

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

November 18, 2016

2 Kings 3:1–4:17. Joram’s evil reign.

Mark 14:22–50. Judas, a user of the Lord for “greater goods” rather than a lover of the Lord.

Proverbs 6:6–11. The vice of laziness.

COMMENTS.

2 Kings 3:1–4:17. Chapter 3 describes events in Jehoram’s evil reign over Israel. During the reign of Joram, Mesha, king of Moab, rebelled against Israel. Joram recruited King Jehoshaphat of Judah and the king of Edom to help subjugate Mesha. The absence of water because of dry stream beds hindered their campaign. Elisha, for the sake of David’s descendant Jehoshaphat, agreed to consult the LORD on behalf of Joram (**3:1–15**). The LORD instructed them to dig trenches which He flooded with water. When the Moabites saw the water, it appeared red like blood to them, and they mistakenly believed that the three kings had fought among themselves. The reddish appearance has been explained as the water’s reflection of a colored red stone known in that area bordering Edom and Moab. The Moabites attacked prematurely and were defeated. When Mesha saw the battle was lost, he offered his firstborn son as a sacrifice to appease the anger of the Moabite deity Chemosh. Human sacrifice was prohibited by the LORD, who called upon the Israelites to give their firstborn to God as living sacrifices, devoted to His service. **Chapter 4** focuses on the ministry of Elisha. Note that a prophet’s widow had no means to pay her creditors except selling her sons into slavery. Elisha multiplied the small amount of oil she possessed, and it was sold to pay her debts (**4:1–7**). In Elisha’s itinerant ministry, he stayed in the house of a wealthy Shunnamite woman whenever he traveled in Jezreel. Because of her ministry to the prophet, the LORD gave the woman and her aged husband a son (**4:8–17**). Later when the boy took ill and died, God answered the prayer of Elisha and restored him to life

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. As we walk with the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love*, we increasingly gain our self-esteem, identity, and sufficiency in Christ. In the Christ-centered life, we come to realize that God begins with what we already are and have. Moses had a rod in his hand, and God used that to accomplish great things. Peter and his partners had fishing nets in their hands. All that the poor widow had was a little oil in a vessel, but “little is much when God is in it.” Most of her neighbors would have unused empty vessels sitting around, so she wasn’t robbing anybody by borrowing them, and once she had sold the oil, she could return the vessels. Elisha instructed her to shut the door so that nobody would see that a miracle was occurring in her house, and no doubt she warned her sons to keep quiet. The amount of oil she received was limited by the number of vessels she had, and that was controlled by her faith-knowledge. When she sold the oil, she had enough money to pay off the debt and maintain herself and her two sons. We do not need more stuff or talent to be effectively used of the Lord. We do not need to be as talented as others to be successful before God. Moreover, God does not want us to be like anyone else; God does not need us to have more gifts than He has already given us—and all of His gifts are realized and actualized by *walking with Him by proper knowledge and proper love*. Let us take confidence in the fact that the grace of God is more than sufficient to allay any and all

fears of not being able not only to make it through the difficulties of life but to be used mightily by Him in His unique predetermined plan.

Mark 14:22–50. This reading takes us from the Lord’s Supper (14:22-31) to the Garden of Gethsemane (14:32-50).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Let us reflect on Judas. Following Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet and giving a lesson on its significance, He becomes deeply troubled and announced that one of the disciples was a traitor. This announcement stunned all the disciples except Judas, who knew that Jesus was speaking about him. Until the very end, Jesus hid from the other disciples the identity of His betrayer, for He wanted to give Judas every opportunity to turn from sin. He even washed Judas’ feet! Had Peter known the truth about Judas, he might have been tempted to kill him. None of the other disciples really thought himself to be the traitor, for their questions imply a negative answer: “It is not I, is it?” The men had often debated over which of them was the greatest, but now they were discussing which of them was the vilest. To make matters worse, Jesus said that His betrayer had even eaten bread with Him at the table! In the East, to break bread with someone means to enter a pact of friendship and mutual trust. It would be an act of the basest treachery to break bread and then betray your host. Judas was sitting in the place of honor. When Jesus gave Judas the bread dipped in the herbs, it was the gracious act of a host to a special guest. Even this did not break Judas’ calloused heart, for after Judas had taken the morsel, Satan possessed him. Judas left the Upper Room to go to make the final arrangements to arrest the Lord Jesus. But even then, the disciples did not know the truth about Judas; and they would not find out the truth until they met him later in the Garden of Gethsemane. The point I am making is that Judas was not a conspicuous moral monster. He came across as a respectable person who was trustworthy enough to be the treasurer for the band of disciples. His capital sin was loving money and political deliverance from Rome more than prizing Jesus Christ. Instead of following the Lord out of *proper knowledge and proper love*, he followed the Lord only to use the Lord to get to other goods he prized more than the effulgent goodness of God incarnated in Jesus Christ. This prevented him from being in a position for God to open his heart from the gospel for regeneration. In principle, God always gives us what we prize above all else, either Himself or some other good, the former leads to greater light, the latter to darkness and suicide, either literally or spiritually. The “original sin” of all deadly sin, at least functionally, is not putting the Lord first in all things. Colossians 1:18, *He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.*

Proverbs 6:6–11. This reading deals with the vice of laziness. The ants are presented as models of diligence in that they work tirelessly in spite of having no taskmaster to goad them on, and they prepare for the winter in spite of having no administration to lay out economic plans. Wisdom literature often examines the natural world for moral lessons

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Laziness either physical or spiritual is a great evil. A lazy person lacks basic motivation and orientation in life. Although the government has a responsibility to take care of the poor, it should not take care of those who do will not work because they are lazy. Likewise, although Christianity is to share the compassion and love for all, especially the poor and needy, it should not provide for those who are lazy: *2 Thessalonians 3:7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.* Laziness leads to poverty and ruin. This is true of the physical life as well as the spiritual life—recall how the latter is severely denounced by the Lord Himself as per the wealthy Laodiceans who were spiritually impoverished. As far as physical labor, the focus of Proverbs 6, man by nature is designed to work and be productive member of society. All the way through the Word of God man is working. Before the Fall, God gave Adam the job of dressing and guarding the Garden (Gen. 2:15). Though sin turned labor into almost hopeless toil (Gen. 3:17–19), it must never be thought that the necessity for work is a result of sin. Man needs work for the fulfillment of his own person. God created him to work. Have you noticed that God called people who were busy at work? Moses was caring for sheep (Ex. 3). Joshua was Moses' servant before he became Moses' successor (Ex. 33:11). Gideon was threshing wheat when God called him (Jud. 6:11ff), and David was caring for his father's sheep (1 Sam. 16:11ff). Our Lord called four fishermen to serve as His disciples, and He Himself had worked as a carpenter. Paul was a tentmaker (Acts 18:1–3) and used his trade to support his own ministry. The Jews honored honest labor and required all their rabbis to have a trade. But the Greeks despised manual labor and left it to their slaves. Moreover, in Heaven, we will all be laboring in Christ's eternal kingdom on Earth. In the meantime we now have the opportunity to walk with Him *by proper knowledge and proper love* and do all of our work as unto Him whether we are an employer or employee: *Ephesians 6:5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.* The very act of walking with the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love*, as one does his job as unto the Lord, brings value and transcendence to even the most mundane detail of work. There is no such thing as an uninspiring job when one does the job for the Lord rather than for self or Mammon. Life in the realities of the supernatural order of God's grace really does take what would be boring and lifts it into

transcendence. To put it more technically, grace as an entitative elevation of the soul and its faculties gives the human being a new esse, a new ontology which is the basis of and which demands a new kind of moral and spiritual life.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love,

Pastor Don