

Not for Sale

by Ralph Sexton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holding onto our spiritual heritage and values, and not trading them off for something that looks good but is not of God.

Duration: 33:29

Scripture: 1 Kings 21:3-4, Proverbs 22:28, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Christian Values", "Moral Integrity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Naboth's vineyard from the Bible as a metaphor for the loss of Christian values in America. The preacher emphasizes the importance of restoring the ancient landmarks of morality and ethics in our communities, homes, and churches. He highlights the connection between the Christian faith and the Ten Commandments, as well as the need to preserve our Christian heritage. The preacher also warns against compromising our values for money, popularity, or convenience, using the example of Naboth's refusal to sell his vineyard.

Transcript

1 Kings 21, the Word of God reads, And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it. Or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

Now look at verse number 3, if you would. And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. Verse 4, And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him.

For he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. That's a Bible way of saying he pouted.

But here comes his sweet wife into the picture. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money, or else if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it. And he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

This is a powerful picture in 1 Kings, as Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard. The king is actually putting pressure on a commoner. The king, the ruler of the land, is using his exalted power to crush the will of an everyday earth farmer.

And to use the power and the prestige of his office to get the desire of his own heart and selfish in its very being and purpose. We realize as we read about Naboth's vineyard, that he did not want to sell his vineyard. He did not want to trade his vineyard.

He wanted to keep it. And as you think about Naboth and his vineyard, I believe there's a beautiful Bible picture for every believer to see and understand. When we look over this vineyard picture, we can see a great comparison to what God has given us as a spiritual heritage.

The very theme, the very purpose, the very reason that we go into communities and have these area-wide meetings is for one ultimate goal. To remind people what we used to have and what we don't have anymore. This is our theme, Proverbs 22, 28.

Restore the landmarks. We want back the ancient landmarks that we used to have in our communities in our homes and in our churches. The values and the ethics and the morals that made America great.

We don't like to discuss it, but we do have a Christian heritage in America. We don't like to bring up the subject, but we do have this great connection between the tenets of Judaism and the ten commandments that were passed down as the Christian faith was developed. We have a heritage that is built not upon the words of men, but upon the law of God as it was passed from one generation to the next generation.

As we assemble here this evening, we must consider what Naboth would not sell. Naboth's parents and grandparents immediately came to his mind. You say, Brother Ralph, how do you know that? Well, notice what he said in verse number three.

He said, The Lord forbidden me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers, plural, unto thee. The first thing that Naboth thought of when the king and his royal chariot rolled up to his little farm and a servant assisted Ahab into his vineyard and said, as Naboth walked out to greet the king and bowed himself and honored the visit of the king, he said, What can I do, O great king? What service can I render unto thee? And Ahab said, What I want is your home. What I want is your vineyard.

What I want is this piece of real estate to belong to me. Naboth thought about that for a moment. He considered it.

And then you know what happened? He thought about his granddaddy. And he thought about his own father. And he thought about what it cost them to get that piece of land.

And then he had the courage and he had the conviction to look into the face of the king and say, Inheritance of my fathers. Because when he began to think about it, when he began to go down and address all of these things and look at them together with his conscious mind spinning upon how he got to where he was, he looked back through a few years of time and he saw his grandfather settling in that part of the country. He looked back through time and he saw his granddad.

And if you've ever been to Israel, if you've ever been to that part of the world, you know it's a very rocky land. It's very, very rocky. And he looked back and he saw his granddad digging and to hold in his sheep and to hold in his goats and then to keep other animals out of what little crop he would grow.

And he saw his granddad sweating. He began to think about all piece of land. Those first olive sheets and soil and the only way they survived was week in and week out, month in and his granddaddy carried water and he poured water.

Then he saw his granddaddy digging around those trees, digging to do with what he was enjoying. Piece of land and his father, his grandmother and his mother, he thought about the blood and his big monster king. It's not for sale.

He hadn't explained it in verse 2. He said he looked at Naboth and with all the king's holdings, with all the real estate, with all the property, with all the places the king could go, why a lost vineyard? And so the king answered his ordinary question. He said that I want to take a productive, take a vineyard that's making food to go on the table and afford a garden of herbs. Because you can't eat herbs.

Herbs are for seasoning. You see, that's not something you don't come home from work and say, boy, big steak of parsley. I have to just fix me a big pot of cloves.

Boy, that's not what you're after. You want her to sort beans. We'll knock down with grease and cucumbers and tomato biscuits that you use to push those greasy cut short beans with to load up your fork.

You don't want, you want something that will stick to your ribs to trade off something that could sustain you, hold you, something that could feed you, look good, get you to work. It can't do you any good. It just can't give you the strength to make it through.

Because he'll get people to trade off their spiritual vineyards, get you at your little families that you have in your home, the morals, the values and the ethics. He'll get you to trade it off for something slick, for something we call situation ethics. It's the herbs and spices of modern day religion.

He'll get you to trade off the blood and the book for something that looks good. And because it's not real, it's not of God, it's something of man. The devil always tries to give you something, a little garden of herbs.

But notice what else the devil offered him. King Ahab said, it is near unto my house. It is near unto my house.

Do you know what that means? King Ahab wanted this man's farm. He was rich enough that he thought he could buy anything he wanted. Got his way.

I'm the king if I want. You mean I can't have it? He was a spoiled brat. He always got it because it's near.

You know what the devil always tries to do when you want to serve God? When he, when you want to get right with God. Is it convenient tonight? Is it convenient for us to be sitting on these old revival steel chairs? Is this, I'll tell you something. It's not convenient.

A lot more convenient for me tonight to be in an air-conditioned house. Sitting in that easy rider with low slung up. He said bringing me a burpsy cola.

And he's sitting in the living room singing, this is like him. Gotta clear you off to make a deal. Look, disparity.

I can't do for yourself, for your big king. But I'm going to tell you something. I'm in the point.

Did you notice that? He said, I'll give it the worth of it. It amazes me what people will sell for money. I'm going to tell you something.

Money will not last. A vineyard can be worked and feed that generation. Can be used up and consumed on a weekend's folly.

Money can be lost on a bad business deal. But that piece of real estate until the Lord comes back. And so the devil said, Naboth, money for it.

And I'm going to tell you tonight, money is nice. But money cannot buy you from the terrors of the night. Money can't buy your sanity.

You can sell your vineyard. You can sell your inheritance. You can sell your morals and your values and your ethics.

But when you're, you'll not like help in your bedroom, looking in the mirror. And you realize what you've traded off for what you used to have. You won't be happy with yourself.

When you're shaving in the mirror, hold your good name and your reputation and your character. You won't be happy with what's there. Teenager, when you listen to old devil Ahab and says, let me trade you your virginity for popularity.

Let me trade you the pleasures of sin for a season. So the crowd will love you. It's a bad trade.

But morally, going to get it back is for God's people to lead the way in repentance. Do you know why we're stealing and lying? Because we're morally bankrupt and looting with them. Because they sold a few pairs of tennis shoes and some leather jackets in our country.

You say, oh, then you go to Kmart to cash a check. If you think we've got character and it's your bond, go try to cash a check. Go try to pay for something with a check nowadays.

When you walk in to try to use a check, they want two forms of identification. They want a major credit card. Then a fingerprint check.

They want your next of kin. They want the promise of your first born male child. Borrowed monies to be and shook hands with the banker and bookkeeper wrote it down and alleged because men had someone, someone played with the most sacred thing we had.

You see, and if you'll give me your vineyard, he's me when I read that a vineyard. He's a king. He's a politician.

He's sitting there in the throne room. He's, he wouldn't know a Kenny Beck potato if it met him. He doesn't know a big boy tomato from a better boy.

He's a city slicker. If you'll give me, pick you out something better. Anytime the devil, you watch out.

The devil can't trade. Do you want to eat to build a better vision? You've got to know how you've got to know how in a vineyard, you've got to know half a tree because he's never been around it. Carleton's sure.

There's some bad apples, some hypocrites, but what'd you do with the vineyard? I responsibility. Jesus is the real solution to the problems of life that we face. Naboth had to think he had to draw back and, and roll

up the brow and say, have me better.

What does the king of this world know about the vineyard that I work in? Not only do we have, but we have neighbors consideration. Naboth remembered how he remembered his father working in the vineyard. He remembered as want to go out in the garden out in the vineyard and work with his dad.

And so when he was too small to go work in the vineyard, he would stay in the house with his mother and his mother would tell him heritage. She would tell him a piece of land. His mom would tell him about how hard they worked to clear the land.

Was a teenager. He helped his grandfather carry stones, those very stone walls that protect the vineyard. His mother told him about his heritage.

She told Naboth the importance of the vineyard. She said, son, we can't eat without the vineyard. While the olive provides food for trade, it provides fuel for our lamps.

It provides medicine for the healing of our bodies. It's the very life sustainer. We use the olive and the grapevine to keep this family going.

And she talked of its importance. And then she told Naboth about the sacrifices. She told him about the night, the sandstorm came, skewed those baby plants.

How they carried water to keep it going. What does it remind you? Little communities was a church house. People that they fell some more trees and to teach their children.

But the primer was to be a Christian and to honor God. Boss mama talked to him about, she said, son, we didn't get here without blood. And she remarked, and boy, she said, don't you ever forget that one day if God should tarry.

One day, son, this vineyard will be yours. One day you'll have the responsibility. Do you not remember as a kid, if you went to church as a child or a teenager, they'd have you Sunday and they'd say one day, this will be the church of tomorrow.

Well, tomorrow is here and you're the church. Now, what are you going to do with a vineyard that I can't help but think that one day they were close to losing the crop and every boss mother tied that little toddler around her waist. And said, you're going to have to go with mama.

We're going to have to go help your daddy and your big brother. We're going to have to go out here and heaps are coming in. And I believe she went out there and started working those vines and started helping.

And I believe as she worked and reached up and pulled and cut these juice, crammed down her arms and little old neighbor boss down here. And every now and then she'd reach up and that juice drop and she'd pull the hull off. And she reached down there and give little neighbor off the goodie.

She'd give him the inside juice out of that. And he said, this is what we're working for. This is what we're living for.

This is the fruit of the vineyard. Mr. I'm going to give away what God's given to me. It's not for sale.

And he thought about it. And he said, the more I think the sweat and the tears of my ancestors cost me. He said, I'm not going to sell it.

And as we gather under this old tent tonight, we ought to reflect about Naboth and his vineyard. You ought to think about Ahab having a type of the devil. We ought to determine that we're gathering here, but for one reason to remember the king for as long as we live.

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