

AMASIAH MADE HIS LIFE COUNT FOR GOD

2 Chronicles 17:16

INTRODUCTION:

What an opportunity in this modern city of ours, to make your life count for the Lord. I wonder, as I think today, just how much every life here in this congregation means to the world. Would you have your life to count for the highest and the best. I'm thinking that you need not neglect anybody - the humblest, the poorest, the lowest, the richest. That your life can count for the highest and the best. The way to do it is to seek the guidance under the mastership of the Lord Jesus.

I've chosen a text in the O. T. - the man Amasiah, who was he? You will note that he was a chief officer during the time of King Jehoshaphat. Next to the King himself, this man was the first man of the Kingdom.

He was so important, that 200,000 men were picked and put under his command. Amasiah stood next to the king in position. Now this important man situated in this important place, made a willing offering of himself to the Lord. It is a glorious thing when men and women of leadership are very positive friends of the Lord. It is a glorious thing when an outstanding leader in the community, a lawyer, a skilled doctor, a school teacher - people who occupy place of responsibility and opportunity can give a commanding influence. Now this is a position of leadership, which this man Amasiah had.

Now let us see what lessons we can gain from his life. There are at least three things I think we can discover. First, where to put God's cause. Second, what this man Amasiah offered to the Lord. Third, how he made the offering.

I. WHERE TO PUT GOD'S CAUSE

Here indeed is a lesson. This is the first thing in his life that he settled. And surely he was right. Where should he have put God's cause. You men and women that are out before me today - where should you put God's cause. Now we must put it somewhere. We must give it some place in life. And it must have some place in your life.

Now a clever magazine once in giving answers to a question like this, what is the great need for the church today, was one of the questions. The answer given to that question, was something that we cannot rely upon.

The first answer was, the church today, should have larger numbers. That answer missed it widely. Not one time does God put the emphasis on numbers. Indeed the Bible, by direct statement and by implication, warns us as a snare that there is in numbers. David of old took the census of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And he plunged the nations into disaster because while taking this census, his people took their eyes away from God. And down the people went into disaster.

It is not how many we count that tells how much we weigh. It is not the quantity but the quality.

Henry Drummond, holding an institute for a group of Christian people, following his address was quizzed. And one of them asked, Mr. Drummond, isn't the first need of Christianity today that we shall have more people behind it. And quick as a flash his answer was, no, not more people - but a better brand.

Jesus cannot command big situations with little people. I dare to affirm today that Jesus is most of all hindered by little people. And therefore, comes the ringing challenge of the Bible quit ye like men. Not flocks but like men. Jesus

waits for the strength and the power, and the victorious living of people. And Gideon with his great army had to weed it down until he had 300, and then he was able to do battle for the Lord.

In this magazine, in the second place, another answer was - what we need for Christ is more money. Now, I think that answer misses the mark. No where in the Bible does the emphasis fall upon money as the chief thing that is going to triumph in God's cause. Money is a powerful factor everywhere. In religion as well as daily affairs. And I do not have sympathy who sometimes cry against money, cry against men who make money, and men who have money. I think that is thoughtless and I have no sympathy with that group. I think a man who can make money ought to make it - honestly. Rise early in the morning and toil late at night. But as a man makes money, that man is to remember the challenging words spoken by Moses. "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power, to get wealth."

We remember that money is the servant - it is not the Master.

A rich woman lay dying. She made a last appeal to her physician. She said is death eminent. He assured her that she was then facing death. And there she tried to pull the cover over her case. From those who were present, over and over again, this rich woman cried. "Oh, how I dread to meet God when I remember how I have trifled with my money." And well, we might answer, for she must answer to God's judgement for every dime that she had. Now do not be deceived, money is not the first thing in the kingdom of God. So this is not the real issue.

Now what is the first thing for the triumph of the kingdom of God. Our man, Amasiah, "he put God's cause as the first thing in his life." He crowned his life by putting God first, as making him supreme.

Think about Jesus in his great sermon, but seek ye first the kingdom of God. And his righteousness, and bread and meat, and sufficient things shall be added unto you. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Not second, not third, not partially, but put first the kingdom of God.

Paul illustrated this by saying for me to live is Christ. Or if you think about the newer translations, for me to live, is for Christ to live over again. Paul was saying in my own life, the best I can, I am living the teachings and the purposes of Christ and trying to live literally for him. I am not my own at all, Paul said. I belong to Christ.

I belong to Christ because he created me, because he died for me, because he preserves me.

Amasiah tells us a lesson. He did it in what we would call a secular calling. He did it while he was in the Army. And that was a difficult place for him to make this decision. For in the Army, he says, I am going to stand up for God. I am going to put his cause first there in the Army. There can be no differences when we think about the Christian life as secular and as religious. You are just as much called to be the right kind of Christian on Tuesday, as you are on Sunday morning in the house of God with a hymnbook in your hand. Now if Christian men and women are going to be more careful and conscientious at one place than they are at another - then they are not the right kind of Christians.

When God's men and women out in the big world, shine for Christ and witness daily, that's where he wants you.

602 A leading shoe man was a devoted Christian. Morning by morning and night by night. One day a man asked him, if you should put your whole passion in one sentence, what would that sentence be...he smiled, and said, if you had come to my office -

and asked me this question, you would know for I have there in my office a cardboard - you had better come and find out. The preacher went to his office, when he entered, there was a cardboard. Six little words. And they voiced his whole life's passion. Here they are: God first, family second, shoes third.

Now that is exactly right. You put it any other way and you will make trouble. That is exactly the way to arrange it. Whether you are in the army, whether you are a merchant, or work in a shop. Whatever your task or occupation is. God first, family second, business third. God first - before father, mother, loved ones. God first before business.

well I read an interesting story about a great (pork packer) of the Northwest. Somebody asked him what is your business. The big packer answered, "I am a Christian, Sir, that's my business. The man questioned him a little further. He said I don't understand, what is your daily work. What is your main concern. He came back with this answer. My business is to be a Christian. But I pack pork to pay the expenses."

Every man and every woman out in the business world in this life, your life is to be the right kind wherever you are. And that is the point I want to make about Amasiah. He was a soldier, but he put God's cause first.

II. WHAT DID THIS MAN AMASIAH OFFER HIS LORD

Now this is another lesson that we learn from this man. For the Bible says that he offered (himself) to the Lord. To me that is the supreme gift. The highest contribution that any man or woman can make, is the right kind of life.

Savonarola turned the tides of wicked Florence. The people of John Chrysoston

- who was a gifted preacher, that it were better for the sun to cease shining, than for John to cease his preaching. Now this man Amasiah gave his life to the Lord. Now really that is the key to the whole matter of living.

Dr. Truitt used to hold a week of preaching and camp meetings with the cattle men out in the West, while they were rounding up cattle each year, he would go out and spend a week and preach. So there were about 1200 men out there one morning when he was holding a service. And he preached on a text, "ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." One man heard that sermon that day. He had not been a Christian very long. And the service was over and he came over to the preacher and says, let's go for a walk I want to talk to you about something serious. They walked about a mile and a quarter away from the camp and he did not say a word for awhile. The preacher waited for him as they were standing by the ledge of a rock. He said I want you to pray a (dedicatory prayer) for me. What do you wish to dedicate, the preacher asked. Slowly as he talked, the tears began to stream down his eyes. He said, I did not realize until this morning that all these thousands of cattle that I have and I call them mine - are not mine at all. But everyone belongs to Christ. I did not know until this morning that all these miles and miles of land over which my cattle have browsed, are not mine at all. But that every acre belongs to Christ. You understand, I have not been a Christian long. I do not know much about the Christian life. But I have learned today as never before that something which the Christian life means. And now I see that every cow, every thousand of cattle belong to Christ. All these acres of ground. And I want to take my place in God's cause. I want you to tell God for me that I will be his trustee from this day on. I will be his administrator on this, his estate - and I'll try to live for him and be such an administrator as I ought to be.

When he had finished telling the preacher that, he said I've got something to tell the Lord myself.

The Preacher said, we knealt beside the rock. Like two children, and he said, Master this man bids me to tell thee thus and so. And he consented while the Preacher spoke the sentences to God. When he had finished, I waited. The man put his face to the ground and he said he sobbed out a prayer. And now Master, am I not in a position to give you my bad boy. His mother and I seem to have no influence over him. I have given you my property today. Henceforth, be your administrator on your estate, and now won't you take my boy in the same way and save him - and save him soon for your Glory.

The preacher said we went back to camp and that evening we had another service. And when he had been preaching about 15 minutes this wild boy came in. He came over toward his father and sat down. He said, Papa, I can 't wait until that man is done with his sermon. I have to decide for Christ."

And the Scripture came to the Preacher in this fashion. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

What power a man has with God when such a man comes to Christ and says to him, you can get me for any field, for any journey, any task, for any duty that you wish. Master, I am yours. To go, and to say, and to be, and to do as thou wilt. What a power this is in the world.

And I think this is what happened to that rancher. When like Amasiah, he came to the place that he was willing to give himself.

This is the thing that Paul challenges in the book of Romans. That a man offer himself.

✓ III. HOW HE OFFERED HIMSELF

This to me, is a part of this lesson. He was not drafted. He was not conscripted. No one forced him. But the Bible says he offered himself willingly, to the Lord.

I would say to each person here today what a glorious thing for men and women, young people, to rise up and say without being coaxed, without being pushed, without being drafted - rise up and come and say Christ can have my best. I am willing to give him my best today. What a power that man or that woman can have. And what a power if that dominates your life.

Either self is the dominating factor in life, or God.

You may mark that the self-centered life is doomed - no matter how brilliant - how clever, how intelligent you may think that you are. Just like the self-centered nation will go to ruin. It is also true in the family. When the family becomes so self centered, it is doomed. This was the thing that happened to Lot's family. He was self-centered. No matter, though he was a brilliant man, Lot's family perished.

Gladstone said of Napoleon, he had the keenest brain that was ever packed into a human skull. And yet, he died like a dog in a ditch after he made Europe cringe and tremble before him. Why. He was self-centered, in life from first to last. What did he care to walk with cruel foot over the heart of beautiful Josephine. What did he care to sacrifice a 100,000 soldiers. If only he could carry out his self-centered ambitions.

But the life linked with Christ, the life that says "yes" to Christ, the life that says oh Christ, thou canst have me. You have the plan. And I'll accept it and I'll take it as my life.

Before you leave this place today, I would like to ask you men and women to settle this, in your life - and other course will bring distress.

George MacDonald, the Scotchman, wrote a simple poem:

I said let me walk in the field
He said, no, walk in the town
I said, there are no flowers there
He said, no flowers but a crown.

I said, but the skies are black
There is nothing but noise and din
And he wept as he sent me back
There is more, he said, there is sin.

I said but the air is thick
And fogs are veiling the sun
He said, but hearts are sick
And souls in the dark undone.

I said, I shall miss the light
And friends will miss me, they say
He answered, chose tonight
If I am to miss you or they.

I pleaded for time to be given
He said, is it hard to decide
It will not seem hard in Heaven
To have followed the steps of your guide.

Then I turned, one look at the field
And set my face to the town
He said, my child, do you yield
Will you leave the flowers for the crown.

Then into his hand went mine
And into my heart came He
And I walked in a light divine
That path that I had feared to see.

I want to say to you today, if you miss this. You will miss everything.
Will you not say, God helping me, I will yield my life. I will take the steps
of Amasiah and offer my life willingly unto him.