

Bible Study: Receive your full inheritance

You will get more out of this study if you read the verses and ponder the questions several times a day. You'll also get more out of the study if you discuss it with others. Jesus says where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is there with them.

Monday 1 Kings 16:29-31 (NRSV)

In the thirty-eighth year of King Asa of Judah, Ahab son of Omri began to reign over Israel; Ahab son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Ahab son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, he took as his wife Jezebel daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him.

It's not good when the start of your biography says you did more evil in the sight of God than all who were before. But that's the status of many of Israel's kings. In Ahab's case, part of the problem was who he chose to marry. Ahab probably would have been evil on his own. But Jezebel prompted him to worship other gods and to build a temple for Baal, leading much of the nation into idolatry.

How many of your friends, associates and family members encourage you to walk closer with God who loves you? How many encourage you to do things you avoid that you know are good?

How many encourage you to take big or small steps away from God and what you know to be good?

Among all your associates, who influences you the most?

Take some time this week to pray for the influence you have over others and for the influence others have over you. And if you know people who need to make good choices of spouses, business partners and friends, hold them in prayer this week. It often makes a lifetime of difference.

Tuesday 1 Kings 17:1 (NRSV)

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

When the king is leading Israel into idolatry, it's not a fun time to be a prophet standing up for truth. But that was Elijah's role. He announced a three-year drought in response to what Ahab was doing. Notice that when the king goes wrong, the whole country suffers, even people who disagree with the policies of the king. That's one of the reasons it is so important to pray for good leaders in government, in business, in the church, and in all other areas of society. (See 1 Timothy 2:1-4.)

Who do you feel called to pray for this week, that they would make good and right decisions and live lives that bring blessing to the people under their care?

Wednesday 1 Kings 19:15-16 (NRSV)

[When Elijah felt like quitting] then the LORD said to [Elijah], "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place."

During the drought, Jezebel killed many prophets of God and was personally responsible for feeding 450 prophets of Baal. At last it came time for a showdown, recorded in 1 Kings 18. Elijah demonstrated the power of God (and the weakness of Baal) and had the 450 prophets of Baal put to death. Then he announced the end of the drought.

As sometimes happens after a great victory, Elijah was completely worn out when it was over. When he heard Jezebel wanted to kill him, he fled for his life and asked God if he could die. God's response came in a famous encounter where Elijah heard God not in a strong wind, earthquake, or fire but in a still small voice. In that encounter, Elijah learned God's chosen successors to the kings of Aram and Israel and the successor to Elijah's own position as prophet.

Who are you training to do the things you know? (You may be training several different people in different roles, e.g., good citizen, parent, professional associate, etc.) If you are not training anyone in a particular role of yours, ask God who you should be mentoring and raising up.

Who is mentoring you? If no one, ask God for a good mentor to train you for your next assignment.

Thursday 2 Kings 2:8-9 (NRSV)

Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit."

The rights and responsibilities of a firstborn son provide much of the drama in Genesis and Exodus, as various characters live up to, abandon, or steal their birthrights. By the time Moses laid down the charter for Israel in Deuteronomy, the firstborn son received a double portion as his inheritance (see Deuteronomy 21:15-17). In today's reading, Elisha asks for a spiritual inheritance equivalent to Elisha's being the firstborn son of Elijah. God grants this request, and the prophetic community recognizes the authority given to Elisha (see 2 Kings 2:15). Tomorrow we'll read about the amazing inheritance God has granted to you.

Friday John 14:12-14 (NRSV)

[Jesus said,] "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

Jesus told his disciples it was better for him to leave earth than to stay because after he was gone, the Holy Spirit could be released. (See John 16:7.) In today's passage, Jesus says one consequence of his death and resurrection is that "the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."

To what extent have you lived into this part of your inheritance from Jesus?

What helps you fulfill it? What hinders you?

How can you see more of God's great works in your life today?

Saturday

What have you done this week because of Jesus?

What do you want to do next week because of Jesus?

What do you need help with?

For more great Bible Studies, go to <http://www.LaJollaLutheranChurch.com>

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible (NRSV), copyright, 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S. A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.