

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 18 Jun 2023

**Sermon Title** : Horns of Refuge

**Speaker** : Rev Reuben Ng

**Text** : 1 Kings 1:49-50

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Kings Chapter 1 begins by telling us that David who did amazing things for God is now an old man. One of his sons, Adonijah, seeks to exalt himself and become king. Adonijah puts his plan into action by finding Abiathar, a priest with spiritual authority and Joab the commander of David's army who could provide him with the physical might and power, to support him. The three of them came together and Adonijah was anointed king by sacrificing many animals before God, followed by a great feast. Although David knew what Adonijah was doing, David did nothing. David failed to step in as a father to correct and guide Adonijah but allowed him to carry on with what he was doing even though it was wrong.

When Nathan the prophet and Solomon's mother Bathsheba heard of what Adonijah was doing, they confronted David. David then reaffirmed his decision for Solomon to be king by gathering Zadok the priest and his mighty man Benaiah, who had fought many battles with him, to anoint Solomon as king in Gihon. Solomon sat on David's mule and travelled to Gihon in a public procession where he was cheered and celebrated by the people as David's successor. When news of the celebration reached all the guests of Adonijah, they trembled, rose and went their own way (1 Kings 1:49). Adonijah being fearful of Solomon, arose and went and took hold of the horns of the altar (1 Kings 1:50). This phrase on the action of Adonijah clinging to the horns of the altar was repeated in verse 51.

Why was refuge and safety for Adonijah found in the 'horns of the altar'?

## **The altar**

- **The structure**

In Exodus 27:1-2, we see God providing Moses with instructions regarding how to build a Tabernacle, a tent of meeting for His people who were wandering around in the desert. The tabernacle comprised multiple sections with pieces of furniture including the altar. God gave Moses specific instructions to make a square altar that had horns on its four corners, made from one piece of acacia wood. The altar made of acacia wood would then be overlaid with bronze. This was the altar that we read about in 1 Kings which Adonijah ran to cling onto its horns for refuge, deliverance, shelter and salvation.

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

- **Interaction**

In Exodus 29, Aaron and his sons were set apart and consecrated for God to use as priests. Exodus 29:11 tells us how they engage with the altar; a bull had to be killed before they could enter into God's holy presence to interact with Him. Anyone who wanted to interact with a holy God would stand in danger of losing their life because of their unrighteousness or wrong-doings. Therefore, a life had to be sacrificed and blood had to be shed to atone and cleanse them of their unrighteousness so that they would be forgiven, covered and purified by the blood to enter into the presence of God.

In today's context, where it is so easy for us to attend a church service, sometimes we forget that worship is really about honouring God and we need to prepare ourselves for entering into God's holy presence.

- **Symbolism**

In Exodus 29:12, the priests are instructed to put the blood of the bull on the horns of the altar with their fingers. There is a reason and symbolism behind the instructions given by God to the priests. This act of consecration by the priests involved the shedding of blood for atonement and the blood being put on the horns of the altar, which were a symbol of strength and power. The whole act of consecration symbolized the fact that only by the blood of atonement and forgiveness can one approach and lay hands on the strength and power of God.

## **Horns of the altar in other parts of the Bible**

- **Amos 3:14**

In Amos chapter 3, Amos was given a word of prophecy from God regarding the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Why would God when releasing a word of judgement about the Kingdom of Israel use the phrase 'horns of the altar' being cut off?

God was saying that in the day that He brings about judgement on the Northern Kingdom of Israel, there would be no strength, power, refuge, deliverance or safety that anyone would be able to find. There would be no strength power or safety that could stand in the way of God's judgement because the horns had been cut off.

- **Exodus 21:12-14**

In these verses, we see that the 'altar' provide a refuge, shield and deliverance for unintentionally killing someone. Hence when Adonijah feared for his life, he did not run to Egypt or some other land but to the altar and laid hold of the horns, seeking the strength and power from God for safety, deliverance and salvation.

## **Our horn of refuge or salvation today**

Today, we do not have the horns of refuge or salvation as those found in the Old Testament, but the Bible tells us that God is our refuge and salvation.

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

*The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. (Psalm 28:7)*

*I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." (Psalm 91:2)*

Keeping these verses in mind, let us see how we can view God through the lens of the "horns of refuge/salvation" so we can understand these phrases better and so allow it to help us appreciate and gain a better insight about God.

- **Psalm 18:2**

*The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

In this verse, we see that the 'horn of salvation' captures and encapsulates everything that comes before it. When we go to altar and lay hands on the horn of salvation, we effectively have laid hands on the power of God as our rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield and salvation, our stronghold.

- **Luke 1:68-69**

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.*

- ❖ For us who live in the New Testament, the good news is that we have a horn of salvation, not a physical one, but a spiritual one in Jesus.
- ❖ For us who call upon the name of Jesus as Lord and Saviour, this horn of salvation resides in our hearts. When we come across any trial or tribulation, we do not need to go anywhere to lay hold of any physical horn of salvation and we do not need to shed any animal's blood for deliverance and safety. Instead, we are able to claim hold of God's power and strength through the covering of blood Jesus shed for us.

- **Acts 4:12**

*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

There is no one else apart from Jesus in whom we can find refuge, cleansing, access to lay hold of God's power and holy presence, without fear of rejection.

## CONCLUSION

Let us know and see Jesus as our horn of salvation and be thankful, never to look for any other source of salvation or refuge for any situations in our lives because He is the only name who can save, cleanse us completely and allow us to enter into God's holy presence.

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read 1 Kings 1:49-50 slowly.  
How do these verses speak to you personally?

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

3. The priests in Exodus had to be purified by the blood of an animal so that their sins would be covered and they could enter into God's holy presence. Reflect on your attitude as you prepare to enter into God's presence for Sunday services.
  - a. How do you prepare yourself to enter into God's holy presence prior to the service?
  - b.
    - (i) On a scale of 1-10, with 1 the lowest and 10 the highest, rate your focus on God's holiness and your need to be cleansed before meeting our holy God.
    - (ii) In view of what the priests did before entering into God's holy presence, what is one thing you can do to better align to God's requirement for His people to enter into His holy presence.
  
4. When Adonijah was fearful of Solomon, he ran and held on to the physical horns of the altar for refuge, safety and deliverance.
  - a. What is/are the first thing(s) you run to for refuge, safety and deliverance in your health, financial, career or other issues in life?
  - b. How does knowing that you have a spiritual horn of salvation in Jesus impact your response when faced with challenges in life?
  - c. What is one specific situation in your life that requires you to claim hold of the 'horn of salvation' currently?
  - d. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 4c. in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your personal experience on how God has been your, deliverer, refuge and shield through Jesus who is your horn of salvation.

OR

Give thanks to God for sending His Son, Jesus Christ to atone for your sins and cleanse you of all unrighteousness so you can now enter into the presence of our holy God.

6. With a prayer partner, pray for the action steps/changes you have committed to in Question 3 and 4 above, surrendering your fears and challenges to God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you as an individual and group to commit to and keep each other accountable in this spiritual journey, running only to Jesus, our 'horn of salvation' for refuge, safety and deliverance in all situations.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. You Are Holy – Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RNv50MtWYU>
2. Holy Forever – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHgxKemCRk>
3. Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me – CityAlight  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zundjUFazfg>

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*