



epic
fail

— Ahab and Jezebel – Champions of Evil —

1 Kings 21
Small Group Plan

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now, I see.*

*Twas Grace that taught
My heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come.
Twas Grace that brought us safe thus far,
And Grace will lead us home.*

*The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.*

*When we've been here ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we've first begun.*

— John Newton.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- When you sing this song what kind of person do you usually have in mind as needing God's grace?
- How ugly or evil would a person have to be before you would begin to see them as beyond the reach of God's grace?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— AHAB'S REQUEST —

1 Kings 21:1-2

¹ Sometime later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. ² Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth."

- Why does Ahab want the vineyard?
- Why doesn't he just take it as "king" or negotiate through the village leaders and elders where Naboth lived?

— AHAB'S REFUSAL —

1 Kings 21:3-4

³ But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my ancestors." ⁴ So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my ancestors." He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.

- Why did Naboth refuse Ahab (cf. Lev. 25:23-28; Num. 36:7-9)?
- What does Ahab's reaction tell us about his character (v. 4)?
- What does Naboth's boldness before his king tell us about his character?

— AHAB'S REPRISAL —

1 Kings 21:5-16

⁵ His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, "Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?" ⁶ He answered her, "Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, 'Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" ⁷ Jezebel his wife said, "Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." ⁸ So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him. ⁹ In those letters she wrote: "Proclaim a day of fasting and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. ¹⁰ But seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them bring charges that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death." ¹¹ So the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city did as Jezebel directed in the letters she had written to them. ¹² They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth in a prominent place among the people. ¹³ Then two scoundrels came and sat opposite him and brought charges against Naboth before the people, saying, "Naboth has cursed both God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death. ¹⁴ Then they sent word to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned to death." ¹⁵ As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead." ¹⁶ When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

- Describe the guilt for each of the individual's involved in this injustice ...
 - ... for the two scoundrels who gave false testimony?
 - ... for the village elders who obediently carried out the plan?
 - ... for Jezebel who planned the murder?
 - ... for Ahab who closed his eyes and accepted the loot?
- How would you describe the chain of command in this drama?
- Was Naboth too trusting?
 - Should he have suspected what was unfolding and how he was being set up?
- How can Ahab so quickly take a dead man's property?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

COVETOUSNESS

- Why are powerful people used to getting whatever they want?
- What is the danger in a “do whatever it takes” way of living?

CONSPIRACY

- Evil leaders must have weak people who will follow their orders. Why are many today willing to turn their eyes away from an evil rather than boldly oppose it?
- We may not be Jezebel, but describe the character flaws that would work with her?

CLEMENCY — **1 Kings 21:27-29** ²⁷ *When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly.* ²⁸ *Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: ²⁹ “Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.”*

- Would you have as easily extended grace to Ahab? Explain.
- What is the most significant lesson you learn about God from this story?
- Would it be difficult for you to confront an injustice? Explain.
- Who comes to mind as someone being victimized whom you can help?
 - How could you help them?
- Close in prayer, thanking God for His grace.
 - Ask Him for the wisdom to extend it and for the courage to say “no” to injustice.