

Humbled Before The Lord

1 Kings 21

Introduction

- Jackson's Seed Planting
 - Fascinated with planting something and watching it grow
 - Took some seeds from a green pepper and planted them in a flower pot
 - Water's them everyday and within the last couple of week's green spouts have begun to shoot up!
 - As they grow we are preparing to transplant them to a larger pot so they can continue to grow and hopefully produce peppers!
- Sermon Series: "God's Messenger: How Elijah Communicated During Uncertain Times"
 - Seed planting has been challenging
 - Drought, running for his life
 - Even when it looks like seeds are beginning to sprout, Elijah's life is threatened by Queen Jezebel.
 - At just the moment that he is ready to give up; God promises that the seeds he has planted will produce 7,000 faithful believers!
- In today's passage a man by the name Naboth has a fertile vineyard
 - The problem is that it is right beside King Ahab's palace in Jezreel.
 - King Ahab is envious of Naboth's vineyard.
 - How King Ahab goes about acquiring Naboth's vineyard will create a problem for Naboth, the king and queen and also for Elijah who will be called on by God to set things straight.
 - The product of this episode will be humility
- Humility will teach us an important lesson today in regards to
 - God's grace
 - Stewardship
 - The seeds of legacy that we are all planting each day

A Steward of God's Kingdom

- **1 Kings 21:17-19**
 - Elijah is sent to hold King Ahab accountable
 - How did we get here?
 - King Ahab's strategy to acquire Naboth's vineyard was to buy it from him
 - Naboth declined
 - Land had significant meaning, as part of God's promise to Israel, land was an inheritance from God

- Selling the land would be like selling your inheritance from God
- The fact that King Ahab would even suggest such a proposal was unethical
- King Ahab returns home distraught
 - Queen Jezebel devises a plan
 - Decree a fast
 - Set Naboth in charge
 - Have two worthless men bring charges against Naboth
 - Sentence Naboth to death by stoning
 - Naboth is killed, now the land is available
- King Ahab acquires the land, but not apart from the knowledge of God
- What is the role of Israel's King?
 - Represent the authority or Kingdom of God
 - Any abuse of that power will contradict God's character
 - God holds any king accountable for how they use their power and the influence on the people through their leadership
- Message for us
 - What has God given you responsibility of?
 - It's not always an official position!
 - Example of Neighborhood
 - Conflict within Neighborhood stirred by the color of window panes
 - Instead of just sitting by and losing our place of influence, we decided to build stronger relationships with our neighbors
 - While people are still upset with how things unfolded during the meeting, I think if we stepped back we could say that our communication and relationships have been strengthened
 - The role that Amy and I have tried to play is to not allow a negative experience tear our neighborhood apart by everyone retreating to their homes
 - In the last couple of weeks, neighbors have talked to one another through email or conversations as they walk through the neighborhood.
- God has given each of us as Christians the responsibility to steward the Kingdom of God on earth
 - Mark 1:14-15 (ESV), "Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"
 - Jesus reminds us that when he came to the earth, the presence of God was (and continues to be) as close as it ever has before.
 - God's Kingdom, God's authority is revealed through the power of the gospel

- Every time that you and I exercise Biblical principles in our life we are planting the seeds of God's kingdom on earth
- Matthew 6:10 (ESV), "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
- We play a part in ushering in God's Kingdom on earth
- We each have a responsibility as stewards of God's Kingdom
- 1 Kings 21:20-21, 25-26
 - King Ahab sold himself to evil
 - His influence for God was sold for his own gain
- Example from Baseball
 - Indirectly impacted this week simply because we are parents
 - A concern was raised that didn't necessarily involve us, however we wanted to be proactive in being part of the solution rather than the problem
 - Asked the coach, "How can we help the situation as a parent and spectator?"
 - Opened the door for dialog, established a relationship
- Becoming more aware of this opportunity in our world today
 - The influence, or spread of the gospel is not going to come so much from within the walls of our church, but from our stewardship of the Kingdom of God in the world
 - People are looking for someone who is not going to sell out for personal gain, but instead people who are guided by principles that are bigger than themselves
 - We have an opportunity as stewards of God's kingdom to plant seeds

Prophetic Voice Restored

- What has happened to Elijah to restore his prophetic voice?
 - Hand of God
 - Low whisper
 - Elijah has found the strength to continue the journey
 - Represents a clear contrast to King Ahab's leadership
 - Failure to Thrive
 - Refocused/Renewed Purpose
 - The wilderness may not have been God's will, but God's mercy and grace found Elijah in the wilderness, restored Elijah, and got him back on the right track.
 - Elijah listened (eventually!) and resumed his God-given purpose.
- As Christians, we are living in the wilderness as it relates to our prophetic voice in the world
 - Our position of influence is not the same as it once was
 - In order to regain our voice it will take a lesson from Elijah's story

- Being jealous for the Lord can draw us closer to God
- God can lead us by his hand
- Listen for the low whisper
- Continue the journey
- Our prophetic voice will be restored as you and I discover ways to be stewards of God's kingdom not only in the church, but in the world!

Humbled Stewards

- 1 Kings 21:27-29
- The one thing that is similar to both King Ahab and Elijah's experiences is that they are both humbled by God
 - King Ahab is humbled by his sin
 - Elijah is humbled by his emptiness
- Humility enabled Elijah to be an effective messenger of God
 - As he confronts King Ahab, he knows the importance of humility from his own experience- he can relate to King Ahab
 - Humility allows for God's grace and mercy to be received
 - The invitation of grace reveals the character of God
 - Reminds us that God is just and in control
 - The result is renewed purpose
- Consider the legacy that King Ahab is planting versus Elijah
 - King Ahab is given the responsibility to lead the Nation of Israel under the authority of God and yet his sin influences an entire Nation to turn from God
 - Elijah as a faithful messenger of God is being used to establish the next generation of faithful believers who will continue to share the messenger of God's grace.
 - Both King Ahab and Elijah were stewards of God's Kingdom. One was a king and one was a prophet, but with two different results.
 - You and I have the opportunity to sow a legacy that will either produce the fruit of King Ahab or Elijah

Conclusion

- Will we recognize the responsibility that God has given us?
 - By selling our influence for personal gain?
 - Or investing in God's Word to spread the message of God's Kingdom?
- Whether you realize it or not, you are a steward of God's kingdom
- God can restore your prophetic voice as you seek God with all of your heart
- Humility is the key ingredient to recognizing the potential of what God has given to you.

- Humility is an attitude of worship; humbled before the Lord