

2 Chronicles - Commentaries by Richard "Dick" Gorgas

The Christian Shepherd: 2001, "Do It Heartily" (31:21)

"In every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart and prospered" (2 Chron. 31:21 JND).

In my daily reading this morning, my attention was called to this verse. I wondered why what I do sometimes does not prosper. How instructive! Hezekiah did it with all his heart.

How often our efforts are perfunctory-halfhearted. May the Lord stir us with the example of this dear man who did so much to restore Judah (and some from throughout all Israel) to the worship of Jehovah.

I was struck, too, with Hezekiah's gracious prayer of intercession for the people. He prayed for them, saying, "Jehovah, who is good, forgive everyone that has directed his heart to seek God, Jehovah the God of his fathers, although not according to the purification of the sanctuary. And Jehovah hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people" (2 Chron. 30:18-20 JND).

Twice over, the Scriptures say of Hezekiah that "he spoke consolingly" to the people (2 Chron. 30:22; 32:6). What an example for us!

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Dorothy Conference: 1997, Hezekiah's Invitation (30:1)

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And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh. That they should come to the House of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel. For the King had taken counsel in his Princess and all the congregation in Jerusalem. To keep the Passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently. Neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation. So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan. That they should come to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem. For they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written. So the posts went with the letters from the king and his Princess throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye, children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers. Who therefore gave them up to desolation, as you see. Now be not stiff necked as your father's were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord. And enter into his sanctuary, which he has sanctified forever. And serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. For if you turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful. And will not turn away his face from you, if you return unto him. So the post passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh. He went unto Zebulun. But they laughed them to scorn and mocked them. Nevertheless, divers of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem, also in Judah. The hand of God was to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king and of the Princess by the word of the Lord. And they're assembled at Jerusalem, much people to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. A very great congregation. They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away and cast them into the Brook Kidron. Then they killed the Passover on the 14th day of the second month, and the priests and Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the House of the Lord. And they stood in their place, after their manner, according to the law of Moses, the man of God. The priest sprinkled the blood which they received of the hand of the Levites. Verse 18. A multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves yet. Did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was written? But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, the Lord, the good Lord, pardon everyone. That prepareth his heart to seek. God, the Lord God of his Father's, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people. And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness. And the Levites and the priests praise the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord. They did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession. To the Lord God of their fathers.

Verse 26. So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, and was not the lake in Jerusalem. Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard. And their prayer came up into his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven. This passage of Scripture. Was much before my heart as we traveled through Romania. We saw what a terrible confusion. The enemy has wrought even in that in those brief years. Since they have liberty to meet together. Divisions. Alliances that are contrary to the Word of God. It was a heartbreak. And I thought of this chapter and we mentioned it a number of times, the sum of the brethren. And I would just like to go over a few points that I feel the Lord would have us think about today. You know the story of the division of Israel. We don't need to go over that. It's something that continues until this day. And please don't fix your eyes on a particular division. It's not on my heart to talk about particular divisions. But I want to talk about what Hezekiah did. There was an exercise. People were worshipping

the Lord, or at least saying they were worshipping the Lord, in many different places. And you know, they had some justification for. They're rebelling against. Reabon. Don't get me wrong, it's still called the sin of Jeroboam, the son of. Knee bat which made Israel to sin. It was a sin. It was a sin what they did. But I'm sure all of us know that there was provocation too. And I don't suppose there's ever a difficulty among the Lord's people, but what there isn't? At least in the minds of those who leave a justification. And saying, well, you know, we were provoked. Hezekiah's exercise, beloved, is not to bring the people back to himself. That has been so strongly brought to my soul. Look at what he says, that they should come verse one to us, to Judah, no, to the House of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel. God has been dishonored. Many times through the history. Of those who profess to be gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has been dishonored. His center has been set aside. And what is our desire to see? Ourselves vindicated? No, we want to see the Lord have his place. That the Lord might have his place, that they should come to the House of the Lord. Are we ought to be out recruiting people to? Come to our meeting. May the Lord preserve us from that. May we set before souls, and may our desire be. That they be gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now there was much weakness. Notice it says that they did it in the second month. There's a provision in scripture for that. If they couldn't do it in the first month, there was a gracious provision for them to do it in the second month. And priests hadn't sanctified themselves sufficiently verse three. Neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. All their such lethargy in our hearts such. Shall I say, without poking fingers at any of us. At myself that there's a lack of spiritual vigor sometimes in the things of God.

There is a lack of exercise. So they established verse 5A decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel. All Israel. Hezekiah, do you have a right? You're only the king of a small part of Israel. You are only the King of Judah. Give them a right to do this. From Beersheba even to death. They should come. To Judah. Is that what it says now? Come to keep the Passover under the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem. God has established a center. And beloved brethren, it's on my heart to say that if we're promoting anything other than God's center, we are secretary. We are secretary. The shame. Of the awful divisions among the people of God. Bows our heads, doesn't it? Even if we feel that God has preserved us where we should be. And I believe that with all my heart. What is our spirit to be? Come to us. No, the Lord is the one that's to have his place. And I like the middle of verse. 6. We'll start the beginning. So the post went with the letters from the king and his Princess. Throughout all Israel and Judah, Throughout all Israel and Judah, Beloved brethren, we have a right. To send to all the people of God, to come back to where the Lord? Would have them be. To us, not to us. Montreal conference a year ago. Brother Michelle Payette gave a little word. He taught us a new English word, and I haven't forgotten that new English word. Him as I. I thought when he stood up, I said, what is this Frenchman telling us? A new English word? Himasa, him, us and I. Oh, it's Christ first. First, Christ the center. Have you read that little track by Charles Stanley? I say this for the young people especially because I got a lot of blessing from that. Did you ever read Christ the Center or why do we meet in His name alone? That's a wonderful little paper. Christ the Center. Christ the center. What do they say on the posts? They say ye children of Israel, turn again. Unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you. Are you discouraged because there's just a little remnant going on? Maybe almost. The weakness may be unbelievable where you are. It's on my heart to say this. It's not coming back to us, it's coming to the Lord God of Israel. And He will return to the remnant of you. That are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. Beloved brethren, if any of us are gathered and I believe we are on the ground of Scripture to the Lord's name with himself in the midst it's it's totally God's grace. It was God's grace that brought us there, and it's God's grace that keeps us there. Don't lose sight of that. Don't get the idea that we're better than other people. Were not. And be not verse seven and be not like your Father's, like your brethren. Brethren, it's not just our ancestors. It's like us too. Our brethren, we we. I've been very much impressed recently with the prayer of Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel and those wonderful chapters.

They pour out their hearts, they take their place with the people of God in all the failure. That had come in and they confessed that failure as their own. Have we done that? Have we confessed, Lord? Not only our fathers. It's easy to look back and say, yes, our fathers, they were pretty bad fellows. But what about our brethren? Ourselves? Can we confess that to the Lord? They trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as you see. We see it, don't we? We see the desolation. And it's heartbreaking. Now verse 8, be not stiff necked as your Father's word. This is a wonderful expression, but yield yourselves unto the Lord. And enter. Into our fellowship. Is that what it says? Is that what it says? Look at it, brethren. Look at it carefully. Enter into his sanctuary. We don't. I trust look at it as something that we own. It's God's place. God established. And it's clear in the Word of God that it's the Lord your God who will establish that place. Which He has sanctified forever. He set it apart forever. God's truth doesn't change because of our failure, beloved brethren. Never will. But all brethren, it starts with yielding yourselves unto God, unto the Lord. Serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. Now verse nine is encouraging, where if you turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive. So that they shall come again into this land. I know this is speaking, talking about an earthly sanctuary, an earthly, earthly center. But I think we can apply it and learn from it. And this is wonderful, it says, for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful. And will not turn away his face from you, if you return unto him. You ever think the Lord has turned his way his face from us? He will not. If you turn to him. He'll not turn away his face. He's gracious and merciful. Well, that's the content of the letter. Now what happened? Verse 10 So the post pass from city to city, through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun. And there was a wholesale. In gathering, is that what it says? No, says they lapped them scorn. Mock them. Have you ever heard that? I have Mocking because of the stand we take and where we are and the invitation to folks. Come, come to the place where the Lord has put his name, not come to us. I remember Michelle saying us without him first. Just isn't it. Him I saw. Him last night. It's pretty discouraging, isn't it? Their messages met with laughing. Mocking. I've talked to brethren who mock at the idea. God has a place. Verse 11 is nice, it says, nevertheless, in spite of the mocking and the laughing, the scorn.

Divers, various ones, of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun, humbled themselves. That's the key expression, beloved. It takes a humbling. For one to come back to God's center. It's humbling. And they came. To Jerusalem. It doesn't say they came to Judah. They came to Jerusalem. Say they came to Hezekiah. They came to Jerusalem. God sent her. Now verse 12 is important, it says, and also in Judah. That is the place that you might say where they were already there, weren't they? They were there where the Lord had placed His name. They hadn't left. But it says the land of God was to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king and of the Princess by the word of the Lord. Oh, may the Lord give us to have one heart. Beloved brethren, to do what he has said in his Word. Not turn aside to one way or the other. That's a work of grace. It's the hand of God that does that. May I share the great joy? That was mine 43 years ago. As Mr. Pierpotto and I and. 14 others from. A little company in Brooklyn. Came to the meeting on Gates Ave. And sat with our beloved brethren, sat back at their meeting. It was humbling. It was humbling to say we've been wrong. We've been wrong, but what a blessing. What a blessing, beloved brethren. Were we making much of the Brooklyn Saints? Of the Gathered Saints? Were we making much of them? No, we're making much of Christ. And that's the thing, brethren, it's Christ. Christ is the center. He's the one. To whom we're gathered. Well, there was a result. It took away the altars. There was a lot of things that had come in that were not according to the mind of God. And with this company that had come

and that together, they do away with some of the things they ought to not have there. The altars that were in Jerusalem, altars for incense. They had the Passover. Verse 15 It says in the priests and the Levites were ashamed. They were ashamed. Beloved brethren, have we ever been ashamed that things are so poor as we gather together to remember the Lord? That we're not really clean before the Lord. We haven't. Prepared ourselves. Now things were not done perfectly here. In fact, Hezekiah. Lifts his heart in prayer. You think he was wrong? I don't. Because it says clearly here in verse 20 the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah. And heal the people. God is merciful and gracious. The letters had just said that and God now heals the people. With great gladness they praised the Lord day by day. Notice it says singing with loud instruments unto the Lord. Hezekiah spoke How? Did he speak like Rio Bond? No, he spoke comfortably. I think we've all learned that the way Rehoboth spoke to the people was not comfortably. And what was the result of it? Oh, I know that their hearts have manifested a state of things in the hearts of men. And hearts of the children of Israel.

But let us not give occasion. By speaking roughly. Let's speak comfortably to our brethren. I've done my share of speaking roughly. I'm ashamed of it. Let's see grace from the Lord to speak comfortably to the Lord's people. The end of verse 22 Says. Not only they were they offering the peace offerings, but they were making confession to the Lord God. Of their fathers. Heartfelt confession in the Lord's presence. Is a wonderful thing. Not pro forma confession, heartfelt confession, real confession, not saying, well, you know, we've all failed. That's a wonderful euphemism. But God, I think, would say we have sin. That is, God would have us say we have sinned. And to be specific about the sins, to name them before the Lord. Verse 26. So there was great joy. In Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like. In Jerusalem. And I like verse 27. It says then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people. And their voice was heard. And this is the part that just strikes me particularly. And their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven. God heard that prayer went off, and was received by him. In closing, I'd just like to share a little story that I used in about two or three years ago in the Dominican Republic with some of the dear brethren there. I've recently translated it into English. It's called the forgotten table. The father of a large family was about to die. He called his children together. And he made a rather interesting request of them. Rather strange request. He said after I done it. And I'd like you all to meet together in my house at this very table. Once every year on the date of my departure. To have a meal together. And think of me. Well, they will love the father, so they said. Yes, sure we will. Several years they did. But you know what happens times like that? Squabble started at the table. One brother picked up his things and said, I'm not going to eat here next year. I don't see why I have to come here and take this abuse. Another one said well you're just as abusive and he got up and he wasn't. The two of them walked out and they from then on they decided to have the feast at their own table in their own house. And as the years went by, one and another, sometimes provoked by the ones that stayed. They went and. Did the same thing until there were only three left at the table. What a shame. And sometimes they exhibited a spirit of pride among themselves. Two of the brothers who had gone off, they thought about it a little bit and they said. Terrible state of things. Hey, next year let's have the dinner at your house and you and I will eat together. Not a bad idea. So the division between those two was healed. And they were happy about it. So this is a good idea. Let's invite our other brethren. And they did. They invited their other brother.

And many of them responded. And they had such joy that even one of the three said. I can't hold out against that. That's wonderful. And he went and joined with the reunited brothers. And I had a lot of joy. And then? The two that were left said. This is a shame. The Lord isn't pleased with this, and our Father wouldn't be pleased with it either. So they sat down and they wrote letters. All those who had gone through all the 16. Dominican families are big. I got laughed to scorn. We mocked that, they said. Huh? You think you're right. We're wrong. But God worked. And a few of them humble themselves. And came back. To the forgotten table.

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