

Living With Power in Dark Times

Sunday, September 5, 2021

In this series we will consider the ways in which the lives of Elijah and Elisha show us how to live with power even in dark times

Both faced the difficulties of a culture that had willfully turned its back on God and joyfully engaged in the hedonistic practices of pagan idol worship.

They dealt with a corrupt and self-serving leadership that branded them as troublemakers and sought to silence their voices

They endured difficult times brought on by the consequences of sin and God's ensuing judgment which was meant to draw the people back to Himself

They experienced drought, famine, warfare, spiritually deaf ears, hard-heartedness, and the growing pervasiveness of blatant immorality.

But in spite of these challenges, they lived as victorious vessels through whom God displayed His power and presence.

We too live in dark times and just like Elijah and Elisha, we have the opportunity to display the power of God in the midst of that darkness. In fact, that is what we are called to do...

Matthew 5:13-16

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16 In the same way, let your light shine before others,** that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Acts 1:8

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

They Took a Stand for Truth

1 Kings 16:29-33

29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. **30** Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. **31** He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. **32** He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. **33** Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him.

1 Kings 21:25-26

25 (There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife. **26** He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel.)

1 Kings 17:1

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.”

After we are introduced to Ahab in 1 Kings Chapter 16 and told of his great wickedness, we suddenly and without great detail are introduced to Elijah as he appears on the scene and delivers a message to the King

What we will learn is that this man is a prophet of the Lord who dare to take a stand for truth in the midst of the darkness of his days. He begins with a declaration that God is going to judge the nation of Israel for their wickedness by withholding both dew and rain for the next few years

Living with power in dark days means taking a stand for truth. In order to do that we must...

- **KNOW** the truth

1 Kings 17:24

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.”

To be able to take a stand for Truth we need to know the Truth

In John 18 we read of the conversation between Jesus and Pilate after he had been arrested and the Jews were calling for his execution

John 18:33-38

33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

34 “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

35 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, **the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth.** Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

38 “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.

What is truth? That’s part of the problem. We don’t know.

The darkness of the world and the lies of the enemy has caused confusion as to what truth is.

We need a renewal of truth within the church and a commitment to stand for that truth. Jesus said he was born to testify to the truth. I say that you are born again so that you may testify to the truth. But how can we testify to what we do not know

If you want to read a sobering and powerful description of the state of our nation, get ahold of George Barna's latest compilation of his work entitled "American Worldview Inventory 2020-2021"

In it he says that *"A worldview includes core beliefs but also the behaviors that stem from those beliefs. Consequently, if you say you believe something, your actions will prove it."*

He reminds us that our worldview is shaped by the ideas and behaviors that we are constantly exposed to. The music we listen to, the News we watch, the television and movies we are entertained by. What we are taught at school, the speeches we hear, the conversations we have, the friends we spend time with. Most people cut and paste from a

variety of worldviews such as Postmodernism, Marxism, Modern Mysticism or New Age, Nihilism, Secular Humanism, Christian Theism (which is referred to as the biblical worldview) Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, and Existentialism.

"The biblical worldview is the only one that is based on absolute truth principles provide by the God of Israel and is identified and explained in the Bible. The biblical worldview is all about placing God at the center of life and doing what pleases and honor Him..."

Though about 71 % of people in America consider themselves Christian, "Christian" means different things to different people. When we begin to define what it means to be Christian and have a biblical worldview as defined by the truths of the Bible, we find that only 6% of U.S. Adults posses a biblical worldview.

That means they believe that... *"the Bible is the inspired true word of God and is a reliable and relevant guide for life today. Those are the people whose dominant process for making their life decisions is to identify the biblical principles and commands that relate to the choices they face, and then to consistently act in ways that conform to those principles and commands."*

- 21% of those who attend Protestant Evangelical Churches
- 16% of those who attend Charismatic or Pentecostal Churches
- 8% of those who attend Protestant Mainline Churches
- 1% of those attending Catholic Churches
- 9% of Amercians 50 or Older
- 5% of those in their 30's and 40's
- 2% of those 18 to 29

51% claim they have a biblical worldview - but when you question their beliefs and examine their actions in detail, you discover the tragic truth: They don't know what a biblical worldview is. Reincarnation is possible? Jesus isn't the only wat to salvation?

An astounding 41% believe that the Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon express the same divine truths.

Among young people in their teenage years, 40% claim no religious affiliation whatsoever.

Some 60% of all American teens admit they've never read Scripture on their own.

45% - those who claim to be Christian as well as those who don't - believe all religions teach equally valid truths.

We are truly living in DARK TIMES and we need to take a stand for truth.

Let me give you some of the basic truths that Elijah was standing for and which we too need to stand for...

- **There is only one God**

Psalm 24:1-6

1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; **2** for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. **3** Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? **4** The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. **5** They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior. **6** Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.

- **God controls all things**

[1Ki 17:1](#)

17:1 *Elijah*. Elijah's name (meaning "The Lord is my God") was the essence of his message ([18:21](#), [39](#)). He was sent to oppose vigorously, by word and action, both Baal worship and those who engaged in it.

The significance of the prophecy of no rain becomes apparent when we understand that those who worshiped Baal believed that Baal controlled the rain. In effect, Elijah cut to the heart of Baalism and challenged their so-called god, proclaiming that the Lord God of Israel controlled the weather.

- **The ways of this world are sinful and out of alignment with God's ways
(The wickedness of our days)**

I love what 1 Chronicles 12 says about the men of Issachar when King David was made King at Hebron.

1 Chronicles 12:32

32 from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command;

We need to understand our days...

I believe the Spirit of the Antichrist is at work more than ever before setting things up for his reign upon this earth.

- The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse
- Peace and safety
- 1 world Government
- 1 World Currency
- Can't buy sell or trade without his mark
- Giant Statue that will be worshiped

Revelation 13:11-18

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. **12** It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. **13** And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. **14** Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. **15** The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. **16** It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, **17** so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

18 This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

Video: The Giant

- God's ways are the only right ways

John 8:31-32

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. **32** Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- That He wants to get our attention

If we want to take a stand for Truth, then we need to allow the Holy Spirit to fill our lives and do what Jesus said He came to do in John 16:13 - Guide us into all truth

- We must proclaim the truth

It's not enough to know the truth we must proclaim it

Mark 8:38

38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

"And you will be my witnesses"

1 Kings 18:19-21

19 Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. **21** Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

But the people said nothing.

We proclaim the truth with our mouths, but we also proclaim the truth by the way we live. If those two truths do not match up, then we create confusion as to what the truth actually is - a spirit of hypocrisy that allows others to justify their own untruthful beliefs and actions

Ezekiel 33:1-9

33 The word of the Lord came to me: **2** "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, **3** and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, **4** then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. **5** Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. **6** But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood.'

7 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 8 When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 9 But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

- We must be willing to pay the cost of truth

1 Kings 18:16-18

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?”

18 “I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals.

Standing for truth will not make you popular

When the Angel spoke of John the Baptists birth, he said...

Luke 1:17

17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” *(In other words, he will take a stand for truth)*

And he did just that, but it cost him his life...

Many other who have stood for truth have also suffered the cost of doing so...

Men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer who took a stand for truth against the atrocities of the Nazi Regime.

When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.

If I sit next to a madman as he drives a car into a group of innocent bystanders, I can't, as a Christian, simply wait for the catastrophe, then comfort the wounded and bury the dead. I must try to wrestle the steering wheel out of the hands of the driver.