

No Turning Back (1 Kings 19-22)

1. Intro - Billy Graham's life & death gives perspective
 - a. Impact of one person (whether you agree with him or not)
 - b. Strangely ironic how it often takes death to cause us to think about our lives
 - c. Two men whom God pursued. Both will realize that you can't hit the reset button and start over (start from the beginning) on your life
2. Ahab → 1 KINGS 20
 - a. V1-3, Ben-hadad, king of Aram, goes up to attack Israel and threatens Ahab.
 - b. V4-12, Ahab agrees to give him all that he demanded (money and wives), but Ben-hadad wants to personally inspect the house and take whatever they want. Ahab rejects this, assuming he is just looking for trouble and won't be satisfied. Now he wants to fight.
 - c. V13-21, God comes to Ahab via a prophet and tells him that he will deliver Ben-hadad into his hands (grace upon grace!). Ahab obeys and marches out to war. God gives success by Ben-hadad being drunk and giving terrible commands (v.18).
 - i. While God pursues him with grace and patience, what will Ahab pursue?
 - d. V22-30, God warns Ahab that he will attack again in the spring, but come springtime he promises to defeat Ben-hadad again if he will trust in God. Ahab does and Ben-hadad is defeated.
 - i. God pursues him with grace and patience, what will Ahab pursue?
 - e. V31-34, Ben-hadad pleads for mercy, however, and Ahab makes a treaty with him, letting him go free. Ahab makes a deal w/ him and they part as friends.
 - f. V35-43, God follows up w/ Ahab, speaking through a prophet, to let him know that he was not pleased with Ahab's decision to let Ben-hadad go. God had handed him to Ahab for destruction (v42).
 - i. While God pursues him with grace and patience, he willingly pursues sin and idolatry. Will judgment make him turn?
 - g. 1 KINGS 21:1-3, After some time, Ahab decided he wanted his neighbors land for his own garden, but the neighbor refused (OT Law)
 - h. V4-5, Ahab left angry and resentful (c.f. 20:43). Time has passed, but Ahab hasn't changed. God is still waiting for him to turn a corner.
 - i. V6-16, Jezebel comes up w/ a scheme to get her baby of a husband what he wants. She has Naboth accused by wicked men and then has him wrongfully killed. Ahab gets what he wants.
 - i. While God pursues him with grace and patience, he willingly pursues sin and idolatry.
 - j. V17-26, God sends Elijah to pronounce judgement on Ahab. He accuses him of murder and possession of the land taken from noble Naboth. Ahab has devoted himself to evil rather than devoting himself to God, and because of it God is

about to erase his family from the earth (as had happened to Baasha and Jeroboam).

- i. While God pursues him with grace and patience, what will Ahab do?
 - k. **V27-29**, Amazingly, Ahab is broken and repentant. God says to Elijah, "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me?" God pardon's Ahab and says he will not punish him, but the next in line for king and his family (c.f. Solomon and Rehoboam).
 - i. In that moment, his fleeting repentance shines bright! But it's not sincere
 - l. 1 KINGS 22:1-28, Israel and Judah come to an alliance to go to war against the king of Aram (Ben-hadad?). They seek advice from the prophets of the pagan gods and they all tell them to go up and fight. Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord, says the same thing, but Ahab doesn't believe. God has filled the false prophets mouths with lies so that Ahab goes to war and will die - Micaiah tries to trick him too, but Ahab calls his bluff so he tells him the truth.
 - m. V29-40, Just in case Micaiah is lying, Ahab goes to war without his kingly armor on. Although the warriors of Aram are told to only attack the king of Israel, Ahab gets shot with an arrow by accident even though nobody knows who he is. He dies and where they wash of his chariot the dogs lick up his blood and prostitutes bathe.
 - n. *1 Peter 1:24-25, All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.*
 - i. **God extends grace and patience, desiring all to repent**
 1. God is patiently waiting for our stubborn hearts. We are stiff-necked. Ahab is still angry and resentful after all this time.
 - ii. **Repentance shines brighter than a lifetime of sin**
 1. Ahab... Elisha (turning to follow Elijah)... Our new life in Christ...
 - iii. **Judgment day is coming.**
 1. In the words of the prophet Johnny Cash: *Go tell that long tongue liar; Go and tell that midnight rider; Tell the rambler, The gambler, The backbiter; Tell 'em that God's gonna cut 'em down || You can run on for a long time; Run on for a long time; Sooner or later God'll cut you down || Well you may throw your rock and hide your hand; Workin' in the dark against your fellow man; But as sure as God made black and white; What's done in the dark will be brought to the light; You can run on for a long time; || Run on for a long time; Run on for a long time; But sooner or later God'll cut you down;*
 2. You have this life to repent, but then you're dead and your time is up.
3. Elisha → **1 KINGS 19:15-21**
 - a. V15a, Go by the way you came = go walk 40 days in the other direction so you have time to think about what I am about to tell you;

- b. V15b-16, When you get there, anoint a new king over Aram, Jehu as the new king over Israel, and Elisha as prophet “in your place”
 - c. V17, They will execute God’s justice Hazael → Jehu → Elisha
 - d. V18, God has preserved 7,000 faithful men and women
 - e. V19, Elijah left, found Elisha, walked by him and threw his mantle on his shoulders and kept going.
 - i. God is pursuing Elisha
 - f. V20, Elisha understood immediately, abandoned his oxen and asked to say bye to mom and dad. Elijah seems like he couldn’t care less.
 - g. V21, Elisha does more than that, he decides that there is no turning back - he slaughters his oxen, destroys the yoke and uses it as lumber to cook his livelihood. Then he gives it to all his friends, they eat, say goodbye and Elisha becomes Elijah’s assistant and disciple
 - i. God is pursuing Elisha, but he decides to turn from his life to follow God, and once he does he realizes that there’s no turning back.
 - h. Luke 9:57 As they were traveling on the road someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 Jesus told him, “Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” 59 Then he said to another, “Follow me.” “Lord,” he said, “first let me go bury my father.” 60 But he told him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and spread the news of the kingdom of God.” 61 Another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to those at my house.” 62 But Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”*
4. You have two types of people in these stories represented by Ahab and Elisha
- a. Ahab: While God pursues him with grace and patience, he willingly pursues sin and idolatry.
 - b. Elisha: When pursued by God, he stops, turns, burns the bridge back to his old life (oxen and yoke), and follows hard after God
5. WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT THIS?
- a. “Lord, make me aware of my end and the number of my days so that I will know how short-lived I am (Psalm 39:4).”*
 - b. Rope illustration from Francis Chan.
 - c. You can keep sowing sin and wait to reap judgment, or you can sow repentance and reap righteousness**
 - i. You...
 - d. Some questions as you think about Elisha and Ahab:
 - i. Is God calling out to you? How are you responding?
 - ii. As you survey your life, what are the oxen holding you back?
 - iii. Slaughter the oxen and burn the yoke. There’s no turning back.**

Discipleship Group Primer

- Do a Discovery Study on 1 KINGS 19:15-21 or LUKE 9:57-62
- Add these questions:
 - Is God calling out to you?
 - How are you responding?
 - As you survey your life, what are the oxen holding you back?
 - What would it look like to embrace a “no turning back” mentality?