The Stubborn Saint
Week 4

Big Idea: King Asa's downfall warns us against trading faith for self-reliance, reminding us that true spiritual growth comes from seeking God first, receiving correction humbly, and remaining fully dependent on Him.

Main Scriptures:

2 Chronicles 15:1-2
2 Chronicles 15:17-19
2 Chronicles 16:2
2 Chronicles 16:7-12
Philippians 4:6
John 15:5
Proverbs 12:1

_____

2 Chronicles 16:7-12 7 At that time Hanani the seer came to King Asa and told him, "Because you have put your trust in the king of Aram instead of in the Lord your God, you missed your chance to destroy the army of the king of Aram. 8 Don't you remember what happened to the Ethiopians and Libyans and their vast army, with all of their chariots and charioteers? At that time you relied on the Lord, and he handed them over to you. 9 The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. What a fool you have been! From now on you will be at war." 10 Asa became so angry with Hanani for saying this that he threw him into prison and put him in stocks. At that time Asa also began to oppress some of his people. 11 The rest of the events of Asa's reign, from beginning to end, are recorded in The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a serious foot disease. Yet even with the severity of his disease, he did not seek the Lord's help but turned only to his physicians.

1. This is the story of King Asa, a man who moved from trusting in God, to relying on himself to make results happen. If you go back and read through 2 Chronicles 15 into the earlier verses of 16 we gain a bigger picture of King Asa's story and where he went wrong. In 15 we see the king making a covenant with the Lord

2 Chronicles 15:1-2 The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded. 2 So he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Asa and all Judah and Benjamin, hear me. The LORD is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you abandon Him, He will abandon you.

2 Chronicles 15:17-19 17 The high places were not taken away from Israel; nevertheless, Asa was wholehearted his entire life.[d] 18 He brought his father's consecrated gifts and his own consecrated gifts into God's temple: silver, gold, and utensils.19 There was no war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

2. So where did King Asa go wrong? His kingship started with a full reliance upon the Lord. He heard the words of his seer and chose to acknowledge them. He took down idols, and began to help turn the people's hearts back toward the Lord. Though as we read this is not where it ended. Let's take a look at the decisions that Asa made and where it brought him.

a. He placed his trust in a political alliance, hoping that would deliver the kingdom from war.

2 Chronicles 16:2 - So Asa brought out the silver and gold from the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the royal palace and sent it to Aram's King Ben-hadad, who lived in Damascus, saying, 3 "There's a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. Look, I have sent you silver and gold. Go break your treaty with Israel's King Baasha so that he will withdraw from me."

- We see a shift to worshipping self sufficiency, trusting in his own wisdom more than the wisdom of the Lord. Asa took the treasure he gave to the Lord and gave it to an earthly king trying to form this political alliance. He MADE HUMAN PLANS WITHOUT EVER CONSULTING THE LORD

2 Chronicles 16:7-8 7 At that time, Hanani the seer came to King Asa of Judah and said to him, "Because you depended on the king of Aram and have not depended on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. 8 Were not the Cushites and Libyans a vast army with many chariots and horsemen? When you depended on Yahweh, He handed them over to you.

God was moving and working on Asa's behalf. He had brought them through things like this before, but only through Asa's reliance upon the lord.

b. Asa became defensive when confronted by his seer, a prophet of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 16:9-10 For the eyes of Yahweh roam throughout the earth to show Himself strong for those whose hearts are completely His. You have been foolish in this matter. Therefore, you will have wars from now on." 10 Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison[c] because of his anger over this. And Asa mistreated some of the people at that time.

- Asa had hardened his heart toward correction.

- Instead of listening to his seer and taking his correction and advice for what it was (a trusted adviser and friend looking out for and warning him) Asa chose to instead throw him in prison.

c. King Asa found himself relying on human solutions while neglecting prayer

- When he took the treasure out of the temple to give to king Ben-Hadad.... Scripture never shows him stopping and asking God for direction, instead he makes his own plans.

- Even in sickness we see King Asa, again relying on human solutions and doctors

2 Chronicles 16:12 12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a disease in his feet, and his disease became increasingly severe. Yet even in his disease he didn't seek the LORD but only the physicians. 13 Asa died in the forty-first year of his reign and rested with his fathers.

- Yet again we See Asa trusting his wisdom, and going even further to trust the wisdom of others before ever trusting in the knowledge of the Lord.

3. That was a lot right? It felt like a lot, following the journey of Asa. Ill be honest, there is not a lot of hope if we just left the message there. Fortunately we have hope in Christ and that should always be reflected in what we speak. Though Asa may not have had an opportunity to learn from his mistakes the hope here is that we can! So what does this all mean for us? How can we learn from king Asa's story? How can we make sure we don't follow and find ourselves in the same patterns and behavior he did?

a. The first thing is that when we plan, we must pray first and plan second.

Philippians 4:6 " Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

- We should always plan, hear me on that! If we are made in the image of God and our God is a God of order then, we too should try to keep things orderly and not operate out of chaos.

- This means though that before we plan we go to God in prayer! It also means that when we plan we hold them open handedly (Hold out your hands while doing this to show the example)

- If we make plans and hold on to them tightly we will only be disappointed and frustrated when they don't work out. But when we know God is in control and we seek Him first before making plans it is a lot easier to walk them out and not be disappointed if they don't work out.

b. The next thing we can do is receive correction with humility

Proverbs 12:1 "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but one who hates correction is stupid"

- Correction is beneficial for all of us, to our growth and success.

How many in this room are thankful for the people who have brought loving correction to your life over the years?

How many at the time might not have appreciated the correction as it came?

- Correction is not an easy thing to deal with,
however we must receive it in humility, not taking offense, or being standoffish like King Asa. Those that correct us hopefully will do it in love and out of wanting to see us grow.

- Your performance is not tied to your worth. King
Asa heard "you are doing a bad Job, you are not relying on God, which makes you unworthy and that's why your in this mess"

- Our worth comes from the Lord, it comes from knowing we are His children through the sacrifice of Christ. We must be secure in this fact, especially when receiving corrections!

Like Asa when Johnathan tried to bring correction to me, I wanted nothing to do with it and I certainly did not want to hear it. There was a moment where I began to feel worthless because I too found my worth and value in what I could do and not the Lord.

- What the seer was really doing was reminding Asa of the covenant he had made with the Lord, calling him back to that covenant and helping him see that he was not following that

c. The Third thing we can do is Stay dependent on God no matter your success

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.

- King Asa, when he began to depend on himself, his gifts, his knowledge, things began to completely fall apart.

- We can do things on our own, physically and mentally we are capable. But we are finite beings meaning that what we build has a timeline. Sometimes that timeline is really short and other times it is much longer, but ultimately if we build it, it will come to an end.

- God however is infinite and all knowing, so not only will what God builds last.... It will also be exactly what is needed in that moment for that season. We must rely on God always to sustain us, to lead us, to lift all of our burdens. Whether we are in a season of success, or a season where we need help.... WE ALWAYS NEED GOD.

d. The last thing we can do is always remember who brought you this far!

All throughout the old testament we see people building altars for the Lord. Those altars are built to bring glory to God, but they also serve a much bigger purpose.

Each altar that was built was a reminder for those people. A reminder that the Lord moved here, the Lord brought us through, never forget.

It is easy in this loud and noisy world to take our focus away from God. However in seasons of turmoil and trouble, seasons where we see no way out.... We must reflect on the seasons the Lord has brought us through.

This will serve as a reminder and encouragement that the Lord will bring us through this as well! It also serves as a reminder that there was nothing we could have done on our own to bring us this far, it was the Lord, his goodness and faithfulness toward us that brought us this far.

4. Asa chose to believe in what he could do, over what God could do and what God could do through him. Asa moved from a life of faithfulness to God to a life of being faithful in himself.

_____