallen and hit his head i don't know but this is a powerful part of scripture now we go back to chapter 19 and chapter 19 follows chapter 18 which is usually how the bible works and in chapter 18 the uh uh what jehoshaphat does is unfortunate he he has a soft spot in his heart for king ahab in the northern country the northern kingdom we know ahab the husband of jezebel this this this awful king who who elijah worked with and tried to lead and he wouldn't be led ahab was a very very evil king but jehoshaphat who actually is a godly man had a soft spot in his heart for ahab and and and we have to wonder why he did that i you know maybe he thought ahab was funny maybe he thought you know ahab he's he's not he's naughty man he's a he's a knucklehead he's not a good guy but boy he's funny maybe that's what he did maybe you got a friend like that too who's just really really really wicked but you like spending time with them because they're funny or maybe it's because ahab flattered him because in chapter 18 when he goes to visit him he puts on a big feast to honor king jehoshaphat so maybe it was flattery something like that but while he was there uh you know ahab says to him man we've got a little problem the syrians have taken over ramoth gilead ramoth gilead is a is a is one of our cities on the eastern side of the jordan river and and the syrians they've taken it over and we need to go over there and take it back would you like to come over there maybe bring some of your army with would you like to come over there and help us just retake ramoth gilead probably an

afternoon's work shouldn't be a problem we'll just go over there and knock it out would you like to come with and you know josephat he's like well maybe we should ask god first and micahiah the prophet comes and tells ahab that this will be the day that you die bye bye miss american bye you anyway this will be the day that you die and so anyway ahab was a sleazy guy and a terrible friend and just so you know we need to kind of distance ourselves from terrible friends ahab says to him when he hears that this is going to be the day that he dies he says well you know josephat i've got a plan why don't you wear your robes you know you go out as king you wear your robes and stuff and you be the king i'm going to go in disguise as a soldier and i'll just kind of fight you know in the battle as a soldier and i'll just have just regular soldier equipment on and josephat's like okay well the battle went as as the lord said through this prophet micahiah and and things went bad things were very bad and the army scattered uh syrians were winning uh josephat himself he's running for his life oh god help me and you know they realize hey that's not ahab and they leave him and they don't they don't pursue him any further but one random soldier draws an arrow and shoots it no particular direction and that arrow comes down and the literal translation in the hebrew says that it hit ahab between the joints of his armor where the where the buckle is this is where the you know where it fastens together space who knows about like this maybe and this arrow just from the sky comes down and kills ahab you see and jehoshaphat that's that's chapter 18 jehoshaphat he runs home as he should have in fact it says in chapter 19 verse 1 that jehoshaphat king of judah returned safely to his palace in jerusalem if i were jehoshaphat i'd run all the way to my palace and get under my bed but he he didn't and he ran all the way home now when we apply these passages to our scripture i i i i wanted to make this as applicable as possible to all of us and i just think about the church and and so i gave it this title for our message today god's call to be a part of a greatly significant church that's a terrible terrible title i'm really bad at titles i think god doesn't he leaves the titles up to me and i'll that's what i can come up with a really bad title so i encourage you as you're sitting there to come up with a better title for the sermon so when next time i preach it you know because there's better ways to describe this power for living life with meaning the purpose-driven life come up with something for me and give it to me after the service a good title for this sermon but the the point of this is that god wants to make your life matter and he wants to make our churches empowered when jehoshaphat returns to jerusalem he meets the prophet jehu the seer the son of hanani and jehu the seer goes to him and says to him what are you doing let's let's read these verses when jehoshaphat king of judah returned safely to his palace in jerusalem jehu the seer the son of hanani went out to meet him and said to the king should you help the wicked and love those who hate the lord meaning ahab because of this the wrath of the lord is on you there is however some good in you for you've rid the land of the asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking god j who says to him what are you doing what are you doing your life has a

purpose your life has meaning your life is supposed to be important you god gave you a very specific ministry one that only you have done and you've gotten distracted and so our first point that we really need to see here in this passage is that if you want to live a life that matters if you want to have a church that's greatly significant you need to be intentional with god's mission be intentional with god's mission going up and spending time with ahab and going into this battle was not god's mission for jehoshaphat's life it was a distraction it was it was not where he was supposed to be and i i i think this is important for us today because the last couple of years have been a distraction for us it's gotten us off track we we we we were busy about the lord's business and then all of a sudden we got shut down and the devil celebrates that we have now gone into sleep mode and a lot of people have they they're not here anymore have you noticed what's happening we've gotten distracted by things that aren't god's mission i want you to look at jehoshaphat's mission look at chapter 17 he's this is unique in chapter 17 verse 7 it says in the third year of his reign he sent his officials ben hail uh obadiah zachariah nathaniel makaiah to teach the towns teach in the towns of judah he sent the levites the the the high muckety muck priests there in their robes he said we're not hanging out here in jerusalem you know being all proud of ourselves and and sitting around in comfortable chairs and and just having deep thoughts together and drinking tea we're going out we're going to go out into the villages we're going to go out into the towns and we're going to return the people we're going to take the word of god out to the people and teach them again because they've got they've gotten lost they've they've drifted over over the generations they have lost their knowledge of the word of god we've got to bring them back to god and jehoshaphat made that his mission god gave this mission to jehoshaphat and so to go out and go to war with ahab that's a distraction that is not what we're supposed to do and there's distractions that have taken over our minds and hearts even in the church and even on the mission field you know our our battle is not politics amen to that our battle is not these things you know what i mean when i when i first came uh this morning i i was driving over and i was like how do i how do i say hi to these folks and i was going to put this on to begin my sermon you know that was going to be like and then i was going to go oh no just kidding just kidding you know but i was i was afraid that some people don't have a sense of humor and so i i thought i better stay away from that but these things are not worth fighting for or about it's a distraction we've gotten distracted what is our mission our mission is to bring people back to god and to bring people to god jehu the seer says to jehoshaphat what are you doing what are you doing and in fact he says that the wrath of god is on you because of this god is disciplining us because we have lost our vision and our purpose and our commitment to the mission let me tell you something about being a great church if you want to be a great church you need to think about and and get in your heart second chronicles 16 9 which is a word that was spoken to jehoshaphat's father asa it says this the eyes of the lord range

[20 : 13] throughout the entire earth to uh to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him let me say it again the eyes of the lord range throughout the entire earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him and so god's eyes are looking at us today and he's wondering if first baptist pickens might be a church whose hearts are fully committed to him that he might strengthen this church and use this church and the promise is that if our hearts are fully committed to him he will wow how powerful is that and so he's looking to see if we're intentional with his mission if we're getting away from our our distractions and getting on to his mission jehu said what are you doing what are you doing i was in jakarta jakarta now has 30 million people the the metropolitan area has 30 million people that's 37 000 plus people per square mile and we arrived there on the mission field brand new and and we got the the the one quarter the southern the southwestern quarter of the city and said go get them go get them there's only 28 million when we were there so not as big a job as it is today and we went to a church and we we said to these folks would you guys like to help us we we uh we want to we want to reach out to the the lost people that live here and can we work with you guys is there is there a community that you guys would like to reach that we can help you work with and they said yeah yeah there's these people who uh collect trash they're called pamulung and they they walk around there they collect trash they're they're the trash collecting people nobody cares about them nobody loves them and they live in the trash that they that they gather so they build these homes out of trash and we like to go minister to those people so we went down there and we met them and they said we'd like to learn how to read people take advantage of us because we can't read why we can do that we'll we'll do we'll do a uh a literary liter liter liter literacy project and we did training with this church we okay let's train let's train we spent a year we i'm sorry we spent about a month and a half training here's how we want to do it this is what we're going to do here's you know let's make sure we can all share the gospel this is and we're going to teach people how to read yay and it was time to launch and we passed around the sign-up sheet so we're going to go out on saturday afternoons and we're going to meet with these folks in small groups and we're going to we're going to have little lessons and we're going to get to know these folks and do ministry with them we passed that sign-up sheet around the circle and it came back with no names so i passed it around again i thought maybe you didn't understand me the first time no names i'm sorry mister you know but uh you know we're not comfortable that we enjoyed the training though and the meals we shared together and we need to get to about the lord's business stop being distracted and we do it here too we're too busy the devil just rejoices doesn't he when we have programs and plans and committee meetings that don't result in people going out and sharing the gospel with lost people which is the purpose for us for our lives so let's get intentional with the gospel got to go fast now we got to be incarnational with this gospel going to be incarnational with the gospel if you look at verse four so joseph joseph lived in

jerusalem but he went out again among the people from beersheba to the hill country of ephraim and turned them back to the lord the god of their ancestors who went out again it says jehoshaphat went out again okay so jehoshaphat is not this guy who thinks he's above it all and he just sends other people to do his work okay i said this in the first service and i i was informed that maybe i shouldn't have but he was not a senator who you can see why i said i met that guy we're friends now uh but uh he was not a senator who said we'll have this kind of health care program but we'll give you this kind of health care program he's not a king who who said you know we're going to sit around and we're going to be regal and and opulent and luxurious while you go do the work he's not not not like a pastor who says you know the work the ministry's for the membership and i'm going to sit behind my desk and feel important no no he was a king who got out among the people from beersheba to ephraim and i want to say if you want to win the hearts let me say it this way if a king wants to win the hearts of people he'll go down among them amen if a king wants to win the hearts of people he'll come down among them if a king wants to win the hearts of people he'll come down among them.

Incarnation. The king came down among people. Did he win your heart when he came? Has the king won your heart?

Incarnational ministry. People who are living out there in the villages.

Out there in the towns. Their minds are blown when somebody comes from America and sits on their floor with them.

[26 : 51] And shares their snack with them or drinks their tea with them. Their minds are blown. Mister, why on earth would you leave America and come over here and sit on my floor? Why would you do this?

Incarnation is impactful. And it's not just for other people to do this. You need to do this. You need to go out into the villages.

You need to go out into the towns. You need to go out into the world and be incarnational with the work of Christ and blow people's minds. He came. Didn't he?

He came. 2 Corinthians 8 says, For you know that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that through his poverty you might become rich.

His coming won our hearts and your going will win their hearts. I would sit on the floor with sweet people in the villages in the urban slums and visit their families and they'd say Mister, what are you doing?

[28 : 06] And I would say you know can I share something from my heart? I just I've got to this is the reason that I've come I've got to share something from my heart can I share it with you?

Of course Mister please if you've got something on your heart if you've got a burden share it. It's about my love for God and my trust in Jesus his son can I share that with you?

I don't want to offend you but can I share it with you? Mister please share it with us it's okay if you're burdened we want to hear please go ahead the incarnation at work.

And you just tell them the story of Jesus who was sent here because God loves them and he died on the cross to take their sins upon himself so that they don't have to be punished for their sins eternally and they can go to heaven when they die and he died and he was buried and on the third day he rose again and when you say rose again in that context you know what generally happens?

They gasp ah! It's amazing that the resurrection has that much power that they gasp when they hear about it remember 1 Corinthians 15 says that if he has not been raised from the dead our preaching is useless and so is the faith and the lost are the dead are lost forever and there is no hope that gasp is like an inhale of hope be incarnational with the gospel and be intentional with the mission and finally be indiscriminate with God's people be indiscriminate with God's people verse 7 the instructions that he gives them along with other things he's putting judges in place in the cities but he says in verse 7 let the fear of the Lord be on you judge carefully for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery partiality be indiscriminate that means not using any type of discrimination with people when the king went out among the people he began to empathize with them he began to understand them he began to be connected to their stories and he cared about them he sat with them in their humble settings and he okay so this is what it's like to be you okay I get it and it made him connected with him and so when he came back and gave instructions for the ministry and for the leading of the people he said whatever you do don't discriminate show no prejudice between people that's important to God as his eyes range throughout the earth looking for somebody whose heart is fully devoted to him that's important to God that we be intentional with the mission and incarnational with the gospel and indiscriminate with the people

[31 : 04] I want to show you something in Acts 11 Acts 11 is a passage where at the beginning of it Peter's in trouble Peter's getting called on the carpet in Jerusalem because he has shared the gospel with Gentiles that wasn't supposed to happen he didn't have approval for that that he went to Cornelius' house and Cornelius he's preaching in the middle of his sermon he's preaching and all of a sudden the spirit comes down and all the people started speaking in tongues and the Holy Spirit filled all the people while in the middle of his sermon if you ever want church to end quicker and you're ready for the sermon to finish just let the Holy Spirit have his way and then we'll be done but he got in trouble Peter did Peter went back to Jerusalem and he said look guys this was all God God gave them a vision gave me a vision put it all together his spirit descended this was all God and so in the conclusion of that in chapter 11 verse 18 he says when they heard this they had no further objections and praised God saying so then even the Gentiles

Greek word is ethne even the ethnicities and the ethne God has granted repentance that leads to life now I want you to see something as it applies to the church verse 19 now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch spreading the word only among the Jews so Stephen was killed and everybody scattered and everybody scattered they're still sharing the gospel as we do but they're sharing it only with Jews I'm having too much fun with you people verse 20 some of them however men from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus look at the result in verse 21 the Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord the eyes of the Lord ranged throughout the entire earth looking for someone whose heart is fully committed to him that he may strengthen them in response to these folks breaking out of the barrier of just us going cross-culturally now to other people incarnationally with the gospel

God said that's what I like they're doing it they're doing my work my way and he rolled up his sleeve and he put his hand on that church remember in Ephesians 2 that the work of Jesus destroyed the barrier the dividing wall of hostility between the ethnicities and it was his purpose to create in himself one new humanity Colossians 3 9 there's a verse like this in Galatians I'll read you the one from Colossians 3 9 says you've taken off the old self with its practices and put on a new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator here here here in the church there's no Gentile or Jew or circumcised or uncircumcised barbarian Scythian slave or free but Christ is in all and is all man okay

I want you to think about being in Galatia or Colossae or Ephesus or Corinth or Berea or Philippi in those days and you're seeing people gathering together to worship a God that you don't know and women are coming and so are men together in the same room worshipping God whoa whoa whoa whoa slaves slaves are coming and masters are coming together as equals to worship God together you're sitting there and you're watching this happen as a pagan Greek and you're like what is happening in this place what are those people this is unprecedented that this kind of gathering takes place this is the church of Jesus this is a new humanity where all the barriers are destroyed indiscriminate with God's people whoo man you see how the power of all that they'll know you are my disciples by your love for one another you see how that manifold miracle that manifold what's the word in Ephesus the manifold uh uh i got off track the manifold wisdom of God it was a mystery the mystery what is this what is this wow mind-blowing to the people of the day.

Not only were slaves and women and men and landowners and everything else, but here came barbarians and Scythians. Barbarians! Big, hairy, European, red-headed people coming down, stinking.

[37 : 02] Barbarians are gathering now and Scythians are the bad barbarians. It's amazing what the church of Christ is when we let it go, set it free.

Amen? The scariest thing in the world is that we might live our lives on earth and do nothing of significance with.

That we might be vapor that evaporates into the clouds and have nothing to show for what we did. Just living a life of distraction. And Jehu the seer says, what are you doing?

What are you doing? Or, more tragic still would be to be water that flows down into a stagnant pool and there will be suffering, gnashing of teeth.

But you could live a life empowered. That's a good title. You could live a life empowered, focused.

[38 : 11] And God's call is to be intentional with the mission, incarnational with the gospel, and indiscriminate with the people. Amen? Amen? It's decision time now.

What do you usually do in decision time? You look at each other and look at the poor preacher standing up there like he has no friends? I do that every week. We do this missions thing once a year.

Once a year we do this. It's a special day. It's a special day. We have these missionaries with you and among you and you can think about the mission of your church and you think about your mission involvement, your own personal mission involvement, what you're doing, what your church is doing.

And so in our decision time today, I want to ask you if you might actually come to the altar and pray. Pray for your own heart. That it would soften.

That your own eyes would be, become aware that 155,000 people die every day without Jesus. And that you would actually care about that.

[39 : 19] That we might get shaken up a little bit and disturbed and ask you if you would, if you know the Lord, if you'd come and you'd pray.

Ask these missionaries to come and pray and I want you to pray for them. Pray for them. And you know, when I was a teenager, on a Sunday night, we had an inner city missionary from Louisville come and speak at my church and hardly anybody was there but that night God spoke to my heart and I went alone.

I was the only one at the altar that night and I prayed at the altar and I said, God, I want my life to matter. And I gave my life to the Lord for his purposes that night.

I didn't know what that meant. But you know, God is calling from among us here today that we live lives that matter. So I'm actually going to ask you to come to the altar and pray today.

Think you can do it? Are you thinking about it? You're thinking, nah, I'm not doing that. I want you to reconsider. And if you are here today and you're water, you're going down.

[40 : 32] You don't have to. If you've not given your life and your love to Jesus Christ, you need to know that he loves you and that he's died for you and that he took your sin upon himself.

If you'll give those sins to him and receive life from him, he was buried and on the third day, he rose again. He rose again. And in that moment, he conquered death.

I passed the Hillcrest Cemetery on the way into town this morning. That's an impressive cemetery. I don't know how long it will take from the time the angel shouts and the horn blows.

I don't know how long it will take for all the dead in Christ to rise first before we join them in the air. I don't know how long that will take. But if it takes a minute, when you hear the horn and hear the shout, get in your car and drive up there and watch the show.

Because they're going to burst out of the ground in that place. And dear friend, don't you miss it.

[41 : 36] Don't you miss being in heaven with all those who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. Dr. Ralph is going to...