

The Weekly Word
July 28-August 3, 2014

We continue reading about the OT Kings, a pretty sad lot, but much to learn from them.
Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, July 28: 1Kings 21- Complicit...

I noticed the elders of Naboth's town complied with Jezebel's orders (written Ahab's name). The text never says anything about them, but I wouldn't want to be them when they stand before the Lord on their last day. They were complicit. They knew the evil plan and they executed it, likely to save their own skin.

I pondered the thought of being complicit in ungodly things. I thought about times I cave instead of standing fast to integrity. God is never pleased!

If the elders said "No" the outcome may not have changed. Ahab and Jezebel may have gotten what they wanted another way. But the elders would have remained true to the Lord.

I thought, what is my integrity worth? Do I have a price? If so, how sad.

God calls us to do the right thing, no matter what the outcome might be.

Join me in chewing on this...

Lord, may I stand for You today in all of my dealings. May I do this everyday. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, July 29: 1Kings 22- What the Lord says, comes true...

The Word of the Lord comes true. Again we see the Lord God fulfilling what He has spoken. Over and over the Old Testament affirms and reaffirms that the Lord is trustworthy, and that the Lord is powerful and strong to do what He says He will do.

The psalmist sings that the heavens declare God's Glory. And the writers of OT narrative declare that the Lord is to be trusted and that He alone is God. This is the God whom I serve because the God of the OT is the God of the New Testament.

My thoughts delighted in the Lord, the God. There is no other like Him.

I marveled how He orchestrated events to fulfill His Will. What He decrees comes to pass.

I found myself wondering why Jehoshaphat would request a prophet of the Lord, but then not heed his warning. I have no answer for this, except to note that he, Jehoshaphat, was not indicated in anyway in the prophecy. Maybe he thought, then, that he was safe. I simply do not know.

What I do know is that we should pay attention to the things that the Lord has said, because they will happen... in the Lord's timing, of course.

Lord, I praise and bless You for being God, the one and only God. And for revealing Yourself to me through Word and Spirit. Praise be to You, Lord, God, Father, Son and Spirit. Amen.

Wednesday, July 30: 2Kings 1- Elijah and the role of a prophet...

Elijah was one of the great Old Testament prophets. Recently I read a great book. Its title says it all, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by GD Fee and Douglas Stuart. I highly

recommend this book for anyone who wants to get the most out of her/his Bible reading and study.

Anyway in that book they refer to OT prophets as covenant enforcers. The prophets were people sent by the Lord who spoke for Him, enforcing His covenant with Israel. Enforcers have a difficult job. Why? Because many people who have drifted or turned from the Lord do not want to be corrected.

This is one of those cases; King Ahaziah doesn't want to listen to God and thus God uses Elijah to speak judgment.

Confronting or correcting others, whether it is a child in the home, a subordinate at work or someone you are mentoring, is rarely pleasant. If the person has a humble teachable heart it can have great rewards. However, defiance makes the situation very unpleasant.

Like it or not, people in authority need to confront others.

I'm not sure I gain lots of wisdom from this particular passage beyond these two thoughts. One, this kind of work can be difficult. And two, one better know that you are speaking accurately for the Lord if it is spiritual correction. For me this means making sure that the things I say need to align with God's Word, accurately understood!

Lord, God, keep my nose in Your Book. Keep me consistent in reading and studying and praying about Your Word so that when I am to be your mouthpiece in correcting or rebuking that everything will be guided by Your Word.

Lord, Your Word from 2Tim comes to mind even as I pray. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2Timothy 3:16-17).

May I, in my living, stay close to You and Your Word. Amen.

Thursday, July 31: 2Kings 2- Elijah passes the mantle on to Elisha...

To be a spiritual son... that was Elisha's request.

In verse 9 Elisha asks of Elijah, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Too many times I have heard preachers say that Elisha had twice the spiritual power/authority of Elijah. Unfortunately, that comes from not understanding the text. Elisha wasn't asking for twice the spirit... he was asking to be Elijah's 'first-born' son and therefore heir to the prophetic position. A double portion inheritance was given to the first-born.

God grants Elisha's request and the parting of the Jordan was evidence that the Lord had granted his request!

Elisha accepted great responsibility when he requested and was granted this request. Spiritual authority is a calling that must not be taken lightly...

Fathers, mothers, pastors, elders, deacons, bishops all are granted spiritual authority. If that is you, take the role seriously.

I find myself pondering my authority roles...

Oh, God, may I represent You well. May I use my authority for good. May my words point people to You. May my actions exemplify a life lived for You. Lord, may I never use my spiritual authority for personal gain, but only to further Your kingdom. I pray in my Lord Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, August 1: 2Kings 3- The depravity of humanity...

Moab is losing the battle badly. What does the king of Moab do? What does the man who instigated the war in the first place do? He sacrifices his first-born son, heir to the throne, to the gods in hopes of turning the tide of the war and save his own skin. I mean, how sick is that???

We talk about humanity as if we are good at heart, not perfect maybe, but good. And yet our world is filled with incredible ugliness, sin, and depravity. Some might say this was only one man, but isn't he a product of his society? As king didn't he help shape his society? And if he did this, what else might he have done that we don't know about? And if his people wanted a favor from the gods, would they do similar things?

Gangs ask horrible things of members as initiation. Violence is all around us; just open a paper or read a new feed.

We humans are a depraved lot... more often than we want to admit.

Even as I write all this, my thoughts flip to the message of the New Testament, where God gives us a new heart through faith in Jesus Christ. The only hope for men and women is Jesus.

Have you turned to Jesus for heart surgery? I have. I still have much rehab to do and I have many new life skills and habits to incorporate into my life (I am far from perfect)! But thanks to Jesus I am on the road to recovery and blessed with a calling to tell people about the Savior Jesus... Are you?

Thank You, Lord, God, for calling me on to Your team. Help me, strengthen me and train me to be valuable for Your kingdom purposes. I pray in Your name—the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saturday, August 2: 2Kings 4- Elisha the miracle man...

In rapid-fire succession this chapter chronicles 4 of Elisha's dramatic miracles. Through Elisha, God enters the lives of others and brings His presence, power and healings. No wonder Elisha was revered.

As I was pondering these miracles, it occurred to me that God routinely uses His people to touch and help others. Not all of us get to be a conduit for God's dramatic miracles like these, but every Christ-follower has many opportunities to bring encouragement, love, care, help and provision to others in need in the name of Jesus.

I wondered, how God might use me today to speak to and help someone else in His name. And maybe God will even allow me to be a conduit for His miraculous touch.

Be expectant... God wants to use each of us to make the world a better place today.

Lord, God, here I am. Use me today. Amen.

Sunday, August 3, 2014, 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.