

# Kings Series #11 - "Keep Moving" - 1 Kings 22:41-44

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *Inertia*

1. One of my favorite subjects in school was science
2. Freshman physics in high school was one of my all time favorite classes
3. The teacher was great and made the study of science extremely interesting
4. I'll never forget how he demonstrated the principle of *inertia*
  - a. inertia is the tendency of an object at rest to remain at rest
  - b. and for an object in motion to remain in motion
  - c. he brought in a big medicine ball from the gym and set it on the lab table at the front of the class
  - d. then he told this really petite freshman girl to come up and lift it
  - e. it was much too heavy for her and after some real effort she was just barely able to get it off the table
  - f. then he set up some glass beakers at one end of the table, rolled the medicine ball to the other, and told the biggest guy in the class to come up and roll the ball toward the beakers
  - g. he gave it a good shove, and the ball rolled down, smashed into the beakers, which crashed to the floor and shattered
5. This was the teacher's way of showing us the principle of inertia

### B. *Later*

1. Over the years, I've come to realize that the law of inertia applies not only to the realm of physics
2. It also applies to the realm of the spirit
3. The Christian life is often referred to as a walk in the NT
4. And there is good reason for that
5. If we are not moving forward in faith, then chances are, negative spiritual inertia will set in and we will end up losing ground already gained

### C. *Today*

1. It often happens that you'll be reading through the bible and see a rather short and seemingly insignificant verse, that the Holy Spirit will suddenly illuminate
2. Such is the case with our text today

## II. TEXT

### A. *Vs. 41-44*

{41} Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

{42} Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned

twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.  
{43} And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing *what was right* in the eyes of the LORD. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, *for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.*

{44} Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

1. Jehoshaphat goes down in history as one of the few good kings that sat on the throne of David in the southern kingdom of Judah
2. His father Asa had been as good king as well
3. And Jehoshaphat followed in his footsteps
4. In v. 43 we read that he did not turn aside from the ways of the Lord and did what was right in God's eyes
5. A bit later we read how he even tried to recapture some of the glory and prestige of the throne of Solomon
6. And while the basic report of Jehoshaphat's life and reign was good,
7. There are two caveats, two exceptions that are mentioned
  - a. First, during the days of his reign, the high places were not removed
  - b. Second, he made peace with the king of Israel

## **B. Exceptions**

1. I'll never forget it
2. It was my first performance review to be carried out by my supervisor in the corporate office
3. I had been the head manager of a fast food unit for a year, and it was time for my review
  - a. rather than get it at the unit as I had as an assistant manager,
  - b. they called me into the plush corporate headquarters,
  - c. made me sit in the lobby for a ¼ hour
  - d. then finally called me into a nicely appointed office
  - e. I sat across the desk from my boss
  - f. and he proceeded to take me through my review,
  - g. which was a brand new form they had just begun using
  - h. it was several pages long
  - i. and I did quite well
4. The summary statement went something like this:
5. "Lance is doing a wonderful job in most areas, however, there are a couple of weaknesses that need to be addressed . . . "
6. And then he went on to name them
7. Now, they were all valid points and in the long run I was thankful that he pointed them out
8. But you know what - at the time - I was nearly devastated
9. What I wanted to hear was a simple, "Lance, you're doing a great job. Keep it up! PERIOD"
10. I didn't want to hear, "Lance , you're doing a great job, BUT . . . "
11. That's what happened here with Jehoshaphat
12. He walked in the ways of the Lord and did what was right in the eyes of God, BUT
13. His relationship with God was good as far as it went, but unfortunately, for

- whatever reason, it didn't go as far as it *could*, or *should* have
14. If Jehoshaphat *couldn't* have done anything about the high places and his relationship with the King of Israel, then the write never would have mentioned them here
  15. God never holds us accountable for those things over which we have no control
  16. But He does hold us responsible for those things we do
  17. So, what was the big deal?
  18. Why are these two exceptions such a bog deal?
  19. Well, let's see . . .

### **C. The High Places**

1. The high places were located on the tops of hills
2. They were used by the people as local religious sites
3. People built altars on the hill tops and would offer sacrifices there
4. They would offer up prayers to God or Baal or one of the other false gods worshipped in that time
5. They would burn incense as they prayed because their prayers were thought to join with the smoke of the incense and ascend up into the presence of the god they were seeking to make contact with
6. Where this posed a problem for Jehoshaphat was that God had commanded that these high places be destroyed
7. Now that the temple had been built in Jerusalem, God commanded that all worship be centered there [\[1\]](#)
8. The reason He gave this command was because He knew the tendency of the human heart to bend and twist the revelation of God so as to fit more comfortably in with the lifestyle a person wants for them self
9. I find it interesting that when you ask someone what they thing God is like, you get as many different answers as there are people you ask that question
10. It seems everyone believes in their own God
11. And as far as they are concerned, their opinion is just as valid as anyone else's
12. But God hasn't left it to us to try to figure Him out merely by using our own imagination
13. In fact, he warns us against using our imagination in trying to figure Him out
14. No, God has disclosed Himself to us
15. As it says in Hebrews 1, God has at various times and in various ways, spoken to us by the prophets; but finally, in the fullness of time, He became one of us in the person of Jesus Christ
16. The tabernacle and later the temple, were the official ways God gave man to come to Him and enter into relationship with Him
17. Israel was the privileged nation entrusted with these means of access to God
18. it's all the more grievous then that some many of the people said, "Oh, I don't want to go to the temple in Jerusalem. It's too far away. And besides,

- it's too crowded and noisy."
19. "I'll just hike up this hill over here and build my own altar and worship God my way."
  20. God commanded the people to worship Him only at the temple for a reason
    - a. they needed to realize that God is holy
    - b. they needed to be reminded that sin had driven a barrier between them and God
    - c. and that the only way for them to enter into His presence is if the sin problem was properly dealt with
    - d. that required the blood of an innocent sacrifice
  21. All the ritual and formality of the temple was meant to be an elaborate and detailed picture of the coming Messiah who would once for all take away the sin of the people and draw them back into fellowship with God
  22. As the people rejected the temple, and rejected God's revelation of Himself and the prescribed way, the only way, of entering in to communion with him, they set up their own, false faith
  23. Oh sure, they continued to *say* they were worshipping God, but they weren't
  24. They were worshipping a God of their own convenience
  25. Jehoshaphat's error was this: As the king, he was the shepherd of the nation
    - a. though it would have been highly unpopular
    - b. he should have issued the order for the high places to be dismantled
    - c. he should have passed an edict which forbade the people from visiting the high places for worship and led them in a return to the temple
    - d. but he didn't - because the movement to worship at the high places was the popular religious choice of the day
    - e. as though truth could be settle by majority opinion
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26. What are we to glean from this; how does this speak to us?
  27. In a couple ways . . .

### First

1. We live in an age when most people believe truth is relative and situational
2. The motto of the age isn't, "Let God be true but every man a liar."
3. The mottoes of our age are,
  - a. "It works for me."
  - b. "I got no problem with that."
  - c. "If it feels good, do it."
4. Most people don't think it matters too much whether what you believe is right or wrong, just so long as you believe it sincerely and are true to yourself
5. In the midst of this uncertainty, Christians need to take a definite stand on the truthfulness of the revelation of God
6. Even more, we need to be forthright and bold in our personal yielding to that revelation
7. We are not free to believe whatever we want to about God

8. We need to be radical in taking every thought captive to Christ
9. We need to be diligent and zealous students of the Scriptures, giving our minds and thoughts over to the renewing work of God's Spirit
10. It is one of my consistent prayers that God would deliver me from any thought that is unworthy of Him
11. We need to see if we have erected any high place in our own imaginations where we've built a little altar to a god of convenience
  - a. a god that let's us live as we want
  - b. a merely religious deity that is satisfied when we throw him a devotional bone now and then

## Second

1. Because Jehoshaphat was the king and shepherd of the nation, the responsibility for removing the high places lay with him, even though doing so would be highly unpopular
2. God has placed some of you in positions of leadership
3. I'm thinking specifically of husbands and fathers
4. You are the shepherd of your little flock
5. Are there high places in your family?
6. Are there places where the gods and goddesses of this world are worshipped in your home?
7. It may be highly unpopular to remove them
8. But if after determined prayer, and the consistent direction of the Holy Spirit, you know God's prompting to remove them - be obedient

## **D. The King of Israel**

1. The second exception we see to Jehoshaphat's good life was that he made peace with the King of Israel
2. How could this possible be wrong; after all, isn't peace a good thing?
3. Well, it all depends on who you are at peace with
4. The king of Israel this refers to was none other than our good friend Ahab, the most wicked king to ever rule the northern kingdom
5. Jehoshaphat is called to task because he entered into an alliance with Ahab, though he knew he was an evil and wicked man
6. To seal the union, Jehoshaphat gave his son Jehoram, to be the husband of Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah
7. This woman was a chip off the old block of her mother
8. And the corruption that marked Israel under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel soon infected the throne of Judah through her influence
9. She was bad news - and she came through Jehoshaphat's alliance with the King of Israel
10. The point is this; because Jehoshaphat was God's man, he should have realized there were those he could in no way partner with
11. The man or woman who chooses to stand *with* God will find him or her self having to stand *against* those who oppose God
12. If we put our hand in the Holy Hand of God, there will be those with whom

- we must withdraw our hand
13. Or sure, we must be civil and not answer evil with evil
  14. But we must not enter into alliance with them, or join together in cause with them
  15. This is one of the reasons why I am heartsick with so much of the ecumenical movement
  16. Evangelical Christians are uniting with cults and other major religions in order to combat what they perceive as the threat of secularism
  17. But these cults and religions are heretical and are outright opponents of the gospel of Christ
  18. How can Christians unite with these enemies of Christ?
  19. Ecclesiastes says that there is a time and a season for everything under heaven [\[2\]](#)
    - a. there is a time for peace
    - b. and there is a time for war
  20. While believers are to be diligent to safeguard our unity in the Spirit
  21. We need to be equally diligent to avoid entanglements with those who stand in opposition to God
  22. I know this seems obvious, but you'd be surprised at the number of professing Christians who would rather spend time with their pagan and worldly friends than with their brothers and sisters in Christ
  23. And when those friends begin to engage in that which is clearly blasphemous and wicked, rather than either resist or withdraw, they get sucked in
  24. Like Jehoshaphat marrying his son to the daughter of Ahab, they end up getting sucked into the lifestyles and sin of the enemies of God
  25. If you are a Christian, there will be some people you can not, you must not, hang with
  26. The church at Corinth was plagued by this very problem
    - a. the city was utterly corrupt and given over to sin of the rudest and crudest kind
    - b. because the believers were weak and immature in the faith, they had failed to withdraw from the sins which had marked their past
    - c. Paul wrote to them, exhorting them to grow up and become the different people Christ saved them to be
    - d. regarding their continued traffic with the ways of the world he wrote in 1 Cor 15:33 "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"
  27. Am I saying then that Christians should have no contact whatsoever with unbelievers?
  28. Not at all; what I'm saying is that we must not enter into fellowship or communion with the enemies of Christ
  29. Or contact with them should be limited to our witness as believers
  30. Our mission to them is not fellowship but evangelism

### III. CONCLUSION

### **A. The Report On Jehoshaphat**

1. Though the report on Jehoshaphat is a good one
2. It contains these two exceptions
3. What will the report of our lives read like?
4. Lance or Jeff, or Bill, or Charley
5. Mary, Lynn, Michelle, or Janet
6. He/she pleased the Lord; he followed the ways of Christ pretty faithfully . . .
7. Nevertheless, the faithfulness that marked his early years faltered and failed in his later
8. There were some high places of secret sin he retreated to time and again, though the Holy Spirit spoke often to him about them
9. Oh, and he struck up an alliance with those whose lives were unconcerned with the things of God
10. Their priorities distracted him
11. Their pursuits weakened his commitment
12. The desire for their approval eclipsed the love and acceptance of Jesus which was already his

### **B. Inertia**

1. Christian, you've come this far in the walk of faith
2. Don't stop - keep moving
3. Don't let the negative inertia of slowing down and stopping keep you from pressing on to all that God has for you
4. And if you realize today it's too late, that you've already stopped, and it's difficult in the extreme to get moving again,
5. Then come up for prayer this morning
6. It's time to get moving again!

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[1] Lev. 17:3-6 26:30 Deu. 12:2-5

[2] Eccl. 3:8