

Where Boundaries Matter Part 2 The Importance of Staying In

1 Kings 22:3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

- I. Introduction/Review
 - A. God of the mountain and valley
 1. Last week: Where Boundaries Matter: Where to get in
 2. This morning: Where Boundaries Matter: The importance of staying in.
 3. We talked about how God is boundless.
 4. The ancient enemy of Israel, Syria, suspected that the reason Israel was able to beat them in battle was because the battle had taken place in the hill country of Samaria.
 5. Their theory was that Israel's God was a powerful God on mountain tops but was

not a God of the valleys. But God proved otherwise:

1 Kings 20:28-29

*28 And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, **The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.***

6. In other words, that God is boundless. While men have boundaries they have to live under, God is boundless:

*29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and **the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.***

7. Tiny Israel conquered massive Syria.
8. Our God shows Himself mighty not just in our mountain top experiences, but He proves Himself mighty in every valley.

9. **Testimony** from days Sis. W in hospital for covid. Peace that arrived.
- B. Where to cross over
 1. But then we talked about the important boundary that God called everyone to cross over when He said, “come out from among them, and be ye separate.”
 2. God has called us away from and out of this world, to be cleansed from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.
 3. That is a border line that God called us to cross that involves changing our direction, turning fully away from the domination sin held over us, toward a full surrender to God. That is called repentance:
Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

4. When we repent of our sins and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, we are taking those steps of faith that lead to obeying the gospel and getting on the right side of the boundary— inside the King’s gate, inside the kingdom, inside the church, on the inside of the house of God.
 5. And do you know why it is so important to be in the house of God? That is where our protection begins—inside God’s boundary.
 6. **[slide]** The gates of hell **cannot prevail** against us there; we have **deliverance** from evil there; we have an **escape** from temptation there; we have **power** to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy there because we **overcome** him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.
- II. The boundary to get in
 - A. Is where judgment begins

1. Being inside God's boundary is important because that boundary is where judgment begins. Are you on the inside or the outside? That matters:

1 Peter 4:17-18

*17 For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God**: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

*18 And if the righteous **scarcely** be saved, **where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?***

2. I'll tell you where they appear. Where they will appear is what keeps preachers preaching, and what keeps saints trying to reach their loved ones.
3. 2 Thess 1:8-9 tells that the ungodly and the sinner shall appear on the wrong side of the border among **everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord**, and from the glory of his power.

4. That is a truth not to be trifled with that sets the fear of God in our hearts.
5. But we do have a choice in the matter, about which side of the boundary we are on.
6. So, the good news is, when we accept Jesus' offer to take our sins away, which is what the gospel message is, then it puts us **on the inside of the boundary of His church.**
7. Obeying the gospel starts with believing the gospel, and then repenting. And the truth about God is it **is not His will that anyone perish:**
*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***
8. God has a wonderful plan of redemption, a conversion experience, a born of water and Spirit experience, a repentance experience,

and He offers it freely, because that is a place where boundaries matter.

- B. Is where the new, reconciled creature begins
 - 1. Do you want to get into the boundary of His church where there is protection from what comes out of the gates of hell?
 - 2. You may be down in the valley and think that God is only the God of the mountain, or that He is only the God of super-spiritual saints.
 - 3. But He is still God where you are right now, and He is calling you to a closer place by His side where He begins that process of making us new.

2 Cor 5:17-18

*17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

- 4. And something that comes with that newness is a right relationship with God—it

is called reconciliation:

*18 And all things are of God, who **hath reconciled us to himself** by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

5. By obeying the gospel when we repent and are baptized in Jesus' name for the remission/forgiveness of our sins, we are reconciled to God.
 6. And we become a new creature in Christ when we are filled with the Holy Ghost.
 7. That is what is meant by being born of the water and the Spirit.
 8. Crossing the boundary into God's territory includes a reconciled relationship with the God who makes all things new.
- III. Ahab the boundary jumper
- A. God of the mountain and valley
 1. Let's go back to King Ahab for a moment. We mentioned that because the Syrian king doubted whether the God of Israel was a

God of the valleys, but God demonstrated His power in the valley which allowed Israel and King Ahab to win that battle.

2. The point was that God is not restricted to boundaries of mountains or valleys. He is God of all places.
- B. The alliance with the enemy
1. But there are just two more battle scenes we want to look at with King Ahab, ending with what turned out to be King Ahab's final battle.
 2. You will find something interesting about King Ahab as you read about his life. That is, depending on the circumstances, you will see that Ahab was a boundary jumper.
 3. In other words, we see when Ahab was used of God for divine purposes while operating inside of God's boundaries.
 4. But Ahab was most known for his wicked acts dwelling on the outside of God's favor

and rejecting God's Word and God's purposes.

5. And in this next story, right after winning a victory for God, we see him cross over the border to fight against God and His will.
6. If you remember, Israel conquered 100,000 Syrian soldiers in that battle, and a wall fell on 27,000 soldiers as they tried to flee. However, the king of Syria escaped:
1 Kings 20:30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.
7. God had delivered the enemy into Ahab's hands. King Benhadad represents the adversary, the devil, who continually waged war against God's people.
8. Syria and King Benhad had been a long-time enemy of Israel and caused the people of Israel much fear, harm, and loss through the years.

9. And now total destruction of the enemy was at King Ahab's hand as King Benhadad humbly surrendered. But Ahab's response was unthinkable:

*1 Kings 20:32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? **he is my brother.***

10. We are talking about where boundaries matter, and this is one of those places. During war, you must recognize who is the enemy and who is your brother.
11. Ahab had been doing God's work operating inside God's boundaries. But suddenly he forgot who was the enemy, and who was his brother.
12. When you start seeing the enemy as your brother, you have crossed the boundary into dangerous enemy territory.

13. When Benhadad saw that Ahab was treating him like a brother instead of a conquered enemy, he transformed from a humble surrendering enemy, to his subtle enemy strategizing. He said to Ahab:
*1 Kings 20:34 And Ben-hadad said unto him, **The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore;** and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.*
 14. What Benhadad was saying, was, **first**, “I’ll restore Israel’s cities that had Syria has taken.”
 15. Just remember, when bargaining with the enemy, promises mean nothing. Benhadad did not restore the cities he had taken. That is what led to Ahab’s final battle and defeat.
- c. Bargaining with the enemy

1. But **second**, Benhadad offered him “**streets for thee in Damascus.**”
2. That requires a little explanation. What was true then is still true today, Damascus was/is the capital of Syria.
3. So Benhadad promised Ahab he would give him “streets in Damascus” in other words, as was common among warring kings, when a king was defeated in battle, the winning king would set up street vendors in their conquered territories.
4. It was like street markets, or a tax-free bazaar, something like an Israeli covered-bridge festival right in the middle of Syria’s capital city of Damascus.
5. It sounded like a pretty good deal for Israel because they could potentially make a lot of money selling their goods across the boundary in enemy territory.
6. But did you notice what Benhadad said, “*thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria.*”

7. There was a history of making deals with the adversary. This was not the first time. Syria had won in a negotiation in the past and had been selling their goods in Israel's capital city of Samaria.
8. Dealing with the devil is a dangerous deception that ends in destruction.
9. What God had commissioned Ahab to do was end this long-term relationship with the enemy by destroying him, but instead, he spared his life and sent him away freely with terms for a long-term deal.

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10. We see in this one event was how Ahab jumped boundaries in a very short time.

11. We will see in a moment, that Benhadad did NOT restore the cities Syria had taken, and that second part about exchanging goods with the enemy was not a good idea.
- D. Don't allow the enemy's stuff at home!
 1. There is a spiritual application with what will come out of making alliances with an enemy of God, and with marketing his products, propaganda, programs, and philosophy, right in the streets of your home town.
 2. God wants you to end ties with the enemy, not continue dealing for him.
 3. We've just got to say, "Listen enemy, I'm not using and I'm not dealing! I don't want to have any part of your goods devil!"
 4. Dealing with the adversary is a serious issue. If we look back in time around 50 years earlier, the same King Benhadad made an alliance with Asa King of Judah, and King Asa paid off Benhadad with...

1 Kings 15:18-19

*18 Then Asa **took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,***

19 There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

5. Do you see the problem here? In order to make an alliance with the enemy, it requires sacrificing treasures that belong to the LORD.
6. And that will preach in more ways than I have time or wisdom to cover—treasures of the king's house are lost in this league.

7. God does not want you using what comes from the enemy. God does not want you dealing with what comes from the enemy!
8. It comes at the expense of treasures, finances, time, energy, and devotions, that belong to God.
9. That was the problem that King Ahab of Israel had that led to his bad habit of boundary jumping.
10. Trying to please God becomes impossible when you are still dealing with the enemy.

E. Reclaiming Ramoth Gilead

1. So here is our final application of this passage.
2. The Syrians had taken territory from Israel in previous conquests and peace treaties.
3. And now King Ahab, perhaps realizing he had failed God, decided to retake some of the territory back from King Benhadad of Syria:

1 Kings 22:1-3

22 And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

4. He had made the mistake of negotiating the return of this land as part of that earlier peace treaty because he learned, you cannot negotiate with terrorists or tyrants. They won't come through with their end of the treaty.
5. Since Syria did not return Israel's lands as promised, the King of Israel decided he had to take that land back.
6. And if verse 3 was standing alone without the consideration of the many other sins of King Ahab, I would think this was a correct decision on his part.

7. But it is the same Ahab whose previous alliances with enemies led him to marry the evil Queen Jezebel.
 8. It was the same Ahab who had imprisoned and killed the prophets of the Lord.
 9. It was the same Ahab who in chapter 21, with his wife, connived to kill his neighbor, Naboth, just so he could take over his vineyard.
 10. It was at t at time that Ahab decided to take back the city of Ramoth in Gilead.
- F. The final battle
1. It was a noble thing to take back Ramoth in Gilead. That was a city rightfully belonging to Israel:
1 Kings 22:3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?
 2. Ramoth Gilead was a border city. This was a place where Boundaries Matter because

was just on the inside of the border with Syria. **[Map Samaria to Ramoth-Gilead]**

3. But Ahab's problem was that he had made a covenant with the enemy. He was making deal and regular exchanges with the enemy.
4. Making compromises and deals with the adversary, continually crossing the boundary in and out of enemy territory, makes it impossible to defend the boundary cities.
5. Even taking what belongs to you is difficult.
6. Ahab lost his life in that battle and Israel lost the city.

IV. Conclusion: Renew, Restore, Rebuild

1. We are preaching about "Where Boundaries Matter: The Importance of Staying In."
2. But there is hope for those who have been guilty of border jumping. The plan is renew, restore, and rebuild.

Ps 51:10-12, 17-18

*10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and **renew** a right spirit within me.*

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

*12 **Restore** unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

*18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: **build** thou the walls of Jerusalem.*

3. David set the example. After making deals with the devil of lust and murder, he nearly destroyed all God had given him. Until...
4. Renew a right spirit through repentance and ending the deals with the adversary; restore relationship with worship and humble submission; rebuild the boundaries and remain within them.
5. That places you inside the place where boundaries matter.