

## When Push Comes To Shove

On Sunday, we continued our sermon series on the life & times of Elijah and Elisha by studying a story that reminds us of those times in life when what we want to do conflicts with what we know is right.

1. Warm up question: Jeff began Sunday's sermon with an example from the roadways. Most of us aspire to "drive like Jesus," but then things happen that cause us to want to get aggressive. Have you experienced anything like that lately? Confession is good for the soul. Tell us what you did. ☹
2. Who's the biggest hypocrite you've ever known? Was that person happy in life?
3. Who's the most genuine person you've ever known? Was that person happy?
4. Read I Kings 21:1-7. As king, Ahab had the best of everything – palaces, chariots, the finest clothes, the best food, etc. Yet still he wanted more. It just goes to show, we can never get "enough."
  - a. Read Proverbs 27:20. What do you think that verse means?
  - b. No matter how much we have, there's always some next thing we want. For you, what's that next thing? What's something you want?
  - c. When Ahab didn't get what he wanted, he got depressed and withdrew. Jezebel was differently. She got aggressive and went after what they wanted. Think of a time when you couldn't have something you really wanted. How did you react?
5. Read I Kings 21:8-16.
  - a. What do you suppose was going on inside Jezebel as she did all this? As best you can imagine, what was she thinking, and what did it feel like to be her?
  - b. Do you think Jezebel liked herself? Do you think she liked her life?
  - c. Why did the elders of Jezreel do what Jezebel said? How do you think it felt to be them as all this unfolded?
  - d. What do you suppose Naboth felt as all this unfolded?
  - e. Have you ever been in a situation like Naboth, where you were a victim of someone else's power play? How did that feel?
6. Read I Kings 21:17-24. The story of Naboth's Vineyard is meant to be a cautionary tale, illustrating what happens when we elevate our own wants and desires above doing good. Arguably, this is the greatest test of our faith and our discipleship: When

push comes to shove, when what I want conflicts with what God wants, how do I respond?

- a. Jeff told about a time when he let his own desires overcome what he knew to be right. He let his sister get punished for a booger he put on the wall. All of us have done things like that, as kids and adults. Tell us about a time you let your wants overcome your commitment to doing right? What happened? How did you feel afterward?
  - b. Now let's reverse the scenario. Tell us about a time when you did what was right even though it really cost you. Afterward, how did you feel?
  - c. Look back over this past week, can you think of a time (no matter how small) when you did something you didn't want to, just because it was the right thing to do?
  - d. Are you facing any big issues in life right now where you feel torn between doing what's right and doing what you desire?
7. Jeff offered two suggestions for how we can get better at living our faith even when that conflicts with our personal self-interests. **First, we have to keep practicing.** We can't get down on ourselves and give up. When we fall down, we have to keep getting up again until we finally get into a positive groove. Most of us have certain areas in our life where we struggle to live our faith consistently. For some of us it might be anger management, or gossip, or sharing our money, or dealing with difficult people, or driving gently, or substance abuse, etc. Is there are area in your life right now where it feels like God is calling you to practice "self-denial" for the sake of goodness? Are you actively practicing? How's it going?
8. **Jeff's second suggestion for how we can do better at living our faith was: Feed your soul!** Our souls are like our bodies. If we don't feed them well, they will grow weak and be unable to meet the challenges that arise. The Building Blocks that we teach at LifeJourney (see list on next page) are a great way to feed our souls.
- a. Many of us prepared Soul Care Plans at the outset of 2014. What was a key growth objective in your Plan for this year? How's it going so far?
  - b. Do you feel you are routinely giving your soul enough spiritual food? If not, which Building Block calls to you for greater focus?
9. Sunday's sermon closed with the story of the Amish girl who asked a gunman to kill her and let the others go, essentially reenacting the sacrifice Jesus made. What's the difference between people who can do something like that and people who can't? Do you think you could do it? If not, what holds you back?

***May God help us to become more and more consistent in living our faith!***

## **Build Blocks For Feeding Our Souls**

- D** A conscious **decision** to follow Jesus
- W** Consistency in weekly **worship**
- C** **Connecting** to people in a deep spiritual way through Oasis
- Q** **Quiet time** for daily communion with God
- G** Consistently **giving** of my financial resources
- S** Living a life of **service**
- ?** **Unique things** I'm called to do to further my spiritual growth