

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, October 23, 2016

Counted Unto Him for Righteousness

Today I would like to further explore a topic that my dad touched on a few weeks back. You might recall that he preached about our scriptural duty to be honest in our words, and our deeds. He briefly mentioned that there are examples in the scriptures where God's people were dishonest, and yet it seems as though it was a good thing that they did, and that the Lord was pleased with it. He mentioned those instances, in order to acknowledge that they are present in the scriptures, but to caution against using them to justify sin in our own behavior. I would like to expand the discussion beyond dishonest behavior. The situations we will consider are these:

1. Godly people (with strong evidence of salvation) committing sin, while in a difficult circumstance, supposing that their circumstance justified the behavior.
2. Godly people doing something that looks sinful on its face, and yet God counted it for righteousness.
3. Ungodly people doing something that looked right, and yet God counted it for evil.

So let's take a look at some of these situations, endeavoring to heed the lessons that the Lord has carefully, purposefully appointed for us:

1Corinthians 10:11-13 "11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

It is instructive that Paul here tells us to learn from the examples of those that have gone before us, and then promptly warns us not to be high-minded and self-righteous while we do it, lest we be puffed up, forgetting what manner of people we are, and fall into condemnation. Consider:

- As foolish as some of their behavior might be, we are not better than any of these people, and we have done just as foolishly, if not worse! As we look at some of these examples, consider the mindset that these people would have been in, given their circumstances. Consider when you have been in a similar circumstance, and the battle with your own flesh that you had. Sometimes, by the grace and help of God, we sow to the spirit, and win those battles. Sometimes we do not.
- Our trials and afflictions are ultimately not unique, and we should be very careful justifying our behavior on the premise that they are unique.

1) Godly people (with strong evidence of salvation) committing sin, while in a difficult circumstance, supposing that their circumstance justified the behavior.

- **Abraham and Isaac lying about their wives**
 - **Genesis 12:10-20 “10 ¶ And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. 11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: 12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. 13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. 14 ¶ And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. 15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. 16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. 17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram’s wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? 19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. 20 And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.”**
 - Amazingly, Abraham did this EXACT same thing to Abimelech, the King of Gerar, with an identical outcome (Genesis 20). Later, Isaac also did this same thing, to that SAME KING! (Genesis 26)
 - These men are men that the Lord filled with faith, causing them to forsake the riches of this world – see how the Holy Spirit describes them in Hebrews 11. And yet here we find them at a moment where the fear of man gets the better of them, and indeed, it brings a snare upon them, and the people around them. Have we not each experienced these moments in our lives, when the fear of man comes upon us? It is downright terrifying how easily we can slip off into faithless behavior!
 - Despite their failings in these situations, the Lord kept them! See how the Holy Spirit describes the matter through the pen of David:
 - **1Chronicles 16:18-22 “18 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; 19 When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it. 20 And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people; 21 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproveth kings for**

their sakes, 22 Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”

- The Lord here provides us with overwhelming comfort and confidence. When we find ourselves in distress because of our sins, we should believe God, and know that the blood of Christ is effectual.

- David lying to Ahimelech

- **1Samuel 21:1-9 “1 ¶ Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? 2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. 3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. ... 6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. 7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. 8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king’s business required haste. 9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.”**

- When we find ourselves in a difficult circumstance, we might think it justifiable to use sinful means to achieve our goal, by pointing our minds to the desperateness of our circumstances. Here, David was fleeing from a murderous King Saul, and he needed supplies. So he lies to this priest to achieve his goals. Seems straight forward – no harm, no foul, right? He had a righteous cause, didn’t he? After all, he had already been anointed, by Samuel, to be the next King. But look at the domino effect that his actions had:

- **1Samuel 22:9-23 “9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite [*Speaking to Saul*], which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 10 And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. 11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father’s house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. 12 And Saul said,**

Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. 13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? 14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? 15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more. 16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. 17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. 18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. 19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. 20 ¶ And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. 21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests. 22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. 23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

- Consider the sorrow that David carried with him, all the days of his life, over this little white lie. Gill suggests that the following verses of Psalm 119 are in direct reference to this event:
 - **Psalm 119:28,29** "28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word. 29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously."
- And yet, the Holy Spirit gave David great comfort, to share with each of us, lest we be swallowed up by the weight of our sins:
 - **2Samuel 23:5** "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."
- Peter denying Christ

- **Luke 22:54-62 “54 Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. 56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. 57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. 58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. 59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. 60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. 61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”**
 - Peter lied here, in order to avoid trouble, and potentially death. However, once it was done, that justification was little consolation to our dear friend. We know this circumstance. We know the fear of man. We know this sorrow.
- We have faced these situations in our lives, and will continue to face them – trials of our faith. We don’t always make the right decisions, or do the right thing. When we find ourselves in a tight spot, like this, we should look to God first, and not the analysis and remedies of the flesh. Believe God! He will deliver us in ways that we can’t even dream up! We should be awfully careful with any analysis that because of the rightness of our cause, we are justified in sinful behavior.
 - **2Timothy 2:5-7 “5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.”**
- First and foremost – when we are in one of these situations, we should seek God in prayer. Continuing instant in prayer! I sometimes find myself grinding on a thing in my mind, thinking through all of the possibilities, trying to come to a conclusion, and THEN I pray. It should be the reverse!
 - **Jeremiah 33:3 “3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”**
 - “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!”
 - **Luke 12:29-31 “29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth**

that ye have need of these things. 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

- Satan – the accuser of the brethren – is busy keeping our sin before our face; he wants us to believe that our hope is vain, and that the blood of Christ is not effectual to redeem us! As such, when I find myself in distress over my sin, I find some comfort in Paul’s words:
 - **2Corinthians 12:7-10 “7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”**
 - We perceive our utter reliance upon Christ most acutely, when we come face-to-face with the weakness of our depraved flesh, and the awfulness of our sins. At those moments, we are fully convinced that we have no righteousness of our own, and that we live only by faith.

2) Godly people doing something that looks sinful on its face, and yet God counted it for righteousness.

- These are watershed moments in the lives of some of our brothers and sisters of faith. In each of these instances, the scriptures clearly tell us that the otherwise apparently sinful actions of these people were counted as righteousness by God, and because of these actions, God brought blessings upon them and others.
- Jael lying to and killing Sisera
 - **Judges 4:17-22 “17 Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. 19 And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. 20 Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. 21 Then Jael Heber’s wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and**

weary. So he died. 22 And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.”

- Judges 5:24-27 “24 Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent. 25 He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. 26 She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen’s hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. 27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.”
- Phinehas killing Zimri and Cozbi
 - Numbers 25:6-13 “6 ¶ And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; 8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. 9 And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. 10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: 13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”
 - Psalm 106:28-31 “28 They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. 29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them. 30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. 31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.”
- Rahab lying, and committing treason to protect the Jewish spies; resulting in the genocide of Jericho
 - Joshua 2:1-15 “1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot’s house, named Rahab, and lodged

there. 2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. 3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. 4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: 5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. 6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. 7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate. 8 ¶ And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; 9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. 12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: 13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. 14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. 15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall."

- Hebrews 11:31 "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."
- Moses' parents (Amram and Jachobed) and the Hebrew Midwives (Shiphrah and Puah) lying, and breaking the law to save the life of Moses (and other Hebrew children)
 - Exodus 1:15-22 "15 ¶ And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: 16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son,

then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. 18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? 19 And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. 20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. 21 And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. 22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.”

- Exodus 2:1-3 “1 ¶ And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink.”
- Hebrews 11:23 “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment.”
- These are all actions of faith, and are born of zeal for God. For the most part, you don’t see planning, forethought, and design in these actions; these people found themselves in a place where the quarrel of the covenant was waxing hot, and they acted on faith. These are not typical, or regular situations; as such, I think that it would be foolish for any of us to be quick to lean upon these instances, when we have a decision before us. On the other hand, we may well have some of these instances happen in our lives (perhaps on a smaller scale); when considering someone’s behavior in the heat of the battle, we ought to be as charitable as the facts will allow – the Lord knows the hearts!

3) Ungodly people doing something that looked right, yet God counted it for evil.

- Jehu killing Jezebel, and all of Ahab’s lineage based on the direct instruction of God
 - 2Kings 9:4-37 “4 So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead. 5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. 6 And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel. 7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the

servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. 8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel: 9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah: 10 And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled. ... 16 ¶ So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. 17 And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace? 18 So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. 19 Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. 20 And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. 21 And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. 22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? 23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah. 24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot. 25 Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; 26 Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD. ... 30 ¶ And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. 31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? 32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. 33 And he said, Throw her

down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. 34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. 35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. 36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: 37 And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel."

- 2Kings 10:1-11 "1 ¶ And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children ... 6 saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. ... 7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel. 8 And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning. ... 11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining."
 - I told you all of that detail, to show that Jehu said a lot of words, and did a lot of work that looked like the words and deeds of a person that is zealous for the Lord. And yet, after having done and said all of that ...
- 2Kings 10:31 "31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin."
- Hosea 1:2-5 "2 The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. 4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."
 - God explicitly instructed Jehu to do these things, as a part of executing His promised, righteous judgment on Ahab. Jehu did as he was instructed; and yet God cursed him and his lineage for it. Why? Because he didn't

have faith! We can technically do the right thing, for the wrong reason, and with the wrong spirit – that is not pleasing to God! Which brings us to the ultimate conclusion of the matter: without the gift of faith, we’ve got nothing!

- **Galatians 3:11** “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”
- **Hebrews 10:35-39** “35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

These scriptures are full of sobering, terrifying instruction, as well as wonderful hope and comfort. Please don’t mistake my purpose here as a call to self-righteousness. Rather, it is a sober recognition that we constantly face these crossroads in our lives, with Satan laying traps for our feet; we must put on the armor of God, searching the scriptures, so that we are prepared for these things. When we encounter them, we must be instant in prayer, and quick to seek and heed good counsel from our brothers and sisters of faith, knowing that they are full of goodness and able to admonish, and that their senses have been exercised by reason of use. We must help one another to strive *lawfully* against sin, and to resist the devil so that he will flee from us.

I’ll leave you with a thought that should give us all assurance and comfort, as we soberly make our pilgrim way:

Romans 8:31-33 “31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

I love you all. Amen.