February 26, 2021 Lenten Devotional
II Kings 22:8-20 - "The Book of the Law"
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The high priest Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.' When Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, he read it. Then Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, 'Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workers who have oversight of the house of the LORD.' Shaphan the secretary informed the king, 'The priest Hilkiah has given me a book.' Shaphan then read it aloud to the king.

When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and the king's servant Asaiah, saying, 'Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our ancestors did not obey the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.'

So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; she resided in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter, where they consulted her. She declared to them, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, Thus says the LORD, I will indeed bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. Because they have abandoned me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the LORD. Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place.' They took the message back to the king.

-II Kings 22:8-20

Lenten Reflection:

From a very young age, I was bothered when I saw someone on the streets who was seemingly homeless and hungry. It broke my heart and I remember asking my mom how could we let this happen in a world that is so rich with resources. No matter where we were stationed, our family would volunteer with our home congregation in homeless shelters and soup kitchens. Seeing people, *regular* people being neglected by society made me really sad.

God created all people in God's image, regardless of our socioeconomic standing, we are ALL God's children, and EVERYONE deserves to be viewed as such, to be treated with kindness and compassion. To this day, homeless shelters are my favorite way to donate my time and resources, especially in these winter months. It is always humbling to volunteer and get to know people like "C".

I met "C" in Norfolk while working with the NEST program. I was in the kitchen helping to prepare meals when my mom raced in to "introduce" me to someone. At the time, I was in my third year of sign language. We exited the kitchen and went into the dining area. She introduced me to "C", who is deaf. He had not been able to communicate with anyone in weeks. Knowing sign-language, I was able to listen to and learn his story. His story helped me appreciate the things we take for granted like family, cars, shelter, and hot meals. "C" is a recovering alcoholic from a nearby town. He lost his home due to his addiction and his family no longer wants to be in contact with him. "C" had no one to rely on so he came to the NEST program looking for help. "C" continually mentioned how wonderful it was that my family was serving together in this capacity, and he encouraged me to stay in school.

Being able to help "C" by offering resources and a listening "hand" was the highlight of my year. It's been two years, and I still think of "C" often. I went to lend a helping hand, but looking back, it was me who need the humbling life lesson of appreciating all that I have.

2 Kings calls us to humble ourselves in the presence of the LORD. Often, it's easy to get carried away with other's opinions, politics, and possessions…but, God calls us to follow our faith, even when it's not the popular choice. God also calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves by donating time, money, and resources to those in need. By humbling ourselves and following the way of Jesus, our blessings come into full view.