

U-Turn Here and Now  
February 13, 2011  
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What is the thing the average man WILL NOT DO when he is driving a car and gets LOST? Stop and ask for directions.

Anybody have a GPS in your car? When you go the wrong way what does it tell you to do? Make a U-Turn at the next safe opportunity.

REPENTENCE from sin is the U-Turn we ALL need to make. The Israelites 2 Kings 17 had a problem with U-Turns and they paid a high price for it.

What do we mean by the word EXILE?

- a. Enforced removal from one's native country.
- b. Self-imposed absence from one's country.

Where have you heard EXILE mentioned in the news this week? President of Egypt

The 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of 2 Kings is the story of the CONSEQUENCES of the DISOBEDIENCE of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in about 722 B.C.

Look at our first passage in 2 Kings 17:5-9

5 The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

- For three years two different kings of Assyria had LAID SEIGE to the Northern Kingdom of Israel
- Finally the Israelites began to run out of food and they were captured
- Assyrian records indicate that 27,920 Israelites were deported about 250 miles to the north east.
- Why would a conquering force move all the people they captured to another place?

Our lesson commentary says...

*“The policy of the Assyrians toward conquered peoples was to relocate the captives outside their homeland and to repopulate the region with trial groups from elsewhere in the Assyrian Empire. This policy separated people from their ancestral homes, lands, and traditions with the aim that they would realign their loyalties to the Assyrian king.”*

- Why would God allow this to be done to His chosen people? Look at verses 7-9.

7 All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods 8 and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. 9 The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns.

A statement of fact:

Disobedience leads to dislocation! Habitual sin will take you far into places you don't want to be.

- Let's be clear about who the Israelites were
  - These were not pagans who didn't know God.
  - These were God's people who were acting LIKE pagans.
  - They knew better...they had been warned in Deuteronomy 28

Deuteronomy 28:1

1 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth.

New International Version, ©2010 (NIV)

Then he goes on for several verses telling them about those blessings.

Deuteronomy 28:15

15 However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you:

New International Version, ©2010 (NIV)

Then he goes on for several verses telling them about the curses for disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28:49

49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand,

They couldn't say they hadn't been WARNED

Back to 2 Kings 17:13-15

13 The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets."

14 But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the LORD their God. 15 They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made

with their ancestors and the statutes he had warned them to keep. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do.”

Look at some key expressions in these verses:

- What does it say they did in verse 7: They worshiped other gods
  - We’ve said many times before that IDOLATRY...worshiping IDOLS isn’t just having a “shrine” in your home where you bow down to IDOLS.
  - How could someone “worship other gods” instead of THE TRUE GOD?
- What does verse 9 say they did? ...secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right
  - Question: What is the difference between PRIVATE and SECRET?
    - Private – i.e. There’s a reason for walls and a curtain in my shower. If you accidentally walk in on me getting out of the shower I will be embarrassed but not ashamed.
    - As for SECRET – Sometimes we do things in SECRET because we’d be BOTH EMBARRASSED and ASHAMED.

Statement: If you do something you have to keep secret it's a pretty good indication you probably shouldn't be doing it!

- Anything you and I might be doing that we’re trying to keep secret?
- Guess what, THERE ARE NO SECRETS FROM God.
  
- Verse 9 says: They built themselves high places in all their towns.
  - These were pagan places of worship on hills out in the woods and groves.
  - Not only did they worship idols in private...they worshiped them in the open.

Statement: Secret sins will come out sooner or later. But if you sin blatantly you’re not just sinning personally...you’re RECRUITING FOR SATAN!

- Anything you and I might be doing that is a “high place” in our lives?
  
- Verse 15 says: They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their ancestors and the statutes he had warned them to keep. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless.
  - They followed worthless idols and became worthless.
  - Ever hear that expression: “You are what you eat”?
  - It’s pretty certain that “You ARE WHO or WHAT you worship!”
  - Pastor Johnny said something a couple of weeks ago to the effect of “May my life not be defined by a moral failure.”
  - What do people think about when they hear the name, “Ted Haggard”?

Statement: God forgives sin but there’s a high price to be paid in reputation for HABITUAL SIN.

- Verse 15 also says: They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, "Do not do as they do."

Statement: How many Christians spend more time imitating the world than imitating Christ?

What was the first example of someone being exiled by God for disobedience?

Genesis 3:23-24 (New International Version, ©2010)

23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side[a] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Disobedience leads to dislocation!

Even some of God's greatest people have to pay the price of DISLOCATION for disobedience.

Moses...

Numbers 20:12 (New International Version, ©2010)

12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

Then there's David...adultery...murder...coverup...

2 Samuel 12:10-14 (New International Version, ©2010)

10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

11 "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14 But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for[a] the LORD, the son born to you will die."

What are some ways you can be "exiled" because of the disobedience of habitual sin?

You can be REMOVED from GOOD HEALTH.

You can be REMOVED from your FAMILY.

You can be REMOVED from your RESOURCES.

You can be REMOVED from your REPUTATION.

You can be REMOVED from MINISTRY.

Yes, you can REPENT and be FORGIVEN and hopefully RESTORED...but Disobedience leads to DISLOCATION.

We've been talking primarily about believers...but what is the ultimate exile? Hell - Separation from God and eternal torment. Without a relationship with Christ we would face TOTAL EXILE FOREVER

Ray Steadman writes:

(2 Kings)...is a picture of a wasted life. Here is a picture of an individual who is a Christian. whose foundation is laid by Jesus Christ but who has built upon it with only wood, hay and stubble. In the secret place of his heart in the will, he has refused to walk in obedience to the things revealed unto him through the Holy Spirit who dwells in the temple of his human spirit. As a result his life becomes more and more characterized by decay and corruption and defilement.

But...he goes on to write:

The whole lesson of 2 Kings of course, is that it need not be so. God is continually interrupting our lives with the evidence of his grace. God tries to arrest us in our stubborn deliberate ways. Yet we can go ahead. God will not stop us -- just as he didn't stop them. But one day we shall have to stand naked before the one who loves us who gave himself for us and to whom we have denied the right to be God in the temple of our spirit.  
<http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/3027/0212.html>

I'm ready for some GOOD NEWS!

For believers in Christ...

Proverbs 28:13

13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,  
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

1 John 1:6-9

6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all[a] sin.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Maybe you've never accepted God's gift of forgiveness.

Here's the ULTIMATE GOOD NEWS

Romans 5:8

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Those of us who ACCEPT GOD'S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION will not be EXILED from God...here's what we have to look forward to for all eternity:

Revelation 21:3-4

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' [a] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

So What's The TAKEAWAY?

- Disobedience leads to DISLOCATION
- There is ALWAYS a price to be paid for HABITUAL SIN
- The GOOD NEWS is that God's GRACE allows our sins to be COVERED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS...if we TRUST HIM AS SAVIOR AND LORD and REPENT...make that U-TURN we all need to make.