

Lesson 168: Waking With Jesus -Part 1

Scripture: 1 Kings 21:1-21

Memory Verse: “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” 1 Timothy 6:6

— 1 Kings 1:1-21 NLT—

Now there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. One day Ahab said to Naboth, “Since your vineyard is so convenient to my palace, I would like to buy it to use as a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange, or if you prefer, I will pay you for it.”

But Naboth replied, “I can’t sell what God has given to me.”

So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth’s answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat!

“What’s the matter?” his wife Jezebel asked him. “What’s made you so upset that you’re not eating?”

“I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or trade it, but he refused!” Ahab told her.

“Are you the king of Israel or not?” Jezebel demanded. “Get up and eat something, and don’t worry about it. I’ll get you Naboth’s vineyard!”

So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and other leaders of the town where Naboth lived. In her letters she commanded: “Call the citizens together for a time of fasting, and give Naboth a place of honor. And then seat two scoundrels across from him who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death.”

So the elders and other town leaders followed the instructions Jezebel had written in the letters. They called for a fast and put Naboth at a prominent place before the people. Then the two scoundrels came and sat down across from him. And they accused Naboth before all the people, saying, “He cursed God and the king.” So he was dragged outside the town and stoned to death. The town leaders then sent word to Jezebel, “Naboth has been stoned to death.”

When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, “You know the vineyard Naboth wouldn’t sell you? Well, you can have it now! He’s dead!” So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it.

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Ahab’s story is an example of lacking godliness with great contentment. When we lose sight of Jesus being the source of our contentment, we walk the path into death like Ahab did.

In James chapter 1, it says temptation comes from our own sinful desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires (when not confronted with truth, trust and love for God’s commands) give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. (Not just literal death like in the murder of Naboth, but also death as in eternal separation from God.)

In contrast, when we proclaim the excellencies of God’s character and actions, we are recognizing the spirit of the law, looking into God’s true nature and thus as the object of our admiration and enjoyment we become more like him.

The Lord sent Elijah the prophet to confront Ahab and deliver the news that because of his actions he would die. Ahab did not see the weight of his sin and accused Elijah of being his enemy. Then Elijah explained that Ahab’s line of succession would be cut off and his wife would die too.

Ahab began to see the consequence of his sin and it was then that he repented in deep humility. The Lord reduced Ahab’s sentence so that he wouldn’t have to see his kingdom lost. God was merciful to Ahab and God wants to be merciful to you. No matter the bad things you have done, the Lord wants you to confess them, so that he can forgive you. He wants you to find your contentment in life through faith in Him and what He accomplished for you on the cross where He took that same consequence of death that our sins lead to like Ahab. As it says in 1 Timothy 6:6 “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”