

Naboth: Learning the Ways of God

Scripture Readings: 1 Kings 21.1-29, 22.34-38, 2 Kings 9.30.37

During this study series we have concentrated on the part of faith in the life and service we render to the Lord. Here we also deal with the attitude of the servant of the Lord when ministering in a sin weary and wicked world. We are constantly surrounded by sin, blatant and subtle. (Neither is the servant of God immune from it's constant appeal in our heart, but we can be isolated from it through the resources given to us in the Lord.) See Jeremiah 17.9 Genesis 6.5, Psalm 51.5 and Romans 7.14-20. This is natural man's natural state. We should never forget it because if we do, we make error after error. The story of Ahab and Jezebel are pictures of the heart of natural man Naboth is a picture of the heart of spiritual man. Elijah is a picture of the heart of a consecrated servant. There is also a glimpse of the heart of God. Notice then:

Ahab's Impulsive Desire v1&2. Ahab was King of Israel and could have all that his heart may desire. No matter how much we have there are always some things we cannot have. We cannot have that which:

- Is unlawful
- Is immoral
- Belongs to another
- Harms the interests of others
- Contrary to God's word
- Out of God's will

Ahab's selfish desire was contrary to all of these principles. He sulked.

Naboth's Informed Decision v3. His immediate retort was "The Lord forbids me to do it," It was his inheritance, acquired at the conquest and part of his family for generations. See Leviticus 25.13-16, Numbers 36.7. Naboth's desire was to obey the word of God,

There are times when the Christian should say no, even though the world would say yes. In 2 Corinthians 6.14-16 these preclude sharing:

Marriage with unbelievers

Business Partnerships with unbelievers
Christian ministry with unbelievers
This does not mean that we should be unfriendly, it indicates that Christian values will be compromised by an equal partner who does not also hold those values. Christians who do not heed these injunctions are making their life hard at the least and are in danger of missing out on the blessings that follow a 'single eye.' See 2 Corinthians 6.17&18.

Jezebel's Iniquitous Decree v5-14. She not only sinned against Naboth, but she caused others to sin. More than that she sinned against the Lord. She forgot all about Numbers 32.23b or she didn't care. See also Ezekiel 9.10 and 1 Peter 3:12. How many ways did Jezebel sin? She is a picture of those who because of a position of power live as though God is irrelevant. What positions of power today cause men and women to dispense with God as irrelevant? She connived.

God's Inscrutable Direction to Elijah v17-19. The prophetic message given to

Elijah to deliver to Ahab against Ahab and Jezebel shows us just a little of the ways of God. Notice:

God is slow to anger. See Exodus 34.6&7 Psalm 86:15 *"But thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,"* and Psalm 103:8, and other places Proverbs 14:29 tells us why; *'He who is slow to anger has great understanding.'* There are many implications of this trait. Here are two:

1. God allows the wicked to 'prosper' for a while. This means that:
2. Christians may suffer disadvantage or persecution for His name's sake.

These two factors have often caused the righteous to wonder what is going on, *"Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I complain to Thee; yet I would plead my case before Thee. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive?"* Jeremiah 12.1.

But God will not abide sin, rejection and stubbornness forever v17-19. See Exodus 34.6&7 again, and note the closing words. See also Genesis 6.3, Genesis 15.16, Nehemiah 9.30&31 2 Peter 3.9

We do not know the measure of God's patience. When will the sword of judgment fall? Genesis 18.23-33, Revelation 6.9-11, Nehemiah 9.30&33

Even then He is loving and gracious v27-29. The heart of God aches for the

Remember, God's word is only hard to those reject. It is Good News to those who heed. Read Ezekiel 33.11 and 2 Peter 3.9-14

repentance of all people, so much so that He sent His Son to die (John 3.16) is it not unreasonable that He should be anxious for our response. Jonah 4.2&3 also 4.10&11, Luke 15.21-32, Psalm 36.6

We can go beyond the limit of His tolerance. God cannot be patient for ever. See Hebrews 2.2&3, Isaiah 1.10-15, Isaiah 59.1-2, Jeremiah 7.16-20. Our knowledge of the nature and ways of God does help us understand the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Elijah's Ingenuous Duty. He was quick to obey, in fact so quick, we cannot see him move. Read the lines between v19 and v20. This is true despite the negative nature of God's message he carried.

In these days of open rebellion to God what should our message be? Should we tell them

- That God is love?
- That God is merciful?
- That God is holy?
- That God has already condemned sin?
- That God paid the price of our sin?
- That God accepts those who accept Jesus?
- That God rejects those who reject Him?

The Answer is Yes, Yes, . . . Yes. We cannot change or modify God's word. Our task is to tell it like it is, in a way in which they will listen.

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Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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