

The Weekly Word

June 26- July 2, 2017

Summer officially begins this week... so happy summer and happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, June 26: 1Kings 10- Is wealth seducing you?...

Opulent and extravagant wealth... such is the picture that emerges from this chapter of Kings. Israel was at her zenith in wealth, prestige and world acclaim. *King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart (23-24).*

But where is the Lord? Yes, He had done this, but nary a word about the worship of the Lord is presented in this chapter. The only reference comes in the opening verse when the writer notes, *When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relationship to the LORD, she came to test Solomon with hard questions.*

The wonderings I have are about Solomon's relationship with the Lord. Yes, God is extravagantly blessing him but what about his devotion to the Lord? All the fineries mentioned were his... chariots and horses, gold almost beyond measure, shields of gold and goblets of gold.

I'm wondering if Solomon is being seduced by his fame and wealth. Maybe it is just a lone chapter and God doesn't figure prominently in this one chapter. This has happened before in the story of God's people. But I am also wondering about Jesus line, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:25).*

Wealth has a seductive power to it. I am wondering if Solomon is falling prey to it.

A person doesn't have to have the wealth of Solomon to be under money and riches spell.

The Lord begins to probe my relationship with wealth. Is the basic comfort and security I have undermining my reliance on the Lord? This is a deeper question than it appears and I need to sit with it for a while allowing it to soak into private places of my inner life...

After all, according to Jesus a person *cannot serve both God and mammon* (money, wealth, riches) (Matthew 6:24).

Lord, look into me and show me who I truly am. I need You, Lord. I love You, Lord. Amen.

Tuesday, June 27: 1Kings 11- All in all of my days...

Today we learn of Solomon's divided heart. His downfall comes through women. They seduce him away from the Lord.

We find ourselves in trouble when we think we know better than God, picking and choosing which God-ordained rules we are going to follow and which we are not.

Solomon chose not to follow God's marriage regulations by marrying women from nations God specifically told Israel NOT to intermarry with (2). Over time their worship habits influenced Solomon who joined them and so his heart was separated from the Lord. Solomon even went so far as to establish altars for foreign gods in Israel (4-8).

How sad. A blessed and promising life destroyed by sex and disobedience.

Two thoughts bounced in my head. One is that God's rules are all or nothing. I know as humans we cannot live up to God's rules fully. We are filled with sin and need a savior, but the thought that keeps coming to me is that I cannot pick and choose what aspects of God's laws I want to follow and which ones I want to avoid. Solomon disregarded marriage regulations. By placing himself above God he set in motion his down fall. It is idolatry to place myself above God.

The other thought is about going the distance. In verse 4 it says, "*As Solomon grew old...*" Jesus often said the one who stands firm till the end. God calls us to follow all the days of our lives. Solomon did not. I'm guessing that he made small steps away from the Lord and over time found that he had stepped away from the Lord. Diligence in examining our lives and constantly returning to and re-confessing our love for and obedience to the Lord helps keep us on track.

When David sinned, he repented and returned but apparently Solomon did not. As a result of his faithlessness God raised up adversaries reminding Solomon that he needed the Lord. These reminders didn't work.

'All in all of my days...' that is God's call to me this morning as I sit with the Lord.

Will you join me?

Oh, God, I cannot do this on my own. I confess I need Your help to walk with You. Send Your Holy Spirit to guide me. Open my ears to His voice. Strengthen my heart to desire You and my will to follow You all the days of my life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, June 28: 1Kings 12- Many thoughts...

So many thoughts, observations and musings... here are a few.

Golden calves. Jeroboam made golden calves for Israel to worship. This was reminiscent of Aaron in the desert. Did Jeroboam choose a calf because of the ancient sin of Aaron or was it something to do with calves? Was it something in their culture? Interesting how sins of the past seem to rear their ugly heads. Is it generational or cultural or a piece of both?

What are the generational and cultural sins I need to wage war against??? Wealth and greed? Independence? Selfishness with regard to my time? Life of ease rather than service? Oh, the thoughts that spin in my head.

The role of Egypt. Solomon married a daughter of Pharaoh and now Egypt is harboring a fugitive from Solomon, Jeroboam. Egypt was never an ally of Israel, but they offered 'friendship' and alliance when it benefited themselves. And even as they offered a hand to Solomon they were also willing to offer another hand to Jeroboam. Who really are our allies?

Listening to the news this kind of thing happens all the time in world politics, but if I personalize it... who really are my allies? Who can I trust to have my back, to help me walk faithfully with the Lord? This takes discernment and prayer...

Advisors. On an earthly plain, Rehoboam failed because he listened to the wrong advisors. He chose to listen to young unseasoned voices, sons of privilege who didn't have the wisdom of service and years. Now certainly God was behind all this this. He was splitting the kingdom due to Solomon's sin, but there is wisdom in considering one's advisors.

Don't choose only "Yes voices." People we trust but who have a different perspective are essential. And don't forget prayer. There is not a single word about Rehoboam consulting the Lord on this matter.

Lord, help me to continue to chew on this chapter in Your book. Teach me I pray. Through Jesus, my Savior. Amen.

Thursday, June 29: 1Kings 13- Who is your God?...

Did Jeroboam believe he was worshiping the Lord just at a new location or was he deliberately setting up rival worship?

If there was any question about the answer, Jeroboam appears to settle the question when he answered the ‘man of God’ who is the central focus of today’s chapter. In verse 6 *the king said to the man of God, “Intercede with **the LORD your God** and pray for me that my hand may be restored.” So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king’s hand was restored and became as it was before.*

Jeroboam does not call the Lord his God. There is our answer... over the last two chapters we have watched Jeroboam set up rival worship for the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom.

God gave Jeroboam an opportunity to be faithful but he ‘spit in God’s face’ and rejected the Lord. How sad.... how sad for himself and for all the people of Israel who followed his lead.

The whisper of the Lord as I sit with Him today goes like this. “Be honest about who you worship.” The feasts looked the same, many of the practices looked the same, but Jeroboam was honest with himself. He was not worshiping the Lord God. He had established a rival god.

The Lord reminded me that if I am going to worship Him I must follow His Word and ways as given to us in the Bible. I am not free to make things up for myself as Jeroboam did.

Faithfulness to the LORD is essential...

Lord God, keep me close to Your Word. As my world changes and general behavior of my culture strays further and further from Your truth, help me to remain faithful to You and Your Word. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Friday, June 30: 1Kings 14- Sin carries consequences ...

Both Jeroboam and Rehoboam lives end badly. The Lord did not allow their sins to go unpunished.

Sin carries consequences.

Immediately as I began typing the above sentence, I knew it was the Lord’s key thought for me this morning.

Sin carries consequences. Sin brings judgments. Whether in this world or at our death, we will all answer for our sin.

Jeroboam paid dearly for his sin. We all will... unless we make peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith in Jesus is the only answer for our sin...

Jesus, I bow to You. I confess You are God, my God. I will follow You. Without You I have no way to stand before the Father except as condemned sinner. Thank You for the cross and my forgiveness. I pray in Your name. Amen.

Saturday, July 1: 1Kings 15- What would an exposé reveal about you?...

As the parade of kings from the Northern Kingdom –Israel- and the Southern Kingdom – Judah- cover the page of this chapter and the succeeding chapters of the books of Kings, the defining feature of each king is whether he does evil or good in the eyes of the Lord.

Were they faithful to the Lord or not? That is the concern.

And that in reality is the issue for everyone. Are we, am I, faithful to the Lord or not?

What will people write about you when your days are ended? Will it be obvious that you have been faithful to the Lord?

If a news personality was assigned to write an exposé of your life and she followed the trail of your life's footprints... hobbies, work history, associations, etc. If she investigated your social media footprint, browser history, bank records and interviews your neighbors, friends, associates and 'enemies' would the evidence label us as faithful to the Lord or not?

Oh, Lord, You know. You know my heart. You know the true inner person me. Forgive my evil, redeem my life that I might follow You all the days of my life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, July 2, 2017, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.