

The Weekly Word

August 4-10, 2014

The accounts of Israel's kings are sad tales of disobedience. Sadly, sometimes we learn by observing what not to do. That may be the case as we read God's Word this week. Blessed reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, August 4: 2Kings 5- Warnings...

I saw in this chapter a couple of warnings about the way sin can enter a person's life.

With Naaman, the sin of pride almost kept him from receiving his healing. Elisha asked Naaman to do a simple act and his healing would be complete. But Naaman, at first, refused. My meditations generalized. How often does God ask something simple of me (us) and for some reason I (we) say no?

It might be pride or arrogance or disobedience, you name it. And by refusing we miss some blessing from the Lord or we miss being God's blessing in someone's life. How sad this is.

Oh, to have a friend like Naaman's servant who dared to speak truth into his life before he missed his opportunity for healing.

Then there was Gehazi. How or why greed surfaced on this day the text doesn't say. But greed did surface and Gehazi had no spiritual strength to say 'no' to it. He caved and concocted a lie to gain riches. This reminded me that sin is always crouching at the door, looking for even the smallest opening to pounce!

We must be aware and be alert... always.

Diligence and perseverance... two key thoughts for today.

Oh, Jesus, keep me alert. When I doze or get distracted, please call out and warn me. And when I am tempted to disregard Your call, please send someone who can be to me like Naaman's servant was to him, a voice of reason that I can hear. I pray this so that I might follow You with all my heart today and every day. Amen.

Tuesday, August 5: 2Kings 6- Serve, love, obey...

Accounts of the miracle man, Elisha, continue with three more dramatic events. I found myself wondering, "Why, Lord, are there all these accounts of Elisha, the prophet and miracle worker?"

Were they 'proof' that Elisha had received the double portion requested earlier?

Were they a validation of his prophetic ministry, over against the king who was against him? I cannot say for sure.

It is strange to me that even after the second miracle of capturing the Aram army, the king of Samaria doesn't listen to and follow him (vv 24ff). Jesus' comment that a prophet is without honor in his hometown seem to fit. Even though everyone, even the king of Aram, understands Elisha to be a prophet of God, the king of Israel will not submit to him! Defiance can blind us from truth.

Another thought I had was that being faithful, even being a faithful miracle-worker & prophet, doesn't guarantee a warm reception from people, even the supposed people of God.

Kingdom service and obedience is due to our King –the Lord God Almighty. How people react is another matter entirely.

Serve Jesus, love the Father, obey the voice of the Spirit and leave the results to the Lord. Don't worry about the reactions of others!

Lord, open my ears that I may hear You, clearly. Open my eyes that I may see what You are doing, clearly. Open my heart that I may follow You, wholeheartedly. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Wednesday, August 6: 2Kings 7- Sharing...

God does what only God can do. The account of the Aramean flight is yet another example of the Lord orchestrating His Word and Will. The God of the Bible, the God we serve is THE everlasting, almighty, only wise God and the pages of the Bible reveal this to be true!

As individuals, each person has a choice to believe God's self-revelation told in the Bible or not to believe. The choice is yours.

I, for one, choose to believe.

In terms of meditations, I found myself thinking about the lepers' dilemma. They discover food and riches free for the taking. At the same time they know that fellow Israelites are starving in the city. What do you do? Keep it for oneself or tell others? Verses 8-9 tell their story. *The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp, entered one of the tents and ate and drank. Then they took silver, gold and clothes, and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also. Then they said to each other, "What we're doing is not right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let's go at once and report this to the royal palace."*

They decided that what they discovered should be shared with others. My first thought was the golden rule; love your neighbor as yourself. Do for others what you would hope they would do for you. The lepers remembered the plight of others and did what they could. They did what the Lord would have had them do.

Almost immediately I began to think about present day scenarios that could be considered parallel situations...

Do I care for the poor (people I know, not just nameless poor) with the heart of generosity these lepers displayed?

Do I care for the lost and share the Gospel with the lost, with the heart of generosity these lepers showed?

And so my meditations went...

Lord, do I live Your golden rule, Your greatest commandment, part II, as these men did?

Do I see myself as desperate and receive everything You give as gift, as these men did? Do I, Lord?

Lord, change my heart, I pray. Make me more like You. Give me Your heart, I pray... Amen.

Thursday, August 7: 2Kings 8- Remembering...

The circumstances of the woman receiving her property back, got me thinking about how God arranges circumstance to accomplish His purposes. Not everyone would agree with me that God arranges things. Many, maybe even most, people in the world are willing to acknowledge coincidences. Things that just seem to fall in place, like the woman arriving just as Gehazi is reminding the king about Elisha's miracle with her son.

The scriptures don't see it that way. Scripture understands that God's hand is behind these "coincidences." I have adopted the view of Scripture. For me they are 'God-incidences', not coincidences.

I began to think about 'God-incidences' in my life. Too many to recall, but spending time remembering has been encouraging walking down memory lane. The wonderful and surprising ways the Lord has worked in my life and the lives of those I hold dear and know well.

I serve an amazing God... and I am delighting in recalling His wonderful works.

Take a moment before you pray and recall how God's hand has worked in your life. Then join me praise and thanks to Him.

Lord, I praise You. You are so good. I have been blessed by You and Your work in my life so many times. Thank You. Praise You.

Lord, I pray that I keep my eyes open to Your workings. I pray that I recognize Your hand at work and praise You for it. I pray that You work things so that my life brings praise to You and advances your kingdom. For You I live... Praise be to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Friday, August 8: 2Kings 9- Mixed motives...

I marvel at how immediately Jehu obeys the Lord in killing the king and usurping the throne. Yet, I know that Jehu isn't faithful to the Lord in other aspects of his kingship. How is it that he immediately does something but not others? I notice that the area of obedience will serve his needs and desires... hmmm?

Jehu strikes me as an example of 'most people'. We are people of mixed motives and mixed behaviors.

Lord, what a mess we are...

I find myself falling before the Lord in prayer...

Forgive me, Oh God, for my mix of faithfulness and unfaithfulness in my life.

Lord, I don't want to be a Jehu... a person who serves You when it is convenient and beneficial, but ignores You when it doesn't suit me. Lord, I don't want to be double minded. Forgive me, I pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, August 9: 2Kings 10- You cannot serve God halfway...

Jehu was zealous for the Lord in the destroying of Ahab's family, but he was not so zealous with the worship and sacrifices of the Lord. In verses 29-31 we read:

However, he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit—the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. The LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in accomplishing what is right in my eyes and have done to the house of Ahab all I had in mind to do, your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit.

Jeroboam sent up the false altars, established a false priesthood and mimicked the worship of the Lord. However, in so doing, he created a cult that had an appearance of godly worship but was in truth a rival for the Lord.

Jehu followed the Lord in killing off Ahab's family, but then he turned and continued the false worship of Bethel and Samaria. By not turning from this false worship, Jehu missed the mark and was not considered a follower of the Lord God almighty.

We cannot serve God halfway. We cannot partially worship the Lord. We cannot pick and choose what parts of God we are willing to follow and what parts we can disregard.

With the Lord... we are 'all in' or not in at all!

God expects total devotion ... no holding back. No playing it safe by keeping others gods along side the Lord. The Lord alone is to be worshiped and only the Lord is to be worshiped.

Search me and know me. Search my heart, Oh God, and see if there is any wickedness in me. To be Yours, totally, I pray through Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

Sunday, August 10, 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.