

- ***Read Psalm 9:1-10*** This Psalm of David speaks to something that isn't even mentioned by name within the Psalm itself, but this is a psalm about the justice of God. The God we serve is a God of justice. In fact, **Psalm 33:5 tells us that "He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord."** Those who do good will be rewarded, but those who deal wickedly will meet their fate of punishment. **(Psalm 11:5-7)**
- We live in times where there are many "social justice warriors" who are just waiting for the next cause in which they can march and bring attention to some sort of perceived injustice. It is true that there are many injustices in this world. There are those who are done wrong by others. There are the less fortunate who get the short stick in this life. There are those who suffer unjustly. However, this isn't something that is special just to our lifetime.
- In fact, we can look to Scripture and find numerous stories where injustices occurred. One of the ones that stands out most in my mind was one of our Daily Bible Readings from the past couple of weeks in **I Kings 21**. Here we read about Naboth's Vineyard and how Ahab and Jezebell dealt unjustly with Naboth for the sake of obtaining his vineyard. Let's consider a bushel of lessons that we can learn from this story of injustice concurring Naboth's Vineyard.

I. Some things are worth more than money.(vv.1-3)

- A. We start off with Ahab desiring to buy the vineyard of Naboth because it was in a good location in respect to his house. Aha doesn't seek to steal it or take it, but he actually does the right thing and offers Naboth compensation for the garden in the form of another or money.
- B. However, Naboth declines the offer because this vineyard belonged to his family as a possession. It seems as if it had belonged to the family for some time. He wasn't willing to part with the vineyard even though he would have gained something for it. He recognized that there are some things that are worth more than money.
- C. **Proverbs 22:1** tells us that a good name is worth more than many riches. Naboth wasn't willing to sale his family's good name. Just the same, we ought not be willing to give away those things most valuable simply because we will gain monetarily from it. This is especially true when we consider our soul. What would it profit us to gain the whole world and lose our own soul. **(Mark 8:36)** Some things are simply worth more than money.

II. Don't let disappointments lead to more problems. (vv.4-6)

- A. Upon hearing that Naboth wasn't going to sale his vineyard, Ahab became overwhelmingly disappointed. Instead of accepting Naboth's decision and moving on, Ahab decided to dwell upon his misfortunate and go home and pout like by laying on his bed and not eating. This led his wife Jezebel to inquire about his issues, and we'll read in a moment where that leads.
- B. There isn't anything wrong with being disappointed. Stuff happens in this life. Things wont go our way from time to time. However, we cannot allow ourselves to dwell upon the disappointments of this life.
- C. When we dwell upon disappointments then bad things usually follow. We might allow disappointments to affect us to the point where we behave as if we are depressed like Ahab. We might allow our disappointments to cause us to just give up all together. It might be that we dwell on our disappointments to the point where it pushes us to seek retribution on those who might have caused our disappointments or we seek to disappoint others simply because we have been disappointed in some way.
- D. We must be better than this not allow ourselves to dwell upon past disappointments. Instead we need to put our faith in God and move on towards better things or risk compounded our issues. **(Psalm 37:7-11)**

III. Covetousness can easily lead to more sin. (vv.4-16)

- A. From reading this text it seems that the main cause of problems for Ahab was the fact that he coveted the vineyard of Naboth because of its location to his home. Instead of just letting the situation pass, he continued to dwell upon it. His actions led his evil wife to do evil things in order to obtain it.
- B. Remember, there is nothing wrong with desiring nice or good things. But when we allow that desire to overtake us and it consumes us to the point where we are willing to do anything to obtain it...then we have major issues that need to be addressed. This is where Ahab and Jezebel allowed his covetousness to go. It snowballed into something far worse than it ever had to be.

- C. Let's remember that this isn't the first time a king of Israel allow his covetous heart to lead him to sin horribly by taking the life of another person. King David followed nearly the same kind of pathway in his mission to have Bathsheba for himself. His lustful eyes could've been the end of that situation, but he allow things to escalate and growing into something that he surely never expected at the beginning. **(II Samuel 11)**
- D. We must be sure to nip sinful actions in the bud or they will have the chance to grow into something we next expected them to become. Sin can easily take us farther than we ever wanted to go and places we never wanted to be.

IV.LEADERS: Don't abuse our power and authority (vv.7-16)

- A. A serious lesson I took away from the reading of this story is that as a leader I ought not take advantage of our authority and power and abuse others with it. This is exactly what Jezebel did to innocent Naboth. She took advantage of her status and had others lie about Naboth and had him put to death. She completely abused her power, authority, and influence for evil purposes. David was guilty of the same thing as he rebuked the rich man for taking the poor man's little lamb.
- B. If not careful, we can be tempted to abuse our power as leaders in various positions to get our way. Shepherds are warned to not serve simply for sordid or evil gain or power and authority. **(I Peter 5:1-3)** Those who teach must be sure to teach only the truth because if they teach falsely or for their own gain then they will be judged. **(James 3:1)** As parents, we must be sure to not just throw our authority as parents around, but we must seek to do what is best for our children and not provoke them to wrath by our own selfish actions. **(Eph. 6:4)**
- C. With any leadership position comes great honor, but it also brings forth great responsibility. We must be sure to not allow the temptation to abuse our power for evil gain.

V. Evil people will not escape judgement (vv.17-26)

- A. Those who knew Naboth must have been heartbroken and incensed by the fact that his life was taken unjustly simply for some material gain. However, the needed to take to heart that the God of Israel is a God who loves justice, and He would not allow for the evil to go unpunished forever.
- B. Truly God was aware of what had happened and He sent Elijah to deliver the punishment to Ahab for his and his wife wicked deeds. This should speak very strong to us about the nature of God and that He will not allow evil people to continue in their ways without faces the consequences.
- C. Certainly David realized the punishment for his sins when he realized that his son with Bathsheba was dead. Sometimes, the punishment is swift and apparent like in that case. However, sometimes the punishment for sin is held off for a time and the evil workers are punished only in the next life. Regardless, We must be certain to remember that God will not allow the wicked to go unpunished. **(Psalm 11:5,6)**

VI.Repentance is available, even to the worst of sinners (vv.27-29)

- A. Probably the most surprising part of this whole chapter is the end. After Elijah has handed down what will be the punishment for Ahab's and Jezebel's actions, Ahab responded with great sorry for what he had done. He tore his clothes and mourned for his evil deeds.
- B. While God is a God who loves justice, He is also a God of righteousness and the obviously sorrow and repentance of Ahab moved God to postpone the judgement upon him and his house. The key wording to me is from **v.29** where God acknowledges the humility of Ahab as the reason for postponement of judgement. Evil the post evil of individuals, if they will humble themselves before God can find mercy.
- C. We must remember that David repented and mourned for his sin against Uriah and God. He recognized where he failed and repented. However, repentance does not negate consequences entirely. The young child still died. Ahab's house would still be destroyed. Yet, the humility of a sinner will result in the grace and mercy of God if the sinner is willing to humble himself and recognize the error of his ways.

Certainly, the story of Naboth's vineyard is a sad one because injustice was surely present. An honorable man was murdered simply because he possessed a vineyard in good location. He was murdered because someone abused his/her power because of covetousness. Surely, we must be aware of the temptations to do the same in our life, and hopefully we will take these lessons to heart so that this sad story will not repeat itself in any form in our lives. May God be praised as we live lives that glorify Him in all that we do.