CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
APRIL06 2024

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 21; 2 Kings 9.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 16.

just scratching the service



Photo by The Crystal Lenz

keytext

"There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife. He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the LORD drove out before Israel."

(1 Kings 21:25, 26, NIV)

flashlight

"Naturally of a covetous disposition, Ahab, strengthened and sustained in wrongdoing by Jezebel, had followed the dictates of his evil heart until he was fully controlled by the spirit of selfishness. He could brook no refusal of his wishes; the things he desired he felt should by right be his" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 204).

"A reformation followed. Those who took part in acclaiming Joash king, had solemnly covenanted 'that they should be the Lord's people.' And now that the evil influence of the daughter of Jezebel had been removed from the kingdom of Judah, . . . 'the city was quiet.' 2 Chronicles 23:16, 21" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 216).

what do you think?

Take the following service quiz by filling in the blanks with the first answer that comes to mind.

1. I think the best example of a selfless servant who is alive today is _____.
2. The biggest reason some teens don't get involved in service is _____.
3. The biggest reward in serving is_____.
4. Besides Christ, the most selfless person in the Bible is _____.
5. The most selfish person in the Bible is _____ _____.
6. Serving others makes me feel _____ _____.

did you know?

The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, and being clothed with humility, possessing that love that is pure, peaceable, and easy to be entreated, full of gentleness and good fruits, is not an easy attainment. . . . The soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in knowledge and true holiness."—Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 376



INTO THE STORY

"Some time later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. Ahab said to Naboth, 'Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth.'

"But Naboth replied, 'The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my ancestors.'

"So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my ancestors.' He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.

"His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, 'Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?'

"He answered her, 'Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, "Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place." But he said, "I will not give you my vineyard." '

"Jezebel his wife said, 'Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.' . . .

"Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 'Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. Say to him, "This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?" Then say to him, "This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!" ' "

"Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she put on eye makeup, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, 'Have you come in peace, you Zimri, you murderer of your master?'

"He looked up at the window and called out, 'Who is on my side? Who?' Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. 'Throw her down!' Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot.

"Jehu went in and ate and drank. 'Take care of that cursed woman,' he said, 'and bury her, for she was a king's daughter.' But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands."

(1 Kings 21:1-7, 17-19; 2 Kings 9:30-35, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What does the story of Ahab and Naboth teach us about selfishness?

Is service the best antidote for selfishness? Why or why not?

What was it about Jezebel that was most offensive to God?

Do you think Jezebel's life exhibited the principle "whatever one sows, that will he also reap" (Galatians 6:7, ESV)? Explain.

How do you reconcile this story of God's harsh judgment against Jezebel with the loving nature of Christ? Why do you think God acts in judgment?

Based on this story, what would you identify as the highest value for Ahab? Naboth? Jezebel? Jehu? What can we learn from their story that might help to inform us about what we choose to value today?

punch lines

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" **(Matthew 5:16, NIV).**

"A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare" **(Proverbs 21:6, NIV).**

"Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" **(Philippians 2:4, NIV).**

"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked" **(Luke 6:35, NIV).**

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" **(2 Corinthians 5:10, NIV).**

further insight

"Following Christ's example of unselfish service, trusting like little children in His merits, and obeying His commands, we shall receive the approval of God."—Ellen G. White, *Our Father Cares*, p. 310

"However lowly, any work done for God with a full surrender of self is as acceptable to Him as the highest service. No offering is small that is given with true-heartedness and gladness of soul."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 359

Sabbath

Read Psalm 34:14; Matthew 25:34-40; 1 Corinthians 9:19; 1 Timothy 6:18, 19; James 2:17; 1 Peter 2:12.

In a small group of friends share the answers you gave in the *What Do You Think?* section. Then think about and discuss with someone today's Bible passages in light of their message.

Sunday

Read Proverbs 21:6.

Think about the story of Ahab and Naboth's vineyard. Reflect on the following questions:

Have I ever wanted something so badly, only to be disappointed when I got it? What does this teach me about materialism?

_____
_____
_____

Jezebel was a very destructive influence in Ahab's life. Do I have anyone in my life who is leading me into destruction? How would God have me deal with these influences in my life?

_____
_____
_____

Monday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Think about how Ahab is remembered still to this day ("There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD. . . . He behaved in the vilest manner" [1 Kings 21:25, 26, NIV]). If there was a text that people would read a thousand years from now about you, a verse that summarized your legacy, what would it say? Write it below.

_____
_____
_____

Tuesday

Read Philippians 2:4.

In chapter 16 of *Prophets and Kings*, Ellen White mentions a number of lesser-known characters following the reign of Ahab. Review the chapter in *Prophets and Kings*. Identify the following people and note how they fit into the story:

Ahaziah _____
Jehoram (Ahaziah's brother) _____
Jeroboam _____
Jehoshaphat _____
Jehoram (Jehoshaphat's son) _____
Athaliah _____
Jehu _____

Wednesday

Apply the selected *Punch Lines* to your life. "Let your light shine before others" (Matthew 5:16, NIV). Here is one way that I can let my light shine today: _____

_____
_____

"Not looking to your own interests but . . . to the interests of the others" (Philippians 2:4, NIV). Here is one person God has called me to take an interest in today:

_____

"Love your enemies" (Luke 6:35, NIV). This is what that command is calling me to do today:

_____
_____

Thursday

Read Luke 6:35.

Speaking of Ahab's selfishness, Ellen White writes: "This dominant trait in Ahab, which influenced so disastrously the fortunes of the kingdom under his successors, is revealed in an incident which took place while Elijah was still a prophet in Israel. Hard by the palace of the king was a vineyard belonging to Naboth, a Jezreelite. Ahab set his heart on possessing this vineyard, and he proposed to buy it or else to give in exchange for it another piece of land" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 204).

So intense was Ahab's desire for this vineyard that when it was not satisfied he was taken ill. What does this teach us? How can we be so filled with Christ that He overwhelms any hint of selfishness? In what other ways can selfishness bring great harm?

_____
_____
_____

Friday

Read Matthew 5:16.

Consider the words of Ellen G. White from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668, "All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service."

Whom do I need to help me take the next step in my commitment to God?

_____
_____
_____

What one thing do I need to do to help someone this week?

_____
_____
_____

[1] William Strauss, "Today's Teens Are Less Selfish Than Some Adults Think," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 5, 2007, www.csmonitor.com/2007/0305/p09s02-coop.html.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 16.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URIhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.