



## **The Way of Forgiveness**

### **2 Chronicles 34:15-22, 26-27**

*Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD (2 Chronicles 34:7)—ESV).*

When we read or hear God's Word and recognize our sins as did King Josiah, if our hearts are tender, we will humbly pray to God and ask God to forgive us. We will not be like Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, who hardened his heart so often when he heard the Word of the LORD from Moses that the LORD finally began to harden his heart as punishment and to demonstrate that the LORD was God and not Pharaoh who claimed to be God. King Josiah made a public confession of his sins when he tore his fine robe and wept before the Lord. He was so tender-hearted that he even wept over the sins that the fathers of his people had committed as well as his own. He wept when he realized how they had all dishonored and mistreated their Holy God, the LORD who had loved them so much as to care for them in every way as a shepherd does his sheep. Indeed, he knew they deserved and had suffered God's just punishment and God was their only hope. Likewise, in a parable, Jesus commended a tax collector who confessed his sins to God rather than brag about his righteousness or make excuses for his sins. He knew he did not deserve God's forgiveness. Jesus said the man had confessed and called out for God's mercy, so he had left the temple in favor with his merciful God (see Luke 18:9-14). After King Josiah had wept and confessed his sins, he sent Hilkiah to Huldah the prophetess to ask the LORD what to do. Through her, the LORD said He had heard Josiah's prayers. In response to God's forgiveness, Josiah cleansed the land of its idols, and the people did not turn from following the LORD all Josiah's days. We are reminded of what John, the gospel writer, wrote in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In our response, we can lead others to turn to Jesus in faith.