

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF SOLOMON
STUDY NUMBER 23 – 1 KINGS 11:14-43

We have been in the last sections of the life of Solomon, and we are skating back and forth between the historical and some of his writings. Two weeks ago we were in the historical record, last week we were in Proverbs 5 on sexual infidelity and today we jump back into history. Next week I'm going to do the eulogy and do the tribute in Proverbs 3 which is one of my favorite sections to teach. In 1 Kings 11 the last time we were together there were some key statements in the first part of that Chapter that is going to set the stage today. Just listen carefully.

1 Kings 11:1-4 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women, besides Pharaoh's daughter— Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods."
NEVERTHELESS, SOLOMON HELD FAST TO THEM IN LOVE. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

THE KEY PHRASE in those verses is:

**NEVERTHELESS, SOLOMON HELD FAST TO THEM
IN LOVE.**

I just say this, his love has grown cold and, as a result of his love growing cold for the Lord, he is making some real bad decisions. Those decisions are going to be played out in the study today because we are actually going to have Solomon die in the study today.

Last week we quoted from Deion Saunders' book, Power, Money & Sex. Dein quotes from the Book of Ecclesiastes. Listen to what he says:

I remember winning the Super Bowl that year; that was the same week I bought myself a brand new \$275 thousand Lamborghini and I hadn't even driven it a mile before I realized, No, that's not it. That's not what I am looking for. It's got to be something else. I'm so hungry!

I tried everything. Parties, women, buying expensive jewelry and gadgets, and nothing helped. There was no peace. I mean I was playing great. Every time I would turn on the TV I could see myself on three or four commercials. At one time I think I was on five different commercials at the same time. You see yourself, the kids see you, you've got all this media attention and everything the world has to offer, but no peace, no joy, just emptiness inside.

The Bible describes it in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes as chasing after the wind, and that's exactly what it was like. I tried to buy myself something to make me happy and I was even emptier than before, because I could see that nothing could possibly satisfy the hunger that was deep down inside of me.

That's when you turn to the women, and you say, Okay, let me get this woman and have sex with her, and then I'll be happy. But that doesn't do it, so the next thing you know you've got two women' but nothing, nothing, nothing.

You know that describes Solomon to a "tee"! He has tried all these different things and when he writes Ecclesiastes he just says all of that is meaningless, meaningless, meaningless.

Now we have a problem, he is coming down to the end of his life and he has made these decisions. Is he going to handle these circumstances where he has been disobedient to the Lord in the right way and become repentant and broken like his father would have done?

Or, is he going to continue to hold fast like we read in the text and dig in his heels and oppose God in the end. I want to just say this at the beginning, God is not going to sit by idly. While we are living in disobedience he will take action in our lives.

In order for us to understand that I want to give you a few verses of scripture to kind of build the frame work for what I am getting ready to share.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

John 15:1-2 I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that does bear fruit, he prunes, so that it will be even more fruitful.

Hebrews 12:5-6 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

Here you have a man he's very distinguished, very successful, he is king of the land and yet, as a leader, he is living in disobedience on several different levels. What you are going to learn today is what the Lord does when you live in disobedience. You are going to watch how the Lord works when there is disobedience in the life of a king but, remember, the same principle applies in the life of an individual; you and I sitting here as believers. He will do the same thing with us.

v. 14 Then the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom.

First phrase, *the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary*. I'm asking myself a question. Would he do that again? Would he raise up an adversary in your life because he wants to accomplish some purpose and deal with something in your life and mine? Would he raise up an adversary against a country that is living in disobedience by bringing another country into the circumstances and into the mix to discipline the country? You have to answer YES to all of those!

I want to stop and give you an overview because I think this will help you a little. When you read a name like *Hadad the Edomite* you know it is going to be a long day in your Devotions, you don't know the guy and you don't know what that means. So let me just stop for a second.

Basically, what is getting ready to happen today is Solomon has his heels dug in, he is holding fast to those women he loves, he is not going to violate it, he is worshipping these idols and involved in all of the stuff that we learned a couple of weeks ago and he is still doing it. What is God going to do? He is going to do three things:

HE IS GOING TO RAISE UP HADAD FROM THE SOUTH.

HE IS GOING TO RAISE UP REZON FROM THE NORTH.

HE IS GOING TO GIVE HIM THE BIG BLOW BY GIVING HIM JEROBOAM THE SON OF NEBAT. HE IS GOING TO COME OUT OF THE TRIBE OF EPHRAIM.

It is this three-pronged adversity that is a part and parcel of the price that Solomon is going to pay by his deliberate disobedience.

Now that you have that overview, we can dig into it and the first one is HADAD and he is down from Edom in the south. I asked myself a question. Why is he going to do this? Why is God going to do this to Solomon? You come up with an obvious answer, its DISOBEDIENCE isn't it? I mean we have seen disobedience in Solomon's life over these previous weeks. Idolatry, immorality, the horses, his horse trade in the land of Egypt was in violation of the law and the multiplication of the silver and gold just to mention a few.

You see I really believe that when a person gets hooked on this stuff he just keeps running and he can't get himself unhooked.

That is what Deion says: All I could do was stay busy, occupy my time, do whatever I could do to keep working so the feelings of emptiness wouldn't come to haunt me. I would see a beautiful woman who was a challenge, I ended up conquering her. I would say to myself, man that's not it! I achieved every goal I could think of. I was right back where I started, empty, empty, empty and nothing I did could touch that deep loneliness inside of me. I was just running and I couldn't stop.

Sin has a very subtle hook in it and Satan knows that. When you go so long and you have lived so long in compromise and so long in disobedience, the older you get the faster the slide into hell! You don't get unhooked! Solomon doesn't all of a sudden get unhooked from one thousand women and unhooked from all the diplomatic relationships in Egypt and give his gold and silver for something philanthropic or something like that and change so quickly. The time comes when really it is too late, but he is still here. So the Lord loving him so much will create a circumstance for response while allowing these things to come to light.

I believe the Lord did that with Judas Iscariot. Why would the Lord put Judas Iscariot as the guest of honor, wash his feet, and then give him the first piece of bread. I think when he was washing his feet he probably looked

up into his eyes and said, “Judas it is not too late. You could still come back, you can still retrieve this thing.” Even though the Lord knew full well that he wasn’t going to do it.

Hadad is from Edom in the south, his name means “thunderer”, he is well named. The thing I want us to see in this is how God can just take circumstances that surround us individually and he can just work them in order to get His purpose in teaching us what we need to teach or, to get us to let go of what we need to let go of or, to put ourselves in a position of blessing by submission and brokenness to what He is allowing.

C.S. Lewis says it this way. God uses adversity like walking a dog. If the dog gets its leash wrapped around a pole and tries to continue running forward he will only tighten the leash more. Both the dog and the owner are after the same end, forward motion, but the owner must resist the dog by pulling him opposite the direction he wants to go. The master, sharing the same intention but understanding better than the dog where he really wants to go, takes an action precisely opposite to that of the dog’s will. It is in this way that God uses adversity.

(From Parson’ Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(Don't Just Stand There, Praying Something: The Incredible Power of Intercessory Prayer by Ronald Dunn)

Vance Havner used to say, "The problem is that the situation is desperate but we're not."

p. 79

Do you know what has happened to me as a result of this study? One neat thing is I really appreciate the Book of Proverbs. I appreciate it in a different way. All of my life in ministry I have always bought the line of the typical seminary teaching that Proverbs was written by a young man while he still had wisdom. There are some great statements in Proverbs now that are very meaningful. I want you to listen to just three of them:

Proverbs 16:3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

Proverbs 16:9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

You just think of those things and you realize here he is and this kingdom of peace is being disrupted now on the southern border as the study begins.

I have always wanted to read a book by Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son.

(Living Beyond the Limits) by Franklin Graham)

Our reluctance to confront others can be our mistaken belief that we as Christians should simply make people feel good. Nowhere does the Bible say we're to feel good about sin.

Imagine if while building the ark Noah had simply said, "Hey, you down there, I want you to know you're going to get a little wet. Please, don't panic. It's nothing to get anxious or uncomfortable about, but you need to think about getting an umbrella.

Each person we meet on a daily basis who does not know Christ is hell bound. That may make some folks bristle—but it's a fact. When we refuse to warn people that their actions and lifestyles have eternal consequence, we're not doing them any favors. If everybody feels good about his or her sin, why would anyone repent?

I have heard it said that we want a God without wrath, who took man without sin, into a kingdom without justice, through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.

The truth is, judgment is coming.

p. 29

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I feel sometimes that the Lord is frustrated with our lack of attention to detail and there comes a time when it is necessary for Him to take action against us. Things fall apart quick and fast when God is your enemy or when He is part of the adversary.

v. 15 Earlier when David was fighting with Edom, Joab the commander of the army, who had gone up to bury the dead, had struck down all the men in Edom.

Enter Joab, military commander. He is blood thirsty. He has two brothers, Abishai and Asahel. These three boys are all sons of Zeruah, David's sister. Joab is blood thirsty as can be so is Abishai. Asahel was a fatality in one of the earlier battles.

Joab is one of these guys that has the blood of three innocent men on his belt. He has the blood of Abner, who is Saul's military general. He has the blood of Abaslom, David's son when he was in the military. Amassa was assassinated by David on the road to a military campaign. When Joab does something, he does it big time. Evidently, they had a conflict in Edom and there were some fatalities among the Israelites. He is on his

way down there to bury them and when he gets down there he just loses it.

v. 16 Joab and all the Israelites stayed there for six months, until they had destroyed all the men in Edom.

v. 17 But Hadad, still only a boy, fled to Egypt with some Edomite officials who had served his father.

Evidently, this was the king's son. He is just a young guy and he flees with a few of the citizens that are left out of the officials of the government and they head south to Egypt.

v. 18 They set out from Midian and went to Paran. Then taking men from Paran with them, they went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house and land and provided him with food.

Isn't it interesting how Egypt and Pharaoh always does good things? Remember when Jacob and the whole family came south they were completely taken care of. Here's Hadad fleeing from Edom down there and Pharaoh says come on in I am going to give you three things. I am going to give you a house to live in, land and some food and then later he starts liking him so he gives him a wife as you see in the next verse.

v. 19 Pharaoh was so pleased with Hadad that he gave him a sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes, in marriage.

v. 20 The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son named Genubath, whom Tahpenes brought up in the royal palace. There Geneubath lived with Pharaoh's own children.

v. 21 While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David rested with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me go, that I may return to my own country."

Why is he going home? Revenge is seething in his heart like you can't believe. It has been boiling over all these years and he has been waiting for his turn. Now the time has come, Joab's history and David's history. I can go back and begin to pay back the debt that they owe me for what has taken place in my family. Here comes Hadad!

v. 22 What have you lacked here that you want to go back to your own country?" Pharaoh asked. "Nothing," Hadad replied, "but do let me go!"

Isn't it interesting how the sovereignty of God is always forever moving behind the scenes for the full accomplishment of His purpose in our lives for blessing and adversity. For Solomon at this time it is adversity.

But your saying what can a guy do like this when he gets back home? Well you know what he can do. He can do raids, he can do guerrilla warfare, he can do mobilizing, organizing the opposition just like Absalom did and then bombings and assassinations. As well as terrorist acts of all kinds. They are not foreign to this and so on the southern border there is trouble coming from the south.

When you get to verse 23 it is almost like you read verse 14 isn't it?

v. 23 And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah.

David and his military campaigns went north and this young man was involved in that situation. Driven out of his home in the midst of a military campaign but he is enough of a rebel that he comes back. Isn't it interesting too how God can turn up the heat and continue to put greater pressure to have the full accomplishment of His will. Maybe as a believer, you feel that kind of adversity. Maybe you feel that kind of hurt and you wonder what in the world God is trying to do. I mean you've been good and you don't know anything in your life that is wrong, it seems so inconsistent. What's He doing?

Don't Just Stand There, Praying Something: The Incredible Power of Intercessory Prayer by Ronald Dunn

Sometimes we misjudge the Vinedresser. We may be

resting in our appointed place, abiding in the vine, bearing good fruit, when suddenly heavy steps are heard entering the vineyard. Instantly, the word comes through the grapevine: The Vinedresser has come, and He's carrying pruning shears. And then He's standing in front of you, and for no reason at all, without a word of explanation, He starts clipping away some of your best wood. Nearby vines try to encourage you: It will be all right, they say; it's for your own good, they say; you will live through it, they say. But you know you won't. You can't understand the cruelty of the Vinedresser—this, after you won the Most Fruitful Branch of the Year award.

Nevertheless, if you're a branch, pruning goes with the territory; it's an occupational hazard. Branches are instruments, not ornaments. The word here for "prune" is translated "cleanse," which, when used in reference to the vine, means "to prune by the removal of superfluous wood."

pp. 149-50

So what's happening to Solomon because of sin and disobedience is the same principle that is happening to you and me. I mean He is going to come walking into our vineyard and start nipping our branches for the purpose of a fruit that He wants to bear.

v. 24 He gathered men around him and became the leader of a band of rebels when David destroyed the forces

[of Zobah]; the rebels went to Damascus, where they settled and took control.

He does the same thing in the north that I think Hadad is doing in the south. Its robbery, raids, any way to get resources for themselves and for their military operation from the north.

v. 25 Rezon was Israel's adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel.

You think two's enough? Now you are going to get the bad one. These two are external here comes the internal shot.

v. 26 Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

We always say, trouble comes in threes! One, two, three strikes your out at the "old ballgame". Well, here it comes. Let me just remind you Solomon has (1) become sick, (2) he is selfish and (3) he is a sorry leader and he has no right to lead anymore. God is just taking the steps behind the scenes to take Solomon to a premature grave. That's the bottom line right now. What you see here is tough. Look at Psalm 75:6-7

Psalm 75:6-7 No one from the east or the west or

from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges; He brings one down, he exalts another.

None of us are indispensable and when we live with disobedience in our lives we can expect that these kind of things are going to happen because God loves us so much He is not going to let us go our own way.

(No More Excuses: Be the Man God Made You to Be by Tony Evans)

Hebrews 12:6 says that “Whom the Lord loveth, he skinneeth alive” (Evans translation). And whom the Lord loveth, he spanketh. Jonah was about to get spanked big time.

The Lord didn't stop him from getting on the boat in Joppa to go to Tarshish. But the Lord met him in the middle of nowhere. In the words of that great boxing philosopher Muhammad Ali, “He can run, but he can't hide.”

pp. 90-91

To understand this I have gone back to (A Gentle Thunder by Max Lucado.

How far do you want God to go in getting your attention? If God has to choose between your eternal safety and your earthly comfort, which do you hope

he chooses? Don't answer too quickly. Give it some thought...

God does what it takes to get our attention. Isn't that the message of the Bible?...The relentless pursuit of God. God on the hunt. God in search...God is creative as he is relentless...Both kind and stern. Tender and tough. Faithfully firm.

God will whisper. He will shout. He will touch and tug. He will take away our burdens; he'll even take away our blessings. If there are a thousand steps between us and him, he will take all but one. But he will leave the final one for us. The choice is ours.

Please understand. His goal is not to make you happy. His goal is to make you his. His goal is not to get you what you want, it is to get you what you need. And if that means a jolt or two to get you in your seat, then be jolted. Earthly discomfort is a glad swap for heavenly peace. pp. 52-54

v. 27 Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king; Solomon had built the supporting terraces and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father.

Remember during the building campaign he built the temple and then he built this huge palace complex. He then entered into a large landscaping program; it was

basically to take the hilly area and beautify it and fill in the caverns that had been created by all the construction. Who does he put in charge of that, but Jeroboam, the son of Nebat? You see here is a young guy. He is very capable, very energetic, he is very motivated and he is promoted through the ranks very quickly by Solomon because of the kind of guy he is.

v. 28 Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the house of Joseph.

Who does that sound like? Well that sounds like Joseph. Remember he gets into Potiphar's house and Potiphar just loves him so much he just elevates and gives him everything to do and whatever he wants. Then, when he gets thrown into prison unjustly the main guy in prison turns over everything to him because he was such a fine young man.

v. 29 About that time Jerobaom was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country.

I think you need to know that because God isn't going to make this public. The way it is going public is Jeroboam is going to take it and make it public and that is part of his rebellion.

v. 30 and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces.

v. 31 Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: “See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes.

Does that sound familiar? Remember when Samuel came to Saul after he had been disobedient with the Amalekites what he said to him?

1 Samuel 15:27-29 As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.”

The prophet comes to Jeroboam and tells him what he is going to do.

v. 32 But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe.

What happened to that other tribe? You see in the southern kingdom there was Benjamin and Judah together. They literally formed the southern kingdom of

Judah. The tribe of Benjamin was kind of dissolved into Judah and they became the southern kingdom. Then you have the northern kingdom of ten tribes to make your twelve.

There is a KEY WORD in verse 33. See if you can find this word.

v. 33 I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, not done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

You see the word that is so very, very troubling it is the word "THEY"! Let that sink in for just a minute. You see, biographically and historically in our study it has all been GOD and Solomon right? Don't tell me what a leader does for the land doesn't affect the citizens of the land because now we have citizens who are following their leader and doing exactly the same thing and they have violated in all five of these areas. What you and I condone and what goes on in the White House effects what goes on among the citizens of this land in what we permit and what we don't permit. Here it has happened in the land of Israel. Solomon's violation in every level to the law and the kind of lifestyle he is living has affected the citizens of the land and they are participating in all of this that has taken place. The Lord comes across with a bold FIVE FOLD statement that just blows you out of the top! Let's look at reality, let's don't deny! Let's don't

rationalize! Let's don't say God is going to cut slack and we can do this and get away with it. Listen to God:

- 1) They've FORSAKEN ME.**
- 2) They've WORSHIPPED ASHTORETH, CHEMOSH & MOLECH.**
- 3) They've not WALKED IN MY WAYS.**
- 4) They've NOT DONE WHAT IS RIGHT IN MY EYES.**
- 5) They've NOT KEPT MY STATUTES AND LAWS.**

So sure, you have a leader that is not doing it and he is the one we are focusing on but now the citizens are guilty of the same thing.

Remember the woman at the well when she is finally enticed to want to have some "living water". She says, "Give me this water" when she and the Lord were talking. The Lord just hits her blindside and says, "Go call your husband". Remember that? Remember what her answer was? "I don't have a husband." You see we are not use to having somebody get after us when we are not telling the whole truth. So the Lord in the next statement says, "This true thing you have said: you don't have a husband. You have had five husbands and the man your living with is not your husband." I am just saying to you and to me, we can be disobedient and just say so much and say that is truth and leave unsaid all the stuff that totally condemns us that is human nature. The

Lord is not going to do that. He is going to make it clear. It is our responsibility to take the one step.

I believe Deion has done that. I love this little statement in his book:

(Power, Money & Sex by Deion Sanders)

When I was in the world I attracted who I was. It was always the fun, sexy, party people. Now I'm attracting people who love the Lord and recognize that God has always comes first in my life. And that's what they want, too. When I go to dinner with a woman now, I put Matthew, Mark, Luke and John right between us! And when we get through with all those books, we know how to Acts!

(Final Call by Steven J. Lawson)

IF THERE IS A WATCHWORD that describes the American mind-set today, it is the word tolerance. We Americans worship at the shrine of tolerance. In the shaping of public opinion and the forging of national policy, we esteem the broadmindedness which says any and all values, if sincerely held, are equally valid.

There are no absolutes today. We tolerate everything except intolerance.

Tolerance. Webster defines the word as “the allowable deviation from a standard; sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing or conflicting with one’s own.”

That, in a nutshell, is America. A broadmindedness as wide as America itself. An openness that embraces almost anything morally, politically, or educationally.

George Gallup, America’s pollster, says that 67 percent of Americans today believe that there is no such thing as absolute truth. In other words, right and wrong varies from situation to situation. It may be wrong for me, but right for you. p. 131

You say to yourself, we are living in this culture and we see a study like this where God is sovereignly moving around the scenes to the full accomplishment of His purpose. We’re crazy. We are not listening. We are not letting the Word of God do what it is suppose to do which is bring us to a place of obedience.

v. 34 But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon’s hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who observed my commands and statutes.

v. 35 I will take the kingdom from his son’s hands and give you ten tribes.

v. 36 I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name.

v. 37 However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel.

Notice he almost says exactly the same thing to Jeroboam that he said to Solomon in that second appearance. It is all conditional on your obedience; that is basically what verses 38 and 39 say.

v. 38 If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you.

I am willing to do all this for you. Do you remember what Jeroboam did? He got so jealous over Jerusalem being the center of worship and so insecure that he had two golden calves. He put one in Dan and one in Bethel. He had the people worshipping idolatry and involved in things far worse than we even see here in Solomon.

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a wicked, vile king. There was never a good king in the northern kingdom after they split. When Rehoboam, Solomon's son took the

southern kingdom the tragedy of the northern kingdom was that they were the first to go into captivity because of the idolatry and wickedness among them.

(Stories for the Heart by Alice Gray)

CHICKENS

Annie Paden

Jack London's wonderful classic, White Fang, tells the story of an animal, half dog-half wolf, as he survives his life in the wild and then learns to live among men.

There is one story in particular that has left a lasting impression on my heart.

White Fang was very fond of chickens and on one occasion raided a chicken roost and killed fifty hens. His master, Weeden Scott, whom White Fang saw as a man-God and "loved with single heart," scolded him and then took him into the chicken yard. When White Fang saw his favorite food walking around right in front of him he obeyed his natural impulse and lunged for a chicken. He was immediately checked by his master's voice. They stayed in the chicken yard for quite a while and every time White Fang made a move toward a chicken his master's voice would stop him. In this way he learned what

his master wanted—he had learned to ignore the chickens.

Weeden Scott's father argues that you "couldn't cure a chicken killer," but Weeden challenged him and they agreed to lock White Fang in with the chickens all afternoon.

Locked in the yard and there deserted by the master, White Fang lay down and went to sleep. Once he got up and walked over to the trough for a drink of water.

The chickens he calmly ignored. So far as he was concerned, they did not exist. At four o'clock he executed a running jump, gained the roof of the chicken house and leaped to the ground outside, whence he sauntered gravely to the house. He had learned the law.

Out of love and a desire to obey his master's will, White Fang overcame his natural, inborn desires. He may not have understood the reason but he chose to bend his will to his master's.

Animal stories have a way of breaking your heart and often reveal profound truth. The simplicity and purity of White Fang's love and devotion to his master help me realize that my life will always be full of "chickens"

What I have to settle is, whom will I serve?

pp. 79-80

Are you still chasing chickens? I know you probably feel that in your heart sometimes and the Lord just has to slap our hands, call us back and remind us that He wants to be the one who directs and guides our lives and He knows what's best.

v. 39 I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever.

Now what does Solomon try to do as soon as he finds out? You know Jeroboam, the son of Nebat runs to town and says, "Guess what, I am the next apparent heir to ten tribes". That gets back to the palace in a hurry. Solomon acts just like Saul. Remember when Saul tried to kill David when he found out David was going to be his replacement? Chased him all over thunder and was never successful.

v. 40 Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death.

Same song, third verse! Hadad went down there at the beginning of the study and now we see Jeroboam who is waiting down there as an apparent heir to the ten as soon as Solomon is history. He is unsuccessful. He just puts Jeroboam on his most wanted list and is unsuccessful in getting him.

v. 41 As for the other events of Solomon's reign—all he did and the wisdom he displayed—are they not written in the book of the annals of Solomon?

v. 42 Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.

v. 43 Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

I saw this little statement in a company on one of the cubicle wall's:

“To err is human but to really screw up requires a computer!”

You know I thought Solomon, you really screwed it up without a computer. You really messed up big time. You had all the opportunities, everything going in your favor but you chose not to go that way. You know Deion dedicates his book in this way:

**To the bleeding men, especially the athletes:
Who are still on the outside looking in, and who have refused so far to enter God's training room to get cared for. You know what I'm sayin!**

I am just saying when you read something like this there comes a time when it is all gone. There is **NO FAME, NO FORTUNE, and NO FUTURE** because the clock has just

run out and your chance at life is history. For Solomon it has come today. It has come to this and the regrets that we feel as we read it as it comes at a time of no repentance, no response, no release, no brokenness, no sense of wanting to make it right before he is through. But, that's the biblical record isn't it?

(The Seeking Heart Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)

Just yield yourself to God without reserve. Live in the present moment. Let God do what He sees fit without resisting Him, and agree with God without trying to justify what you want to do. Temptation is a necessary part of a Christian's life. Don't be upset by even the most shameful temptation. Look at God and dwell continually in His presence—He will keep your feet from falling.

p. 142

If anything is capable of enlarging the spirit and freeing you it's an entire surrender to God. Nothing will keep your mind calm, content, and joyful as living like a child in the arms of God.

Christ wants you to follow the will of God and to live it out in the present moment.

p. 129

(31 Days of Prayer: Moving God's Mighty Hand by Ruth Myers)

Lord, I submit myself to You, presenting life and my desires as a living sacrifice. I acknowledge You as Lord of my desires, my plans, my successes and failures, my place in the world, my friendships, my popularity. You are Lord of my present and future relationships, health, money, possessions, and human approval. How good it is to yield to You, knowing that You withhold no good thing from your obedient children who trust You and call on You.

I choose to give you all rights to myself, take up my cross, day by day, and follow You. Give me power to resist the devil. Give me grace not to let the world squeeze me into its mold—its desire to indulge...its desire to possess...its desire to impress. Instead, may Your Spirit remold my mind from within. I really need this, Father, so that I can know You better, delight in You more constantly, and experience Your good and perfect will for me.

Show Your mighty power, Lord, by keeping me following You closely. Do the same for my Christian friends and family members, especially the young ones. Deliver us from sin and from Satan. Do this especially for those who right now are toying with temptation or giving in to sin.

(To Follow Him: The Seven Marks of a Disciple by Mark Bailey)

Let me tell you a story that illustrates what I mean.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and the sexton was making his final check of the choir loft high in the balcony at the back of the church. He thought all the doors were locked and no one was around, so he was startled to hear footsteps echoing up the narrow stone stairway leading to the balcony. Suddenly a man in slightly tattered clothes appeared in the doorway.

“Excuse me, sir,” the stranger said, “I’ve come from quite a distance to see this organ and this cathedral. Would you mind opening the console so that I might get a closer look at it?”

At first the custodian refused, but the stranger seemed so eager and insistent that he finally gave in. The man looked longingly at the ranks of keyboards, at the stops and pedals, and then he hesitantly asked, “May I sit on the bench?”

“Absolutely not!” the sexton replied. “What if the organists came in and found you sitting there? I’d probably lose my job!”

But the stranger was so gently persistent that the

sexton finally gave in. “All right,” he said. “You can sit there, but only for a moment.”

The custodian noticed that the stranger seemed very much at home as he slid on to the organ bench, so he was not totally taken by surprise when the next question came. In fact, he interrupted the stranger in the middle of his request.

“No ! Definitely not! You may not play the organ. I don’t even want you to touch those keys. No one is allowed to play it except the cathedral organist.”

The man’s face fell, and his deep disappointment was obvious. He reminded the custodian how far he had come, and he assured him that no damage would be done. Finally, the sexton relented and told the stranger he could play the instrument and then he would have to leave.

Overjoyed, the stranger pulled out some of the stops, pushed in others, and lovingly poised his fingers over the keys. Suddenly the cathedral was filled with the most beautiful music the custodian had ever heard in all of his years in that place. The music seemed to transport him heavenward. It rang from the rafters, shook the windows, and touched the sexton’s heart in a way no music, indeed, no message, had ever done. The sexton was so taken with the breathtaking beauty of the melody he was hearing that he half-

expected a choir of angels suddenly to materialize and join in.

Then, as suddenly as he had begun, the dowdy stranger stopped playing, slid off the organ bench, and started down the stairway.

“Wait!” cried the custodian. “That was the most beautiful music I have ever heard. Who are you?”

But the stranger had already disappeared down the narrow, dark stairway. The sexton hurried after pushing through the door and into the sunlight, where a crowd of people had gathered, drawn by the dramatic music that had soared from the cathedral.

“Why didn’t you tell us?” one man cried to the sexton as he appeared in the doorway.

“Tell you what?” the man asked, confused.

“That Mendelssohn was here!” the agitated man replied. “I heard the music and couldn’t believe my ears. I got here just in time to see him leave. He vanished into the crowd. But it was him, all right. Felix Mendelssohn was here!”

Felix Mendelssohn, one of the greatest organists

and composers of the nineteenth century, was the dowdy stranger who had begged the sexton to let him play?

The crows disbursed, and the awestruck sexton was left alone in the great stone edifice, the beautiful organ music still ringing in his ears. Just think! he said softly to himself, I almost kept the master from playing his music in my cathedral.

p. 26-28

NO RESPONSE, NO REPENTANCE, NO RELEASE. We are sorry Solomon.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked [or laughed at]; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7 NASB)

LESSON #2: The Lord is not a disinterested bystander. When He sees disobedience in our lives He takes action.

LESSON #3: Solomon was guilty on five counts: (1) idolatry; (2) immorality; (3) horses; (4) Egypt, and (5) silver and gold.

LESSON #4: God does discipline His disobedient children.

LESSON #5: The tragedy of Solomon's life is that if he understood the afflictions of his own heart, why he did not do something about it?

LESSON #6: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

LESSON #7: God is taking action against Solomon because he has lost his right to lead.

LESSON #8: "For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; he brings one down, and exalts another" (Psalm 75:6-7 KJV).

LESSON #9: The reason for God's judgment is five-fold (1) "they have forsaken me"; (2) "they have worshipped Ashtoreth...Chemosh...Molech"; (3) "they have not walked in my ways"; (4) "they have not done what is right in my eyes; and (5) "they have not kept my statues and laws" (1 Kings 11:33 NIV).

LESSON #10: What a difference would have been made if Solomon would have spoken the words of Job: "Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6 NIV).

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF SOLOMON

STUDY NUMBER TWENTYTHREE — 1KINGS 11:14-43

Notes

11:14 Then the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom.

11:15 Earlier when David was fighting with Edom, Joab the commander of the army, who had gone up to bury the dead, had struck down all the men in Edom.

11:16 Joab and all the Israelites stayed there for six months, until they had destroyed all the men in Edom.

11:17 But Hadad, still only a boy, fled to Egypt with some Edomite officials who had served his father.

11:18 They set out from Midian and went to Paran. Then taking men from Paran with them, they went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house and land and provided him with food.

11:19 Pharaoh was so pleased with Hadad that he gave him a sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes, in marriage.

11:20 The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son named Genubath, whom Tahpenes brought up in the royal palace. There Genubath lived with Pharaoh's own children.

11:21 While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David rested with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me go, that I may return to my own country."

11:22 "What have you lacked here that you want to go back to your own country?" Pharaoh asked. "Nothing," Hadad replied, "but do let me go!"

11:23 And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah.

11:24 He gathered men around him and became the leader of a band of rebels when David destroyed the forces [of Zobah]; the rebels went to Damascus, where they settled and took control.

11:25 Rezon was Israel's adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel.

11:26 Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

11:27 Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king: Solomon had built the supporting terraces and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father.

11:28 Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work, he put

him in charge of the whole labor force of the house of Joseph.

11:29 About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country,

11:30 and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces.

11:31 Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes.

11:32 But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe.

11:33 I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

11:34 " 'But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who observed my commands and statutes.

11:35 I will take the kingdom from his son's hands and give you ten tribes.

11:36 I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name.

11:37 However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel.

11:38 If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you.

11:39 I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever."

11:40 Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death.

11:41 As for the other events of Solomon's reign—all he did and the wisdom he displayed—are they not written in the book of the annals of Solomon?

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LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE

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LESSON #10: What a difference would have been made if Solomon would have spoken the words of Job: “Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6 NIV).

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Kings 11:14-43 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What does the Lord do because of Solomon’s disobedience, according to verse 14?

3. What does the Lord do in verse 23 against Solomon?

4. What did Jeroboam, son of Nebat do, according to verse 26?

5. Describe Jeroboam's relationship to Solomon and his kingdom, according to verse 28.

6. Summarize the message of Ahijah the prophet to Jeroboam recorded in verses 29-39.

7. What is Solomon's response to Jeroboam, according to verse 40?

8. Summarize Solomon's obituary in verses 41-43.

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?
