



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions Good Kings – Bad Kings Series, Lesson 16

Lesson Title: Bad Kings – Merciful God

Take Home Point: Be humble before God and receive his mercy.

Warm-Up:

At one point in J.R.R. Tolkien's classic tale *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo Baggins laments that his Uncle Bilbo showed mercy to the treacherous Gollum when he so clearly deserved death. His friend Gandalf replies, "Deserves it! I dare say he does. Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgment...I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it...My heart tells me he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many – yours not the least." Most of us will admit we need mercy; it can be harder to accept that others need it, too, especially when we believe they don't deserve it. But mercy is given, not earned.

Read: 2 Chronicles 12:9-16; 1 Peter 5:6

Observation (What happened?):

What did Rehoboam do after Shishak ransacked the temple?

What nationality was Rehoboam's mother? How might this have affected his spiritual life?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What does it mean that Rehoboam humbled himself but also that he did evil and didn't follow the Lord?

Why do you think God let him reign 17 years although he was an evil leader of the Israelites?

Insight:

Over and over in the Bible, we come face to face with the fact that our timing and desires are not the same as God's. I don't know about you, but I need frequent reminding of this even though it is a basic and obvious truth. In Psalm 37, Rehoboam's grandfather David wrote of this in such a way that reassures me that God is in control. He repeated the phrase, "Do not fret," several times, reminding me that fretting and worrying only lead to evil. He tells me to "Wait on the Lord," "Trust in the Lord," and "Commit your way to the Lord" as if he wrote it just for me. What is this kind of trust, this kind of waiting, this kind of not fretting? It is humbling myself before God and accepting his Lordship and control over everything. David doesn't only tell us what to do in Psalm 37, he also tells us what will happen. The wicked will disappear like a vapor, like dry grass. The meek will inherit what they leave behind; they will be lifted up. But in God's time, not ours. Does that sound familiar? You can be sure that Peter knew Psalm 37 very well. The words he wrote in his letter are eternal, as true in his day as in David's day as in ours.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Name one recent situation in which God showed you mercy when you humbled yourself.

What situation are you in which you need to wait for God to lift you up in his own time?

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