

God's Care for His Servants in a Time of Turbulence

Text: I Kings 16:2-6

When flying, there is only one thing I dread to hear worse than hearing the pilot say, "We are going to be expecting some turbulence," and that is when the pilot says, "I'm going to ask the attendants to take their seats and fasten all seatbelts." On a Wednesday morning a few years ago, I approached my gate in Fort Lauderdale, Florida preparing to fly home for our Prayer and Bible Study at Christchurch. Soon after arriving I saw a tall distinguished United Airlines pilot standing in front of my gate checking his watch. Upon second look, I recognized Captain Brad Andrews, a fine church member from years gone by and one of the finest deacons we ever served with. We had a grand time of fellowship before flying. Because Brad has flown primarily intercontinental trips on the big birds, I rarely saw him outside of church and deacon's meetings. How refreshing it was to hear his calm, Christian voice over the intercom of the plane. As I settled in for my flight across the Gulf of Mexico and home to Houston, I met Tabitha, the young lady sitting near me. I asked if she was familiar with Tabitha or Dorcas in the Bible and she was not, but seemed interested in knowing who the person was who originally bore her name in the book of Acts. She told me her mom got the idea for her name from the old television program, *Bewitched*. I gave her insight from the biblical perspective on her name and it served as a perfect introduction to witness for Christ. About forty minutes into the flight we hit some pretty tough turbulence. Looking frightened she said, "Oh, this is rough." In fact, it did feel a little scary. I calmly told the young lady, "You have nothing to worry about; I know the captain!" Tabitha sighed a sigh of relief. Soon after landing safely, I told Captain Andrews good-bye, my wife picked me up and before church on that Wednesday evening, we went by to see Linda Pool who was nearing her Heavenly home. In the early morning of that next Friday, Linda went home to be with Jesus. We had a great last visit! It was candid, serious and at times humorous. We reminisced and talked of Heaven. I told Linda about my encounter with Captain Andrews and the young lady. When I told Linda that I comforted the frightened young lady by saying, "I knew the captain," Linda smiled and immediately I made the application and she agreed that at times like these, it's good to know the Captain.

And in these turbulent times, it's good to know the Captain (Joshua 5:15).

I. NEVER UNDER-ESTIMATE THE POWER OF SIN.

I Kings 16:29-33

A. A Disturbed Marriage

I Kings 16:31

Notice these haunting words: "And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam..." (I Kings 16:31a). David sinned with Bathsheba. God said to David through the prophet Nathan, "For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the

sun” (II Samuel 12:12). We should never take lightly what God takes seriously. Numbers 32:23 reinforces this seriousness: “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). God’s desire is that we should see sin as He sees it. Romans 7:13 says, “Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”

We see that Ahab was not the only king in the Bible who got messed up by uniting in marriage to a wicked woman. I Kings 11:3, 4, 11: “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.” Needless to say, we also see the problem when Solomon did not follow his own inspired advice as recorded in Proverbs 5:18-20: “Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?”

B. A Defiled Land

I Kings 16:32, 33

Wicked Ahab raised an altar to Baal and made a grove where wicked activity abounded. In doing this, he defiled the land. When people sin, they rarely keep it to themselves; they bring it home with them, thus defiling the home environment. We sadly see this in the life of Achan (Joshua 7:19-26).

II. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE INFLUENCE OF A GODLY MAN.

I Kings 17:1

James 5:17, 18

I Kings 17:17-24

Elijah was a man subject to the same blessings, discouragements, happinesses and hurts as you and I. Yet although he was a man of “...like passions...” (James 5:17b), he got his prayers answered.

III. NEVER UNDERMINE THE SURPRISING PATHS OF GOD’S PROVISIONS.

I Kings 17:2-16

A. The Brook and the Birds

I Kings 17:2-7

B. A Limited Place

I Kings 17:5: "So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan." I Kings 17:6b, 7: "...and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." It was only a matter of time before the brook would close up, but God had not led him there to stay. Never judge what God is going to do because of the natural elements that surround us. God knows where we are.

C. A Laughing Place

I Kings 17:6: "And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening..." Ravens are the comics in the bird kingdom. They can be trained to talk. In captivity, they are hilarious mimickers. Ravens would have been glad to eat the bread and meat they carried by God's direct orders to Elijah. It was a miracle that the ravens did not eat the food they brought to Elijah! It had to bring a smile to Elijah's heart to see those birds carrying his breakfast and dinner to him! This is just what God's prophet needed. Proverb 17:22: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." When I was thinking about this incident, I was reminded of one of my favorite Disney movies of all time, "The Song of the South." The explanation of Brer Rabbit's "Laughing Place" is a classic of American pop-literature. Everybody needs a "laughing place."

D. "There" is a place where God Provides (I Kings 17:9).

How unexpected! Elijah's needs were going to be met by a starving woman and her son!

E. "There" is a place of God's Providence (I Kings 17:10).

There is the blessing of a two-fold blessing. Elijah and the lady got their needs met.

F. "There" is a place of God's Promise (I Kings 17:14-16).

The promise is true that when we give, God gives back to us in greater quantity (Luke 6:38). Eccl. 5:13: "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." Proverbs 22:9: "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor."

-Pastor Pope-