

Pastor Melissa Carmack  
November 28 & 29, 2015  
First Lutheran Church of Aitkin, MN

**2 Kings 22:1-10; 23:1-3**  
**Josiah's Reform**

**Children's Sermon:**

Josiah was only 8 years old when he became king. Anyone here 8 years old? Would you like to be a king?

By the time he became king, everyone had forgotten the promises they had made to love God, to love their neighbor, and to go wherever God would have them go. Some were even following different gods who were not God at all.

But Josiah helped the people find their way back to God. Josiah found God's word that had been lost and he restored it to a special place in the temple.

Have you ever cleaned your room and found something that you thought you had lost? What was it?

When Josiah cleaned/did a remodel of the temple, he found a part of the bible! Deuteronomy, which is now a part of the Old Testament.

What does God's word/The bible tells us about? (Jesus, God, and how to live!).

Josiah always did what God wanted him to do. And he helped other people know about God and what God wanted for them too. How can we do this?

(make scroll...coloring picture...kid station)

## 2 Kings 22:1-10; 23:1-3 Josiah's Reform

### Adult Sermon

Advent has officially begun (SAT – ok...it actually official begins tomorrow). Tis the Season! Deck the Halls. Yes, it's ok to play Christmas music and find your holiday spirit. It's a joyful season. But it's also a season of rest and reflection and deliberately focusing on the coming of the Christ and on who we are in our relationship to God.

And here at First Lutheran, we try hard to help you do just that. During Advent, we invite you to come to worship and hear stories of God. We invite you to enter a time of daily devotional and scripture reading. This year, another pastor and myself have co-created a discussion based (with an activity component) advent devotional for you or you and your family. Pick one up as you leave today. During Advent, we wait. We wait for our Savior and put our faith in the promises that we find in scripture. In the bible.

It's only been about 500 years now that we have even had access to the bible. Before that time, only the priests or the kings could have access to the bible, and common people like you and me had to rely on those authority figures to tell us what was in there. And some kings did a good job at this, and some kings...not so much.

And this is where we pick up our story for today. Today we learn about Josiah. Josiah was a good king. He was only 8 when he became king, so maybe it was his innocence that made him honest and truthful and a follower of God, or maybe he looked up to his great grandpa, Hezekiah, who was also a good king when he ruled.

Between Hezekiah, the great grandpa, and Josiah, there were a few bad kings in there that ruled. Like, really bad. They made the temple – the church – into a building of shrines that they forced people to worship. They did not worship God and had lead their people into lives of destruction. They even went as far as to hide the Word of God, so that it couldn't be taught and read to people.

So during Josiah's time as king, he decided it was time to reclaim the temple...to take back the worship of God and only God...to get rid of the idols and shrines and literally do a reorganize and remodel of the temple so that it was once again a Holy place where people could worship the one True God.

And it was during this remodel that a hidden scroll was found that had the word of God on it – part of the book of Deuteronomy which we now find in the Old Testament. This was a big deal, because now Josiah had God's Word to share with the people. For many years, he had just been following God in the best way that he knew how...how his great grandfather had taught him to.

But now! Now...he had God's Word to help guide him in his ways and help him to lead his people.

The scriptures being rediscovered led to a reshaping of the worship life in his kingdom. Scripture created this powerful shaping force in Josiah personally and in his people. They were able to see clearly the mission that God had set out for them through God's word.

There is no danger, today, of the Word being hidden – we have access to bibles and it's still the most produced book in the world. The power is still there, waiting to be released, to emerge from the walls we build around it and bring about change. There is no doubt that the kind of reformation that could be accomplished if we followed the Word of God is needed now more than ever. We have access to the bible and we take it for granted. When is the last time that you have let the words of Scripture guide you, lead you...transform or reform you?

As we make every day choices that affect economy, politics and issues of equality and justice, how might the power of the Word direct our choices and effect change that makes a difference for all God's children? As we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Christ, how might we give flesh to the reform all that God seeks to accomplish? What is our mission, both individually and as a church? And will we trust God with our time, our talents, our resources and our giving enough to believe and fully live into that mission?

Living into this mission can be a powerful thing! A Life-giving opportunity. We have a God who is willing and ready to walk with us in that mission...to use our resources for the greater kingdom of this world. Are we ready to trust God and live into our mission that He has given us? His mission that he lays out for us in this bible that still lives and speaks to us today?

Dave McMillan is one of our small group leaders for confirmation and he attended the Soup Kitchen a few weeks ago with his small group of boys. He wrote this explanation of what he experienced that night:

"There are certain universal things that bind us together and remind us that despite our differences, we share a common humanity. Music is certainly one of the greatest of these. A song has the power to connect us and to wipe away the petty differences that divide us better than just about anything else. Love lives in the notes.

During the Nov. 11 visit to the soup kitchen, the eighth grade boys confirmation group experienced this first-hand.

The group met Logan and his grandfather while cleaning up after serving the meal. The grandfather talked and spun yarns about his positive philosophy on life, but mostly he talked about Logan's ability to write and sing rap songs. He was many things and shared much of his

life story, but at his core he was simply a proud grandpa. Conversations continued until long after everyone else had left.

Jon Blanchette played the first notes on the piano, followed by Joe Cummings. The notes weren't much. They were mostly just snippets of elementary school songs. But the power of music drew the group together and started a remarkable moment.

Having learned that Logan was a singer, Jon asked him to rap. He did. It was a short rap that had the boys smiling and laughing. Sam Sadlowski, a very gifted musician, sat down at the piano and began to play. It was a simple two-chord beat to perfectly accompany Logan's songs. The next five minutes were a mix of freestyle rap (made up on the spur of the moment) that was not only quite good, but wove a heart-wrenching tale of the young man's life. It told the story of frustration, lost-but-not-abandoned dreams, and a daily battle that rages within him between desperation and hope. One verse was particularly touching...

"Twenty dollars a day, whatever that means.  
I don't know what to feel, but I used to have dreams.  
After all this time it doesn't seem real,  
Still needing to come here to get a free meal."

The song ended, as it often does, with applause. A moment was shared. A connection was made. A lesson was learned.

The main purpose of volunteering to serve at the food kitchen is to do God's work on Earth. Food was served and people were helped. God's work was done. But His love was truly experienced when a young man shared a song with a group of eighth grade boys."

**The soup kitchen is only one aspect of mission that we share together. It's a good mission, and one that I am proud to be a part of. Let us all share in this mission of God. May God use us and our resources for His mission in this world. Thanks be to God. Amen.**