***2 Chronicles 15:7-10 But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!”*** *8****And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the Lord that*was*before the vestibule of the Lord.****9****Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.*** *10****So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.***

Trust, Obey, Praise. Last week, we considered the lilies of the field – how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet, Solomon in his finest was not clothed like one of God’s flowers.

Over the next several weeks, save Men’s Day next week, we’ll consider people in the Bible that trusted God, obeyed God, and praised God, even in times of uncertainty. Today, we’ll consider King Asa, king of Judah. The Bible tells us in 2 Chronicles 14:2 *Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God* and in 1 Kings 15:14 ***-*** *But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa’s heart was loyal to the Lord all his days.* His heart was loyal to the Lord. He did what was good and right in God’s eyes. What wonderful statements! In the verses preceding our scripture, we know that Asa is returning from a war with Zerah of Ethiopia. Zerah had a million soldiers and 300 chariots. Asa went to war with about half as many soldiers and in the face of overwhelming odds, this is what he prayed – 2 Chronicles 14:11 *And Asa cried out to the Lord his God, and said, “Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!”* The Bible says that God struck the Ethiopians & they fled. When faced with things that are overwhelming, how often do we cry to the Lord – it is nothing for You to help? Bad diagnosis – it is nothing. Bad situation – it is nothing. Hopeless outlook – Lord, it is NOTHING for You to help! God not only helped. We find that He blessed Asa and Judah. Trust. Obey. Praise.

In verses 7 of our focus scripture, *But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!”* Obed tells Asa – be strong and do not let your hands be weak. In other words, Trust. Asa, trust that your work and your faithfulness will be rewarded. God struck an army, but God had a larger purpose for Asa. Strike the disease of idolatry. Strike the worship of idols. Turn the people back to God. Likewise, we must be strong. We must not let our hands be weak. Our work will be rewarded, but work we must. The fields are white unto the harvest, but the laborers are few. Many sit at God’s table, but few serve in God’s vineyard. Trust is key.

Verse 8 goes on highlighting Obedience. Asa hears and Asa obeys. *And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the Lord that*was*before the vestibule of the Lord.* Asa trusted and obeyed. His own grandmother had created a place of idol worship. He tore it down and removed her as queen. Imagine that! Removing idols is dangerous and unpopular work. Likewise, we must take courage and obey. Start in our own home, in our own circle. If it takes us away from relationship with God, it is an idol. Asa trusted, but until he acted, there was no obedience. Many say they trust, but the **action is missing in action**. Obey is key.

Verses 9-10 *Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the Lord his God was with him. 10 So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.* Now they praise. The people saw the Lord was with Asa and they praised. Verse 11 tells of the sacrifices made. Verse 12 tells of the promise they make to seek God with all they heart and soul. Likewise, we must praise God. Too often, we forget to praise. Asa trusted. Asa obeyed. Asa praised. And peace prevailed in the nation for 20 years. When did the peace end? When Asa sought physicians for his foot issues and the king of Syria for military protection instead of the God of heaven. He stopped trusting. He stopped obeying. He turned to man for confidence. 2 Chronicles 16:9 is clear. Hanani the seer comes to Asa, confronts him and says this *- For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.* God seeks those who will trust. obey, and praise.

This week, know that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth seeking those whose heart is loyal to Him. Let us not act foolishly. God is worthy of trust, worthy of obedience, worthy of praise. We must ask – where is the loyalty of our hearts? Is it in the strength of the Lord or the foolishness of man? The peace of our spirits rest in the answer to that question.