March 14

Happy Monday, everyone.

As we continue our walk through the books of the Bible in order, this week we will continue with the so-called historical books and will look at the book of 1 Kings, followed next week by, you guessed it, 2 Kings.

I won’t lie to you. They’re hard books to read. Lots of names that are difficult to pronounce, complicated plots, and some flat-out strange stuff. Most of all, it tells the story of repeated sin and idolatry by almost all the kings of Israel. Nonetheless, as with all Scripture, these books are inspired by God and while they may seem not all that relevant today, in fact, they have some quite relevant and important lessons to teach us.

**The lesson I would like to focus on today is the steadfastness of God and promises fulfilled.** Here’s the background:

1 Kings opens with King David being very old and near death. After some shenanigans by David’s fourth son, Adonijah, who wanted to be king, David names his second son, Solomon as the king. Recall that in the book we studied last week, 2 Samuel, God promised David through the prophet Nathan that there will be someone on David’s throne forever:

>“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son...And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (7:12-16).

This is a most important moment in God’s plan of redemption for Creation. Here He is promising that from the line of David will come His Son, who will reign forever. In order for that to take place, David’s lineage needs to continue, and so it does with Solomon.

Solomon is well aware of God’s promise to his father David, and after having been named king and anointed by God, and after having built the temple, as God had also promised, this is what Solomon says:

>“Now the Lord has upheld the promise that he made; for I have risen in the place of my father David; I sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel“ (1 Kings 8:20).

What promises has God made to you? For those of us who claim Jesus as our Savior, God makes the biggest, and most propound promise in all of human history: The promise of eternal life in heaven. My prayer for you today is that you rest in the assurance that when each of our time comes, God will fulfill that promise in a way we can never imagine.

IHS, Pastor Lou
March 15
Grace and peace to you this day.

The prophet Elijah had a tough job. It was his responsibility to prophesy to all the evil kings of Israel, warning them against their sin and idolatry. Needless to say, it was not always well received. He was constantly on the run, and his life was often in danger. In one of my favorite passages in all of Scripture, after one such episode where he literally is running for his life, this is the exchange he has with the Almighty:

“Lord God All-Powerful, I've always done my best to obey you. But your people have broken their solemn promise to you. They have torn down your altars and killed all your prophets, except me. And now they are even trying to kill me!” “Go out and stand on the mountain,” the Lord replied. “I want you to see me when I pass by.” All at once, a strong wind shook the mountain and shattered the rocks. But the Lord was not in the wind. Next, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. Finally, there was a gentle breeze, and when Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his coat. He went out and stood at the entrance to the cave” (1 Kings 19:10-13).

While literally in fear for his life, the Lord speaks to Elijah not in a powerful wind, not in an earthquake, and not in a fire. (Can you imagine, Elijah is already scared to pieces, and he has to endure a tornado, an earthquake, and a fire before the Lord speaks to him.) In any case, the Lord speaks to him in a gentle breeze (some translations say a gentle “whisper.”)

How does the Lord speak to you? Have you heard the gentle whisper of the Holy Spirit? Have you felt His gentle breeze on your face?

Elijah went to a mountain be alone. My prayer for you today is this: You don’t have to go to a mountain (though you certainly can if you like!). But go ahead, find a quiet place, still your mind, and listen for that gentle whisper of the Spirit of God. Then see what He has to say.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
March 16

Greetings, DGCC Family.

By all accounts, the temple Solomon built for the Lord was a sight to behold.

Cedar from Lebanon, everything covered in gold. Thousands of laborers and skilled craftsmen. Seven years of round-the-clock work. 180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and at the highest point, about 20 stories tall. Absolutely no expense was spared.

But Solomon knew that the purpose of the temple…was not the temple. It was to glorify God, and to be a symbol not to just the Jewish people, but to all people. In his prayer of dedication, this is in part what Solomon says:

“As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name—for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name” (1 Kings 8:41-43).

Solomon anticipated, and welcomed, foreigners, aliens, and refugees from all the nations to the temple. Solomon knew an important lesson that we are advised to remember today: the church is a place where we welcome in the name of the Lord all of His people. In this way, as Solomon said, “so that all the peoples of the earth may know you and fear you…”

I am so honored to be serving the Lord in a church that is welcoming and inviting. Blessings to you all as we serve together.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
March 17

Happy St. Patty’s Day!

One of the saddest days in the history of ancient Israel is when it became a divided nation. King David ruled during its “golden age.” Solomon was given great riches and wisdom by God and built the temple. However, the temple came at a price. Solomon levied heavy taxes on the people in order to pay for the temple and other “public works” projects, and the people protested. Sound familiar? The protesters were led by a man named Jeroboam.

When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam took over. Jeroboam and some of the protesters met with him to complain about the taxes his father Solomon had levied, and to ask if he would ease their burden.

Rehoboam then met with two sets of advisors to formulate a response. The elders advised that he reduce the taxes. But a group of young men advised that he actually increase the taxes. This is what happened next:

“Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, “Come back to me in three days.” The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, he followed the advice of the young men and said, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.” So, the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite. When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

“What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse’s son?
To your tents, Israel!
Look after your own house, David!”

So the Israelites went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them” (1 Kings 12:12-17).

Tribal loyalties and political partisanship drown out the word of God, and the nation divides. Once again, sound familiar? The nation of Israel forms in the north and is led by Jeroboam, and the nation of Judah forms in the south, led by Rehoboam. Both nations, now divided, would be conquered by foreign powers. Politics and tribalism carry the day and bring division and destruction.

My prayer for today is this: let’s be sure to pray for our elected leaders. Let’s pray daily for unity, for understanding, and for the Word of God to be heard by all.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
March 18

Happy Friday, everyone!

Here’s your Friday musical devotional.

Turn up the volume and enjoy!

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzGmvLVKjgssKJfjiPDVXqxmhzdB?project
or=1

IHS,

Pastor Lou