

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan

# THE BIBLICAL WILD

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WEEK XVIII: I Kings 4-6 / I Kings 19-21

Psalm 100 let us pray.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his, we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan and this is the Biblical Wild, pioneers in the Christian wilderness.

Today we are in the crow's nest of Christ Enrichment Center, a building that was once Christ Episcopal Church here in the city of Flint. Not too far from a large former General Motors installation known as Buick City. A grand place of manufacturing and at the heart of the economy of the city that is completely vacant. We are in the midst of a place that was once prosperous, but even in those last days of prosperity, not all was as it seems.

We turn to the book of I Kings, we are reminded that Solomon who has been called by God as a wise man, and is known throughout all the area as one with great wisdom one as one who has begun to accumulate power and possessions even more even more than his father David did. On the surface, it seems that Solomon is being blessed for all of his ambition and being quite successful. But running beneath the stream of success and ambition is also a theme of violation of Torah. Solomon is caught up in kingdom building in accumulation and consolidation of power and wealth. And ironically its Solomon's policies of success and ambition that also brings about judgment and destruction. What we have revealed is a striking contradiction between the common perception of Solomon which is of one who is wise, and the reality that just below the surface Torah disobedience leads to failure. So often so it is in the world and in our own lives that we see leaders who seem to be above the fray who seem to be the anointed one as it were who fall from their pedestal and disappoint us. Business' that seem to have unbridled success, success that is unstoppable, they find themselves in federal court and significant fines, loss of the business, changes that were unexpected, and we have our own intimate knowledge of our own private failings contrasted with our public perceptions of success. The story of Solomon the story outlined in I Kings can also be our story. A reminder that worldly success and worldly ambition in and of itself is not wrong, in fact it can be turned toward the good. But if we lose sight of God's commandments we lose sight of God's rule in our lives. We lose sight of God being the one who is sovereign over us, then all that success and all that ambition is for naught.

As you ponder these scripture passages this week I have a couple questions for you to consider.

In what ways do you affirm God's ultimate rule over your life?

In what ways do you deny God's rule in your life?

May God bless you and I will see you next week on the Biblical Wild.