

Sunday 27th January 2013

Standing in the Gap Part 1

Two weeks ago we talked about going against the flow. Against the world's ways, systems, expectations.

How sometimes it can feel like we are alone, like we are the only ones. No one else gets us.

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Throughout history we find people who have stood in the gap between what is good and what is not. People who are a voice for what is good.

Alpha: The last Alpha session we had we heard about William Wilberforce. How he stood against the slave trade for over thirty years. Stood against Parliament, Rules, People. And won. A voice for God's heart. Just one of a thousand who put their soul on the line.

How must he have felt, all those years of no one listening.

Tonight I would like to begin a study of a man who appeared to step out of nowhere and be called of God to stand in the Gap.

Quote: Oswald Chambers wrote: *Like a meteor he flashed across the inky blackness of Israel's spiritual night.*

Wouldn't it be fantastic if that was written about us today.

Like a meteor, (Your Name) flashed across the inky blackness of today's generation of spiritual night!!

We are going to look at a man who single handed overcame 400 prophets of Baal and won, yet the following day ran for his life from a woman!!

A man who God loved so much that he sent a special chariot of horses of fire to transport him to heaven.

Standing before us and ready to stand in the gap we have ...

Elijah the Tishbite.

At this point do not separate yourself from him because he was a great man of God and you feel you are not.

Listen: We are so alike. One day brave, the next fearful,

Times when we meet life with a smile and times when the slightest thing pulls us down. Crushed by it's weight.

He was courageous and a coward, went from hopeful to helpless.

We are more like him than we could ever imagine and are connected in his name: Elijah: "The Lord is my God"

When we can say "The Lord is my God" we too can be the humble hero that stands in the Gap.

1 Kings 16:29-33 Read

1 Kings 17:1 Read

1 Kings 16 ends with a profound statement, verse 33

Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel than all of the kings who were before him.

WOW God provoked!! That takes some doing.

Romans 15:5 Now the God of Patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Jesus Christ.

God is Patience itself. He has been provoked!!

Provoked: No strongs def; Dic says: To stir up anger

Ahab was the last straw. It's like God says " That's enough, you have gone too far. (God steps in not us)

Ahab did worse than any other King before him. Today we see that each generation seems to be failing God more than the previous one.

We have that responsibility to stand in the gap for future generations and not let it slide.

How bad is bad, How bad has it got to get?

Lets look back and see just some of the Kings before him and remember Ahab did worse than all of them. Also remember that these were Israel's kings not worldly kings.

1 Kings 13.33 Read Jeraboham set up high places

1 Kings 15:26 Read Nadab, Drew others into his sin

1 Kings 15:29/30 Read Baasha, A murderer who ruled 24 yrs

1 Kings 16 Elah Another murderer, an assassin killing another assassin, and drunkenness.

1 Kings 16 Omri Did all the aforementioned and more.

Then in comes Ahab, just when you didn't think it could get worse, it does.

1 Kings 16:33 Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel than all of the kings who were before him.

And the nature in which he did these things sends out a warning to us today.

Verse 31 says: That it was a light thing for him to walk in the sins of previous kings.

He found it easy, Trivial and had contempt. A " whatever" moment

It's so easy to go with the flow and justify the error of our ways instead of looking to God. Israel were as far away from God as they could get.

God steps in and says " Stop" no more. How close are we to another Stop that's enough. Maybe when some people like Elijah are prepared to step forward.

Just because he comes in like a bolt of lightening doesn't mean to say that he has not been prepared beforehand.

Like Isaiah:

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, who shall I send and who will go for us, then I said, here I am, send me.

Have we heard the Lord's voice? Have we answered?

All it takes is someone who is prepared to do what is right.

Micah 6:8 He has told you O man what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk kindly with your God.

For us today to fulfil this calling is That we are to know Christ.

The one who stood in the biggest gap of them all. Between sin and God, reconciling the world to himself.

2 Corin 5:17-21 Read

We are now ambassadors for Christ.

As Elijah was called of old to put a stop to sinful ways, so God sent his son Jesus Christ to say **Stop** to sin and to show us the way back to God.

John 14:6 Read

Elijah and Christ were both uniquely anointed to awaken an indifferent world, and today we will not awaken an indifferent world if we do not deliver the message of the cross.

Christ Crucified for forgiveness of sins.

Let it not be as found in Ezekiel 22:30

But as in Isaiah 6:8 "here am I Lord, send me.