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Daily Devotional - Monday, November 11, 2024 - A Risk Worth the Reward

NOVEMBER 11TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, November 11, 2024 - A Risk Worth the Reward

On a day-to-day basis there are situations where, without a specific person's contribution, things might happen in very different ways. Chapter 11 highlights one such person by the name of Jehosheba. She was the sister of the assassinated king of Judah, Ahaziah. When her brother was killed by Jehu, Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, set out to destroy all the heirs to the throne including her grandson, Joash (or Jehoash) (v. 2). But Jehosheba, his aunt, risked her life to save the boy and the Davidic line. He was the sole remaining heir! She, along with her husband, Jehoiada, a priest, sheltered the boy for seven years. Athaliah ruled as queen over Judah and continued her son's idolatrous behavior. She was, after all, a daughter of Ahab.

But when the time was right, Joash was revealed to the nation (v. 4) who overthrew Athaliah and restored the young heir to the throne of David (v. 21). While he was young, Joash followed the lead of his mentor, Jehoiada who restored Judah's commitment to their covenant with God, and to the eradication of Baal worship in the country. Later, Joash called for a restoration of the Temple which by now was over 100 years old (12:4-5). All this began with one person risking her life to save a child.

Jehosheba’s courageous act preserved the line of David, the line from which the Messiah would descend and through whom the kingdom of God will be restored! It is not hard to imagine what it cost her. The years of sheltering the child in seclusion. The years of fearing the secret would get out. Did she have children of her own that she cared for? Yet she took the risk, and her courage places her among the heroes of the Old Testament!

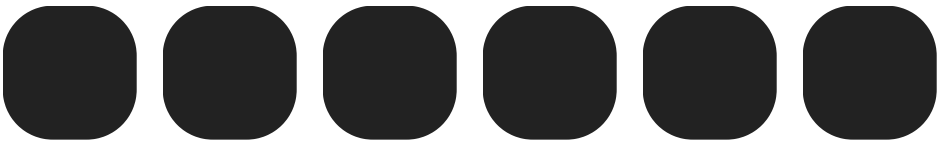
What single courageous act has God put in front of you to perform? Are you facing a risk for the sake of God’s plan? Perhaps it means letting something go? Perhaps it means giving up something?

Merciful Lord, give us maturity and wisdom to live in the power of the Spirit of the risen and ascended Christ. As we look at the examples of the Old Testament heroes, we ask You to help us live courageously for You.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, November 5, 2024 - Our God Reigns

NOVEMBER 05TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, November 5, 2024 - Our God Reigns

We live in a world that celebrates inclusion. But sometimes this represents a rejection of reality. For example, how many gods are there exactly? And is it possible for all these gods to be equals? While our society may tell us to accept them all, the writer of 2 Kings would disagree.

In the ancient Near East, a god would fight for, defend, and take care of the people within the boundaries of that country. So, it was disturbing to read that Naaman had achieved success at the hand of Yahweh (v. 1)! The Israelites believed there was only one God. His sovereignty extended over every nation, and Israel would only succeed if and when He willed it.

Naaman was “commander of the army of the king of Aram.” Although he was “a great man” (v. 1), he suffered from leprosy, an incurable disease. A girl, whom Naaman had enslaved, knew there was a prophet in Israel through whom wonders were taking place (v. 3)! Naaman, in an act of faith, requested leave to visit this prophet. He planned to appeal to the god of an enemy nation for help. So, he sent gifts to the king of Israel hoping to win the favor of this god. Little did he know that the king of Israel was wicked; the god of Israel was against him. “When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: ‘Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel’” (v. 8).

Elisha issued a simple command: Go and wash in the river Jordan (v. 10). Naaman returned clean! God’s miracle convinced Naaman that Yahweh was God of the whole earth.

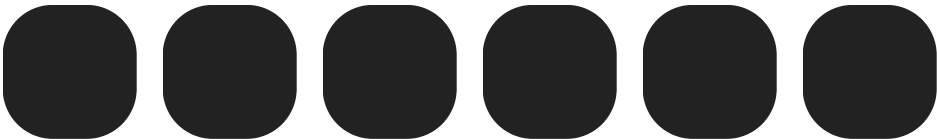
Why does it matter that we honor our God as the only true God? How does this belief increase our motivation to reach the lost?

You are indeed the only true God! We proclaim Your sovereignty over the nations through the ages. Jesus, thank You for coming as the Light of the world to live among us, to expose our great need, and reveal Your steadfast love.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, November 4, 2024 - Our God Reigns

NOVEMBER 04TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, November 4, 2024 - Our God Reigns

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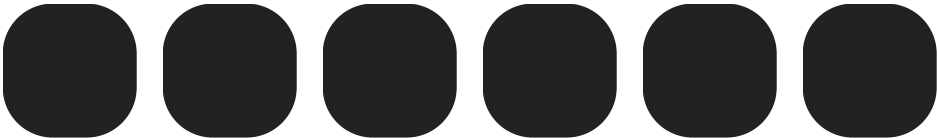
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Daily Devotional - Friday, November 1, 2024 - Whom Do You Trust?

NOVEMBER 01ST 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, November 1, 2024 - Whom Do You Trust?

Occasionally when conversing with people who have strong opinions about a particular topic, I ask where they found their information. If the answer is “I Googled it,” their convictions become suspect. Why? Because the source of our information is critical to forming our opinions. Whom you ask shows whom you trust.

The book of 2 Kings begins where 1 Kings left off. Ahaziah, the son of Ahab is on the throne, and he is behaving like his father (see 1 Kings 22:51–53). We should recall that former king Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, were responsible for the institutionalization of Baal worship in Israel. After Ahab died, he was replaced by his like-minded son, Ahaziah, who continued his father’s idolatrous practices.

Ahaziah’s lack of faith was exposed when he was injured (v. 2). Wondering if he would survive, he reached out for divine help. What he reached out to revealed where his confidence lay; he reached for Baal! Yahweh, the God of Israel, sent a message dripping with sarcasm to challenge the king: “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to inquire of Baal-Zebub?” (v. 3).

The king’s search for answers in the wrong place led him to behave as if God, a trustworthy source, did not exist! This would have been a particularly bad example for the king to set. The people would be tempted to believe that if the king inquired of Baal, maybe it was because the God of Israel was not real. Ahaziah came under God’s condemnation and, as a result, would die of his injuries. The message for God’s people, then and now, is clear: Do not seek truth from false gods. Whom we trust in times of trouble reveals a great deal about what we believe.

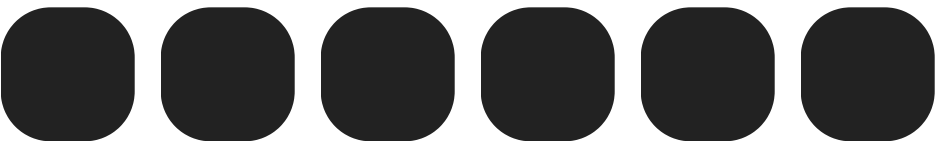
Whom do you reach for in times of trouble? What does your search for answers reveal about your faith in God?

As we start our study in 2 Kings this month, Lord, we ask You for insight and understanding despite the time and culture distance. May we learn from its lessons, which also apply to our day and age!

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, October 29, 2024 - Clothed With Kindness

OCTOBER 29TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

In the winter of 1777–1778, George Washington’s army at Valley Forge was sick and starving. Chief Shenendoah of the Oneidas sent a gift of corn in support. An Oneida woman known as Polly Cooper also helped the soldiers with nutrition and medicine. Though she refused payment, she accepted the gift of a shawl from General Washington. Today the “Polly Cooper shawl” is one of the greatest treasures of the Oneida people.

Generosity, especially at the right time, is praiseworthy in God’s eyes. Faith, after all, must be accompanied by good deeds, or of what use is it (James 2:14–17)? In today’s parable, the Son of Man, as king and judge, separates true (sheep) from false believers (goats) (vv. 31–33; see also Matt. 13:24–30). What standard does He use? Practical service.

What distinguishes the sheep from the goats is simply what they *did* or *did not* do (vv. 34–36, 41–43). The good works mentioned are feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers (that is, showing hospitality), clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the prisoner. The sheep showed compassion-in- action for the needy; the goats did not. These six actions are examples, not a complete list. Each is still something we can do today.

Jesus was of course not saying that salvation is by works. We know that salvation is by grace through faith, with good deeds following afterwards (Eph. 2:8–10). The parable has a limited point and is not a complete doctrinal statement. The point is simply that a tree is known by its fruit (Matt. 7:17–20). Both groups act surprised so that the King can explain: Good deeds done in faith for a fellow believer are as significant as if they had been done for Christ Himself (vv. 40, 45).

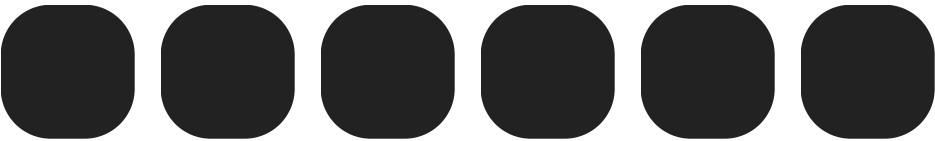
Read about Dorcas (also called Tabitha) in Acts 9:36–42. What can we learn about clothing ourselves with kindness from her example?

Holy God, thank You for the reminder in today’s reading about feeding the hungry, showing hospitality, helping the poor, and visiting the prisoner. Equip us for the generous and selfless service for Your kingdom.

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