

June 16, 2013

Sermon – “Ethical means being right with God”

When I was a child watching cartoons it was clear who the good guys were (Bugs Bunny) and bad guys (Elmer Fudd). Luke Skywalker versus Darth Vader and Batman versus the Joker.

Today’s colourful scripture story tells the tale of a bored, self-absorbed king, his wicked, devious wife and their victim – Naboth, a good, decent, hardworking, moral man.

While it’s safe to say that the messenger for us, put simply means be like Naboth and NOT like Ahab and Jezebel.

It’s a morality play about steadfastness ultimately winning out versus greed and entitlement.

How do we hear this story in the echo of recent news reports.

- Corruption charges versus MANFF.
- Corruption charges versus several senators.
- Corruption allegations around Rob Ford.
- Reports of chemical weapons used versus civilians in Syria by government forces.

Sometimes it seems that all we hear about is bad people getting away with doing the wrong thing.

“A sense of entitlement is a cancerous thought process that is void of gratitude and can be deadly to relationships, businesses, and even nations.”

“When we replace a sense of service and gratitude with a sense of entitlement and expectation, we quickly see the demise of our relationships, society, and economy.”

“Beware: It is a quick transition from a nourishing sense of gratitude to a poisonous sense of entitlement. Steve Maraboli, *Unapologetically You: Reflections on Life and the Human Experience*.

Naboth died unjustly

- He was honourable, respectful, faithful
- He was steadfast
Refused to compromise his values (land) that had been entrusted to him by his ancestors.

“I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet. Mahatma Gandhi

Self-centeredness and greed are pervasive in our world, especially among those who have power over others. May the story of Ahab and Naboth be a constant reminder to each of us to defend and care for themselves. Nancy deClaisse – Walford Mercer University – Atlanta

Our relationship with God is reflected in the way we treat our fellow humans who is made in God's image. George Fox Seminary, Portland, Oregon

But if we look at the story from Naboth's perspective, it really doesn't matter that Ahab got his comeuppance in the end.

Naboth knew he could not control the behavior or values of anyone else... especially the king. But he knew that only he could be responsible for his own values/actions – he chose his path confidently – he died with his soul and integrity intact - he is a role model of a godly life.

He had the courage to stare down power, envy, greed, corruption, lies, and deception.