

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

January 24, 2016

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Fireside

PART

N/A

TITLE

Marvelously Helped Till He Was Strong

SCRIPTURE

2 Chronicles 26



© 2016 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Hey Providence, we're so glad that you have tuned in. I hope you're warm and cozy, being kind to each other in all those confined spaces. I know you guys are having fun out in the show. We certainly miss you guys being here but it's a joy to be here with all of you.

As you look through God's word, every time that you see snow referenced, it's there as a great reminder of things that all of us love. Of God's forgiveness, of God's power, His mercy, His might, and so I hope that in these days that you and I, that we're all truly mindful of God's grace to us in Christ.

So, we're in John, chapter one, as you know, but we're going to actually break from that. But I think it's important for us to practice so there in your homes, on your couches, John chapter one, one through three is what we, as a church family have been in, and so let's go ahead and say that now. Okay?

John, chapter one, verses one to three: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him, not anything made that was made."

So keep memorizing that, we think it's really important. Next week we'll actually be in John chapter one verses 14 through 18. But for now, I want to just ask you to turn to 2 Chronicles, chapter 26. This is a fascinating story of a king name Uzziah. Now what's interesting about us, is that most of us who are here in this nation and those who are, actually even here, on livestream, we're all from a nation where we don't put a whole lot of value on kings. When all of us went to school, we studied presidents, not king. We only had one king and we threw his tea in the water and we rebelled against him and so most of us are not that high on kings. As you open up God's word, you don't study presidents, what you study is kings.

There's a tremendous amount of weight that's placed in God's word for us on the kings. In fact, if you had a Bible and that Bible weighed ten pounds, four of those pounds would actually consist of pages that are either written by a king, that are written all of the kings, what they've done, who they are or, they're written of what actually took place of what the whole nation had to do to actually come out of the terrible decisions that these kings made. There was 43 of these kings. Not one of them walked with the Lord all the days of his life. Be these kings were like you and me. There's many of them who did honor God, who loved God but they're much like you and me. All of these 43 kings are there in scripture. And 40% of all of the whole Bible references these kings.

Most of us, we don't know much about it. So this is one of the kings, and I think it's important for us to understand what would God say to us as we look back in time, thousands of years, why should you and I on this snowy day, care about King Uzziah? The reason is because God's word says this "For everything that was written in the past, was written to teach us, so that through the endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures, you and I, we might have hope."

So I want to ask you, as we do each Sunday, to let's just pause, and let's pray together:

Father in heaven, we're grateful for Your Word. Lord as we read it now, we pray, God, that You would give us hearts that would believe it, that would understand it, that would seek to want to practice what we read. We thank You for your kindness and thank You for each person who, in their homes, can actually hear this. We are grateful for these technologies and pray God, that Your Word, even on a day which is very different, God, that Your Word would pierce our heart and would change our lives. So thank You for Your kindness to us. Would you be our teacher we pray. In Christ's name, Amen.

So 2 Chronicles, chapter 26. We read these words, starting at verse 1: "And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was 16 years old and made him king."

We're told in verse 3 that this king, he eventually reigned for 52 years. And verse 4 actually tells us something that's very ... it's so unique. There's only about six or seven of all 43 kings that a sentence like this could be said of him. But it said in verse 4 "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord."

Verse 5 it says that "he set himself to seek God." And it also says "as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper." Then from verse 6 all the way down to verse 15, what we find are the very tangible ways that God allowed him as king, as a nation to prosper. It says in verse 6 that "they made war." It says that he built cities. In Verse 7, it says that God helped help him. In verse 8 it says that "his fame spread and he became very strong."

In verse 10 it says, that he actually cut out cisterns, wells to hold the water. It says in verse 14, it says that "And now, Uzziah prepared for all of his army, 307 000 troops, shields and spears and helmets, coats of mail, bows and stones for slinging." In Jerusalem it says that he made machines, invented by skillful men to be on towers in each corner to shoot arrows and great stones.

Now hear this. It says that his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong. Then it says that when he was strong, he grew proud, to his own destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the Temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. It says that the priest, whose name is Azariah, says that he went in after him, along with 80 other priests of the Lord who were men of valor, and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, "it is not for you Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will be bring you no honor from the Lord your God."

Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand, to burn incense and when he became angry with the priests, it says that leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord, by the altar of incense. It says in verse 20 that the chief priest Azariah and all the priests looked at him and behold he was leprous in his forehead and they rushed him out quickly and he, himself hurried to go out because the Lord has struck him. King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper, he lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the Lord.

So we find in this king a man, who started so well and at the end of his life, when he became strong because of the grace of God, we find that he became proud, arrogant, all the way to the place where he rejected God's command and in response, he had to live the last few years of his life, in isolation as a leper. It's a tragic story, but it's there for us so that you and I can have encouragement and hope. Now I know some of you are saying, "Well that's probably the passage that I would have chosen today as well." Probably not. You're saying "Why Brian, would you pick a passage out of all of the scripture that would actually talk about a man walking in to the temple, to burn incense, where he's not supposed to and him getting leprosy on his forehead?"

The reason is because what I see in verse 15. Where he says this "this king was marvelously helped." And as I read those two words, marvelously helped, it makes me think of us as a church family here at Providence. I'm amazed at what God has done over 37.5 years here at Providence. I'm amazed at what He's doing right now. I see such tangible acts of love and compassion by so many of our people. I see God in leadership, lay leadership, elders and deacons who serve with all of their heart. I see faithful teachers and children and student ministry and college and all of our adults. I see compassion. I see a passion for the nations, that the Gospel would literally come from us and God would take us with the Gospel to places all over the world. Even in our own nation and all the nations in the world that we could be showing the love and truth of Christ with others. I see how God has protected us in so many practical ways over the last many years. I see tremendous unity in our body. We've prayed for this. We've asked God for this. And we see that in so many of these practical ways, we see that God has marvelously helped us. But just like King Uzziah, the fact is that you and I, we have within our heart, everything we need, to ruin every good thing that we know.

We have what is inside of us. If we act upon it, to literally bring us to a place of ruin. Not only as the church family but as each individual person. The last thing we want said of us is that in these years, we grew proud because God had been so gracious to us, and in our pride, that it moved us to the point, to the brink of ruin.

There's a verse in James. James chapter 4, verse 6 that I think paints a great picture, a very simple picture of the entire chapter that we just read. James, chapter 4 verse 6 says that "God opposes the proud but he give grace to the humble."

So from this chapter, what I want to show is just two practical truths that if we follow them, I believe the Lord will protect us in amazing ways, even as he helps us.

The first is this: God honors those who honor His Word. He always has. God is a promise-making God. You honor a promise-making, promise keeping God by reading His Word. By seeking to say “God, I believe what you have written but also by acting upon it.” Believe that He is going to be faithful to His Word. What it says here is that King Uzziah set himself to seek God. What this means literally is that he positioned himself where the Word of God would be falling. It’s like in baseball, you have a guy that is on the mound, and he has a ball and he’s going to be throwing it. And he’s throwing it to a very specific location so the catcher positions himself in that precise place in order to receive what his pitched. This is exactly what he did. He looked at where God was speaking. He looked at how God was speaking and he said, “I want to position myself in those times and at those places, where God’s Word is going to fall upon me so that I can hear His Word, I can believe it and I can act upon it.”

As a result, what it says there in verse 5, he was instructed by Zechariah, prophet, in the fear of God. Then it says as long as he sought the Lord. As long as he positioned himself where God’s Word was falling upon him, the Bible says that God made him prosper, which is ultimately what you and I long for in our own life, is that God will prosper our life. That God will use our life to advance His Kingdom here on the Earth. So King Uzziah, he didn’t ignore God’s Word. He didn’t passively let it fall to the ground as if it was not valuable and precious to him. And the reason I believe, is because he cared about God’s Word.

Isiah chapter 66, verse 2 says this, “God says, this is the one whom I will esteem. He who is humble, and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my Word.” This is what King Uzziah did. It says that God made him prosper so long as he positioned himself to seek the Word of God. So it says that his fame spread far for he was marvelously helped.

So first is don’t forget that God honors those who honor His Word. I would even encourage you on a day like today, not one of us has an excuse to read the Bible today. Time, for most of us today, will not be a tremendous hindrance in our life. So, look at His Word. Look at Him.

The second thing that I think we see here is that God opposes the proud who reject His Word. And this is exactly what he did when he became so strong. It says that when he was strong, he grew proud. It’s really interesting that even before the first king, Saul, was on the throne, God actually talked to a man named Moses and gave instructions on what the kings should do when they took the throne. This is what it says: Deuteronomy, chapter 17, verse 18 says this, “and when he, that is the king, sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book, a copy of this law.” In other words, God told every single king that when they took the throne, that they were to get a notepad out and they were literally to copy word for word what God had written as the law of Moses.

Then it says “and this copy shall be with him.” Meaning he should keep with him. He should keep it on him. And the reason is because he shall read it all the days of his life. I think this is a fascinating thing and a really practical thing for you and I to do. You and I perhaps choose a book of the Bible to study is that part of our study would literally be to copy word for word what we read into a notebook. It just forges the Words deeper into our heart.

What’s interesting is that Moses actually told, or God told Moses, what would take place if the kings would do this. He says that “If a king will do this, that he will then learn to fear the Lord his God” And then second it says “that he will also learn that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers.” I believe this is ultimately what took place in King Uzziah’s life. We’re not told that he stopped listening to God’s Word, but what we are told is that he became proud and typically those individuals that stay near to God’s Word have a unique advantage in remaining humble because God’s Word tells us of our weaknesses repeatedly.

So one day King Uzziah lifted himself above his brothers. Not having the fear of God, lifting himself above his brothers. We’re told that what he did was he walked into the temple to burn incense on the altar of incense. Now you say “Why is it such a big deal?” Well it’s a big deal because God’s Word said specifically back in Numbers, chapter 3, verse 10 that only the priests, only the sons of Levi had authority to actually have access to go into this part of the temple and to burn this incense. It’s actually an incredible merciful thing because there in Numbers, it says that if anyone other than the priests goes and actually does this. It actually says there that he is to be put to death.

So, God had mercy on him in only giving him leprosy. But this is what happened. He walks in, and the chief priest, he runs in and then 80 other priests and it says that these priests were each men of valor. They were men of courage. They were not weak men, they were strong men. It says that 81 men then opposed King Uzziah. Says “you’re not supposed to be here. God’s Word says you’re not supposed to be here.” Verse 19 says “and he became angry.” And it says that in his anger towards the priests, it says that leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord.

Then it says in verse 20, it says “they rushed him out quickly.” And now, all of a sudden, King Uzziah was very eager himself to leave. “He himself hurried to go out because the Lord had struck him.”

Now I don’t know if you remember or if you’ve read in the Old Testament, who the health inspectors were in the nation of Israel. There we’re told that it was the priests. That if you had something wrong with your skin, you were deemed unclean. That if you believed that your skin was then healed, you could go back to the priests and the priest would inspect your skin, and if indeed, it was clean, that you would be offered access, back into the corporate worship time with the people of God.

I find it interesting that God gave Uzziah a disease that literally forced him to submit to these priests for the rest of his life. There at that moment, he rose up in anger. I can see him saying, don't you realize who I am? I am the king and because of that pride, for the last several years of his life, he had to live in isolation in a little room, a little apartment behind the palace. You see, this pride is incredibly sobering to me, because no matter how weak I know myself to be, my heart seems to have no trouble manufacturing what seems to be an endless supply of pride. And my pride probably looks different how the world might say "Well that's a proud man."

Most of us in this place, as we gather here, were wise enough not to show the obvious fruits of pride, like boasting and things like this, but pride shows itself in a number of ways. Impatience, I see that in my life. Sometimes, being quick to become angry. At times, there's pride that wells up in my heart and I care so deeply at times of what our congregation thinks about me or about what we're doing at Providence. So pride wells up. And why pride wells up is because 1 John chapter 2, verse 16 tells each one of us is that there's literally three root structures. Three trees that are growing actively in each of our hearts, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Lust, greed and pride. These things, these trees, they grow automatically in each of our hearts. By default, we wake up thinking about ourself. By default, we're impatient people. By just natural default, we're quick to become angry with other people when they offend us. So the real question is not if pride is active and involved in each one of our hearts that make up this body called Providence. The real question is are we actively fighting against that pride and seeking to pursue being humble. So I want to end with just two practical applications for each one of us.

First is as a church family, I just want to encourage us. Let's repent of pride when we see it and run after humility. As I said earlier, our network around here, as we walk these halls and sit in these chairs Sunday by Sunday and week by week, we're all wise enough not to show the obvious signs of pride. But like a pig at the fair, we tend to dress up our pride so that it looks acceptable, pleasing to others. You and I, we can identify pride because pride has as its heart, it's beating heart, the source of unbelief. But God says apart from me, you can do nothing. So when you see self-sufficiency, that's a part of the heart that's an unbelief in God's Word.

And then from this heart, you actually find arteries and veins of selfishness. Of self-centeredness. Of self-pity, of self-boasting. You see to boast of ourself and to loathe of ourself actually still has pride at the very center. It still has self at the very center of our life. So I want to encourage us to run after humility.

What does that look like? Well, first of all it looks like we need to run to God's Word. We need to read it every day of our life as an expression to God to say we live in your world, I know that I live in your world, and You've written a book to help me navigate this journey. I'm going to humble myself. I'm going to listen to You.

Second is, as a church family, we need to give ourselves to prayer. This is a way for us to run after humility. Prayer is literally the language of humility. Prayer, by its very nature, says I can't but you can and I need you. Prayer as a church family says "God we're relying not on our pastor, and not on our plans and not on our creativity and not on our money or resources or giftedness, we're relying specifically and solely upon you. We need you to come through."

It's so interesting that in our church family we engage in efforts all the time that are drastically in need of prayer and sometimes, sometimes we loosen our hold on our hard independence and that true humility and as a result of that, sometimes even we at Providence find ourselves acting in our own strength. I want to encourage us, let's be active in prayer. Even right now, we're in a special season whereas we have elders and deacons in our church family, men who we love, men who love us, who've been called by God, who've met criteria in 1 Timothy and in Titus of what a Godly man looks like, to volunteer their time, to serve us in our body. And the process here at Providence literally starts to where we as a church family identify people that we see within this body, that are seeking to walk with the Lord. That are seeking to know the Lord. That are practicing humility. That are seeking to be Godly men.

The process begins right now, where even next Sunday, I believe is the deadline to where a form can be submitted to where you can literally nominate men from Providence to serve this body in this special, unique roles. The process continues to where those men are vetted to where we're seeking to pray and ask God, "is this a man that's ready for this task?" But I want to encourage us a church family, as you think about it, even today, and as you think about people this next week, let's bathe that entire process in prayer. Let's tell God "We can't get this right without you. We need you." There's a lot of people that look slick, and they may look Godly but God knows their heart. So let's pray to God. Not only in this area but in missions and in how we train up children and students and everything that we're doing, let's bathe it prayer.

I like to think of my day where I want to start the day and I express my own dependence to the Lord. I wake up and I say "God, I have a lot of things on my plate but what I do know is this, is that you're God and I'm not. That you're the one true God and therefore you have authority over everything and I gladly submit my life to your authority." And at the end of the day, when my head hits the pillow, normally what I try to do is to give thanks for what He did in the day. What this does is it transfers all glory back to God at the end of every single day. That every good thing that took place, that every mercy that I've seen. That everywhere that God protected, every way He'd defended, He's provided, just reminds me as my hearts bends away from this, it just reminds to say "God, I know that all of those good things came from your outstretched hands. So I say thank you."

There's a special Proverb. It's Proverbs, chapter 27, verse 21 that says "the crucible is for silver, the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives." I believe what this means is that each one of us experiences God's marvelous help in each of our lives that we experience good things, kindnesses that have been poured out to us and, as those are poured out to us, they come sometimes in the form of praise. So, just as a furnace is meant to purify gold, God is seeking to purify us by even allowing us to see and for other people to acknowledge good things that's He's doing in our life. So that precise moment that we pass the test, only when we transfer the glory back to him and we say "God, it's not to us. It's not to us at all. It's to you is all the glory." So as a church family, let's reflect, let's repent of pride and let's run towards humility.

The second application is simply this, is let's reflect, even today, on the Gospel. Let's reflect on what God did for us in sending Jesus Christ. Now, over the last several months, I've said this several times, but I think it bears weight on us just to hear it one more time. That is when mankind sinned in the Garden, fell short of God's glory. Right in the midst of the curse, God made a promise, and that is there would be someone, there would be a Redeemer born of woman that would live his life in righteousness and that he would crush the head of the serpent and then he would restore all mankind back into a right relationship with him.

So the Bible is meant to be read as if we're looking for that one. Well as you get to two places in the first book of the Bible, chapter 17, and chapter 35, both there in that book, what we're told there is that the one that would be coming, he would literally be a king. As we read each of these 43 kings, we're supposed to ask, is this the one? And so if this was the very first time that you read chapter 26 of King Uzziah, you and I were supposed to ask this question, is this the redeemer that would come in order to crush the head of evil and bring us back into a right relationship with God? And all 43 times, we are tragically disappointed until another king arrived.

That king came to live a righteous life and He died on a cross to pay the penalty for my sin and for your sin. He was buried in a grave and three days later, Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

You see, when you and I reflect on the Gospel and we contemplate the cross, the cross never flatters us. The cross, when we reflect upon it, always engineers, it always develops and manufacturers humility in our heart. You see, nobody can look at the cross and assume themselves to be the hero. There's only one hero, and that's Jesus.

But we are told that those who look to the cross, we find hope and grace in our time of need. So as we have thought about this king, the good news is that even though in his pride, he fell tragically, is that even in that we can learn that you and I can be encouraged, that you and I can find hope, but even more than that, the hope that we can anchor our own hearts to, our lives to and our families to, is that another king came and that king was the King of kings. That King is going to come back again and he's going to bring us back to Himself. And we're going to live forever in a perfect relationship with Him, without any stain or wrinkle, any sin or any selfishness.

In those days we will not have to fight for pride. We will not have to fight for righteousness. We won't have to fight to be humble because it will be our nature and that will be a great day. So as you think this day as you're walking outside and you see the snow, I want to encourage you to consider the King of kings who came in order that our sin, though as scarlet, that it could be as white as snow. He's going to take us home, and it's a joy to be able to walk with you in that journey.

I hope you and your family have a great rest of the day. God bless you guys and we'll see you next week. Take care.



© 2016 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)  
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.  
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.