

22 July 2012

THE FALL OF ISRAEL

E100



This week for the E100 readings we've looked at the fall of Israel. As I've gone through these readings I've been made aware of the traps that also face us. Not just as a church community, but within my family and marriage as well. The same traps that caused Israel to fall will also cause me to crash and burn as well.

The first story for the week was David and Bathsheba. When I lose my way morally I crash and burn, just like David. I begin to lose my way morally when I turn God's will into a set of rules I have to follow or else I'll be punished. Then I've depersonalised them.

Have you noticed how in society we seem to be depersonalising all we do. We don't encounter a person but a machine.

As Christians we don't have a set of rules to follow, we have a person to follow, who we trust with our lives. We follow Jesus, not a set of rule. The moment we depersonalise life we're left feeling oppressed. Why can't I do this, everyone else is, and they're seem to be having fun. Why can't I?

As Jesus' disciples our goal is to follow him because we trust him. Our goal is to grow to be like him in all areas of life; which obviously includes our sexuality. That's why we read; "But the thing David had done displeased the LORD." (2 Sam. 11:27c) Because David hadn't broken a rule, he'd broken his trust in the LORD. David didn't break a rule he broke the Father's heart.

Where are you being tempted morally? Where

are you being tempted to depersonalise life leaving yourself open to actions that will displease the LORD, the one who loves us and who we love. Love's goal isn't to break the other person's heart but to love the other person.

Next came Solomon. Solomon who was so wise, but he compromised his relationship with the LORD. It is so sad to read; "The kingdom was now established in Solomon's hands. (and immediately this follows) Solomon made an *alliance* with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter." (1 Kings 2:46c,3:1)

Solomon made an 'alliance'. What was he thinking? With all his God given wisdom Solomon makes and 'alliance' and with all people, Egypt. They're

living, knowing I'm loved, precious to the Father through the Son. Enjoying the company of the Holy Spirit daily. Rejoicing in sharing God's life with him in a living, vibrant, loving relationship which is gifted to us through Jesus. This is the home the Father has build for us to live in and enjoy with him. What's motivating you?

Let us pray. Heavenly Father reveal to me those area where my relationship with you is being undermined, where I depersonalise, where I box you out, where I respond to fear. Jesus send the Holy Spirit to heal me so that I can always live out the relationship of love you gave you life for me to enjoy and share. Jesus daily grow me as your disciple that daily I also live doing the Father's will because I trust him. Amen.

Then I read the story of Elijah which crystallised things for me. Elijah goes to the widow of Zarephath, that's enemy territory, and asks her to take a huge risk. Elijah says; "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel says; "The jar will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land." (1 Kg 17:13,14)

'Don't be afraid' Elijah has just asked this woman to share her last meal with him believing that the little they have won't run out. Everything in me would be screaming; 'this is rubbish'. Yet amazingly she trusts. She doesn't live by fear but by trust in the LORD. Bingo!

Later this is contrasted with Elijah who is running scared. He runs and hides in a cave, where the LORD graciously comes to Elijah healing him, so that he too can live trusting the LORD not living by fear.

Jesus comes to each of us that we might live from the Fathers' grace and mercy. That we might live loved. Jesus' love banishes all fear, all fear of punishment and fills our heart and soul with the Father's love for his precious children. So now our lives are a living expression of who we are; the Heavenly Father's children, marked by his love, delight of his life.

Am I living from fear; trying to prove myself, trying to condemn others. Living from fear is the seed of destruction. Or am I

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
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Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

the very people who had them enslaved. That's the very nation they left to be free, and now Solomon binds himself to them!

Solomon undermines his relationship with the LORD. He undermines the trust in this relationship. Solomon invites Egypt to be part of this relationship. The LORD isn't into a three some. The LORD is faithful and loyal. The LORD has given himself 100% to this people and to Solomon. But for Solomon that's not enough, he's got to make a few deals so he can feel safe and secure.

If Solomon with all his God given wisdom can fall, then I'm also a candidate. Where am I tempted to make 'alliances'? Where am I tempted to look to find security, to find acceptance so I can feel good about myself? Where am I tempted to look to find my identity, to establish my self-worth?

Jesus has come and given himself 100% that I might trust him 100% knowing that he won't change his mind. In Jesus, in this person, in a personal relationship I discover my identity and self-worth, I find my security and acceptance, so that I can step out into life knowing who I am and whose I am.

What Motivates you; fear or grace?

Where are we tempted to make 'alliances', trusting our wealth, seeking comfort and luxury, looking for praise from others, condemning others to prove ourselves. The Devil is very subtle in how he gets us to make 'alliances' without us even realising it.

The Pharisees of Jesus day are a huge warning for me. They thought they were committed to following the LORD but they had made an 'alliance' with

performance. Ultimately it was their performance that mattered, not the LORD'S promises, not growing in a personal relationship with the LORD responding to life out of the love, grace and mercy that was theirs in this relationship.

This week invite the Holy Spirit to show you where you are being tempted to make 'alliances'. Not to feel bad about yourself, but so you can give those thoughts the boot and rejoice in the relationship of love, grace and mercy we have in Jesus. This is what we want to grow in.

The next temptation that lead to the down fall of Israel was the temple they built. David was promised that his son would built a temple for God, because David had blood on his hands. Interestingly Solomon wasn't any better than his father. The son who builds the temple is Jesus. Remember that

one of the promises of Jesus was that he would destroy the temple and rebuilt it in three days. Jesus is the only Son who doesn't have blood on his hands, the Son who build's the only sort of temple where the Father wants to live.

I don't know why we think the God of the Universe would want to live in a stone building. But Solomon builds the temple and that starts to change the way the people think about God. God goes from the one who leads his people to be stuck in one place. The Tabernacle moved and the people followed. The Tabernacle was mobile, not static. The temple is static, fixed, immovable, set.

God has subtly been removed from leading his people, being out there in their lives to being in the building where you have to go to meet him. Worship shifts from the way we live to a ritual we perform on holy ground. What a sad

shift. Holy ground is now only found in a building, what does that say about the rest of our lives. God's not there. God's not interested. We worship on Sunday and do business Monday to Friday. And God obviously isn't interested in Saturday cause all we do is play. The temple slowly leads people to box God into a building,

Jesus builds the only home the Father wants to live in.

to compartmentalise their living. How different is Jesus' temple. Jesus' temple is made of living stones; that's people in other words. That's the very place the Father wants to live. Notice we come back to building a living, vibrant, loving relationship.

I don't want to depersonalise God by boxing him into a building and only relating to him with fixed rituals that

condemn me if I get it wrong. I don't think this is the sort of relationship Jesus gave his life for. No Jesus tore the curtain in the temple apart so that he could get out, and get into our lives, the very place he wants to be.

Jesus is after a dynamic personal relationship based on his love, his grace and mercy won for us through his death and resurrection. Jesus has come that we might share life with him in every area. He's even keen to be with you Saturday and enjoy playing sport. I reckon the Father loves playing with his children.

Where am I tempted to box God out of my life, confining him to some impersonal ritual? Where am I tempted to box God out of my life, my sexuality, the way I do business, how I treat the shop assistant, making life more and more impersonal because that's the way to greater profit.