

Do What's Right (Part 4) – Is 36:4-20

Is 36; This is part 4 of a mini-series titled *Do What's Right*, based on the account of a guy named Hezekiah – a king in Judah, about 7 centuries before Christ

And we found in Part 1, that we ought to do what's right . . .

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

And then Part 2 . . .

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

And Part 3 . . .

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

Primarily b/c you can't placate sin; All of those were from the 2 Kings account of all this

- Which brings us to Part 4, and Is 36 (**Summary**), the place we started; And I want to read starting at v1, in order to refresh the context in our minds
[1] In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah [that's 701BC, one of the major events in the history of God's people at that time], Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. [2] And the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh [kind of like a general] from Lachish [another city in Judah at that time] to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field [just outside the gate on the east side]. [3] And there came out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder [3 of Hezekiah's leaders]. [4] And the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? [5] Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? [6] Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

He was saying that Judah's alliance w/ Egypt was going to bite them; And he was right
B/c they shouldn't have made it in the first place

- And then, in v7, the Rabshakeh starts into his little diatribe by anticipating their response, and swerving from the truth; Which is the basis for our first principle
You clearly trust in Egypt . . .
But if you say to me, "We trust in the LORD our God," is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, "You shall worship before this altar [the one in Jerusalem]"?

Uh, no, Rabshakeh-boy; That would be incorrect
There was no incongruity or contradiction between their trust in the LORD, and the removal of various altars and places of worship scattered throughout the land
B/c those were *pagan* places of worship; And altars to *false* gods
Hezekiah didn't have it wrong, the Rabshakeh did

Which serves to illustrate the principle that we should do what's right . . .

Because doing what's wrong leads to arrogance (v7-10)

In the midst of his sin, the Rabshakeh thought he knew more than he did
Insinuating that Hezekiah was *inconsistent* in tearing down all the altars except the one that was in his backyard, to ensure that the people were dependent on *him*
That they would come *his* way for worship
It was an accusation of arrogance, from someone who was the epitome of it

And that's usually how sin works, doesn't it? The more we indulge, the more it clouds our judgment and leads us to believe that we know better, when we really don't
That's what I mean when I say that doing what's wrong leads to arrogance
In this case, **the arrogance of superior thinking (v7)**; It's the first of 3 kinds

- The Rabshakeh thought he was dead on, when he was dead wrong; He thought he knew *better*, when he knew squat
That's what living wrong leads to – the arrogance of superior thinking

And we're not exempt; Especially when skies are blue in our lives; When things are going our way; When that's the case, we tend to think we know best
We tend to think we've got it going on; We tend to think we can do no wrong
And without even knowing it, we become the Rabshakeh

- The second aspect of arrogance here, is **the arrogance of superiority (v8-9)**
Doing what's wrong leads to the arrogance of superiority – thinking we're more *powerful* than we really are; Look at v8-9
[8] Come now [the Rabshakeh says], make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. [9] How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

That's the arrogance of superiority; In v8 he's like . . .

"You're so pathetic, I'm going to spot you some help, just to make this sporting; In fact, if you can find 2000 riders, I'll give you 2000 *horses* – just to keep things interesting
"After all, I don't want our soldiers feeling *sorry* for you or anything"

"And if you think your friends can help you, your Egyptian buddies, think again; You couldn't hurt a flea with their help; Don't be ridiculous"
It's the arrogance of superiority

Which most often comes from making a habit of doing what's wrong, and succeeding
Like gang members, who think they're invincible; Or crooked leaders of nations, who think they're untouchable; Or drug dealers
Who after years of doing what's wrong, tend to think they're superior; Unbeatable

And the same thing can happen to you if you're wildly successful in doing what's *right*; It too can lead to the arrogance of superiority

Which means we have to be ever vigilant; Lest in doing what's right outwardly, we begin to do what's wrong inwardly; It's a slippery slope

- And then 3rd, is **the arrogance of spirituality (v10)**
And oh, does this start to hit close to home

B/c there's an insidious form of spirituality, most often found in the church of all places
– that if we're not careful, will creep into our souls, and lead to our downfall

And the Rabshakeh had it going on in spades; Look at v10

Moreover [the Rabshakeh says], is it without the LORD that I have come up against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it.'"

He actually invokes God's name and claims to represent him, in order to rationalize his actions and intimidate his foe

Which isn't unlike those in our day who spiritualize *their* every act; From cult leaders to church members, far too many people are on the "God-told-me-to" page

Whether they use that verbiage or not

"God told me to quit my job; God told me to leave my church; God told me to buy a business; God told me to sell my house; God told me to tell you [blank]"

Really? Really? B/c God told me just the opposite; Now what do we do?

"God told me to" is often the arrogance of spirituality that creeps into our souls, when we fail to subject our thinking to the scrutiny of others

Or open our lives to the *inspection* of others; Or feel the need to justify ourselves

Or assuage our guilt in *one* area, with a spiritual façade in another

➤ We ought to be very, very careful of representing God all by ourselves

Very careful of making decisions in a vacuum

B/c there's a significant risk of being spiritually arrogant, thinking we have a perfect read on the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives, when we don't (**Summary**)

Better to measure your thoughts and actions against the Word of God in front of you, the people of God around you, and the circumstances of life before you . . .

In *addition* to what the Spirit of God within you is saying

Anything less than that, and the arrogance of spirituality will creep in, take root, and take over; Until you're brought to your knees at the bottom of the barrel . . .

And forced to face the *truth*; Better to do what's right in the first place

That's the first principle here

The 2nd, is do what's right . . .

Because doing what's wrong leads to nonsense (v11-20)

V11-12 – *Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall." [12] But the Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?"* That was often the stark reality of a long-term siege in those days

And there's a good leadership principle here that I think is important to understand

You see, Aramaic would *ultimately* become the common language of Palestine, but at this point it was the language of business and diplomacy; The masses didn't know it

And in wanting the Rabshakeh to use it, Hezekiah's guys weren't necessarily trying to be secretive, just protective; That's what good leaders do

They protect those in their care from discouragement and distraction

B/c some people don't have the *maturity* to handle all the information; Like kids in a family; Good parents don't tell their kids everything about their finances . . .

Or disagreements, or difficulties; They protect them

B/c they often don't have the maturity to absorb it, and keep it in proper perspective

And if they do, it might only serve to distract them; Which I imagine was the case with most of the soldiers; They probably *could* have handled the info . . .

But it most likely would have distracted them from their duties, or frustrated them without the ability to *do* anything about it

In which case they simply didn't need to concern themselves with it; Especially with capable leaders in place

➤ But that didn't stop the Rabshakeh from *trying*; And this is where we see the *nonsense* of doing what's wrong

[13] Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! [14] Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you. [15] Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

You know what that is? That's nonsense – **the nonsense of doubt (v13-15)**; One of the weapons of those who *do* what's wrong, and think wrongly

Like when Germany dropped propaganda pamphlets on American soldiers shortly after D-Day; They were waging psychological warfare by sowing seeds of doubt

And the Rabshakeh did the same; He cast doubt on Hezekiah's *motives*, by saying . . .

Do not let Hezekiah deceive you; Really? Is that what Hezekiah was doing? Is that his motive in all this? It's a seed of doubt

As is his next comment – *he will not be able to deliver you*

"He won't be able to follow through on his promises; It's all smoke and mirrors"

More nonsense

And perhaps the most nonsensical of all, is his comment in v15 – *Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD*; As if that's even possible

And does he even have a clue as to who he's talking about? As in, the LORD; Yahweh?

The God who was, and is, and is to come? The one who created the heavens and the earth, miraculously delivered their forefathers out of slavery . . .

And gave them a land to dwell in? *Don't let Hezekiah make you trust in him?*

It would be laughable, if it weren't so senseless

But that rarely stops people from spouting the nonsense of doubt, does it?

Especially those who don't *think* right; Or *do* right

➤ And we need to be on the lookout for it; Be wary of those who sow seeds of doubt; And those who perpetuate its nonsense

Like those who question the truth of the Bible without considering all the evidence, or even reading it

Or those who question the existence of God because he can't be seen or touched

Or the assurance of salvation b/c it's based on faith; Don't be swayed

There's good reason to trust this book as God's Word – both subjective *and* objective
And good *reason* to trust in God, starting with the *effect* of his presence – from creation
to the cross; And good reason to *hope* in Christ, starting with his resurrection
Don't be swayed by the nonsense of doubt; In *any* area of life
Especially from those who *do* what's wrong, and think what's wrong

➤ And the same is true when it comes to **the nonsense of lies (16-17)**

Again, modeled so well by the Rabshakeh; Look at what he says in v16
*Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me
and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of
his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern,
[17] until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and
wine, a land of bread and vineyards.*

“Oh really; Is that how it's going to be? Then what about the other cities and nations you
rolled over? And do you really expect us to believe . . .
That you'll be different than every other nation of our day? Lies; All lies”

That had to be some of what was going through their minds; Which makes his comments
pathetic; But once again indicative of the *nonsense* of people in sin
They lie; That's their tendency; Show me someone who's not living right, and I'll show
you a liar; Whether it's telling *explicit* fibs, or passively putting on a façade
B/c doing what's wrong in one area of life, inevitably overflows into others

Better to do what's right in God's eyes; Better to avoid the nonsense, and stop it
Otherwise, you once again won't be far behind the Rabshakeh

And then 3rd, do what's right, b/c doing what's wrong leads to . . .

The nonsense of messed up thinking (v18-20)

*[18] Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying, “The LORD will deliver us.” Has any
of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?
[19] Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim?
Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? [20] Who among all the gods of these
lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver
Jerusalem out of my hand?”*

That's messed up; Why? B/c the gods of the other nations aren't *real*; Backed by demonic
influence, yes; But not real (1 Cor 10:20)

And comparing the two, comparing the gods small “g” that don't exist, with *thee* God,
big G, who always was – is apples and oranges; Night and day
The other countries weren't delivered b/c they *have* no gods
And Judah *will* be delivered b/c they *do* – b/c they serve the *living* God, the LORD

In which case the Rabshakeh's thinking is *messed up*; Flawed; Illogical
And something to not only avoid yourself, but once again beware of in others

➤ Like the thinking of those who try to use the Scriptures to advocate gay marriage, when
the Scriptures are very clear that the practice of homosexuality is wrong
It's the nonsense of messed up thinking, that stems from doing what's wrong

That stems from trying to justify your lifestyle when God says it's wrong
And the list goes on and on in that respect

Beware of it; Read between the lines in the issues of the day; Smell the battle; Think
biblically and critically – not negatively, but thoroughly and discerningly
And listen to others who do the same

➤ And by all means, avoid the nonsense of messed up thinking yourself
Whether it's personal matters, spiritual matters, work-related issues, relationships,
family, church – you name it, none of us are immune
None of us are immune from the nonsense of rationalization, messed up thinking, and
the tendency to self-justify; None of us

Which is all the more reason to do what's right – by measuring your thoughts against the
plumb line of Scripture, and surrounding yourself w/ those who do the same (**Summ**)
Anything else leads to arrogance and nonsense

Prayer – Help us as we take these principles to heart; Keep us from wrong, and find us
living and thinking right – in your eyes; According to your word
And receive our *tithes and offerings* now, with the same delight in which we give them
You're good to us, and we give back now a small portion of what you've given to us