

1 Kings 21

Ch 20 ended with King Ahab receiving the rebuke of the prophet via the Word of the Lord and the just judgment of his ways. God had delivered the Syrians into his hands on 2 occasions by miraculous measures. He was wanting Ahab to know that He was the Lord and that there is no other, there's no other god that can deliver in time of need, no god that can bring the rains of refreshment to your life, or the fresh fire of the Holy Spirit in time of need. And He was teaching the Syrians that He was the God of the high times, and the low, the hills and the valleys, that his ability to deliver knows no limits. But Ahab made a treaty with the enemy; he heaped honors upon his oppressor (Ben Hadad) and had oppressed one who sought to honor him in fighting for him in the battle (regarding the scenario that the prophet presented to him). As Ahab was headed home he passed by the prophet and the prophet said to him. "I was out in the midst of the battle and a superior officer came up to me with a prisoner and said, 'Keep watch over this man and don't let him escape, if he escapes it's your life for his or a talent of silver.' and While I was busy here and there he got away." The king said to him, "Out of your own mouth you've judged yourself, its you for him." and W/that the prophet removed his disguise and said, "Thus says the Lord, 'Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.'" It was so easy for Ahab to see the right thing to do in another mans life, yet he was willing to justify his own situation that was exactly the same only to an even higher standard because the superior that had ordered him was God Himself!

It's so easy to see the spec in our brother's eye and be blind to the plank in our own. The bible says that we're to worry about the plank in our own eye before we begin to try and deal with the spec of saw dust in our brother's or our sister's eye. Sure he had an excuse for his mishandling of his primary responsibility, he was a busy man, engaged in the fight, had lots going on, all of which were noble things. But the point is that a busy life, doesn't justify a disobedient life that neglects one's primary priority to the Word of God. Yeah we can get involved in lots of things, but if our marriage is going down the drain how does what we're doing outside of that arena justify our primary priority to our husband, or our wife? (You get the idea), so the king of Israel rather than repent, simply regretted that he'd been busted, sank down in a sullen disposition and went to his house in Samaria.

Now some time passes (how much I'm not certain) but we read here in vs 1 of ch 21.

Vs1-2

We need to pause here for just a moment because as this episode begins to unfold there are some things that we need to see. 1st of all we want to take note of what Ahab *has*, because what we're seeing here is that there's something that Ahab *wants*. And this is the age-old problem; the flesh is never satisfied, because if there were ever a type of man who should've been satisfied, it would be Ahab.

After all he's a king, which means what? It means a few things #1 It means he has *power*, he's a king which means that as a king he has a kingdom and wields authority over that kingdom, and you would think that kingly power would certainly satisfy. But Ahab's not satisfied, there's more, hand in hand with his *power* is *political position*. He rules over an area, "Samaria" to be exact, which brings me to the 3rd thing that Ahab has #1 Power, #2 Position, and #3 he enjoys *Possession*. He rules over some real estate, he's really got *some area*, literally "Samaria."

But listen, though he's got Power, he's got Position, and he has Possession, "Some area" isn't "All area" he wants *more*. "Naboth has a vineyard that would be awfully convenient for me to make a little vegetable garden, its so near, next to my house, that's what I *want*, if I had that, *then* I'd be satisfied." What's happening here? Listen carefully; he's fallen into the *grip* of *greed*, the *mindset* of *more*, the *consuming condition* of *covetousness*. And it can start out so subtle, so seemingly insignificant, its Friday night, you've scrimped and saved, you're going out somewhere nice. You've been so looking forward to that bowl of French onion soup and as the waitress brings it out, you look over at your wife's bowl... and she has *more*. Suddenly you're not satisfied anymore, greed has gripped you, I want more. And it's all fine and fun but if left unchecked it can move; it's the "more" mindset. You've got a new ride but when this years model comes out it has just a little bit *more* on it than yours does. And it's not that yours doesn't get you from point A to point B, but that has just a little bit more about it. And if I get the new car, I've got to have the new stereo and some new speakers that keep up with the new stereo, but with the new speakers and stereo I'm going to have to have some new cds, and with the cds I'm going to have to have the amp that drives them and the EQ that clarifies them, and on and on it goes. And as you continue to feed, it continues to lead, "I'm not satisfied with my wife I want somebody else's" it's the consuming condition of covetousness, its that "Everybody wants to rule the world" type thing that keeps satisfaction just slightly out of reach. "I need more."

I'll never forget the morning (a year or so ago) my daughter Elizabeth (3 at the time) came into my bedroom, I was sitting on my bed, getting my shoes on or something. And she brought in one of those cans of spray whipped cream. And she was wanting some squirted in her mouth, on her tongue. And when I figured out what she wanted I said, "Oh you want a little bit on your tongue?" and She said, "No, *too much!*" She didn't want a little, she wanted too much...But in the observant lyrics of an old Bon Jovi song, "Too much is never enough."

That's why Paul wrote to Timothy and said; "*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things*" 1 Tim 6:6-11 Ahab, gripped with greed, fond of that field, said, "Lets make a deal, what's your price."

Vs3

Pause right there. Ahab, a man of power, of position, prominence, and possession, comes into contact with Naboth, a man of *principled priorities*. “I see you have a little piece of property there, I’d like to purchase it, just name your price.” “What do you mean its not for sale, I’ve got money, I’ll give it to you just tell me what you want and I’ll give it to you.” and This is the way your enemy works, be careful Christian. Because there are things in your life that are non-negotiables, whereby it’s imperative that you maintain your integrity and refuse to sell out. But the enemy will always come along with the offer of a price, something that will tempt you to sell your integrity, pass off your principled priorities for the right pay. But Naboth says to Ahab, “This piece of property is not for sale.” You see the land in Israel wasn’t like land in our day, “Give me the right price and I’ll walk away.” No, it belonged *to* the Lord, was an inheritance *from* the Lord and was not to be simply sold. God had said, “*The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.*” Lev 25:23 You see the Lord had designed and devised a plan to keep any one person from manipulating a monopoly whereby they could oppress the people.

He brought them into the Promised Land and said, “I’m going to divvy up the land, divide it out a certain portion to each tribe, but know this its always *Mine*, I’m simply giving it to you to dwell in and live upon.” That’s why it wasn’t to be sold permanently, it wasn’t theirs to sale, it’s the Lord’s and He’s distributed it accordingly. Now if it got really bad they could lease it, or sell it for a time, but no matter how much was owed on it, or how indebted they became through it, at the end of 50 yrs all debts were to be canceled and the land was always to revert to the original family that occupied that particular parcel. And this was God’s way of managing potential oppression, someone profiting off of their land, purchasing more, profiting off of that, buying more and so and so own until they had an empire of their own, everyone indebted to them, they’d managed to monopolize, and now they oppressed the people. God said, “Not going to happen, its mine and I’ve given it to you and you’re to give it to your children.” That’s what Naboth is saying here, “My father passed it down to me, and I’m going to give it to my children.” Num 36:7 says, “*So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.*” Naboth is a man of principle, of godly priority, wants to make sure that that with which God has blessed his life is invested into the lives of his children. Listen, those things that God has invested into you, invest them into your children, pass them down, bless them with that with which God has blessed you. Insights into His Word, how He’s worked in your life, share with them how He made Himself real to you, lifted you out of the pit of destruction and despair, and gave you everlasting life. Maybe God has given you a trade whereby you’re physically or materially blessed, teach it to your children to the glory of God, don’t sell it off for a quick profit, if God gifted you with it, perhaps you should gift your children with it. You see those things that God has given us, (which is everything) they’re not ours to do with what we want anyway, they’re the Lords, and we’re to wield wise stewardship with that which He has entrusted to us. So, “Sorry Ahab, not for sale.”

Now what is Ahab to do? *Pray* about it? That would be too *spiritual*, let's keep it simple, how about *pout* about it, that seems more *sensible* doesn't it?

Vs4

No real commentary here, he's just being a big baby, "I have 'some area' but I'm not going to eat until I have 'all area.' Naboth won't sell me his vineyard so I'm not going to eat until I get it." He's got all this power, prestige, position, prominence and possession, its not enough, he needs just *a little bit more*, be careful.

Vs5-7

What's happening here? Is Ahab a spineless worm who hides behind the backbone of Jezebel? Sure, but here's the deal guys. Remember what we just read in 1st Timothy? The Love of money makes us act out in all kinds of worthless ways, and Ahab is doing what so many of us do, he may be down, he's displeased; he's discouraged, feeling dejected, but what else is he doing? He's dumping on his wife, and though he's venting, and in about an hour and a half when there's a game on and he's vegging in front of the TV, he'll forget about it. He's spewed on her in a way of weight that now she's carrying around, and what he's spoken *into* her, and the way he's represented *before* her will now bring about ramifications *from* her, be careful guys. She's now bearing a burden that he's cast upon her and she feels responsible to pick up the pursuit where he left off and do what he was unable to do. And that's exactly what's happening today even in our culture, the husband wants this, can't get that, so the women join the work force to do for the husband what he couldn't do for himself and for his family.

He won't provide, so she does, he doesn't protect his families needs, so she does, and the more he lets go, the more she takes control and soon enough the home is out of order and it all began when he refused to rightly represent his God given place in the home. He should've sucked it up, realized his wrong, and moved on, but instead he had a pity party, misrepresented the whole situation to his wife, he failed, she feels the need, and now she's going to do something about it, notice.

Vs8-10

So she sets up a situation that has the appearance of being spiritual, but the agenda in reality is very sensual, or fleshly. She says, "Proclaim a fast." Now regional fasts would be proclaimed when it seemed as though the people were either laboring under or threatened with some sort of curse, and so they were seeking out the *situation* before God in the hopes of *reconciliation with* God. And in reality what's happening here is that Jezebel has set Naboth up in Ahab's name so as to place him before the people, it almost lends itself to a courtroom type situation. They're all there, Naboth is before the people and then 2 witnesses come forth with false accusation against him so that he might be taken out unjustly and murdered all in the name of doing something proper and prudent before God. And it's all happening just right, the law demanded 2 witnesses regarding any kind of capital crime, blasphemy against God was a capital crime, and remember that all this is going down over a vegetable garden.

Now she's accusing him of breaking the law in his blasphemy, (which is a false charge that he's not guilty of) meanwhile Ahab and Jezebel are guilty of breaking the law of coveting his neighbors property, bearing false witness, and murder at the same time. But they look so spiritual doing it, and it all stems from that grip of greed in Ahab, the mind of "more" the condition of covetousness. Be careful.

Vs11-16

And it would appear from 2nd Kings 9:26 that they took his heirs (his sons) and killed them to at the same time. But this idea of taking the vineyard by killing its rightful owner should strike a chord in us, because in this happening, Naboth becomes to us in a certain way a type of Christ. You remember Jesus said, *"There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him."* Matt 21:33-39 Now as you know in prophecy and in parable the vineyard represents the nation of Israel, and Jesus was illustrating to them how over the years the nations leaders had killed the prophets and people that God had sent to them over the years and ultimately they would kill Him, God's own Son whom He had sent them. Naboth was the rightful owner of the vineyard having received it from his father even as Jesus said, *"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father,"* Luke 10:22 The wicked authority wanted what the son had, even as the bible tells that Jesus was delivered up to Pilate because of envy. The condition of covetousness, wanting what didn't belong to them. Naboth was accused on religious and legal grounds, so was Jesus, He was accused of blasphemy, of saying that He would destroy the temple, and He was accused of forbidding His followers to pay taxes to Caesar, all of which were false charges, just as the charges against Naboth were false. Naboth was killed after a brief emotional trial brought on by false witnesses just as Jesus was. And in each case God pronounced judgment upon the leadership of Israel which impacted the entire nation. So there's some interesting similarities in there. And we read in vs 17

Vs17-19

Now I heard somewhere that it had been 6 yrs of silence from Elijah at this point. Don't know where they got there resources but be that the case another way we could understand that is that it had been 6 yrs since Elijah had heard from the Lord. And you think you're struggling tuning into the Spirit, the just live by faith, not by feelings, God was there the whole time, but Elijah had a season of silence where he was growing in his walk of faith. But now God says to him, "Go down to Samaria where you'll meet Ahab in the vineyard of Naboth, and say to him, 'Have you murdered and taken possession as well?'"

Remember what Jesus said, “...*there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.*” Luke 12:2-3 Like we said last week you just can’t escape the presence of God. But notice guys that even though technically it was Jezebel who manipulated this whole thing, it was Ahab that God held accountable. Why? He’s the head of his home, the 2 become one in the marriage union and God holds the husband accountable for the workings of the wife. And wives don’t think that God doesn’t see the things your husbands do in you, you are one flesh before him. Take those issues of your wife on your face before the Lord as though you were crying out for your own deliverance, or those problems that your husband has before God’s throne as though they were your own. Take personal interest in them because they are you in his eyes, you are one before Him. It’s radical, but it is written the two shall become one flesh, do I know all that entails? No, but I do know that you husbands are accountable for your wives, Elijah didn’t go to Jezebel, he went to Ahab. Remember it started in him, the grip of greed in him caused her to feel the need to follow through where he wouldn’t or couldn’t.

Vs20-26

Now having exhorted the husbands regarding the need to be whom God has called you to be let me say a quick word to the wives. Did you notice that word, “Because” there in vs 25? Because his wife stirred him up, he sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord. He made his own choice and was accountable accordingly, but he was influenced in his decision by his wife, wives recognize the influence you have in your husbands lives and wield it wisely. We spoke of the unwise wielding of influence that Peter portrayed Sunday morning, here we see the need for those of you who are wives to be mindful of the incredible influence you have in your husband’s life. You can stir him up in a way whereby he’s encouraged to sell himself to holiness to work righteousness in the sight of the Lord, or in a way that tempts him to sell himself to evil to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord. Yes the husband is the head, but the wife is the neck, and she has the ability to so often turn the head a particular direction that he might lead in a certain way, be careful ladies, God searches your heart in this arena just as He does the husbands in his motives. But I’d also draw your attention to the phrase, “Sold himself” it speaks of slavery, you’re going to serve someone, Paul said, “*For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*” Rom 6:19-22 We’re all in bondage in some way or another, but the beauty of it is that you can choose, bondage to sin and wickedness which ends in death, or enslaved to righteousness through holiness which has its end of everlasting life. Ahab had sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, but watch this.

Vs 27-29

What kind of grace is this? Amazing- grace, God is so eager to show mercy, there's just something about genuine brokenness and humility that stirs the heart of God towards mercy. Even though Ahab's repentance is short lived, its genuine. And God says, "Look at that, something is finally getting through to this man. It won't last, but just because he's sincere in his repentance in this moment, I'll hold off for him." Now God wasn't saying He would punish his son's simply because they were his sons, but rather He's prophesying concerning his son's that they'd follow their dad's path and reap that consequence. But we see the scripture in action, "*The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.*" Ps 34:18 and Again "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart --These, O God, You will not despise.*" Ps 51:17 Isaiah tells us, "*...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*" Isa 66:2 Ahab responds to God's Word, so God responds to Ahab in mercy, let him who has ears to hear, hear what the Spirit is saying.

(Crucify the insatiable appetite of the flesh, being satisfied in You, not to cover up sensual agendas in the appearance of something spiritual. Because You search our hearts, help us to enslave ourselves unto holiness to work righteousness in your sight reaping the end there in, everlasting life.)