

# The Lord is able to give much more

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now this evening we might turn our attention to 2 Chronicles chapter 25. We look at verse 9 and consider what the Lord is saying to us through this word.

And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.

What shall we do for the hundred talents? The Lord is able to give thee much more than this. When we read an incident like this from the Old Testament, we might well wonder what relevance has that piece of scripture got for us in our day and age.

After all, wasn't that an incident that happened long in the past? Is it not something that's just now the dust of history and it's as well to leave it alone? But then when you and I come to the word of God, we must bear in mind its relevance for our day, just as it's got relevance for every day, for every other day, for every generation.

And so as the word of God came to King Amaziah long ago, the word of God comes to you and to me, speaking like this.

[ 1 : 39 ] We may wonder what we ought to do. We may wonder about our own duty as far as God is concerned. And there might be a reluctance on our part with regard to that duty.

And we might say to God, But I can't. I can't do this duty that you're imposing upon me. Simply because if I do this duty that you're imposing upon me, I'm going to lose.

But you see, God comes to us and he says, You mustn't look at the losses. There inevitably will be losses. But you mustn't look at the losses.

What you've got to look at, says God, are the gains. And that is precisely what Amaziah wasn't prepared to do at this particular moment. He did it, certainly, but not with good grace.

Let's consider this man for a little while. He was a religious man. There can be no question at all about that. But it's one thing to be a religious person.

[ 2 : 48 ] It's quite another thing to be a committed person to God. In verse 2, it says this of Amaziah, He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

Ah, when you read that, you say to yourself, Here's a good man. Here's a man who did what was right in the sight of the Lord. But then look at the qualifying phrase.

But not with a perfect heart. He didn't do it with a perfect heart. In the punishment of his father's murderers, His father was King Joash, And Joash had been murdered by his servants.

And in the punishment of his father's murderers, He adhered, this son of his, Amaziah, He adhered strictly to the Mosaic law, In that he put to death only those who were responsible for that murder. At that time, it wasn't just that people were put to death Because they had committed a crime, But so often, whole families were put to death At the will of some despot.

[ 4 : 04 ] But read verse 4. He slew not their children. It came to pass, it says in verse 3, When the kingdom was established to him, That he slew his servants that had killed the king his father.

But he slew not their children, But did as it is written in the law, In the book of Moses, Where the Lord commanded, saying, The father shall not die for the children, Neither shall the children die for their fathers, But every man shall die for his own sin.

So here was this man, And he adhered strictly to the Mosaic law. And from that point of view, He did that which was right, In the sight of the Lord.

But not with a perfect heart. You remember how Samuel said to Saul on one occasion, The Lord, he says, Seeth not as man seeth.

For man looketh on the outward appearance, But the Lord looketh on the heart. Saul, Samuel says, You're looking at the outward appearance of things.

[ 5 : 19 ] You're only interested in what you see, What you observe with your own human eyes. But that's not how God sees things. God is not looking at the outward aspect.

God is looking at the inward aspect. He sees within. He sees the whole thing, From within to without, And from without to within.

What then had happened at this time, In the history of Israel? In the history of Judah, rather. Well, this king Amaziah had, Made an arrangement, With the people of Israel, To hire, These mercenary troops.

And Amaziah paid a hundred talents, To the Israelites, For the use of these mercenaries. He wasn't concerned at this moment, Whether the thing was right, In the eyes of God or not.

[ 6 : 28 ] All that Amaziah was concerned about was, Whether it would benefit him or not. So long as it would benefit him, That's all he was interested in. Now isn't that true with us so often?

You're confronted by God speaking to you. And God makes the way of duty so plain to you, But you begin to ask, Will this be of any benefit to me?

And all that perhaps you and I are interested in, At that point in time, Is what is going to, Be of benefit to us, Materially speaking, Or in other ways.

We're not really interested in, Whether this has got any bearing, On the glory of God. And that is precisely where Amaziah went wrong. He wasn't interested in whether this union, That he was making with these mercenaries, Had any bearing on God's glory.

He was only interested in his own advancement. And at last this man of God, Whoever he was, We don't know, He came to Amaziah.

[ 7 : 47 ] And he says to Amaziah, O king, Let not the army of Israel go with thee. For the Lord is not with Israel, To wit, with all the children of Ephraim.

But, If you are determined to go, Says this man of God, Then go. God shall make thee fall before the enemy.

It won't be for your good. It won't be for your benefit as you think. It won't be for your advancement at all. Rather it's going to prove to be a snare to you.

You see, By hiring these auxiliary troops, The king of Judah, Had really departed from the path of duty, And he was now, Instead of looking to God alone for help, And to God alone for strength, He was now looking to the human side.

To the things that he could see, To the things that he could handle. For a little while, Let's just consider together, The duty that was imposed upon Amaziah.

[ 9 : 10 ] What kind of a duty was it, That was imposed upon him here, By this man of God, Who came to him and said, Let not the king of Israel go with thee. Well, we might say, That it was a moral duty, That was being imposed upon him.

You see, As this man, Amaziah, Found it necessary to organize, This expedition, Against the Edomites, He gathered together his men, And as he made his preparations, For attacking the Edomites, He resolved that it was necessary, For him at this point, To gain the help, Of the children of Israel.

And you see, His action now, At this precise moment, Had moral implications. Indeed, All our actions have moral implications, All our decisions have moral implications.

And for this man at this time, There was the moral implication. Was he doing right?

Was he doing wrong? But he didn't stop to consider that. He didn't stop to consider the moral implication. He didn't stop to consider, Whether what he was now going to do, Was right in the sight of God, Or whether it was wrong.

[ 10 : 40 ] Are you faced with some crisis just now? Do you wonder what your decision ought to be?

Have you got to make up your mind about something or other? And as you consider having to make up your mind about this or about that, Are you considering God in all this?

You must consider God in it. Because if you don't consider God in it, It might, I say it might, Lead to disaster for you.

And this is where it's so necessary for us, When we're making up our minds about marriage, When we're making up our minds about employment, When we're making up our minds about where we're going to live, When we're making up our minds about church connections, How imperative it is to know that we are doing the right thing, To know that we are doing the thing that's going to please almighty God, And not please ourselves.

You see, By buying the help of the idolatrous Israelites, Amaziah had now shown that he was not fully trusting in the Lord.

[12:10] His thoughts, His actions, At this time, Were morally wrong. And of course we know that unholy alliances, Have never had the blessing of God resting upon them.

God makes it plain that he is able to work by few, As well as by many.

Do you remember Gideon? That famous man of the Old Testament? When he was asked to go and fight the Midianites? Oh, Gideon thought, Now what I must do is this, I must gather as big an army as I possibly can muster.

I must see what I've got. And you see, He thought that his strength lay in might, In human might.

And so long as he had human might on his side, He could go and fight the Midianites, And he would succeed. And God at last came to him and said to him, Gideon, I'm not interested in human might.

[13:27] I'm not interested in this large army that you're gathering together. You will reduce this army. And you will bring it down to the number that I want you to take with you to fight the Midianites.

And you will take no more. And when Gideon was finished, You know that he was left with 300 men. And I'm sure that Gideon's faith must have been tested, And he must have said to himself, Well, what can I do against the might of Midian with only 300 men at my disposal?

You see, The same thing happened in the experience of David when he went to meet Goliath. The people of Israel at that time thought that they had to get a powerful man as big as Goliath.

As strong as Goliath. They didn't seem to have one who then was going to fight Goliath. And at last David came a stripling of a shepherd fellow from the fields, With little or no experience at all of what it was involved in being a military man.

He said, Let me go and fight him. And you know what he said to Goliath? You come to me with your spear, with your sword, and with your shield, And with all these things that you think are necessary for your protection.

[15:03] But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts. Well, the outcome was settled, wasn't it? It was no contest.

Goliath had to fall. Goliath had to lie there prostrated at the feet of David.

Just in the same way as the Midianites had to fall at the feet of Gideon. You see, what God requires of us is implicit faith in himself.

What God requires of us is absolute obedience to his word and to his command. And this nameless man of God who comes into the presence of Amaziah points out to him that it was now necessary for him to break off this unholy and ungodly.

This unholy and ungodly alliance that he had made with the children of Israel. He had acted wrongly. He had acted wrongly. And now it was his duty to put the matter right.

[16:18] He said, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee. Don't venture on this.

For if you do so, it's at your peril. O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee. For the Lord is not with Israel to wit with all the children of Ephraim.

Not only was it a moral duty, but it was a divine duty for Amaziah to break off this unholy alliance. It wasn't just that it was the right thing to do, but it was the God-given direction.

This man of God who came to Amaziah warned him that if he persisted in his own course of action, then no matter how fiercely he might fight, he was on the losing side.

If thou wilt go, do it. Be strong for the battle. Be as strong as you like for the battle.

[17:31] God shall make thee fall before the enemy. For God hath power to help and to cast down. You see, what was being made clear to Amaziah was what his duty ought to be.

And when God gives instructions, and when God gives guidance to us, it's clear, it's unmistakable. But you know, when God gives us directions, and when God gives us instructions, there can be a cost in it. And that's what this man Amaziah discovered, the cost.

You see, to carry out one's duty always costs something. And I say this, if you are going to be a committed Christian, it's going to cost you something.

If you are going to follow the Lord holy, it's going to cost you something. If Amaziah was going to carry out the divine instruction, it meant that there would be cost in it.

[18:45] And there might be someone here tonight, and maybe this is the night you're going to be converted. Who knows? And as you are weighing up this matter of salvation, and as you are weighing up this matter of being saved, and of being a Christian, you might be considering, well,

look at what it's going to cost me.

If you want me to be a committed Christian like this, look at what it's going to cost. But God comes to you and he says, don't be looking at the losses.

Consider the gains. You see, what did it mean for Amaziah? It meant separation. O king, says this man of God, let not the army of Israel go with thee, for the Lord is not with Israel.

You see, God makes a distinction between those who are his people and those who are not. And to emphasize the distinction, God demands separation on the part of those who are to be his.

And this is one of the hardest things to do, to separate. This is one of the hardest elements in Christian commitment, separation.

[ 20 : 11 ] We read Paul's argument along these lines in his second letter to the Corinthians, where he makes the difference between those who are believers and those who are not.

And he emphasizes the need for separation on the part of the godly from the ungodly. Listen to him. I'll read it once again.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what conquered hath Christ with Belial?

Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell with them and in them, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons. Ah, but that's the rub, and that's the difficulty.

[ 21 : 28 ] Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord. And how difficult it is to be separate. How difficult it is to go back to one's employment where one has been, and to be able to tell them there that you're no longer what you once were, you've changed, you're a Christian.

I once worked in the post office, and when I was converted as a young fellow of 17, I knew I had to go back into that office and say to these folks that I had worked with that I was now a committed Christian.

And I remember one of them laughing at me and saying, it's one of those phases you go through. In a week's time you'll be back with us.

You see, that's the separation that is necessary. The distinction must be made clear. Come out from among them, and be ye separate.

Oh, it doesn't mean, of course, that you no longer sit at the same table with them, or that sort of thing, as some people have suggested. Oh, you carry on. You carry on doing your work beside them. You carry on even having your meals with them.

[ 22 : 59 ] But you make it clear that there is a difference. If Amaziah was to be in the favor of God, it could only be by doing what God commands.

And in his case, it meant this separation. Not only does it mean separation to carry out one's duty as far as God is concerned, but it also involves sacrifice.

Amaziah had paid a hundred talents for the use of a hundred thousand mercenaries. And to send away these auxiliary troops would mean the total loss of this one hundred talents.

and this is what is disturbing him. What shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? I'm going to lose.

I'm going to lose these mercenaries and I'm also going to lose the money I've paid for them. Loyalty to God was going to cost all this.

[ 24 : 13 ] And in order to walk in God's ways, sometimes a sacrifice like this is demanded. And in a situation like that, there can be no compromise.

There can be no coming to terms. It's all or nothing. And that's how it had to be with Amaziah and that's how it has to be so often in the Christian life.

You remember the rich young ruler? He's a case in point. He came to Jesus.

Oh yes, he wanted to get home to heaven. He wanted to be in glory at the end of his day. He wanted to be sure of his soul salvation.

But he also wanted to hold on to the things that were dearest to him in this life. And Jesus knew that these things that were dearest to him in this life had become his God and they had to be put aside.

[ 25 : 22 ] Go. Sell what you have. Get rid of your idol. Get rid of this obstruction that is coming between you and God.

Go and get rid of your talents said Jesus to him. But this is precisely what he was saying. What will I do for the hundred talents? Just the same as Isaiah was saying. What will I do for this? I'm going to lose it. And so the rich young ruler went away sorrowful.

You know sometimes as Jesus tells us we've got to pluck out the eye we've got to cut off the hand we've got to cut off the foot.

Like this how are you using your eyes? What is it that you are looking at that you ought not to be looking at?

[ 26 : 28 ] what is it that you are seeing with your sight that you ought not to be seeing and it's causing a distraction and keeping you back from being totally committed to God?

Well cut it out, pluck it out. These hands of yours are they sinning unnecessarily? These hands of yours are they being used wrongly?

Then cut them off. Set it aside. These feet are they taking you to places where you ought not to be and where you ought not to go?

Then cut it out. Cut them off. That's what Jesus is saying. Make the sacrifice. Give it up. God and still we cry out what shall we do for the hundred talents?

But on the part of Amaziah it also required faith. On the one hand you see the hundred talents of silver were there.

[ 27 : 45 ] the hundred thousand mighty men of valour were there. He could see these things. But he couldn't see the great Jehovah who was in heaven.

He was invisible to his eye. And now what God was requiring of him was that he now walk by faith and not by sight. And oh it requires such tremendous faith doesn't it to believe in the things that the Lord speaks to us about.

This walking by faith it's so difficult. Here down in this world we can see the things that we love and we want them.

We see them we want them. And we can say well I've seen this and I've tasted this and I've done that and I know what it's about. But you are asking me to believe in Christ and I've never seen him. And you're asking me to believe in heaven I don't know whether it exists. And you're asking me to exercise faith in these things and I find that to be so difficult. And that's what God is asking from you and from me.

[ 29 : 08 ] And like Amaziah you see we're so inclined to say but I can't see God but I can see these mercenaries and I would sooner put my trust in what I see than in what I don't see.

Are you like that? But we notice in conclusion the reward that came to Amaziah and this is the reward of duty.

Here was God's promise the Lord is able to give thee much more than this. The man of God says to Amaziah the Lord is able to give thee much more than this.

Amaziah you're concerned about this these talents this money you're concerned about this human health that you can put your trust in but the Lord is able to give you much more.

The Lord is able to give you much more than these 100 talents and the strength of God Almighty is far greater than the strength of these 100,000 mercenaries that you're putting your trust in.

[ 30 : 28 ] And God never goes back on his word or his promise. And Amaziah is assured that in fulfilling the duty that was laid upon him by the Lord he will not be the loser but rather he will stand to gain.

And you remember how Paul reminds us of this in his second letter to the Corinthians the chapter that we didn't read chapter 1 where he says all the promises of God in him are yea and amen in him unto the glory of God by us.

In other words all the promises of God are secure to you in Christ. And if you have Christ says Paul then all the promises of God come to you.

God never goes back on his promises and if he promises you something he'll give it to you. And the man of God answered Amaziah the Lord is able to give thee much more than this.

If you obey you will not lose Amaziah was told. If you render implicit obedience and if you put your trust in God you will not lose.

[ 32 : 04 ] And that is what I am saying to you as your minister. If you come to Christ if you put your trust in this Savior that I offer to you you will not lose.

You might say but I will I will have to give up this I will have to give up that if I do what you are asking me to do my whole life is going to be so transformed and so changed that I shudder to think of my losses I shudder to think of what I'm going to give up if you ask me to do what God wants me to do I couldn't and what do I say the Lord is able to give thee much more than this you say you know I'll lose my friends if I become a Christian you'll get more and better friends but I might have to give up my employment but the Lord is able to give you much better by way of employment but I lose my peace of mind because of my losses no the Lord will give you peace that passeth all understanding you won't lose you will gain not only does God promise but God puts into effect his promise God has power to help and to cast down God is indeed the all powerful none can stay his hand or say to him what do us though we sing the earth the earth belongs unto the Lord and all that it contains do you believe that the earth belongs unto the Lord and all that it contains if it's God's then if God wants to give it to you he'll give it to you do you believe it doesn't

God say the cattle upon a thousand hills they all belong to me of course they do one of the great truths that comes home to us is this that we don't really possess anything do we you visited a home where a baby has just arrived in the scene and here is this little tiny child so well attended to by its parents and lying there peacefully in its cot and this is the thing that you bear in mind as you look at this tiny infant sound asleep perhaps in its cot it came into the world in its nakedness and it took nothing in to this world and then later on when you and

I have to attend the funeral of some person and as often as not sometimes we have a coffin lying in here in the church down below there and here is this person has left the world and like the tiny infant takes nothing out leaves everything behind and sometimes as you and I go around our own homes and we look at this and we look at that and we say to ourselves well I'm fond of this or I'm fond of that and sometimes as far as I'm concerned I might go into my study and I might look at some favorite books that I have and that I enjoy reading and then it comes home to me one day your hand will no longer touch these volumes someone else will take over you will leave them just as you will leave everything else and the

[ 36 : 49 ] God who owns all these things this is what Paul says of that God all things are yours whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come all things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's in other words what we think we will lose if we give obedience to God's command let's remember this God will make it up to us in other ways and so it was with Amaziah he experienced the truth of the promise made to him he broke off his alliance with the idolatrous Israelites he went forth to battle and God gave him the promised power and the help because we read this he smote of the children of

Seir ten thousand had he not done what God asked him to do instead of him smiting ten thousand poor Amaziah would be lying dead on the battlefield that's what would have happened to him but at this moment he made the right choice and because he made the right choice God's blessing rested upon him what about you and what about me have we made the choice above all other choices have we chosen Christ have we listened to God and God has spoken to us and said to us you're a sinner you're a lost sinner you're on the way to a lost eternity to hell and there is only one way of escape for you

God says and that one way of escape for you is to go to my son Jesus he's the only savior and God says to you and to me put your trust in him take him as your own follow him as your lord and master but you see so often we say well if I do that what about the hundred talents and God comes back again and God says to us if you do what I am telling you to do and receive my son as your savior the Lord will give you much more than this than the hundred you can only prove that for yourself by giving obedience to the Lord by taking Christ and by becoming a

Christian and if you take Christ as your savior and become a Christian I can assure you you will gain maybe I'm speaking to a young person here and I know your thoughts because they used to go through my own mind when I was young I used to say when I sat in the church in my old congregation listening to my old minister ah well one day I'll become a Christian but not till I'm an old man I'm really going to enjoy my life and after I've enjoyed my life then the dregs of it I'll give to God ah that's the devil who makes you think like that you see we we think as we think along these lines of what we're going to lose no don't be thinking about what you're going to lose think about what you're going to gain salvation you're going to gain

Christ you're going to gain peace you're going to gain life you're going to gain God you're going to gain everything that is identified and associated with God that's what you will gain and isn't that

better than a paltry hundred talents let us pray oh lord we pray that we might indeed learn to give obedience to thy word as it comes to us and as thou art speaking to us tonight here in this service and showing to us the way of obedience which is in Christ thy son may we gladly and willingly acquiesce in thy will as it is revealed in the truth may we not allow a hundred talents or any human obstacle of any kind to come in our way but may we gladly part with whatever might be a hindrance and may we commit ourselves to thee and commit our whole future to thee and take away our sins for

[ 42 : 40 ] Jesus sake amen