

Introduction

King Solomon was at the highpoint of his reign (2 Chronicles 7:11-22). His kingdom was a world superpower and the people lived in peace and prosperity. The new, magnificent temple had been finished and had been dedicated to God. In response, God's holy fire from heaven had come down and filled the temple. The fire visibly showed to the world that Almighty God was with His people.

1. We are CHOSEN (2 Chronicles 7:14A)

"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV).

The phrase, "if my people" does not reflect the hand-picked nature of what God had done. "If my own people" (2 Chronicles 7:14 CEV) is closer to what God is saying to the Israelites.

God has taken the initiative and has reached out to speak to those that He loves. The temple building may be spectacular in human terms, but God is not looking at what the people have been busily doing. Instead, God's focus is wholly on His own, treasured people.

But although God is fully directed to His people, the question remains, are the people wholly focused on God? This question is relevant to us today.

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (Ephesians 2:10 NLT).

Because of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven, in faith of what Jesus has done for us, our sins are forgiven, and we have been made right with God. As a result, in God's eyes, we are his precious, chosen masterpiece. God wants to have a personal relationship with us.

On whom is our focus today?

2. We are CALLED (2 Chronicles 7:14B)

"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV).

As God's people today, we carry God's name. Sadly, some of us seem to try to hide that name from those around us. Or perhaps we try to rephrase the name so that it sounds more contemporary to our friends. But as God's treasured and chosen people, we have His name imprinted in our lives.

God calls His people to four activities that will cause us to grow in our relationship with Him and honour the name that we carry.

a) A Call to Prepare.

"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves".

God's first activity for His people is that they prepare themselves through humility.

Humility is the first step because we are acknowledging that we need God in our lives. We need His help, His strength, His wisdom, His leading in every situation in our lives. God is the Almighty Ruler of the universe, so we must come before Him today, in sincere humility.

b) A Call to Prayer.

“if my people, who are called by my name, will ... pray”.

Perhaps these first 2 steps go together. We are called to pray humbly to God.

Although we are encouraged to enter God’s presence boldly (Hebrews 4:16), as God’s people today, we need to regularly and respectfully talk and pray to God.

c) A Call to Passion.

“if my people, who are called by my name, will ... seek my face”.

God’s third action for His people, is to actively look for God’s acceptance. We will choose to do things that will be pleasing to God. As God’s people today, we are called to seek God and show Him our devotion in loving obedience.

d) A Call to Purity.

“if my people, who are called by my name, will ... turn from their wicked ways”.

God’s last activity for His people is to stop sinning. The word translated “turn” means to change direction completely. If we are going to come into God’s presence and receive His forgiveness, then there must be a desire within us to turn away completely from the wrongdoing that we were previously doing. As God’s people today, we need to repent quickly and turn away from sin wholeheartedly.

As God’s treasured and chosen people, we have His name imprinted in our lives.

So, let us:

- Humbly Prepare to meet with Almighty God.
- Prayerfully speak with God regularly.
- Passionately seek to do what pleases God.
- Turn away from sin and choose what is Pure and right in God’s eyes.

3. We are **CHERISHED**

(2 Chronicles 7:15)

“My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place.” (2 Chronicles 7:15 NLT).

God promises to be attentive and watching out for His people. We are cherished and loved by God. He made us, so He knows every detail of our lives – and He and watching over us.

“The LORD is watching everywhere, keeping his eye on both the evil and the good.” (Proverbs 15:3 NLT).

“Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 23:24 NLT).

“You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do.” (Psalm 139:2-3 NLT).

There are times when the circumstances in our lives suggest that God is not around or seems far away. We are convinced that God is not aware of the problems and difficulties that we are facing. As a result, we feel discouraged, isolated, and possibly abandoned.

God’s word to us is the very opposite. God made us, values and cherishes us; we are His precious masterpiece. As a result, He is watching over us. God’s eyes¹ are open and focused on us today. God’s ears² are attentive and responsive to our prayers.

As a result, as Christians, let us live out our relationship with God in confidence and strength, knowing that we are loved and that God is actively watching over us.

¹ “God’s eyes” is a phrase that refers to His mental and spiritual awareness.

² “God’s ears” is a phrase that refers to His wisdom, understand and presence with us.

CONCLUSION

It is easy to discount this Bible passage (2 Chronicles 7:11-22) as God simply speaking to King Solomon and the Israelites. We think that this is God's word for a specific time, in a specific geographical location, and to a specific people-group. Yet,

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."

(2 Timothy 3:16 NLT).

So, let us remember that:

- We are **Chosen** by God.
Chosen for a personal relationship with Him through Jesus.
- We are **Called** by God.
Called to:
 - Prepare to meet with Almighty God.
 - Prayerfully speak with God regularly.
 - Passionately seek to do what pleases God.
 - Choose what is Pure and right in God's eyes.
- We are **Cherished** by God.
Cherished, loved and protected by God. He is attentive to our needs and aware of our daily situations.

This week, let us be worthy ambassadors and representatives for God. Let us say what we believe and do what we believe. Let us tell our friends, families, and our community, that we are God's people and that God is present and active in and through us.

AMEN