



April 10th, 2019

The Lord Preserves our Hope

“And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed[a] Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived.”
- 2 Kings 25-27-30

This past Sunday, we took a close look at King Solomon. In Sunday school we checked out the first half of his time as King, where Solomon humbles himself and asks for wisdom, which God grants. On Sunday night, we looked at how Solomon's reign went terribly wrong. He started to distrust God and let fear creep into his life. He entered into over 700 marriages, many of them to foreign daughters to gain himself political favor and make sure those nations wouldn't cause Him trouble. God promised to take care of him, but Solomon took it into his own hands. Bad things happen when we react out of fear. For Solomon it led to him being gradually influenced by all the foreign Gods. Solomon wasn't willing to hold steadfast to the Lord, even when it was hard, and by the end of his reign he had allowed idol and pagan worship into every area of Israelite life, even the temple itself.

The rest of Kings then walks us through how the Kingdom falls apart after Solomon. Under his son, the kingdom splits in half. Then, first in the North, then the South, king after king bring things to a more gradual decline. In the South there's some good kings that really try to make a difference, but Israel is so far gone that it becomes hopeless. The Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria and the Southern Kingdom to the Babylonian empire. The temple is destroyed and it seems like God's people have been completely lost.

The passage above marks the very end of Kings - and in it God shows us this beautiful glimmer of hope. In it the king of Babylon chooses to graciously free Jehoiachin, the king of Judah from prison. He shows Jehoiachin kindness and gives him a really high seat. Because of this passage, the book of Kings ends with this hopeful question: Could God's promise still be fulfilled after all? Could a King still come from David's line, despite the fact that the nation of Israel doesn't even really seem to exist anymore?

In our own lives, God is our source of hope. In the midst of strife, whether our sin causes it, or life happens to us, God is in the business of redeeming and restoring. Even in the midst of complete chaos, with two kingdoms in shambles, we see this one guy who God is keeping safe in order to eventually fulfill his promise to the nation of Israel and all people. In the midst of struggle, we can know that God brings hope. He doesn't leave us nor forsake us.

Everyone of us has struggles, trials, and fires we walk through. This week, take some time to reflect and give those things to the one who keep His promises, the one who kept David's line going, who sent His son to die on the cross, who restored us to be in right relationship with God, and who invites us into His Kingdom.