

Sermon Guide
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Date: 3/3/2013
Sermon Series: The Drama of Redemption

The Kingdom Divides

1 Kings 11-14

A Distracted Father

Solomon's Folly

Everything was going so well for Solomon; in 1 Kings 1-8, a picture of the rise and peak of Solomon's kingdom is detailed. But the cracks of his commitment to the Lord begin to show in 1 Kings 10:14-29 leading to compromise which ends in the rapid decline of his kingdom.

Deuteronomy 17:16-17 "Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you 'You shall never turn that way again. And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.'"

Solomon compromised in every way that God had commanded that the kings of Israel should not. The excessive import and use of gold (gold is referenced 11 times in 1 Kings 11:14-29), the importation of horses and chariots from Egypt and the procurement (in "love") of enough foreign women, as wives and concubines, to last many lifetimes. The women, in particular, turned his heart away from the only living God to their false gods. What began as small compromises: a few tons of gold here, a couple of horses there, being enticed by one too many beautiful faces, ended in the degradation of Solomon's empire and the rending of the kingdom.

What happened in Solomon's heart to cause him to depart in such a significant way from the Word of God, the substrata of his idolatry, was the ceaseless pursuit of pleasure. This quest was Solomon's folly.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-10 "I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man. So I became great and surpassed all

who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil.”

The Idol: Pleasure

Pleasure and joy in this life was Solomon’s idol and it destroyed not only him, but the people of Israel who were under his kingship. Solomon had everything in measures far beyond any man who ever lived (and possibly has ever lived); wealth, wisdom, stature, looks, power, women, peace in his lands, material goods, there was nothing and no one he did not have or could not have. Yet, none of it was enough. He remained wholly unsatisfied.

Application

You are no different and your thirst for pleasure will not be quenched by anything in this life. Nothing on this earth will satisfy apart from Jesus. He alone gives the eternal joy and pleasure that has the power to satiate the human soul.

Psalms 16:11 “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

The greatest threat to Solomon’s empire was not a foreign enemy, an economic crisis or other calamity. Solomon’s greatest threat was his sin and his idolatrous heart. Solomon’s disobedience to the Lord resulted in God raising up adversaries and tearing the kingdom apart. There were clear and far-reaching consequences to his sin. Similarly, the greatest threat to our relationship with God is not something outside of us but the sin within us. We must take heed to kill the sin within before it would seek to destroy us. Remembering that there will always be consequences to the sins we commit and they won’t just affect us but, those who are around us and come after us.

Moreover, lest we believe we are smarter than sin or too clever for its traps, remember that Solomon was, according to God, the wisest man who ever lived (or will ever live). The enticement of sin turned the wisest of all men into a fool.

1 Corinthians 10:12-14 “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”

Application Questions

Is pleasure and joy in this life your primary pursuit?

Do you feel as though your life will only have meaning and purpose when you find pleasure in something?

A Deceived Son

The continued effects of Solomon's sin and departure from God's commands are seen in his off-spring. Rehoboam was very likely the "son" with whom Solomon spent a lot of time telling his Proverbs. Proverbs 2:1-5 "My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. Rehoboam has other ideas and soundly rejects his father's admonition and ultimately God.

Read 1 Kings 12:1-24; 14: 21-30

The Idol: Pride

Rehoboam makes very foolish decisions in the first few years of his reign, not the least of which is oppressing the people of Israel. His heart was filled with pride and self-exaltation. He believed himself greater than the wisest counsel and would not heed God's commands. His pride and exalted view of himself prevented him from obeying God and ruling well. The Bible says of him in 2 Chronicles 2:14 "he did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek the Lord". On the surface, it might appear that Rehoboam's story is simply about humbling yourself and heeding the advice and wisdom of those who are older and have come before you. Consider, however, 1 King 12:15 "So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.". What is seen here is that God is sovereign and in control, even over the pride and foolishness of sinful people. The stupidity of man does not thwart or frustrate the plans and purposes of God. Rehoboam's freedom to choose to act foolishly is not violated; he is totally responsible for his actions and choices. Though, ultimately, his strings are attached to God and his attempts to rebel against God's word only fulfill it. Proverbs 21:1 "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will."

Application

We look around the world and see the effects that the foolish decisions, whether political or moral, those in power make that have serious consequences for the people they rule. The natural question that is always asked is "Where is God" and we wonder why He allows these things to take place. The truth is God is in control. He is always sovereignly working in and through the actions of sinful people to fulfill His plans for His glory. This is both a comfort and a warning to us. It is a comfort because it means that the God who is for us is always in control. Working for our good and His glory, even when the disappointments, frustrations and foolish actions of us, and the people in our lives, would seem to suggest that He is not. It is also a warning because we may pridefully believe that we are independent, in control and accountable to no one in, when in fact we are answerable in every way to God. It is He that ultimately fulfills his plans and purposes in accomplishing what He wills and punishing our sin.

Application Questions

What will be your response to God's absolute sovereignty?

Can you rest in knowing that He is ultimately in control even in our pain and disappointments? Can you rest in spite of the terrible, frustrating or foolish things that happen in the world in which we live?

Are you more like Rehoboam, on a power trip, seeking to establish your own sovereignty and neglecting to acknowledge God?

In what ways does your pride keep you from obeying God and having a proper perspective of Him?

Consider Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

In what ways does your pride deceive you and convince you that you know better than anyone about anything or everything, including God?

A Disturbed Successor

Read 1 Kings 11:26-43; 12:25 – 14:20

Jeroboam's, similar to Solomon's, beginning was good. He is described as able and industrious. God chooses him to rule over the ten (10) tribes of Israel because of Solomon's unfaithfulness and, like Solomon, is commissioned to obey all of God's word, walk in His ways and do what is right. However, Jeroboam, despite being the prophesied ruler of the ten (10) tribes, chooses to create gods for the people to worship from a fear that the people will switch allegiance from him to Rehoboam if, as God's statutes required, they must go to worship the living God in Jerusalem.

The Idol: Precariousness

Jeroboam decides to lead himself and the people of Israel into great sin by creating a more convenient and manageable religion, and away from the great I AM. God had promised Jeroboam success and a sure house if he obeyed Him. So like all those who came to ruin, both before and after him, he would not let the sure Word of God be enough. He wanted, and believed he could find apart from God, more assurance and more power. Thus, instead of trusting and turning to God, he trusted his own heart and turned to his own devised religion and secured his own destruction in doing such. The kingdom is taken from him, his house is cut off from the earth and the Israelites are scattered.

Application

Like Jeroboam, God has given us His word and promises in Jesus. But in fear and distrust we turn from belief in God's promises to our own ways, believing that the outcome will be secure. Our false religion may not be the golden calves of Jeroboam, but it may say "do more, try harder, work longer, find control" in order feel security. As Matthew Henry so astutely said "A practical disbelief of God's all sufficiency is at the bottom of all our treacherous departures from Him".

Application Questions

What is it that your heart is tempted to trust in more than the promises of God?

What do you say, or do, that would suggest you believe something other than God is more sure and sufficient: is it a job, relationship, achievement, feedback from others?

A Dedicated God

1 Kings 11:11-13 “Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.”

1 Kings 11:36-39 “Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever.”

It seems that Israel has again returned to near total rebellion against God as both the kings and people are idolaters. God could justly destroy or abandon them, but instead He remains faithful for His glory and the sake of His promise to David. In the same way that He dealt with David, God reminds and confronts Solomon of his sin, disciplines by taking away the kingdom but remains faithful to His covenant promises. Although God is angry with the sin of Solomon (and all of Israel) and disciplines him for it, God’s plan of redemption is not thwarted or ruined. God’s lamp in Jerusalem points to Jesus, who will reign over God’s people forever. He will bear their sin and restore them to fellowship with God.

Application

Just as Solomon was not given what he deserved because of God’s covenant with David, we are not given what we deserve because of God’s eternal covenant with Christ. Because of the covenant that God has made with Christ, you are accepted and forgiven when you fail. It is for His sake that you do not get what you deserve. Repent, believe and trust in the everlasting covenant that God has made with His Son on your behalf. Even through the consequences and temporary disciplines for our sin, the rays of hope shine through those dark clouds that let us know that God’s love for us is forever and he will never abandon us.

Application Questions

Do you feel that your sin has completely broken and ended your relationship with God?

Sermon Link : [The Kingdom is Divided](#)

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