

Surrey Chapel Connect Groups – 8TH & 9TH June 2016
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE | I KINGS 21:1-29

GET THINKING:

In this evening's passage we find God's prophet Elijah confronting the corrupt king Ahab in the vineyard. We can be tempted to read passages like this as 'moral tales' aimed at teaching us to behave better.

Tonight's passage is not primarily a moral tale: it's a demonstration of **our nature** and **God's character**. Spend a minute **praying now** that you'll leave this evening knowing yourselves better, and with greater gratitude for God's character.

READ I KINGS 21:1-29

Ahab's reasonable sounding offer ('a better vineyard') is turned down by the righteous Naboth because it would have meant disobeying God's command for inherited plots of land to be kept in the family. Perhaps in our better moments we are obedient like Naboth, but at heart we're less like Naboth than we'd like to imagine...

I. WHAT ARE WE LIKE?!

Not unlike Jezebel...

- **What do you think motivates Jezebel's scheming?** See verse 7. **How are we like this?**
- Jezebel is the daughter of a foreign king, but she knows enough about Israelite law to create a *mask of legitimacy* (e.g. finds *two* witnesses, and has Naboth stoned *outside* the city). **How are we like this?**

Not unlike Ahab...

- **In what ways can we see ourselves in Ahab?** See...
 - **Verse 4** – his heart's response to God's law.
 - **Verse 7 & 16** – his response to Jezebel's sin on his behalf. See also verse 19.
 - **Verse 26** – his worship of idols. Notice in this passage that Ahab doesn't reject God outright, but chooses to worship other things *alongside* God. As one preacher has put it:
"We don't stop consulting God, but we consult a whole lot of other things as well – and their united voice has a great way of drowning His."
- Notice the stark language of verse 25 – Ahab "sold himself". **How does this phrase challenge a worldly view of 'sin'?**

2. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

God of justice

- **What is God's judgement on Ahab and Jezebel?** Verses 21-24.
- **What reasons are given for the severity of the judgement?** Verses 19-20; 25-26.
- *How should this affect our view of ourselves before God?*

God of mercy

- **What do verses 27-29 show us about God's mercy?**
- **How do we know that God's mercy on Ahab does *not* mean God has simply brushed Ahab's sin under the carpet?**
- Note that God's words of judgement through Elijah actually become the instruments of his mercy. What implications does this have for our sharing of God's word with others?

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CLOSING THOUGHT: God's perfect justice must be satisfied, but here he inflicts the punishment not on the sinner but on the son. **Remind you of anyone?** *Be thankful for God's mercy and for his grace in satisfying his justice through his son on the Cross.*

PRAYER:

Prayers from the passage | Prayers for your group | Prayers for our church