08. The Book of 2Samuel—4:1-12

"Misguided Zeal"

(8/14/16)

2 Samuel 4:1-12 (NKJV)
1 When Saul's son heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled. 2 Now Saul's son *had* two men *who were* captains of troops. The name of one *was* Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin... 5 Then the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out and came at about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon. 6 And they came there, all the way into the house, *as though* to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7 For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom; then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plain. 8 And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life; and the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants." 9 But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "*As* the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, 10 when someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag--the one who *thought* I would give him a reward for *his* news. 11 How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?" 12 So David commanded his young men, and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet, and hanged *them* by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried *it* in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

As we saw last week, the civil war that had been going on for 7 ½ years in Israel between the forces of Saul and the forces of David was coming to an end.

Saul's general Abner, who had put Saul's son Ishbosheth on the throne as a vassal king after his father's death, had come over to David's side and had begun to rally the tribes that were still loyal to the family of Saul behind David as Israel's rightful king.

While all this was taking place and Ishbosheth seemed particularly vulnerable—these two brothers (Rechab and Baanah) who were captains in his (Ishbosheth's) army decided they would join David's side as well.

However, to prove their zeal for and loyalty to David they decided the best way to do that was to kill Ishbosheth, cut his head off and bring it to David as a trophy (much like the way David had killed Goliath, cut his head off and carried it around for a while as gruesome trophy).

These two reasoned that there was no better way to prove their loyalty to David and ingratiate themselves to him than to kill his enemy thus uniting the people behind David once and for all.

It seemed like a perfect plan—especially because helping a king like David to gain full control of the kingdom by assassinating a rival king was done all the time by those looking to defect to the other side.

They reasoned David would be so pleased with them he would no doubt reward them handsomely and make them captains in his army.

Unfortunately, that was a deadly miscalculation on their part not realizing that David had never considered Saul or his family as enemies. (Elaborate)

David mentions the man who killed Saul after he was severely wounded in battle with the Philistines thinking that David would reward him for killing his enemy—and he did but not as the man thought. (2Sam.1:1-16)

I have entitled this message, *"Misguided Zeal"*.

Zeal for a goal or a cause can be a *good*, and even at times a *great* thing—if it is a good goal or a righteous cause—if not it becomes <u>misguided zeal</u>.

Since the Fall of man there have always been those who have believed in a cause so much that no matter what has to be done to achieve that goal or to win that cause is acceptable—even if innocent people get hurt or die in the process—because the end justifies the means.

Under Islamic law the whole world must be 'Islamized' if the world is to have true peace.

The word 'Islam' doesn't mean '*love'* or '*peace'*—it means 'submission'.

The Islamic religion divides the world into two groups: *Dara al-Islam* and *Dara al-Harb*.

The Dara al-Islam is the house of Islam containing all true Muslim (also known as the house of peace)—anyone who is not a Muslim belongs to Dara al-Harb (house of war).

The Dara al-Islam cannot have peace on earth until the Dara al-Harb is destroyed.

It's not until all of the Jews, Christians and pagans are gone and the whole world is Islamicized that there can be peace on earth—this is a cardinal doctrine of the Islamic religion.

Islam is a warrior religion committed to converting the world to Islam—or killing those who refuse.

In the Islamic faith no matter what has to be done to achieve this goal and win this cause of converting the world to Islam—whether it be lying or killing, even if it means killing innocent women and children—is acceptable because the end justifies the means for Muslim fundamentalists.

We see many politicians in our country that want **open borders** and the free flow of people coming from anywhere—especially from Mexico (my own grandfather came from Mexico).

These politicians don't like the term *'illegal aliens'* because it sounds too negative and makes those coming into this country illegally sound like criminals—so they have opted to call these folks *'undocumented immigrants'.*

And while many of these people are simply looking for a better life—many others are criminals that know they can come to this country and take refuge in any number of 'sanctuary cities' and not face prosecution.

These are liberal cities that are defying federal law by not turning these people over to I.C.E. for deportation.

You all remember how Kate Steinle was walking on Pier 14 in San Francisco (a sanctuary city) with her father Jim when she was shot in the back by an illegal alien on July 1, 2015.

The man that shot her, Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez, had been deported five times and had come back for the sixth time knowing that if he took up residence in San Francisco he would not be deported again.

As Kate collapsed into her father's arms, Jim Steinle said, her dying words were: *"Help me, Dad."*

When confronted with their misguided zeal in turning a blind eye to illegal aliens that had criminal records living in their city—the leaders of San Francisco were incredulous that their sanctuary city policy was being challenged.

Furthermore, they were unmoved and undeterred by Kate's death—because the greater good was being served and if a few people have to get hurt or even killed by illegal aliens in the city of San Fran to achieve their goal—so be it, because they believe their cause is just—a no borders world where we can all be one big happy family.

And folks, we can go on and on—whether we're talking about how the IRS is targeting Christians and conservatives in an effort to diminish or destroy our influence in this country because—after all only progressives know what's best for the future of America.

Socialism/Marxism is what all 'enlightened' people know is what's best for us as a nation—and whatever it takes to achieve that objective—regardless of whose rights gets trampled on in the process is okay because *'our cause is just and good'* they believe—and so the end justifies the means.

Whether we're talking about business, politics, or religion—zeal for a goal can be a good thing as long as it doesn't cross the line into an *"anything goes, the end justifies the means"* mentality where you wind up violating what God has said to achieve your goal (lying, stealing, cheating, hurting or killing others etc.).

Whatever you're involved in this morning, no matter what goal it is that you're working towards, know this—in the eyes of God the end never justifies the means.

And if attaining your goal violates anything He has said—it is unrighteous and unacceptable in His eyes and know this—there will be consequences to pay for it.

In a couple of chapters, we're going to see how David had zeal to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem so the nation could properly begin to worship God again.

It was his passion and it was a good goal—the problem was he didn't go about it in the right way (according to what the Lord had said in His Word)—maybe he figured the end justified the means.

The result was that things turned out very bad—in fact one man died. (2Sam.6)

And really it's along those lines that I want to focus the rest of our time this morning—a zeal for God that is misguided and therefore dangerous.

Romans 10:1-2 (NKJV)
1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

There are many today who have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge—Muslims would lead the list but there are others like Hindus and Buddhists.

Here in Romans 10 Paul had the Jewish people in view when he described those whose zeal for God was passionate but misguided.

If you were to go to Israel you'd see the rabbis and orthodox Jewish men with their long, black coats, black hats, often with sideburn curls coming down the sides of their faces.

You see them at the Western Wall with their prayer books in hand, heads bobbing up and down while they pray—they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge—

Romans 10:3-4 (NKJV)
3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Jewish people, and many others, are ignorant of the righteousness that God has provided through Jesus Christ—and instead are offering God their own works and religious rituals and ceremonies as a way of being right with God.

There are really only two 'religions' in the world—the religion of *human achievement*; and the religion of *divine accomplishment*.

Every religion and religious system in the world apart from Christianity falls under the category of *human achievement*—what we do for God to earn His favor, get into heaven, merit His blessings etc.

Only Christianity (which is not a religion but a relationship) falls under the category of *divine accomplishment*—what God has done for us.

Religion says "DO" — Christianity says "DONE" (as in "it is finished").

Religion comes from man and is an expression of his pride (to show he's good enough to work for and earn a place in heaven)—<u>it is man-centered and works oriented.</u>

Christianity comes from God and is Christ centered and grace oriented (i.e. salvation isn't something we earn by works it is free gift we receive by faith).

If you were to ask an orthodox Jew today—*"You are very zealous for God but what are you doing about your sin? You have no Temple, no priesthood and no sacrifices—so how are your sins atoned for?"*

They will tell you that they believe that God will weigh their good deeds and their bad deeds on the Day of Judgment—and if the good outweighs the bad God will accept them into heaven (many people believe that)—

Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV)
11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.'

Hebrews 9:22 (NKJV)
22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Israel was ignorant of God's righteousness, not because they had never been told, but because they refused to listen and learn.

There is an ignorance that comes from a lack of information—and then there is a 'willful' ignorance that comes from refusing to listen to what God has said about how we approach Him.

These are those who reason, "*As long as I'm sincere in what I do for God to get into heaven—He will accept it and let me in.*"

This reminds me of the first two brothers on the face of the earth who both offered offerings to God to be accepted by Him—Cain and Abel.

Genesis 4:1-5 (NKJV)
[1] Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." [2] Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. [3] And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. [4] Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, [5] but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell…

Now there are many who say that this is a 'no brainer' as to why God accepted Abel's sacrifice but rejected Cain's—it was because Abel brought God a blood sacrifice to atone for his sin whereas Cain brought to God crops from his fields—in other words the works of his hands.

Well first of all we're not told in the passage that these were sin offerings—but let's assume they were.

In the Law of Moses God had said that if a person was too poor to bring to God a lamb or even two pigeons to atone for his sins he could bring a grain offering to make atonement.

Remember, these are examples of faith so that it really wasn't the offering itself but the heart of each man that was the issue.

Abel approached God through faith and obedience to what He had prescribed—whereas Cain came on his own terms and felt that God should be happy he came at all!

Jude 1:11 (NKJV)
[11] Woe to them! *[speaking of apostates]* For they have gone in the way of Cain…

The **"way of Cain"** is the way of "self-styled, do it yourself religion"—as opposed to those who approach God through faith obeying what He has said as Abel did.

God has prescribed that there is only one way to approach Him and that is through His Son Jesus Christ—all other ways are worthless and unacceptable no matter how sincere the person might be—

Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)
[12] There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death.

In that regard these two, Cain and Abel, become the fountainhead of all religions on the face of the earth—once again, the religion of *human achievement*; and the religion of *divine accomplishment*.

There are many who believe that because they're a good person, go to church, light the candles, pray the rosary, help the poor—all of these will serve to ingratiate them to God.

There are many who think that, even though they have sinned many times over the course of their lives, if they do 'good things', those good things will cancel out the bad stuff and God will reward them someday with heaven—they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge.

And yet they are sure that when they stand before Jesus Christ someday, He will be pleased with them and will reward them handsomely—even as the two brothers in our passage this morning were convinced that David would reward them for their misguided service to him.

But even as David sentenced them to death—someday the Son of David, Jesus Christ, will sentence those who had zeal without knowledge to eternal death in the Lake of Fire (Hell).

When it comes to getting into heaven we either come God's way or we don't get there—in other words the means justifies the end.

The *means* to heaven is the gospel which tells us that God is offering us heaven as a free gift—if you don't come the way God has prescribed (through faith in His Son) you won't see the end God has provided for you (eternity with Him in heaven).

Titus 3:5 (NKJV)
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Don't be a victim of misguided zeal in whatever form it takes—the end doesn't justify the means.

Be zealous for truth—the truth in God's Word!

Dedicate your life to the 'cause of Christ' by devoting your life to helping others come to know Him.

And then you will know that someday Jesus will reward you for your service to Him.