

**2-26-17 MERCY OFF TRACK
WHEN WE LOVE OUR ENEMIES AND HATE OUR FRIENDS**

I Kings 20:28 And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

I Kings 20:29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.

I Kings 20:30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

I Kings 20:31 And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.

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I Kings 20:33 Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

I Kings 20:34 And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

**MERCY OFF TRACK
THE DAY GOD'S ENEMIES ARE CALLED BROTHER
AND GOD'S SERVANTS ARE CALLED THE ENEMY**

This month we have been talking about love. We defined love based on God's love for us. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. We also talked about how we can prove we love God. Jesus said if you love me KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

In our text we see how Israel's enemies made an amazing statement. Note what they said:

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Notice how these Syrians realized that the Kings of Israel were merciful and compassionate people. Our God is a God of love, and He teaches His people:

I Kings 20:42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.

I Kings 20:43 And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

What is interesting is that after this incident in Chapter 21 we have recorded the incident with Ahab and Naboth. Ahab wanted to buy a piece of property adjacent to him that was owned by Naboth, and Naboth refused to sell it. Jezebel being the good politician she was bribed the men of the city to falsely accuse Naboth of blaspheming God, and have him stoned. How amazing it is that people can use the Bible when it serves them and reject the Bible when they don't like it.

After this when Ahab went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard we read that Elijah was sent of God to confront Ahab with his treachery and murder. We read about this incident in I Kings 21:16

I Kings 21:16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

I Kings 21:17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

I Kings 21:18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

I Kings 21:19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

I Kings 21:20 And Ahab said to Elijah, hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee; because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

How ironic is it that we see Ahab embracing Ben-hadad the enemy of Israel. A man who will later destroy them and calling the prophet Elijah his enemy. A prophet who loved Israel and only wanted the best for his nation.

Here is the lesson in a nutshell. A backslidden nation, when they turn their back on their God, will lose discernment spiritually to the point that they will be blinded to the true nature of who their friends are and who their enemies are. So blinded will the leaders of that nation be that they will be guilty of calling their friends enemies and their enemies their friends..

Ben-hadad, a man who hates Israel and only pretends to be Ahab's friend, is called brother and Elijah, a man who loves Israel and only wants the best for God's people, is called an enemy.

Nothing has changed.

In this message we will learn how this works.

STORY:

The Syrians came against Israel to destroy it. They suffered some setbacks and attributed it to the fact that the God of Israel was a little stronger than their God in certain situations.

So the Lord, to vindicate His name, allowed Israel to defeat Syria.

They said the god(s) of Israel was a God of the hills.

I Kings 20:23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

So they went up by the valleys and plains. And again they were defeated.

After they were defeated they conjured up a way to survive.
When people are in survival mode they will say and do anything to get their way.

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Ahab makes a covenant with Ben-hadad.

Notice what the Syrians said..

We have heard that the Kings of Israel are merciful. Let's go and see if they will have mercy on us..

So Ahab makes a covenant with them.

Then after this we read about the incident with Jezebel and Naboth's Vineyard.

Notice what Ahab's reaction is to Elijah.

I Kings 21:20 And Ahab said to Elijah, hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee; because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

He calls him his enemy.

So we have it. Those who were seeking to destroy Israel, Ahab calls brother.
The one who loved Israel and was seeking to preserve it is called the enemy.

Has anything changed?

Three years ago a poll showed that American Jews looked more favorably on American Muslims than Christian evangelicals by a margin of more than 2-to-1. The results were a shock to most people then because most evangelicals have been quite vocal and active in their support for Israel.

Who of all people in the world are more supportive of Israel than evangelical Christians. And who of all peoples of the world are more Anti Jew than Muslims. It doesn't make sense except to say the spirit of Ahab prevails to this day.

Our former president is a prime example of the Ahab spirit:

Speaking of radical Islamic terrorism, that is just something we won't catch Obama speaking about, as he is seemingly unable to utter the words "radical," "Islamic," and "terrorism" in the same sentence.

On top of that, he has denigrated and mocked Christianity, has seemingly targeted Christians with his progressive liberal policies, and has virtually ignored the blatant persecution of Christians at the hands of radical Muslims around the world.

Hillary had the Ahab spirit:

While campaigning for president she proudly displayed her Muslim supporters as she made her speeches. It doesn't make sense how liberal politicians are so tolerant of a people who kill Christians, are abusive of civil rights, oppress anyone who disagrees with them, haters of Israel, and oppressive of women's rights to the point of abusing women. Yet why is it that liberal politicians like Hillary Clinton embrace these people and want to flood our nation with their religion and seem to be on a vendetta to force evangelical Christians to compromise their beliefs concerning homosexual marriage and other issues that disagree with the liberal political agenda. It doesn't make any sense at all. She has as much as said that Churches and Christians just need to get over their homophobia and xenophobia.

It is exactly what Ahab did when he called Ben-hadad his brother and Elijah the prophet his enemy. THE BEAT GOES ON!!

Evangelical Christians are the enemy.
Muslims are their friends.

Those who hate traditional family values and those who would degrade us from within we embrace. Those who build strong families, a strong nation, morally ethically, socially, these are the enemy!

What is interesting is that today we hear a lot about Syrians who are seeking asylum in our country. Let them in, many say, let them in. They are our brothers. Let the Muslim Syrian Refugees into our country . Should we?

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It is funny that this is the picture we see today of the Syrians. What is sad is, the confusion of who is and who is not our brothers. Our brothers should be chosen on the basis of their belief system and values that agree with those which will strengthen our nation and not just politicians votes.

There are many people who we should take in who truly need our help and are indeed our brothers and not our enemies. But there are some like Ben-hadad that are using their plight as a guise to feed on the mercy of a people who lack spiritual discernment to tell the difference.

To men like Ahab, Ben-hadad is his brother and Elijah is his enemy.

So I believe that our politicians for the most part do not know how to discern who our friends are and who our enemies are. All they care about is who votes for them. This is characteristic of a people who have rejected their God. They are given over to confusion.

Today it seems we are reliving the errors of Israel.
In a few years, Syria would rise again to destroy Israel.

Syria would be assimilated into the Assyrian Empire and then into the Babylonian Empire, and this nation would rise up to destroy Israel.

I. WHAT CAUSES PEOPLE TO BE SO BLINDED TO WHO THEIR REAL ENEMIES ARE?

Why was it that Ahab couldn't see that Ben-hadad was not his friend and brother?

The reason Ahab was so blinded is because his sense of what is right and good was not being guided by God. Our sense of right and wrong, good and bad, love and justice, needs to be guided by the Word of God and not our feelings, thoughts, or whims.

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1. MERCY OFF TRACK IS DANGEROUS.

Mercy must ride the track of justice.
Mercy must be guided by truth.

Mercy without the guidance of justice and equity is like a train that is moving off track.. THAT TRAIN IS BOUND FOR DESTRUCTION.

Ben-hadad said let us see if we can steer Ahab off track because of his Mercy! And it worked, HE DECEIVED AHAB.

We are seeing in the United States of America a country that has gotten off track in this area of Mercy. Just like the nation Israel got off track.

THOSE WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES AND THOSE WHO SEEK TO DESTROY THIS COUNTRY WE CALL BROTHERS.

THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO STEER US IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, THOSE WHO PROVIDE THE SPIRITUAL TRACKS, THEY ARE THE ENEMY!

So we must show Mercy to the homosexual, he is our brother, and little by little this group is destroying our children, our morality, and our family structure. Recruiting in our schools, and as I have said for many years, their next agenda will be to legalize pedophilia. After all, what difference is there except the age group?

So we must show mercy to the immoral, he is our brother. In the name of freedom of speech and expression anything goes today except saying some things are wrong and outright sinful and immoral. The Ben-hadad liars are our brother and those who preach the truth like Elijah the enemy.

People like Ben-hadad can lie and say I AM YOUR BROTHER, but if their belief system has not changed they will not change. WHAT YOU BELIEVE WILL AFFECT HOW YOU TREAT PEOPLE.

We must show mercy to anyone seeking to come into our country even if they are here illegally, our leaders say. Its who we are, a merciful people! It is the compassionate thing to do. Why do you think that people who have violated our laws to get into our country will keep our laws to stay here? Why would the president of Mexico want it and allow it? The reason is because these illegals are robbing us blind not paying taxes and sending this illegal money into Mexico. Truth is, any American dollars coming into Mexico helps that struggling nation economically. Even illegal money.

Mercy without the railroad track of God's word will self destruct.

This goes back to the garden of Eden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What makes right right and wrong wrong.

THE ANSWER: GOD'S WORD AND HIS WORD ALONE. NOT REASON, LOGIC, MAN'S WISDOM, NOR HIS OPINIONS!

Application: Mercy must be guided by God's laws of justice & truth.

It is true that God is willing to forgive and reconcile to himself any who will repent.

But it is one thing to turn to God and quite another to be sorry for the repercussions of your actions.

It is one thing to turn to God and repent, it is quite another just to say something, lie, and take advantage of someone's mercy and kindness.

2. *Mercy off track will self destruct.*

Untimely Ahab's decision destroyed his nation. The people of Syria come back and destroyed them.

God alone has the right balance of mercy, love, justice, equity, righteousness! None of us are wise enough to have that balance.

We do not see as God sees. God alone sees all. While we think we can decide what is loving and what is the merciful thing to do, only God has that right.

II. *WHAT MAKES A BACKSLIDDEN PEOPLE LESS TOLERANT OF THOSE WHO SEEK THEIR WELFARE THAN THOSE WHO ARE SEEKING THEIR DEMISE?*

Notice how Ahab addressed Ben-hadad

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Notice how he addresses Elijah

I Kings 21:20 And Ahab said to Elijah, hast thou found me, **O mine enemy?** And he answered, I have found thee; because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

Ahab did not understand biblical principles of wisdom...

Proverbs 27:5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.

Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

The Bible says clearly that one of the ways we show our love to others is by not suffering sin upon them.

Leviticus 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Notice how the Bible says we love our neighbor by correcting them.

Those who hate the truth will hate those who preach the truth. So God's men will be the brunt of their attack and hate.

What is interesting is that men like Ahab would label people like Elijah hateful people and the Ben-hadads of this world loving people. Why? The reason why is that Elijah speaks the truth and Ahab only loved those who agreed with him. So anyone who speaks the truth is full of hate to the Ahabs of this world. CONFUSION THAT IS ALL IT IS.

III. WHAT IS THE SOLUTION FOR ALL THIS CONFUSION ?

GOD HIMSELF WOULD NOT VIOLATE HIS ORDAINED PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY AND JUSTICE AND WHAT IS RIGHT. IN ORDER TO SHOW US MERCY

Romans 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

To forgive us of our sin Jesus had to pay for our sin on the cross. He had to make things right. Why did he have to do that?

He did it because he had to balance His mercy with His justice. Our sins had to be paid for.

We think we can just wave our hands and everything is forgiven. No, it cost God something to pay our sins. It was a horrific expense. Christ was our substitute for sin. He literally paid our hell on the cross.

So only by seeing men converted to Christ and only in Christ can we be true brothers and sisters. If we want to be brothers we need to embrace Christ in salvation. He will set us free of this confusion and the lies of the enemies of God.

In Christ we learn the true meaning of love and mercy. Also we receive His spirit and learn to discern between those who are our brothers and those who are not. Those who love Christ will love us. Those who hate the Lord will hate us. The solution is simple.

IV. INVITATION:

If God himself would not violate these principles who are we to try to go against God's law?

Those who know not God do not know what it is to love.

As we said in the first message of this series, we do not know how to love but GOD IS LOVE. He shows His love towards us and demonstrated His love toward us.

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

So when we abandon God we lose a sense of what love is. Soon we are calling those who love us our enemy and those who hate us we call our brother.

Why? Because we will not listen to God so anyone who tells us what God says are the enemies. So it is in our nation today.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS ARE THE ENEMY.

BUT:

THOSE WHO HATE AMERICA AND ARE SEEKING TO MAKE US A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY ARE LOVED.

We love those who want to impoverish us.
We love those who are destroying us from within.
We love those who would rob us.
We love those who would demoralize us.
We love those who are destroying our educational systems.

Those who work and pay taxes are hated.
Those who build things and cause us to prosper are hated.
Those who seek to strengthen morals are our enemy.
Those who would seek to demoralize us we embrace.
Those who are robbing our nation blind we love..

Ben-hadad's advisors said we have heard that the Kings of Israel are merciful loving kings. Let's pretend we are sorry, let's pretend we are humble, lowly, and seek his mercy. So he comes and says.

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Let me live, I am your servant.

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SO HE MADE A COVENANT WITH HIM.

Do you think that you can appease ungodly people by making covenants with them? They will only grow stronger and destroy you.

So men like Elijah become the enemy for saying things like I just said.
While men like Ben-hadad are embraced as brothers.

SO THE BEAT GOES ON AND WE HAVE LEARNED NOTHING AFTER THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

Men like Ben-hadad are seeking refuge by taking advantage of a backslidden nation's misguided mercy. And we are embracing our enemies and calling men like Elijah our enemies. All this is happening because we have abandoned the God of our Fathers.