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STUDYING IN THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

and gleaning some lessons good for all times.

Emmaus Bible College

November 2006

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I. Some General Comments in an Introductory Way:

- A. Prophets Old Testament and New Testament are the messengers of the Lord. Those of the Old Testament were more subject to direct and immediate revelation, those of the New have the full council of God in the Holy Scriptures. The essential ministry of making the Word of God known is the key ingredient in both Testaments. In the case of both groups the ministry was more directive than revelatory although the Old Testament made more of the latter. Truthfulness in prophetic ministry is and was determined by faithfulness to the revelation God had made known and in the case of predictive prophesy in the matter of honest fulfillment. There are a lot of varying views on this....we will not argue about them at this time! Maybe later at a table tennis table.
- B. Perceptive students already know there was no "school of the prophets" in terms of our modern understanding of "school". There was more a prophetic fellowship in the Old Testament that is referred to as the "sons of the prophets", apparently followers who served in the ministry of the prophets and at times grew to prophetic stature as in the case of Elisha...the servant of the "man of God", Elijah.
- C. The lessons that will be pronounced in this series of talks are inductively discovered (the buzz word "inductive" is almost a needed term if one wants any sort of credence in Biblical studies today... whether it is used honestly in all cases is a hard point...don't press me in this case.) These lessons are consistent with godliness throughout the Scripture and if learned well are enormously encouraging. Only five will be discuss in this series and it is obvious there are many more but for now.....
- D, The bulk of our Scripture will be found in 1-2 Kings with side trips to Isaiah and Jeremiah. The characters with whom we will deal the most are Elisha, Gehazi, Jeremiah and Baruch....although no doubt some others will show up in the categories of "unnamed prophets or servants."
- E. So this is the end of our Introductory material....the preliminary stuff that makes students restless and teachers worrisome..but somehow it always seems needed at least to the makers of the course material.

II. Lesson # 1: *Keep a Solid Respect for the Lord, His Work and Workers*

A. The relationship of prophet/servant; teacher/student in some case studies:

1. Elijah and Elisha: 2 Kings 2
2. Elisha and an Unnamed servant 2:Kings 6:15ff
3. Elisha and Gehazi: 2 Kings 4:12, 5:20 and 8:4
4. Jeremiah and Baruch: Jeremiah 32 and 45

These will all show a common picture of the “prophet” giving declarations and the student saying “yes”. There is a point in Gehazi’s service where a bit of rebellion is seen (we would be crazy if we did not know some of this exists in all ages) with regard to some fancy clothes but when we read his estimate of his master in chapter 8 we are satisfied that subordination was put back in order. The students are not sycophants or “yes-men” in spite of my earlier note but their regard for their teachers and the Lord who is over all is a main feature. Baruch has the hardest lot of them all (my opinion) as is seen in Jeremiah 36 but he will come out “swinging” even if he does not get the degree of reward he thought might be his! (Jeremiah 45)

B. The teaching or lessons, as you will.

- 1, Accept God’s calling for your life: Elisha, 1 Kings 19:19, Baruch Jeremiah 45. I know it is not always so clear but when one knows it one must be prepared to live it out. Let me tell you about some of my teaching experiences.....I always wanted to teach but when I was assigned a class that was not academically gifted...I decided to sweat it out because it was my calling and having prayed for a teaching position it was no time to give it up then or now!
2. Learn from those who go before us. 2 Kings 2, Elisha sees how Elijah crossed the Jordan and he profits from the lesson as well as many other things.
3. Apply the lessons that are given. There is a caveat in this and it revolves around the character of the teaching. Occasionally even the best of humans will fail and we need to stay close to the Word of God, just in case. But before you apply the lesson, be sure you understand it and then you can move forward. Note the text and situation in 1 Kings 20:35 etc. But follow the instructions even if they should be as sharp as those given in Jeremiah 36:4 and following.
4. Make worship primary. See the example in 2 Kings 3:15 as well as that in 2 Kings 4:33

III. Lesson # 2: *Practice Servanthood*

- A. On servanthood it must be said that there are classes and service levels such as a servant to a king or a servant in the Army. All serving comes to a point of giving one's abilities, etc., to the furtherance of another party and/or the enrichment of others. It is a thoroughly commendable calling as may be seen in Mark 10:35-45, Luke 22:25-30, 1 Corinthians 7:20-23 (watch the context, however) as well as in the ministry of Paul and the other apostles. Somehow in our day there is a stigmatization on servanthood and I will try to discuss this in a calm and non exercised fashion---but it is hard.

The case studies in this category are::

1. Jeremiah and Baruch, Jeremiah 32
2. Elisha, 2 Kings 3:11, etc...a view of his ministry
3. The unnamed servant of 2 Kings 9...this party is a hero but in nothing less than working at a difficult time and situation.

B. The teaching:

1. Assisting others is a service to them, a development of one's own understanding, and a credit to God.
2. The achievement of leadership grows from the lessons of serving
3. The serving may be of the Herculean sort but it is most likely to be less than that and may even be unnoticed.. No problem.
4. Skill development and improvement comes with serving when done efficiently or/and meaningfully

C. Conclusion

The practice of serving should commend itself to us without argument. The Queen of Sheba said to Solomon..”Happy are thy men, happy are those, thy servants, which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom.” (2 Kings 10:8) If then it is easy to say that the king's servants are happy...those of the Lord _____ and almost anyone can finish that statement. Practice servanthood. You will be an encouragement to others, a credit to your calling, and a witness to the love and mercy of God who has so greatly served us all!

IV. Don't be Beaten by Rejection

A. A General Note:

There are many forms of rejection and none of them are pleasant, I think. The potentiality of distress coming from rejection is huge and in some cases even the least strong rejection may dwarf one's life with defeatism and destroy future efforts before they are begun. But some rejection comes to everyone at some time and in some degree so that the lesson from the prophets is that we learn to live with it and be overcomers in the conflict. Somehow one must learn to see that rejection is a growth stimulant and when we face it with triumph we are the better for it. I am not claiming to be a hero in this fight...as an academician I often faced rejection and sometimes it won! But the lessons learned from the prophets help us to win so we look for victory in the face of defeat. Now if this philosophy is not sufficient for your needs, try John 16:1-4 and 15:20-21. Take heart!

The case studies include:

1. Baruch in Jeremiah 36
2. Jeremiah himself in 36:37
3. Elijah in 2 Kings 1.

B. The teachings:

1. When it comes to spiritual things it is often, not always, but often, the Lord who is being rejected and not just the messenger. Your personal rejection is more easily swallowed when you are standing with the Lord (or vice versa) in the situation. Look at 2 Timothy 4 for an interesting example.
2. The purpose of God will be accomplished whether or not...so---
3. Do not invite nor advertise for rejection...it will come soon enough on its own. (Jeremiah's note to Baruch--chapter 45)
4. Understand the rejection as complementary--it will enrich your character and deepen your trust if you do not give up!
5. And remember that abounding in the work of the Lord has its own reward as stated in 1 Corinthians 15:58

C. Conclusion: Take the advice of Romans 15:4 and read in the Word of God about the victories He gave when no one thought it possible. We do not always win in the temporal realm but the work of God is greater and the overcoming power of God is supreme in the universe

Don't be Beaten

V. Carry Out the Task as Assigned

A. Some General data in an introductory way:

1. The assigned task with God will always be “doable” unlike the tasks that are often assigned by teachers and others!
2. It is important to know what the task is and what steps may be taken to get it done. The former is usually the more clear, the latter may need more help.
3. The dealing with the task is governed by special conditions: time, physical strength, personnel, etc. and these should not be overlooked nor should they be thought initially impossible.
4. Ultimately the point is whatever task you accept or is thrust upon you, carry it out to the end, determine to see it through and all the purposes of the assigning party.
5. And the case studies are:
 - a. Baruch and Jeremiah, chapter 36
 - b. the unknown prophet in 2 Kings 9
 - c. An unknown servant 1 Kings 20:35ff

B. The Teachings:

1. The worker knows the task must be completed or the whole enterprise may fail.
2. Be careful to follow the specific instructions
3. Depend on the help of the Lord as you do your part.
4. Don't worry about your reward (Jeremiah 45) Why do we say this so often?
5. Rejoice that you have been given a role in history Your part may be meaningful to many for years to come,.

C. Conclusion:

If the task is too great call for help! Don't abandon it! When it is completed, give thanks! If you are worn out, take a rest but take it on your time, not the time for the task.

VI. In Every Situation: Depend on the Lord

A. Some introductory thoughts:

1. This is really a "given" but one that is often not "taken". It is almost too easy, so to speak. But depending on the Lord does not relieve us from doing what He has given us and enabled us to do. The concept is not to make us lazy or indulgent but to assure us of the undergirding power that cannot be overthrown. The words of Zechariah 4:6 continue to impress us and the New Testament adds the terms of Philippians 4:13 for reassurance.
2. We have two foes in this matter. The first is "over-confidence" in which we are sure everything will work out and we do little, and the second is pessimistic defeatism...I need not define it further. Between these two we find ourselves dependent on the simple grace of God.
3. Some case studies are:
 - a. Elisha----2 Kings 5 with Naaman's leprosy
 - b. The unnamed prophet of 2 Kings 9: such a task as was his!
 - c. Elisha----2 Kings 4, the dead child
 - d. Elisha----2 Kings 2, the unruly youths..or, the "gang"

B. Some teachings:

1. Remember God's instruction and promises...the two go together although we would often like to have the latter while ignoring the former. This has come up several times and will no doubt show up many times later, as well.
2. Honor His presence: prayer, worship, obedience
3. Acknowledge your need...one need not make a federal case of it but a simple recognition is good...for a solace for one's ego but a conditioner for one's courage.
4. Progress as you are able. Move forward or whatever direction works to meet the cause. It is not always physical movement and may, in fact, be meditational movement....the key factor on your mind is the accomplishment of what God wants done.

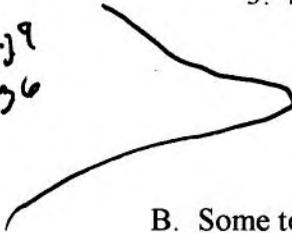
- ### C. Conclusion: He will never leave us nor forsake us! We are more than conquerors! We should not "leave" Him and we should not argue in defiance. When you see what the prophets did--in the face of very great adversity and a lack of what we would call resources, we learn a vital lesson that will stabilize us until we are with Him: Depend on the Lord in every situation. Your dependence will be shown, however, as one is yielded and obedient in what the Lord has declared.

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VII. Conclusion to our Studies *So I haven't worked it out yet...see what you can do and add it on paper and life.*

-6-

4:14
25, 39
36



*Down in the
river camp,*

1. A perfect love
2. A home
3. A life
4. A companion
5. Information

The

VI. A Personal Prayer Made Public...one of the most moving passages in the Bible as the Lord Jesus Christ prays for His own...prays for us and opens His heart for us to see the depth of His concern and love. John 17.

Theme: "Father, I come..." We are the subject of His prayers

A. The occasion: 1

14-15 leaving the room

15-16 through the vineyard

17 A personal prayer made public.

We are the subject

3 how the

11 keep

13 joy

15 hap, oil

17 set asod

21 oneness

23 complete

24 hold joy

26 love a thin

B. A request for the Father: 2-6

the Father will glorify me → ①

C. The completed work: 7-12

give the words
the prayer

②

Keep them safe

D. A request for health: 13-17

give joy, protect from evil

③

Set them apart
for yourself

E. The desire: unity in Truth 18-23

a unified ministry
of witness

④

Unite them and all believers
in truth

F. An eternal destination 24-26

⑤

Let us be eternally yours

And suddenly we hear the voice and perceive the mind of the Lord Jesus and our feet should be guided in the way of His praying and our witness in response to His love.

glory is
progress