

Incentives: Rest on Every Side

Scripture Reading — 2 Chronicles 15:1-15

They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side. 2 Chronicles 15:15 —

One voice made a difference. The Spirit of God spoke through a prophet named Azariah.

Azariah came to speak with King Asa after the king had just returned from routing the people's (and the Lord's) enemies from their land (see 2 Chronicles 14). Asa had called the people to "seek the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his laws and commands" (14:4) and was leading a spiritual cleanup campaign. Sacred stones and altars to other gods were smashed and destroyed. That's what seeking God can look like.

Now the prophet preached to encourage the king and all the people: "The Lord is with you when you are with him." The people had to keep seeking God not just as a one-time event but as a way of life.

So Asa launched another round of purging. He removed more detestable idols and rebuilt the altar of the Lord. This time, the summons to seek God came with sharp teeth in it: "All who would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, were to be put to death."

Why such an ultimatum? If the nation did not covenant together to seek God with their whole heart, the bonds between them as one people would unravel, and they would be picked off by their enemies, one town at a time. So they swore together to seek God—and that glue kept their enemies at bay.

Prayer

Father, in your mercy, compel me to keep on seeking you and to stay connected with others seeking you. Give us all together your secure shield of protection. In Jesus, Amen

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