

The Voice of Micaiah

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of standing for reality and truth, even if it means being unpopular, and ultimately triumphing over the accepted and popular current.

Scripture: 1 Kings 22:16, Jeremiah 1:17, Ezekiel 2:6-7, Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:26, John 15:18-20, Acts 13:27, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Hebrews 12:2, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Standing Alone for God", "Truth vs. Popularity"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks explores the story of Micaiah, a minor prophet who stood alone against 400 false prophets, emphasizing the importance of truth over popularity. Micaiah's unwavering commitment to proclaiming God's word, despite the personal risks and the pressure to conform, illustrates the peril of self-will and the consequences of ignoring divine truth. The sermon highlights that true prophetic voices may often be marginalized but ultimately reveal the reality of God's will. Sparks draws parallels between Micaiah's experience and the life of Christ, who also faced rejection for speaking the truth. The message encourages believers to remain steadfast in their faith, even when it is unpopular.

Transcript

"They knew not... the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath" (Acts 13:27).

"How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?" (1 Kings 22:16).

This is a thrilling story, and it reads like a drama. Micaiah is - so far as the record goes - a minor of the Minor Prophets, but quite evidently he was of some serious account in Israel, even if not very popular. It is something to be noted that his accountability was because of his unpopularity. He was evidently taken seriously even if he was in a very small minority. Among the Prophets of Israel his ratio was

Four Hundred to One

That is the first impressive thing of which to take note. It is possible for a servant of God, or 'voice' for God, to be just one over against a disparity of four hundred! But not just the ratio, but the one to be right and, in the end, vindicated. So this story shows.

Of course, this does not mean that singularity is necessarily a virtue, and that being different from everyone else is inevitably right. But, given that it is the kind of aloneness of Micaiah, it can very well be

the 'voice' of truth.

Our verse above contains a suggestion and implication which is quite enlightening. Said Ahab, to Micaiah: "How many times shall I adjure thee...?" This, then, is far from the first time that Micaiah had toyed with Ahab, or taunted him. The Prophet evidently knew his man. He knew full well that Ahab was a man who, if he set his heart on having, or doing, something, he would have it at any cost, even the cost of principle, or the life of a good man, as in the case of Naboth and his vineyard. The deliberate tone of unreality in Micaiah's voice, which even a selfish and wicked man could not fail to detect, had provoked Ahab again and again, and made him, in spite of himself, demand the truth; although he had no intention of accepting it.

The voice of this Prophet, in the first place, shows that it is possible to be so set upon one's own course, and determined to have one's own way, as to pursue that end against the knowledge of the truth and all faithful warning and counsel. Such an attitude has at its very core the seeds of doom. It is very impressive that this very strength of self-will became characteristic of Israel in the years following Ahab and ended in the seventy years of captivity. Worse still, it was this very thing that led finally to their being set aside as a nation through the rejection of Him who was the Truth. Micaiah first played with Ahab, like a cat with a mouse, and then slew him. The reason for Ahab's terrible doom? Knowing the truth but refusing to obey it!

But what of Micaiah? The four hundred Prophets had tuned in to the popular strain. The ruling power wanted a certain theme. Policy demanded alignment. The current vogue required acquiescence. The day and the hour said that adjustment to its fashion was essential. Safety and freedom from trouble said - 'Fall into line'. The four hundred time-servers and opportunists were only concerned with, and actuated by, how things would affect their own interests and prospects. There was, however, the embarrassing presence of Jehoshaphat who, while he eventually smothered his better judgment, had a sense that all this noise and clamour was hollow and lacking in genuineness. He asked Ahab if there was not another 'voice' that ought to be heard. This put Ahab into a peevish mood, because Jehoshaphat, by his question, had brought a discord into the music and a cloud on the gay horizon. Yes, there was that fellow who had not been invited to the convocation because - well - he spoke the unpopular truth. Jehoshaphat insisted that Micaiah should be fetched, and the messengers sought to persuade him to play the popular tune, sing the popular song, and to fall into line. We know what Micaiah replied.

But Micaiah had every reason to know what would be the consequences of any failure to comply. He knew Ahab quite well, that he was not a man to take pleasantly to having his ambitions thwarted or questioned. Moreover, behind Ahab there was that evil genius, his wife Jezebel. If Jezebel had succeeded in making a stalwart like Elijah run for his very life, Micaiah would suffer no less a fate. He was already in Ahab's bad books. To oppose him on this supreme occasion would not make things easier. With his eyes wide open to consequences, after taunting Ahab, he - at all costs - said what he knew to be the word of the Lord. There are more details, as you can see by reading the story, but the hammer fell and for a time he was in a prison of discredit, ostracism, privation, and exclusion. But eventually his word was proved to be the truth. What Ahab's thoughts were when he was borne away, mortally wounded, to linger out the miserable day until he died at sundown, we do not know, but we can guess. We do know what Jehu did to the four hundred and to Jezebel. From this we see that if Micaiah had compromised, his fate would have been very much worse than it was under Ahab.

We come back to our general object in these messages. Our basic passage in Acts 13:27 focuses the voices of all the Prophets on Christ. He is the inclusive, full, and final 'Voice'. How true He was to the way

of all the Prophets, and how true today! He, as the Truth of God, stood alone, "despised and rejected of men". He was offered bribes in the wilderness, and in His last agonies on the Cross, He refused to "come down" and have an easier path. "He endured the cross, despising the shame."

It is the way of all who have a prophetic anointing which stands against the accepted and popular current; who really have a message from God. Not a 'slant', a 'singularity', an idiosyncrasy, an eccentricity. There are plenty of these. Micaiah's stand was for reality! This is what all the Prophets stood for, and if there was one thing more than another that drew out the white heat of Jesus, it was unreality, hypocrisy, falsehood, and compromise with 'the prince of this world', in principle or system.

Unless we are mistaken, the Spirit of God is forcing the issue of reality in a very utter and ultimate way in our day. The 'four hundred' may seem to triumph for a little while; the Micaiahs may be in an ostracized minority; but reality will issue triumphant at the end.

So says the 'voice' of this Prophet.

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