

Do What's Right (Part 3) – 2 Kings 18:13-17

2 Kings 18:13-17; This is part 3 of a series titled *Do What's Right*

Looking at the life and example of Hezekiah – a man who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (**Do What's Right**)

And we found in week 1 that we ought to do the same . . .

Because obedience brings blessing (2 Kings 18:1-8)

Not that you'll always *know* God's blessing you; And not that you'll win a popularity contest for doing what's right; But blessing nonetheless

2nd, from part 2, was do what's right . . .

Because disobedience brings discipline (2 Kings 18:9-12)

Discipline we should expect (**Expect it**), b/c – *The Lord disciplines the one he loves . . .*

And if you are left without discipline . . . then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (Heb 12:6,8); IOW . . .

- **No discipline, no salvation**

If there's no discipline in your life, you're not a child of God; But if you are, when the discipline comes . . .

- **It's for your own good**

That you *may share* [God's] holiness (Heb 12:10); But . . .

- **You have to accept it**

You have to yield yourself to the training of discipline, otherwise its intended effect will be lost on you

And then last, we noted that . . .

- **But not all hardship is discipline**

Just b/c you're going through hardship, doesn't mean you're being disciplined

It *could* be that you're simply having to deal with one of the many ill-effects of living in a fallen world; Or that God is strengthening your *faith* (James 1:3-4)

➤ That was part 2 from v9-12 (**Summary**), and brings us to part 3, from v13-17

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah [that's 701BC], Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

He laid siege to them and conquered them, we covered that in part 1

What we *didn't* cover, is what happened next

[14] *And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me I will bear."* And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. [15] *And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD [the temple] and in the treasuries of the king's house [his personal wealth].*

[16] *At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD and from the doorposts that Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria. [17] And the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem.*

And we know from Isaiah's account, that he wasn't there for a parade; He was there to conquer, to wage war; Just like he was doing in all the other cities of Judah

IOW it didn't work; Admitting he was wrong, and paying the tribute, and succumbing to the extortion just to get Sennacherib off his back – *didn't work*
Sennacherib sent his army anyway

Instead, Hezekiah should have done what was *right*; Just like he had been doing all along
He should have held the line; He should have stood *firm* against Sennacherib's pagan ways and ungodliness

Because accommodating sinful people rarely ends well (2 Kings 18:13-17)

That's the point; That's the lesson; Do what's right, b/c doing what's wrong in order to accommodate sinful people, rarely ends well

And it's illustrated at least 3 ways by Hezekiah

1. He admitted something that wasn't true

Instead of doing what's right, he admitted something false – "*I have done wrong* [he said]" (14); Which isn't true; He didn't do *anything* wrong

He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord it says in v3

He *followed* in King David's footsteps; Receiving blessing upon blessing

But he almost threw it away with one comment; One false admission; One word, spoken in fear; Or haste; Or who *knows* what

➤ Not good; And not good for us as well

If you try to pacify the desires of sinful people, by admitting what's not true or confessing to something you're not guilty of – it won't end well

At the very least you'll regret it, and at the worst you'll suffer unnecessary consequences

Better to speak the truth

Better to speak the truth, and let the sovereign chips of God fall where they may

That's the first principle illustrated by Hezekiah's response

He admitted something that wasn't true, when he should have spoken the truth

2. He responded in desperation

V14b – *Whatever you impose on me I will bear.*

Really Hezekiah? What about your firstborn? How about your wife? Or your kingship? Or the lives of your top advisors? Or everything you have? Is all *that* on the table?

It was a brash offer, made in the weakness of desperation – b/c he just wanted to be *rid* of the situation; He wanted out

➤ Ever been there? I have; And I'm sure you have too

And the temptation is to respond in desperation, isn't it?

Like when we're desperate for relief, or desperately need a solution, or lose patience with God, or fear the fallout of doing what's right or best

When that's the case, we often speak when we shouldn't, and say desperate things

Instead, we ought to keep our head

B/c accommodating sinful people rarely ends well, it's – **Better to keep your head**

To be quick to hear [and] *slow to speak* (James 1:19); Responding in *meekness*, but not weakness; Humility, but not cowardice; Urgency, but not desperation

That's the *right* thing to do; Otherwise, you'll end up accommodating the very people you ought to be confronting

And then 3rd, Hezekiah illustrated this principle when . . .

3. He gave what he shouldn't

He admitted something that wasn't true when he should have spoken the truth . . .

He responded in desperation when he should have kept his head . . .

And he gave what he shouldn't when he should have stood his ground; When he should have trusted the Lord; **Better to trust the Lord**

Look at v14-16 again – *The king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.*

That's about \$55M at today's prices; An astronomical amount in those days

But that was the payment Sennacherib required to supposedly avert their attack

The worst part of which, is that Hezekiah paid it!

V15 – *And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. [16] [What's more] at that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD and from the doorposts that Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid and [once again] gave it to the king of Assyria.*

He gave away the farm; He gave what he shouldn't, when he should've stood his ground, when he should've trusted the Lord

All to appease a sinful man, who came after him anyway

IOW it didn't go well; And it won't for you either, if *you* try to accommodate sinful people by giving up what you shouldn't

Better to speak the truth, keep your head, and trust the Lord

➤ It's something I didn't do on one particular occasion, when I was trading bonds on the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade in the late 90's

I don't remember what was going on in the world, but for some reason there was a bit of a panic, and I made a series of trades . . .

With a broker who was representing a very large customer

And when I did, I took an *exceeding* amount of risk – not just b/c of the amount of money involved, but b/c of the uncertainty at that time

And it didn't look good in those first few hours – the trades didn't go my way, and I couldn't get out of them

But by the next morning, things had changed so drastically and unexpectedly, they were huge winners

And lo and behold, that broker came to me before the open, and said that the customer had made a mistake, and wanted out of the trades

Which I strongly suspected wasn't true

In fact, I was pretty sure they were just bad trades on their part, and they didn't want to own up to them

But the broker persisted, and said he was going to have to eat the trades himself if I didn't comply; And then implied that if I did . . .

He would keep an eye out for me, and “make it up to me”

So, against every fiber of my being, I said okay – basically giving away the farm, in an effort to accommodate sinful, greedy people

And you know what happened? Nothing – the broker totally ignored me

I got no trades out of it; No preference; No deference; No consideration; No nothing

Just like Hezekiah got nothing back from Sennacherib, when *he* gave up what he shouldn't have

➤ The point being – if you try to accommodate the sin of sinful people, it probably won't go so well; B/c you can't placate sin; You can't satisfy sin
It's ravenous and insatiable; Ask an addict; They'll tell ya

Or look at your own life; Your own desire for sin; Like your desire for illicit sex for instance; Or your penchant for lying; Or your indulgence in gossip

It's insatiable isn't it? And the more you feed it, the hungrier you get

Which means that accommodating sinful people with sinful motives is a losing battle

B/c you can't placate sin

➤ Not only that, but some people are just flat out *unappeasable*; Especially these days Which shouldn't be a surprise, b/c in **2 Tim 3:1**, the Apostle Paul said that . . .
In the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be [among other things] . . . *unappeasable*

As in, it doesn't matter what you say or do, you can't please them; You can't satisfy them They're mad, angry, disgruntled, bent, sideways – and it doesn't matter how hard you try, or for how long, you can't scratch their itch; Period; They won't allow it

They think what they think, they listen only to themselves or to those who add fuel to their fire, and reject anything else to the contrary

Even if it's the truth; Even if it's staring them in the face; It doesn't matter

And it's one more reason to do what's right and best; B/c trying to accommodate them is nearly impossible, and rarely ends well*****

➤ Now, having said all that, it's in no way intended to negate the ethic that Jesus taught The ethic of grace found in **Mt 5:38-42**; Where he says . . .

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' [39] But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. [41] And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. [42] Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

That sounds a lot like accommodation if you ask me; And it is to some extent

B/c sometimes, the right thing to do, is show grace upon grace *regardless* of the result

To speak the truth, keep your head, and trust the Lord – by turning the other cheek

Sometimes the right thing to do, is give *more* than what's asked for

IOW just b/c accommodating sinful people rarely ends well, it doesn't mean you should withhold grace; Do the right thing, yes . . .

But don't withhold grace

In fact, that should be our first impulse – grace; leniency; kindness; favor

That's what Jesus is *getting* at in Matthew 5 – *show more grace*; Even to those whose intent is to hurt you; Even to those whose desire is to shame you

Show grace, trusting *God* for the outcome – instead of taking matters into your own hands; Show grace, in order to glorify *him* with your response . . .

Instead of protecting yourself

And therein lies the fine line between *holding* the line with sinful people, and accommodating them; If you can, if at all possible, show them grace
But *not* at the expense of God's glory; Not at the expense of his name; His fame
Don't withhold grace – **Unless God's glory is at stake**

Which is exactly the mistake Hezekiah made when he accommodated Sennacherib and stripped the temple; God wasn't *glorified* in that; In fact, he was *shamed*
His temple, his abode, his dwelling place – was desecrated

You see, there comes a time when God's glory – his glory in our lives, temples of the Holy Spirit that we are . . .
His glory in our church, his glory in our nation, his glory in the universe . . .
There comes a time when God's glory trumps our grace – the grace he wants us to show

➤ That's why the apostles confronted Ananias and Sapphira in the NT; They weren't accommodated in their lies and sin of bringing a partial gift when they said otherwise
They weren't shown grace in their refusal to come clean and repent; Why?
B/c God's glory was at stake; It would've reflected poorly on the church, and diminished God's glory and honor among all those who knew
There comes a time when God's glory trumps our grace

The same would be true of those who stir up trouble in the church
Like Paul said in **Titus 3:10-11** – *As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, [11] knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.*
That sounds like we'd be *resisting* the person who's evil; Just the *opposite* of what Jesus said; And it is; B/c God's *glory* is at stake in the church
And there comes a time when that takes precedent

And how about 2 Tim 3, after that list I mentioned of all the different kinds of people who will bring difficulty in the last days, when Paul says 3 words – *avoid such people* (5b)
That doesn't sound very grace giving; And once again seems to contradict the admonition of Jesus to turn the other cheek*****

But it's necessary b/c a person who stirs up division and is unrepentant about it, hurts the church that Jesus himself is building; And brings *shame* to his name instead of fame
At which point God's glory, trumps our grace
And it rarely ends well to accommodate them (**Summary**)

But *short* of that, short of God's glory being diminished, don't withhold grace; Even to *sinful* people
Speak the truth, keep your head, and trust the Lord – by showing grace whenever you can

Prayer – God, give us the courage to speak the truth and do what's right in the face of sinful people; And give us the wisdom to know when to show grace, and when to protect your glory
