

“Resisting God’s Word”
1 Kings 22:1-29
(Preached at Trinity, October 24, 2021)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapters 20-22** focus primarily on Ahab’s failures as a king and as a person. When sin goes unchecked, it continues to fester and grow. This is illustrated clearly in the life of Ahab. These chapters will reveal Ahab’s repeated opposition to the Word of God. In **Chapter 20** we were witness to Ahab’s failure to guard himself and Israel against the enemies of God. God’s enemies must be our enemies. Ahab wasn’t zealous for the righteous kingdom of God. God trusted His justice into the hand of Ahab, but Ahab failed because he wasn’t interested in God’s righteous judgment.
1 Kings 20:42-43 NAU - "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have let go out of *your* hand the man whom I had devoted to destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.'" ⁴³ So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and vexed, and came to Samaria."
The word for “sullen” means resentful. Ahab was continually resentful of God’s Word and continually resisted it.
2. In **Chapter 21** we again find Ahab’s resentment towards God’s Word. Naboth was a peasant who had a vineyard located near the summer palace of Ahab. Ahab decided the plot would be a great location for a vegetable garden and asked Naboth to sell it to him.
 - A. Naboth refused on the grounds that it violated God’s Word.
1 Kings 21:3 NAU - "The LORD forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."
 - B. The property belonged to his family. It was their inheritance and Naboth saw it as being entrusted to his care. Actually, the Land of Canaan belonged to God.
Numbers 36:7 NAU - "Thus no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers."
 - C. Naboth knew God’s Word and Ahab should have known it. But God’s Word did not fit his plans. So, he responded in his usual way. He was resentful.
1 Kings 21:4 NAU - "So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him"
3. Now we come to **Chapter 22**. And again, we’ll find Ahab resentful of God’s Word. The author tells us it had been three years without war between Aram or Syria and Israel.
 - A. That was significant because Israel and Aram had been continually at war. We read of Rezon, the king of Aram, in **Chapter 11** -
1 Kings 11:25 NAU - "So he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, along with the evil that Hadad *did*, and he abhorred Israel and reigned over Aram."
 - B. It was also significant because this was the very enemy the Ahab allowed to live. Ben-hadad had already renege on the agreement he had made with Ahab.

4. Ahab determined it was long overdue for Israel to retake the land of Ramoth-Gilead from the Arameans. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah had come to Israel to visit Ahab. Jehoshaphat had entered into a marriage alliance with Ahab – his son Jehoram had married Ahab’s daughter, Athaliah.
Taking advantage of Jehoshaphat’s visit, Ahab sought an alliance with him to go against the Arameans. Jehoshaphat agreed with one provision, “We must first inquire of God’s Word.”
5. Ahab called together 400 of his top prophets.
 - A. It is important to understand, these were Ahab’s prophets, not the prophets of God. Don’t forget that Jezebel removed many of God’s prophets from the land.
1 Kings 18:4 NAU - "for when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.)"
 - B. They were Ahab’s yes men, although they claimed to speak for God—
Verse 11 – “Thus says the LORD.”
The truth was more like – “thus says whatever Ahab wants to hear.”
It reminds us of Paul’s words:
2 Timothy 4:3-4 NAU - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."
6. Jehoshaphat knew right away that these men were charlatans masquerading as God’s prophets.
1 Kings 22:7 NAU - "But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"
7. It is interesting, Ahab also knew they were not God’s prophets, and yet he maintained them and called upon them. This is because they told him what he wanted to hear, even if he knew it wasn’t the truth.
When Jehoshaphat pressed him, Ahab admitted that there was one prophet of God, but he hated him. Why? Because the prophets were God’s spokesmen. They were God’s mouthpieces. They spoke God’s Word. Ahab despised God’s Word.
1 Kings 22:8 NAU - "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."
8. Ahab was basically saying, “I hate him because he doesn’t tell me what I want to hear.” For Ahab, it wasn’t what was true or false, right or wrong, but whatever fit his particular agenda.
9. The amazing thing here is easy to miss. There WAS still a man who spoke the truth. This was a wonderful blessing from God. God had not yet sent them into utter darkness as He did in other times.
 - A. We can read about it in the early days of Samuel.
1 Samuel 3:1 NAU - "Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD before Eli. And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent."
 - B. King Saul experienced a complete blackout of God’s Word
1 Samuel 28:6 NAU - "When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets."

- C. Ezekiel spoke of it
Ezekiel 7:26 NAU - "Disaster will come upon disaster and rumor will be *added* to rumor; then they will seek a vision from a prophet, but the law will be lost from the priest and counsel from the elders."
- D. Amos called it a great famine
Amos 8:11-12 NAU - "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. ¹² "People will stagger from sea to sea And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find *it*."
- E. And Micah warned of it
Micah 3:6-7 NAU - "Therefore *it will be* night for you-- without vision, And darkness for you-- without divination. The sun will go down on the prophets, And the day will become dark over them. ⁷ The seers will be ashamed And the diviners will be embarrassed. Indeed, they will all cover *their* mouths Because there is no answer from God."
10. Ahab still had God's Word available to him, but he did not see it as a blessing. Instead of receiving it with gratitude he hated it. He only wanted what would suit his own desires, what he perceived would bring about the best outcome. He saw God's Word as optional and could be changed at the whim of the speaker. That was the counsel given to Micaiah—Tell us what we want to hear.
1 Kings 22:13 NAU - "Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably."
11. Ahab did not have a listening heart. This was the prayer of Solomon.
1 Kings 3:9 NAU - "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" – literally, "a listening heart."
12. Ahab was like many today. They are in the church. They are interested in the truth but not interested in submitting to the truth.
 See **Verse 16** – Ahab was furious when Micaiah did not speak the truth, but when he heard the truth, he dismissed it. There are plenty of people who love doctrine. They love talking about it and exploring it. They are furious when some pastors do not speak the truth. But they are not really interested in submitting to the Lord of truth.
13. Do you consider God's Word a great blessing and receive it with thanksgiving and obedience? Do you see it as having authority over your life?
 It is an important question for all of us to consider and for the modern church to consider.

- I. It is dangerous when pragmatism is more important than truth
- A. Ahab hated Micaiah because he did not falter in speaking the Word of God
 - 1. Ahab saw it as prophesying evil
 - 2. For Ahab it was only good if it promoted his agenda
 - B. This is the nature of pragmatism – its only good if it produces the intended results
 - 1. John MacArthur defines pragmatism as “the notion that meaning or worth is determined by practical consequences. If a technique or course of action has the desired effect, it is good. If it doesn’t seem to work, it must be wrong. Pragmatism rejects the notion of absolute right or wrong, good and evil, truth and error.”¹
 - 2. Ours is a world of pragmatism. Truth has been rejected for whatever fits their particular narrative.
 - a. This is why so many are proud of the expression, “follow the science.” Science is whatever directs and supports their agenda.
 - b. Their science will allow a man to declare he’s a woman.
 - c. Their science will allow a woman to declare the baby in her womb is not yet a person so she can commit murder if she desires.
 - d. And NO ONE is allowed to question the prevailing science.
 - 3. Sadly, pragmatism has found itself into the church.
 - a. Churches are willing to set aside the principles of doctrinal truth as long as they achieve the desired result of increasing the size of their membership.
 - b. Worship and the programs of the church are measured in terms of the outcome. If it has the desired effect it has to be good. This is why music consistently takes priority over preaching today.
 - c. This is why fathers are willing to tolerate churches who don’t preach sound doctrine as long as their children are being entertained.
 - d. On our local neighborhood social media website a mother wrote: “We’re looking into going to a new church. We currently go to ---. We like it but it’s huge and want something closer to the house. Something super kid friendly as well.”
This is how most people choose churches today. Close, convenient, and meets my felt needs.
 - e. That’s how Ahab chose his prophets – do they meet my needs and expectations without requiring anything from me?
 - C. Ahab had God’s Word but had no interest in it
 - 1. Having rejected it God gave him over to his corruption
 - 2. Having desired lies God blinded his eyes to the truth

¹ MacArthur, John, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993) page xii.

II. Speaking the truth can often be costly

A. Ahab's prophets faced little opposition

1. They spoke what was popular
2. But they didn't speak God's message. Their words concealed the judgment of God – **Verses 19-23**

Paul also described such judgment from God.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 NAU - ". . . because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

B. Micaiah spoke the truth and was despised for it

1 Kings 22:13-14 NAU - "Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, "Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." ¹⁴ But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I shall speak."

1. Micaiah was all alone. It was 400 to 1.
One by one the false prophets announced their good news. They had an encouraging word, words of peace and prosperity. Words of success. Some spoke powerfully and convincingly.
1 Kings 22:11 NAU - "Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made horns of iron for himself and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are consumed.'" **Verse 12** – "And all the prophets were prophesying this way . . ."
But they were not God's words.
2. Micaiah was the lone voice of truth, and yet he spoke it.
He spoke it because he believed it. It was the Word of God. He had no authority to alter it. Micaiah was cast into prison for preaching it.
1 Kings 22:27 NAU - "Thus says the king, "Put this man in prison and feed him sparingly with bread and water until I return safely."
3. Jeremiah was cast into a muddy cistern
Jeremiah 38:6 NAU - "Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchijah the king's son, which was in the court of the guardhouse; and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud."
4. Jesus announced that we should expect no different treatment.
Matthew 5:10-12 NAU - "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

5. James also set the suffering of the prophets before us as an example:
James 5:8-10 NAU - "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. ¹⁰ As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord."
6. Of course, our ultimate example is Christ crucified

Conclusion:

1. We must settle in our hearts, we will seek and embrace the truth of God's Word and nothing else.
2. In our day of pragmatism and relativism, may God grant us boldness to stand firm, even when it goes against the status quo.