

FIXING A BROKEN CHURCH

2 Chronicles 29:1-20, 31-30:5

A Sermon by Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley



Sunday, April 7, 2019

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley

Sermon Title: Fixing A Broken Church

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 29:1-10, 31-36
& 30:1-5



CURRICULUM GUIDE



Sermon Summary

This week's sermon was inspired by those who refuse to come to church or mock the church because the church has been ineffective, hurtful, or scandalous. These issues in the church have turned away many and have wounded some who are still present. Using the story of King Hezekiah, Pastor Wesley gives us the blueprint of how to be a better and more inclusive church community.

Key Points

Following Hezekiah's example, there are four things we must do to fix a broken church:

1. We must ensure that the doors are open to everyone
 - A. Eliminate the two hypocrisies that hurt the church:
 - i) Pretending to be what we aren't
 - ii) Pretending to be perfect and not hurting when we are
2. We must get rid of the mess
3. We must not place church leaders on a pedestal
4. We must pause, praise, and thank God for what God has done

Notes for Facilitators:

We've come to the final week of our winter Village session. While this is the last week your Village will gather for sermon discussion be mindful that the relationships nurtured in this Village will continue to grow. Between now and the fall season we encourage you to get together for activities, worship collectively as a Village, and most of all check-in with and pray for one another. Also if you haven't already, be sure to set aside a time for your Village to close this season with a moment of celebration.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. Do you know someone that has stopped coming to church due to negative experiences? What is the reason they refuse to attend?
2. Do you feel like you can keep it real around church folk and be your authentic self? How does that impact your church experience and your spiritual development?
3. What do you classify as church gossip? How do you handle situations when you're presented with gossip and/or other church mess?



Into The Bible Questions:

1. In 2 Chronicles 29:11, Hezekiah implored the people not to neglect their duties any longer. In verse 12, some Levites got right to work. What does this passage say about church members' roles in the advancement of the work of God? With that in consideration, what are some things that the church cannot delay fixing?
2. 2 Chronicles 29:1 states that Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became King and started to do the Lord's work.
 - a. What are the responsibilities of elders in the community to be open to new direction from young people?
 - b. What responsibilities do young people have to lead in a way that is not disrespectful to their elders?
3. In the reign of King Ahaz, the only doors of the Temple that were functional were those for the Levites and the Priests. Hezekiah had to repair the remaining doors under his reign to allow for other classes of worshipers to enter the Temple. What are some damaged doors that hinder church access to certain groups of potential worshipers? How can we repair those doors?

Life Application Questions:

1. If you have ever been frustrated with church "mess," how did you deal with it? What "mess" have you found yourself bringing into church?
2. How do you reconcile a pastor's role as a leader in the faith with their humanity and inevitable imperfection? What is your response to hearing news, blogs, or rumors about poor behavior from church leaders?
3. We know that there are many examples of churches getting it wrong, but where have you seen the church get it right?
4. Have you ever come to church and been disappointed that Pastor Wesley wasn't preaching? Have you ever decided to stream service when you heard there was a guest preacher? How does that correlate to your reason for attending worship and the status that you put on your Pastor?
5. As you've grown as a Christian, how have others' expectations of you helped or hindered your spiritual development?



"Can I Push It?"

With all of our imperfections, what imperfection or challenge have you tried hardest to cover up when you come to church?

Spirit Work:

1. In 2 Chronicles 29:6, King Hezekiah discusses how the current generation and their ancestors were unfaithful and evil in the sight of God. What are some practices and thought processes you've absorbed from others that may require spiritual adjustment?
2. Pastor listed numerous groups of people for which we have to work on opening the door. Do some introspection and ask yourself with which group you are personally struggling to open the door?



Activity:

- 1. Time to be real:** As the final Village meeting for this winter session, we hope that you will use this opportunity to be transparent and “real” with your Village family! Pastor says, “Church would be different if we opened up and shared what we struggled with, e.g. ‘Hi, my name is Howard-John and I’m struggling with...’.” Take a deep breath and trust God through this process.
 - a. Go around the circle and share a current struggle.
 - b. Close the activity by lifting up each person’s “struggle” into the hands of the Lord.
- 2. Praying for Church Leadership:** Pray for Pastor Wesley and church leaders to continue to stay grounded and lead in the vision that God gives them.
- 3. A Vision for the “Be Real Baptist Church, The Lord’s Rehab Clinic”:**
 - a. Using post-it notes, have villagers share adjectives of this church. Alternatively, you can have people just call out adjectives.
 - b. Based on the feedback, discuss how we as villagers can create this type of atmosphere in our Alfred Street community?

Additional Questions for Married Couples Villages:

1. Pastor mentions in the sermon that it only takes one person to bring mess into the church, causing problems. What are some practices that you use to prevent bringing outside mess into your marriage?
2. King Hezekiah instituted new processes designed to lead his subjects closer to God. As a couple reflect on the following:
 - a. What are some new practices that can be added to grow closer to God?
 - b. What are some old practices that you’ve abandoned that you can implement to grow closer to God?

Additional Questions for Young Adult Villages:

1. Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became king, and Pastor pointed out that Hezekiah was not like his father. In what ways have you thought differently about church from your parents or previous generations?
2. How do you handle negativity about church and Christianity in social media?

Additional Questions for Parents' Villages:

1. Considering the youth of Hezekiah when he came into leadership, how do you explain the value of going to church and serving in ministries to your child? How do you encourage your child's participation in church?
2. Pastor identified that Hezekiah had to implement spiritual changes because his father Ahaz had not been leading his people in the ways of God. What are you doing to ensure you aren't following in the legacy of Ahaz?

Additional Questions for Women Villages:

1. How can you promote healing for someone who has experienced church hurt?
2. How can you help those who feel uncomfortable coming to Alfred Street because of the perception that one has to be of a certain socioeconomic or spiritual status to attend?