



כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה Thus says the LORD

Read 1 Kings 22:1-18

...only to tell me the truth in the name of the LORD!

"Thus says the LORD," I wonder outside of church when was the last time you heard someone use this phrase. Imagine if you were at a dinner party and the host stood up and proclaimed, "Thus says the LORD..." What would you think? I suspect it would be the last time you ate dinner with that friend! In ancient times however, this was known as the Prophetic formula; it told everyone that what proceeded was the truth and that it was from God. In fact, it was so important that any prophet that did not begin prophesying with it, was immediately deemed suspect.

One day two kings decided to join forces in battle; so as not to act in haste they decided first to inquire for the word of the LORD. The kings summoned 400 prophets together and asked them if they would be victorious in the battle they planned. All 400 declared that they would. Now, residing in the one king's prison was yet one more prophet named Micaiah, so one of the kings wanted to hear from him. "I hate him" said the other king, "he only prophesies evil against me, never good." But he summoned him anyway and as the guards brought him to the king, they told the prophet that 400 other prophets had already prophesied that the kings would be victorious in battle, and if he knew what was good for him he would do the same. Standing before the kings, Micaiah answered their question concerning the battle, "Go up and succeed, and the LORD will give you victory." Immediately the one king shouted, "how many times must I warn you only to tell me the truth in the name of the LORD!" Micaiah responded, "Thus says the LORD," not only will you not be victorious, you will die in the battle!

We all want to hear good things about ourselves; however, the problem arises when we want to hear only good things about ourselves. All too often, we surround ourselves with friends that tell us what we want to hear, instead of friends that tell us the truth. In fact, today the filter through which we separate those we come to love and those we do not, often is based on the truth we want to hear as opposed to the truth we need to hear. How many times have you made a decision based on a friend's advice, only when you acted upon it, things turned out different from what you expected? Often this happens because you chose your friend because of their ability to tell you what you wanted to hear instead of what you needed to hear.

As a pastor, I often find people's relationship with God the same. They choose to be friends with God when He has good things to say to them, like "I forgive you," or "I love you," or "I will never leave you; I will be with you always." However, when He says things like, "You do not need that," or "You are not going to get that promotion," or "I will not heal you," we quickly remove him from the friend column. Reading God's Word is the same way, we pick the verses we like and pay no attention to those "other" verses, the ones that say bad things about us.

Even with his dislike of the prophet Micaiah, the king of Israel knew the importance of hearing only the truth in the name of the LORD. Hearing the truth should be just as important to us; as long as it is the whole truth and not just the part we want to hear. One of God's promises to us is always to speak the truth; Jesus even said, "I am the Truth." Only God can speak that truth into your life, and only Jesus can take that truth, whatever it may be, and miraculously turn it into joy in your life. The bible isn't the only place today that you will hear the words, "Thus says the LORD. Every time you drop to your knees and pray, you will hear these words from Jesus. So if you find yourself needing to make a decision, and your friends are telling you to do this and that, ask yourself this, which one started out by saying, "Thus says the LORD." Then drop to your knees, and ask your True Friend, and then go and follow His truth wherever it may lead you.

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