



**SERVICE TIMES:**

Sunday : 9:30 AM  
10:30 AM  
5:00 PM  
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

**ELDER**

Todd Cox Jimmy Griffith  
Travis Everett Paul White

**DEACONS:**

Derek Anderson Bret Cox  
James Dow Patrick Gaughan  
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin  
Craig Hecht Danny Meek  
Skyler Meek Phil Parker  
Jay Silver Jason Stannard  
Travis Starling Bryan Tacker  
Steve Turquette Eric Wise

**EVANGELIST**

Paul White

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**STAMP**

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**CEDAR PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST**



March 21, 2021

**Blaming Others**

In I Kings 18 we read about a meeting between two adversaries. This would be Ahab and Elijah. Ahab was the king of Israel and arguably the most wicked king Israel ever had (I Kings 16:30-33). In fact, we are told more about his reign than any other king of Israel, in part because he epitomized the evil men who led Israel. Elijah was a prophet of God, and his job was to remind this wicked king of his sin and to announce God's judgments on the nation because of their evil. In fact, Elijah had announced the drought and famine, from which the nation had suffered for three years leading up to this moment (I Kings 17:1).

It's no surprise that Ahab hated Elijah. If he could have found an opportunity to kill him, he would have. In fact, Obadiah – the man Elijah uses to set up the meeting – is afraid to make the arrangements because of that possibility. All of this helps to give us a sense of the drama when these two meet each other in I Kings 18. Ahab's opening statement to Elijah is bizarre. Here, we have the wicked king who has disobeyed God, led his nation into idolatry, and brought God's judgment upon them and yet, he refers to Elijah as the "troubler of Israel." When in fact, it was Ahab who

had brought trouble upon the nation. But his perception is so warped that he cannot see his own fault and believes that Elijah is the source of Israel's troubles. Under Ahab the nation would never turn from its evil, because he could not see his own faults and mistakes. There's a lesson to be learned here in this story. Sometimes we act just like Ahab, can't we?

This may be hard to accept, because we as followers of Christ know that Ahab is clearly in the wrong. But sometimes we do the very thing that Ahab does in this story. When we get into conflicts with others, we see only their faults and are completely blind to our own. We may create a list in our mind of all the faults of the other and hope that who ever we share the story with will agree. They probably will agree, if they aren't able to see the other side of the issue.

Worse yet, we may often find ourselves blind to our own faults and get angry when anyone suggests that our own behavior needs to change. We are closed to the possibility that the trouble is with ourselves. Having a lack of self-awareness, when examining issues in our lives, can prevent us from ever solving the problem.

Israel's situation would never improve under Ahab, because he was unwilling to acknowledge his own failures. The same thing can happen in our relationships with one another. Brethren can have conflicts and remain alienated for years, because each party focuses on what the other did wrong and will not even consider examining themselves to see if any repair can occur on their end. This mindset, which says – our problem is with you – becomes a barrier that prevents us from reaching true resolution.

Notice Elijah's words to Ahab (I Kings 18:18). Ahab had neglected the commands of God and led the nation into idolatry. The only way things could get better is if Ahab was humble enough to take a long, hard look at himself, see his faults, and take some steps to change.

When facing a problem, we must stop focusing exclusively on the other person and their faults or failures. Our own point of view in matters cannot cloud our willingness to look at ourselves and see how we may be contributing to the problem.

Romans 12:17-21 discusses not seeking revenge and living peaceably with all men:

“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved do not avenge yourselves, rather give place to wrath; for it is written, *“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.”* says the Lord. *Therefore, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink, For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”* Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

In our earthly relationships and the conflicts we come across, there is usually fault on both sides in a dispute. It is possible one side is clearly in the wrong, like Ahab. But the point is, that we should be willing to examine ourselves to see if any fault could be within ourselves. I am the only person I can change. I cannot force the other to do what is right. We are in complete control of our own actions and our own behavior. We are obligated to do the right thing, no matter what the other does. Examining yourself offers the best hope of repairing the relationship. The alternative is to hold grudges, ignore the other, gossip, nag, or criticize. How well do these solutions solve the problem? God has a better way. We need to be willing to be the first to say, “Maybe the trouble with us is me.” When we have a conflict with someone, we need to honestly consider our words and actions that may have caused or contributed to the problem.

John Wells