

## JABESH-GILEAD and The AMMONITES

1 Samuel 11:1-11

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### **The Threat**

Now the people of Jabesh-Gilead were Israelites, but they were on the wrong side of the Jordan. They were on the East bank of the Jordan and therefore they were cut off from the main body of the people of Israel, isolated and vulnerable to attack. They suddenly found themselves encircled, outnumbered and threatened by the forces of Nahash the Ammonite.

### **Perverted**

The Ammonites were Humanists - much like the Baal worshipers. Like modern-day Humanists, the Ammonites placed man at the centre of all things and made man the measure of all things. Their worship was centered upon human symbols. They had a pornographic religion - the Ammonites worshiped statues of human sexual organs publicly displayed, perverted and distorted. This was the focus of their worship. They had Temple prostitutes and orgies resulting in perversion and the abuse of women and children.

### **Child Sacrificing**

The Ammonites also had a child sacrificing religion. Their pagan god, Molech, required human sacrifices of babies. Generally the first born child would be taken and placed in the arms of an idol of Molech. Their brass, or stone, statue of Molech had his arms held out to receive the babies which would be presented into the arms of the pagan idol. Fire underneath would consume the infants. This was the climax of their religious ceremony. As a fertility cult, the Ammonites believed that sacrificing their children would lead to increased crops and herds and therefore prosperity.

### **Man Centered**

We can identify with this. We have the modern-day Ammonites, called Humanists, who have a very similar religion. The religion of Hollywood is Humanism. Modern-day Humanists, like the Baal worshipers and the Ammonites, have a religion where man is the centre of all things and man is the measure of all things. They rebel against the authority of God and reject God's law.

### **Those Who Hate God Love Death**

Modern-day Humanists also have a pornographic religion. They have digital pulpits and altars made of paper, electronics and celluloid. The television set, newspapers, websites, internet, magazines and films - these are now the modern Temples of Baal and Molech where they portray perverted orgies and distorted sexuality as the centre of their worship. Pornography today seems to be an essential part of the religion of the Humanist. The modern-day Humanists also have a child sacrificing religion. The Bible says that those who hate God love death. The atheists who hate God love death. Therefore the modern-day Ammonites legalize abortion; the killing of the most innocent and helpless of all -pre-born children.

### **Killing Innocent Children**

What difference does it make if child sacrifice is done in a primitive environment; in a mud hut by a witchdoctor wearing skins with sharpened bones; or in a hospital down the road in a clinical environment with sophisticated sterilized equipment by a doctor with academic qualifications, in a white coat? There is no difference between abortion and child sacrifice. Both are the sacrificing of innocent blood; the killing of innocent life. In fact, abortion is just the sacrifice of children to the satanic god of convenience,

valuing prosperity higher than posterity. We can understand what the people of Jabesh-Gilead must have felt like when they saw themselves encircled and out-numbered by this vast body of child sacrificing, pornographic, humanistic Ammonites.

### **Compromise Cripples**

Yet the incredible thing is that the men of Jabesh-Gilead went out to Nahash, saying *“Make a treaty with us and we will be subject to you”*. Let us just have some negotiations and we will be subject to you. You can rule us. You can ruin our society.

### **Craven Cowards**

What were they saying? The men of Jabesh were saying that they were willing for their society to be infiltrated, invaded and inundated with pornography and for their children’s minds, morals and marriages to be destroyed by this mind-rotting, brain-dulling, sickening, exploitative industry of pornography. They were even willing to have their children or their grandchildren sacrificed to the satanic god of Molech!

### **Sadistic Cruelty**

But Nahash the Ammonite was not so reasonable: *“I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israeli”* No doubt Nahash the Ammonite was a sadist. Bear in mind that this would not have been a surgical operation done under anaesthetic. No. They did not even have local anaesthetic. They did not even have pain killers. This would have been a very painful operation to gouge out their right eyes.

### **Painful and Dangerous**

That is not all. They would not have had antibiotics either. They certainly would not have sterilized their instruments. You can be sure that the chances of infection were great in this kind of operation. We are talking about an exceedingly painful and dangerous operation.

### **Ensuring Enslavement**

Yet, Nahash the Ammonite was not just a sadist. He had another reason for this mutilation. He wanted to ensure that the people of Jabesh-Gilead remained slaves of the Ammonites. He wanted to destroy their ability to fight. He wanted to cripple their ability to defend themselves. Gouging out the right eyes of the fighting men, would ensure that they would not be as effective as soldiers. In the chaos of battle you need a full field of vision. Not having your right eye would certainly be a hindrance to a swordsman. Archers with bows and arrows and slings men would be at a disadvantage in their marksmanship if they lost their right eye. This would have meant that the people of Jabesh-Gilead would have been crippled and enslaved. Nahash was ensuring that at least the next generation would be slaves to the pagan idol Molech.

### **Spiritual Disarmament**

Modern-day Ammonites are still seeking to do that. They want to gouge out our right eyes - spiritually speaking. Where Humanists have taken over the public schools, they have made the Bible a forbidden book and prayer illegal. Teachers are forbidden to present scientific evidences for creation in the classroom. The only theory of origins allowed to be taught in the classroom, is the unproven, unprovable nonsense of evolution - *“once upon a time there was nothing and that nothing became something and that something became everything!”* How did this work? *“A whole lot of nothing and a whole lot of time made everything!”* From goo to the zoo to you. From mud to monkeys to man. They call this science! This is the only theory of origins allowed to be taught in most Humanist schools. Not only that, but the Ten Commandments cannot be placed on the walls of a school. How terrible if a child should learn to honour their parents, or not to steal or murder, or not to covet or to bear false witness! You may have pornographic videos, or posters in some classrooms, but apparently not the Ten Commandments!

School teachers have been dismissed for reading the Bible during their free period in a public school. In America school children have been forbidden from reading the Bible on school buses on the way to school. You may have trouble believing all this, but this is what many Humanists are doing. They so hate the Word of God that they want to gouge out **both** eyes of the children so that they cannot discern right from wrong. Without the Bible we are spiritually defenceless before the pagans; they destroy minds and morals and pervert everything with their sex education and values clarification. When the Bible goes out, sex education and situation ethics comes in. Like the Ammonites, they have a perverted direction for worship. They do not worship God, instead they worship images made to look like mortal men. They worship not the Creator, but some of the things that have been created (Romans 1:21-25).

### **The Forbidden Book**

I experienced this on one of my first speaking tours to the USA in 1988. I had been invited to speak to a school about Africa, without the principal realizing I was a missionary. When the principal saw my Bible he asked, *“What’s that?”*

I said, *“It is a Bible.”*

He looked most alarmed and warned me: *“You are not allowed to read from the Bible, or quote from the Bible, or say anything about God or Jesus! Nothing religious! And you mustn’t pray! Do you understand?”* He looked dead serious. I understood.

After he introduced me I greeted the students and staff in the Name of Jesus Christ - as I always do whether I am speaking in a mosque, a terrorist camp, or Parliament. Then I told them that their principal had forbidden me to mention God, or Jesus, or read from the Bible. I smiled and said: *“I spend my whole life breaking those laws in Communist countries!”* I went ahead, read from the Bible, preached Christ and even closed in prayer. I have not been invited back since, but that is not so important.

The point is that the modern-day Humanists also want to gouge out our children’s spiritual eyes. In South Africa, they are working in a more insidious way. The first step was to get Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam into the schools on an equal basis with Christianity. New Age Interfaith is already in the schools through many text books. The next step will be to kick Christianity out. There are people involved in the Education Department who, at this stage, are working on getting the Bible out of South African schools; and all Bible education out as well. We have people trying to take out our spiritual eyes so that we cannot discern right from wrong. They are trying to make our children defenceless by prohibiting the Sword of the Spirit in schools.

### **Second Thoughts**

At this point the elders of Jabesh-Gilead suddenly had second thoughts about this negotiation process. They responded, *“Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you.”* What is happening here? The elders of Jabesh are saying, *“We do not mind you flooding our society with pornography; with the resultant child abuse and exploitation of women. We won’t stop you sacrificing our children, our grandchildren, or our great-grandchildren to the satanic god of Molech. But do not inflict bodily harm upon ourselves!”* These men of Gilead were so backslidden, so lacking in the fear of the Lord, that they were willing to sell their children’s future and eternal destinies before they were willing to personally suffer any bodily harm.

### **Cruelty and Cowardice**

You may also ask: *“Why would someone as evil and sadistic as Nahash the Ammonite give these people the opportunity to seek reinforcements from the rest of Israel?”*

First of all, warfare in those days adhered to a different code of conduct than today.

Secondly, Nahash was a Humanist and Humanists are cowards. Anyone who has been involved in combat against the modern-day Humanists and Atheists can testify along with me that these people

are spineless bullies. They never seem to want to face real soldiers in battle. Communist terrorists could out-distance armoured cars. They could run so fast, breaking Olympic records to escape from a firefight.

The Communists we opposed in Angola and South West Africa had no courage in standing up to real soldiers. That is why they almost never attacked the S.A.D.F. or S.W.A.T.F. soldiers. Instead, they attacked civilians. Their weapons of choice were bombs in shopping centres and landmines in the roads at night. They were brave when they were killing disarmed, defenceless civilians, but cowardly when facing real soldiers.

### **Confronting Communists with the Gospel**

The reasons behind this were expressed well by Colonel Jan Breytenbach. He is the Founder of 32 (Buffalo) Battalion, the South African Special Forces and 44 Parachute Battalion. When he came to Christ and retired from the Army, he joined *Frontline Fellowship*. Colonel Breytenbach and I walked into Angola and preached the Gospel to Cuban troops and M.P.L.A. Communists during the *UN 435 Cease Fire* in 1989.

Colonel Breytenbach declared: *“My men and I, we have killed thousands of you - we never had any trouble killing you. Our trouble was catching you. You ran so fast. Why did you run so fast? Why were you so afraid? I know why. You are afraid of dying. You people have no assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Your god is Karl Marx. Your religion is Atheism. You are all lost. You are damned! You are doomed you are en route to an eternity in hell. No wonder you run like the cowards you are! You are afraid of death. You should be afraid of death. If you knew what was waiting for you on the other side of eternal Judgment, you would come across the border, fall on your knees and beg 32 Battalion troops to lead you to salvation in Christ.”* It was a dramatic outreach surrounded by shocked and hostile Communists, fingering their weapons.

### **Considering Their Options**

These Ammonites had three options. If they attacked the people of Jabesh- Gilead in a frontal assault, they would have lost a substantial amount of men.

The second option was to besiege the city. To besiege the city could be a time-consuming exercise. It could take many months or even years of sanctions to starve the people into submission by destroying their economy.

His third option -to talk them into surrender. Negotiations. The prospects of gaining Jabesh-Gilead without a fight excited Nahash. Then he could gouge out eyes and sacrifice babies to his heart's content, which apparently was every Ammonite's dream.

Thus he allowed the messengers to go out. Nahash the Ammonite was confident that the Israelites were as backslidden as the people of Jabesh-Gilead and that they were too spineless and selfish to be concerned to come across the river and support their brethren on the wrong side of the Jordan.

### **Servant Leadership**

The messengers came to Gibeah, the capital of the new king, Saul. They reported these terms to the people. The people wept aloud. There was much sentiment - but no sacrifice. Many hearts were moved - but no one's feet were moved to action. Perhaps the people were saying, *“Why does not someone do something about this?”* But apparently nobody asked, *“What can I do?”*

Out of the fields - behind his oxen - came Saul. You may ask, *“What is the King doing in the fields behind his oxen?”* Why is he doing something useful and productive? Why is not the king in his palace devising more legislation to complicate the lives of his people or imposing heavier taxes?

Well, perhaps it would solve a lot of our problems if we put more politicians behind the tractors in the fields where they could do something productive! Shouldn't the heads of state receive the same benefits as other civil servants? Ministers in the church are **ministers of grace**. Ministers in the government are **ministers of justice**. They both are ministers of God. The same word used in Romans 13 for *civil government* is used for *ministers in the church - deacons*. The state is the deacon of God. That is where we get the words *“civil servant”, “prime minister”* and *“cabinet minister”* from - a minister is a servant. They have forgotten that.

An enormous amount of power, prestige, status, influence and financial reward has been attached to these political positions. As a result you tend to get power-hungry, money-grabbing, status-seeking, corrupt individuals seeking after those positions. It attracts the very worst kind of people. They climb over one another's heads, stab one another in the back, lie, cheat and deceive, doing anything they can to get into (and stay in) those positions of power.

Perhaps we should withdraw the incentive for such undesirable elements to seek high office. What we should do is actually give presidents, cabinet ministers and members of parliament exactly the same salary, privileges and fringe benefits as what teachers, policemen, firemen and nurses receive! Nurses, teachers, firemen and policemen often do a far harder and more important job as civil servants. They deserve the same rewards as a cabinet minister.

First of all, if you were to link their salaries, you would see that the teachers, nurses, policemen and firemen would be better paid.

Secondly, you would find that the status-seeking, power-hungry, money-grabbing individuals would then choose to rather become chief executive officers of some corporation - where at least they would create some employment and pay taxes instead of the opposite.

## **Love and Anger**

King Saul returns from the fields behind his oxen and asks, *“Why are they weeping?”*

The people explained the drama to him. The people were treating their brethren across the river as a very interesting story - a soap opera. They were emotionally involved in it; they were crying about it; but they had not the slightest intention of getting out there and doing anything about it. As Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power and he burned with anger.

You may say, *“Wait a minute. That does not sound right. Surely if the Spirit of God comes upon someone, he would not burn with anger. Anger is a sin!”* When the Spirit of God comes upon a person, his heart is filled with warm fuzzy feelings. His heart would overflow with love for the Ammonites and he would go out and buy a bumper sticker for his ox-cart - *“Have you hugged an Ammonite today?”* Yet the Bible says that when the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he burned with anger.

The Bible says we must not let our anger lead us into sin (Ephesians 4:26). Anger is not necessarily sin. Most anger comes from pride and leads to sin, but there is such a thing as righteous indignation. There is such a thing as a holy anger. Our Lord Jesus Christ experienced this when he went into the Temple and He saw God's house turned into a den of thieves. A place of prayer had been turned into a market place of corruption.

## **Corruption Desecrates the Temple**

At that time, worshipers had to bring a blood sacrifice. They would come along with a sheep or if they couldn't afford that, then a pigeon at least. What the priests had at that stage was some kind of *Temple Bureau of Standards* rip-off at the door. The priests would find some flaw with the sheep and reject it for not meeting the "Temple Bureau of Standards" requirements. These sheep would have to be left outside. *Temple Bureau of Standards* approved sheep were available inside the Temple precinct. Once inside the worshiper couldn't use his secular, worldly shekels. They had to convert their money into holy, sacred, sanctified Temple shekels through a money changer. The weights and measures were rigged so that one always somehow lost something on the deal.

This corruption was a big business for these people. The Lord saw not only the House of Prayer turned into a den of thieves, but He also saw that they were stealing from God's people. The Lord in anger, with a zeal for God's house consuming Him, made a whip and chased these criminals out of the Temple, overturning the tables, setting the pigeons and sheep free. It must have been pandemonium there. Maybe you have asked yourself why nobody tried to stop our Lord? Where there is corruption, there often are body guards and bouncers.

## **The Wicked Love Darkness and Hate the Light**

When we have conducted outreaches outside escort agencies (brothels) we have been assaulted, threatened, beaten up, with guns pushed into our necks. I was physically picked up off the ground by a man at least twice my weight and thrown over a vehicle into the road. On another occasion I had a bucket of beer and urine poured over my head. When you threaten people's corrupt business by standing outside their brothels handing out Gospel literature; when no customers are coming in anymore; they tend to become vicious and violent. First they start swearing at you, then they try to inflict bodily harm. ***"Light has come into the world, but men love darkness instead of light because their deeds are evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light...."*** John 3:19-20.

## **Neither Meek nor Mild**

Why did none of these corrupt money changers in the Temple physically stop Christ and throw Him out of the Temple? Surely if Jesus was the anorexic figure with delicate fingers depicted in pictures, comics and so-called art of Christ, they could have stopped Him. However, Jesus Christ must have been extremely physically strong to have been a carpenter in Palestine. Carpenters in the first century couldn't just phone up Timber City to order a delivery of plywood. He couldn't just drive a pickup truck over with a chain saw to chop down some trees. He had to walk to the forest, chop down the trees with an axe and physically carry the timber home. Very tough, back-straining work.

## **Physically Strong**

In fact, if you look at a map of Israel and compare it to the Gospel narratives, you will see that the routes Christ marched over were some of the most inhospitable territory. Our Lord must have been physically strong to have walked the distances He did, in that heat; and to have withstood the tortures inflicted upon Him with the whipping and with the crucifixion. Anyone who can fast for 40 days and 40 nights must be physically strong to survive that.

## **Distortion and Blasphemous Idolatry**

Our Lord was most certainly not the long-haired hippy so much art erroneously depicts him as. 1 Corinthians 11:12 teaches that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace. Why would the Bible condemn long hair on a man if our Lord was the Renaissance figure which so many artists have imaginatively depicted Him as since the Middle Ages? We do not know what Jesus looked like. It is a blasphemous breach of the Second Commandment to try to portray Christ in this way.

## **The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom**

We do not know what He looked like, but we know this much: He must have been strong. Not only spiritually strong, but physically strong. These Temple guards and these money changers did not dare stop him. I know why. I think that those eyes that were so full of love and compassion for the repentant, blazed with fury and anger that He struck fear into the hearts of the wicked on that day. I think the reason no one stopped Christ in the Temple is because they were falling over themselves to get out of the way of His whip and to escape the penetrating glare of His eyes that were blazing with holy anger against the desecration of His house.

## **Zeal for God's House Consumes Him**

If the Lord took such drastic measures to cleanse the Temple from mere financial corruption, what do you think He would do if He walked into many churches and church conferences where scenes of apostasy and deception abound? What would He have done if He had walked into the *World Council of Churches Conference* in Canberra where pornography was openly displayed and two women delegates were raped by other delegates; where they opened with pagan rituals such as passing through fire; calling up spirits of the dead; comparing Christ with Qwan In - an East Asian goddess? What would He do if He walked into denominations today who are members of the World Council of Churches, claiming to be the Bride of Christ, but are actually whores of the world?

## **False Brethren**

When I was ministering outside the escort agencies, one of these pimps, a woman who ran a brothel, came to us and said that she was a "*Christian*". Also, her brother was a minister and saw nothing wrong with what they were doing. All of her girls were "*Christians*" and "*in church every Sunday*". I conceded the possibility, although I am sceptical, that all of her girls may well have been in some church every Sunday.

## **Apostate**

I said to her: "*That is possible madam and I can tell you what type of churches they belong to. Most probably the churches you go to are members of the World Council of Churches. They serve as brothels of the devil anyway. You might as well all become Temple prostitutes and turn your churches into brothels because you could not possibly invite the wrath of God upon your congregations any more if you did than that which you already are doing with the World Council of Churches; promoting abortion, homosexuality and interfaith apostasy.*"

## **Blasphemy**

When you think of what is going on in South Africa that you could actually have *Kruis en Kroniek* (Cross and Chronicle) -a religious programme -promoting abortion, pornography and blasphemy! They promoted abortion as "*the best choice*" and pornography as "*Christianity in practice*"! Leaders of the *South African Council of Churches* actively campaigned for *The Last Temptation of Christ* to be allowed into this country! When churches promote abortion, pornography and blasphemy as the SACC and the WCC do, then you know there is good reason for righteous indignation.

## **Righteous Indignation**

God forgive us if we do not feel anger at the evils of abortion, pornography and blasphemy as Saul felt at this occasion here. There are times when we need to feel a godly anger - a righteous indignation - a holy anger. If you cannot feel angry about the murder of innocent people even in a church service; if you cannot feel angry about perversion and pornography being legalized; if you cannot get angry over the killing of pre-born babies -then there is something terribly wrong with you. "***To fear the Lord is to hate evil.***" Proverbs 8:13.

## **What Angers God?**

Notice that in I Samuel 11:6 it is God who was angry. Saul was so in touch with God's heart that he shared God's anger. **What was God angry at?** God was no doubt angry at the Ammonites and their man-centered, pornographic, child sacrificing, humanistic religion. Surely He was angry at their wicked plans for mutilating and oppressing the people of Jabesh-Gilead. This would have aroused the wrath of God upon the Ammonites.

## **The Curse of Compromise and Cowardice**

However, these matters are not the focus of God's anger in this Scripture passage. It is not the wickedness of the wicked that has offended the heart of God in this instance. It is the passivity of God's people that is the real target of His displeasure. It becomes quite clear as you read this passage that the pagans were not the greatest problem. It was God's people who were the main problem. Once God's people were mobilized to deal with the pagan threat and to deliver the people of Jabesh-Gilead, the Ammonites were dealt with quite decisively.

## **Do You Care?**

The real problem in 1 Samuel 11:1-11 is the passivity, fatalism, defeatism, inactivity and neutrality of God's people. The thought that they could stand by and do nothing while their brethren across the river had their eyes gouged out; their children sacrificed; their society corrupted with pornography; that they could stand by and do absolutely nothing - this is what angered the heart of God. The core problem was the heartless inactivity and passivity of God's people. The message of I Samuel 11 is very much the message of the Good Samaritan. You cannot be neutral. You cannot just pass down on the other side of the road. Not to help is to harm. In the message of the Good Samaritan, you are responsible to get involved and help those in need (Luke 10:27-37).

## **Lack of Compassion**

Think of the Christian who reported: *"Only this week I was on my way to a luncheon appointment. I saw a man bleeding in the gutter. People were passing by on both sides of the road and no one stopped! No one was doing anything to help this man. And when I came back from lunch an hour later, he was still there! No one had helped him!"*

## **Why Does Somebody not Do Something!**

Often when we hear of desperate needs, we react: *"Why does not somebody do something?"* We hear someone talking on a problem or sin and say: *"I am so glad so-and-so is here. He needs to hear that."* When we hear mission messages, we respond with, *"Here am I Lord, send my sister!"*

## **Failure to Care**

Very seldom do we think that the Lord could actually be speaking to us. It becomes quite clear in the Lord's description of Judgment Day of Matthew 25, we are not so much judged for what we have done as much as for what we have not done. *"You did not clothe the naked, you did not feed the hungry, you did not care for the sick, you did not visit those in prison for their faith Go to hell. I can never forgive you. You did not care."* That basically is what Matthew 25 is saying. If we do not care enough to step out and meet the needs of the brethren in need, that heartless attitude invites God's wrath upon us.

## **A Shocking Sermon Illustration**

As the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he burned with anger and chopped up an ox into pieces. He sent the bloody pieces by messengers throughout Israel and warned, *"This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul or Samuel."*



## **Galvanised into Action**

Soon a vast force of 330 000 men had volunteered. There were no volunteers before when they had heard of the threat to Jabesh-Gilead. But when they heard of the threat to their oxen, they all turned out! This means that the people of Israel were more concerned about their material possessions than they were for the well-being of their brethren across the river.

## **What Would You Do?**

Let me give you an example. Your pastor stands up on Sunday and says, *“We are going to stand for the right to life for pre-born babies! Next Saturday let us as a congregation gather outside the local abortion clinic. We’re going to have those who are trained in counselling to be sidewalk counsellors, to try and persuade those mothers who may be coming in this time of crisis and considering taking their baby’s life, not to abort their child but rather to consider adoption. We are going to, through our church, support the local Crisis Pregnancy Centre. Some families will open their homes to look after unwed mothers until they carry the baby to full term. We will help them. We will have literature available to distribute to let the people know about the right to life of the pre-born, when life begins, that the baby’s heart starts beating at three weeks and the brain wave at six weeks. Meanwhile the rest of the congregation will have placards and will physically stand between the potential victims and the potential murderers. Next Saturday we will meet at 9:00 o’clock at the abortuary.”*

## **A Matter of Priority**

Next Saturday comes and nobody turns up! On Sunday, your pastor stands up in the pulpit, pulls out a chain-saw, starts it up, walks outside and chops a motor car into pieces. He says, *“This is what I am going to do to the motor cars of anyone who does not turn out for next week’s pro-life demonstration. Those of you who do not have cars, I will get your television sets!”* The next Saturday, everybody turns out. Now if that happened, that would mean we are more concerned for our material possessions than we are for the lives of pre-born babies.

## **Would Money Motivate You to Action?**

Let us give another illustration: As we live in a materialistic society, forgive me for making a very materialistic illustration. What if your church said that for every person you lead to Christ through evangelism and counselling, you would be given R10,000. For every hour you spend in prayer, you will get R1,000. If this was seriously offered and if you prayed more and evangelized more as a result, that would mean that you loved money more than you loved Christ.

It does no harm for us to search our hearts and ask ourselves: really and truly, am I caring for my neighbour, or am I actually more concerned for my own material wealth and comfort?

## **The Fear of the Lord**

The fear of the Lord fell upon the people. In fact, it says, *“The TERROR of the Lord fell upon the people and they turned out as one man.”* This is the real problem in the Church - there is a lack of the fear of the Lord. Once the people experienced the fear of the Lord, there was no problem mobilizing the army. What was needed was for one individual to be open to the Spirit of God and to be sensitive to God and then to communicate God’s will adequately enough to mobilize the people. But the people were only mobilized when the fear of the Lord fell upon them. That is the missing dimension in most of our churches today. In fact, the fear of man seems to dominate most of our churches. Spinelessness, cowardice and compromise have allowed the great escalation of evil in our society. We are not being Salt and Light if we fear what man says rather than what God says.

## **We Need to Call for Help**

We need fellow-believers to rally to our aid. There is a time in every one of our lives when we cannot handle the pressures on our own. When we are out-numbered, out-gunned and we cannot handle it -

then we need to call for brethren to back us up. We need to be ready to do that. We mustn't try to do it all alone like *Rambo*, or *the Lone Ranger*. We have got to be willing to say, "*I need the Body of Christ to help me.*" Maybe you need counselling, or to seek practical, spiritual help. We cannot handle every fight and problem on our own. We need fellow-believers to rally to our aid. We also need to keep our ears and eyes open, sensitive to the needs of other people who need fellow-believers to rally to their aid. This is the essence of the message here.

### ***"You Will Be Delivered!"***

As the people gathered together, Saul told the messengers from Jabesh-Gilead, "*Tell your people that by the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.*" How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bears good news. It's wonderful to bear good news! Especially to captives.

### **Setting Captives Free**

As someone who has been a prisoner in Communist prisons in Mozambique and Zambia, I believe there are few experiences better than getting out of those rat-infested, disease-ridden, filth-filled cells; to be able to have a hot bath; some real food; and to be out of the control of sadistic people without any consciences who can inflict whatever torture they desire upon you. To tell a prisoner, "*You will be delivered,*" is a wonderful thing.

### **Incarcerated**

When I was a prisoner in Zambia in Lusaka Central Prison, there were over a thousand prisoners in a very confined area without a single toilet or a single tap that worked, with no running water, no plumbing and no sanitation. It was a stinking disease factory. The cells were 25 ft. x 15 ft. There were 60 prisoners per cell. Some cells had 65. There were no beds, no mattresses, everyone was just sleeping on the floor and no windows. There was just one little opening in the door. You can just imagine the suffocating heat, stench and degradation.

### **Tortured**

There was a prisoner I met who was a South African soldier. Isaiah Moyo - an ex-Rhodesian African Rifles and Selous Scout operator. He had been working for 5 Reconnaissance Commando and had been spying out terrorist bases. He had been working to stop several car bombing attempts that would have hit our streets. A brave man. He was in prison and he had been there eighteen months. All over his body he had red-hot poker sores where they would pressed metal pokers straight from the fire into his body. He had these pussy sores all over his body. He had been electrocuted repeatedly. He had been drowned upside down in buckets of water repeatedly and so on. He was a dedicated Christian who loved the Lord. His knees were calloused from the amount of time he spent on them in prayer on that concrete cell floor. Isaiah was a wonderful brother - we had great times of fellowship with him.

### **Set Free**

Our Mission was well organized. Within a few days of us being imprisoned, they had demonstrations and prayer vigils outside the Zambian Embassy in Washington and London. Literally thousands of phone calls and letters were received by the Zambian Embassies in London, Washington and in other parts of the world. The Zambians wanted foreign aid more than foreign prisoners. So after a couple of weeks they let us go. When I was freed, I felt bad to leave Isaiah.

### **Abandoned**

Poor Isaiah only had the South African government to get him out! He was still there after eighteen months, despite the fact that 85% of Zambian imports and exports came through South Africa. All their railway locomotives and their airways were serviced by South Africa. Despite all that Zambian dependence on South Africa, this South African soldier was still in a Zambian prison. He only had the government to back him; we had a little mission that managed to get us out.

## Speaking Up for the Prisoners

As I was leaving I said to him, *“Isaiah, we will get you out. You will be delivered.”* I went overseas; I went to the *International Society of Human Rights* convention; I spoke on radio and T.V. in Germany, England and America. I also spoke on BBC’s Africa Service.

A Zambian prison guard rushed into Isaiah’s cell with a radio and said, *“That missionary who was here - he is talking about you!”* Isaiah was able to hear me giving his testimony over the Africa Service of BBC. What a big encouragement! Soon they were dragging sacks of letters and parcels into his cell. The moment we started publicizing his plight, the torture stopped, he became popular and they treated him properly. He started getting better food - and eventually we organised his release.

By God’s grace, we managed to get a lot of other prisoners out too. When I was locked up in Mozambique I found three Reconnaissance Commando operators who had been there five years. One black soldier and two white soldiers -they had been locked up for five years in Machava Security Prison, in Maputo.

When we were released, I had their details memorized. I went to the Foreign Affairs’ people asking, *“Did you know about them?”* *“Yes we did,”* one responded. I said, *“They have not received a letter, a parcel, or a visit in five years. What have you been doing?”* *“Oh, we did not want to endanger their lives,”* they said.

I responded: *“You cannot get more endangered than in the hands of SNASP Security Police in Machava Security Prison. Why did not you send them some soap? Some biscuits? Some antibiotics? Some malaria tablets? Some vitamin tablets? Why did not you send them some books to read? Why couldn’t you send them a letter? These men have been there five years. Do you know what five hours are like in that prison?”*

The Foreign Affairs’ official just looked at the ground and mumbled: *“Oh, it’s so difficult....”*

## Mobilising Prayer and Action

We got their story published. Very small articles, in fact. Yet they were released soon afterwards. People rot in prisons not so much because of the wicked. They rot in prison because good people are doing nothing. Whenever we have mobilized to get prisoners out, we have succeeded in seeing them released. Sometimes it’s been a hard battle for many months. In some cases it went over a year to campaign to get them out. But we got them all out. If we could do it with our miserably small resources, our tiny little mission, you can be sure that governments could do it. But they generally do not do it. Why? Because Christian citizens do not seem to care enough to pressurise them to do it. **Publicity provides protection for the persecuted.**

## You Cannot Be Neutral

What it also tells me is that if we had tried harder, if we had known more, we would have had other prisoners out even earlier. What it says to me is: ***all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.*** Do we realize the power that is within the Church and within our grasp? Do we realize how much suffering occurs because of the inactivity and the passivity and the heartlessness and the neutrality of God’s people who sit by with limp hands saying,

## What Can I Do?

*“Why does not somebody do something about it?”* When they should say, *“What can I do about it?”*

The people of Jabesh-Gilead were told, *“Tomorrow you will be delivered,”* and they were. Saul used wise strategy, perfect timing and he broke into the camp of the Ammonites when they were least expecting it in the early hours of the morning. He totally destroyed the wicked and completely delivered God’s people.

The message is that we need to rally to the aid of fellow believers. We need to listen and respond when fellow-believers are needing aid. The message, like the message of the Good Samaritan is: **you cannot be neutral**. The message is that **we need the fear of the Lord**. We need to be so open to the Spirit of God that we feel what God feels. That we **love those whom God loves and that we hate that which God hates**.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 12:30: *“He who is not with Me is against Me. He who is not helping Me gather is scattering.”*

In I Kings 18:21, Elijah challenged the people of Israel: *“How long will you waiver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, serve Him. If Baal is god, serve him.”*

The Lord God challenges us in Psalm 94: 16: *“Who will rise up for Me against the wicked? Who will make a stand for Me against the workers of iniquity?”*

We need to answer in the words of Joshua 24:15: *“Choose for yourself this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

We need to **put feet to our Faith**.

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