

What hast thou in thy house?

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Dr. B. Stewart, 2nd Kings.

Dr. Bohr.

Just one question and that's two. 2nd Kings, chapter 4, verse 2, and the question, what has to in the house?

I don't want to occupy the time concerning the other scriptures, but I do want to refer to them.

I suppose it's one of the most salient facts that we have that in Israel, the first failure when they got into the land was in a house.

[00:01:04] Then, the same thing. And the first failure in the assembly was in a house.

And it's very solemn to read that in the last days, the attack of the enemy is going to be on the houses.

Subverting all houses. Evil men going into houses, leading captives to the moon.

Last days. The homes of the saints under attack.

This being so, I suppose this is a very pertinent question to ask all those of us who are householders. Husbands and wives. As to what we have in our houses.

I went across the wall to speak about this first failure in Israel, because it didn't only affect the man's house, it affected all the saints. [00:02:10] That's a very solemn fact. If there is one scripture that proves indisputably that associating with evil defiles, it's the story of Achan and his sin.

We know the story well, that God commanded his people to take Jericho. And that when they destroyed Jericho, all the metals, precious and common, were to be forgotten. There was one man who disobeyed.

And on his own testimony, he said he saw, and he coveted, and he stole, and he hid.

And if this question had been asked Achan, what hast thou in thy house?

[00:03:01] He would have been bound to say, I have something in my house that ought not to be there. God said that I wasn't to take it.

If he'd been faithful, he would have had to say that. And when the inquiry was made, and eventually it was found out, this man's home was utterly destroyed.

Death, desolation, destruction, because the word of God was disobeyed.

What a solemn thing to hear about. And it wasn't only that Achan had sinned. Israel had sinned.

And all the sorrow that was amongst the people of God. And again we say that this chapter, this story, proves beyond all possible doubt or argument that association with evil defiles not only the person involved, but those who are in fellowship with the person. [00:04:05] What a sad thing this is.

Covetousness.

Disobedience.

Is this amongst us?

If this question is asked to us this evening, how would we reply?

Are we disobedient?

Are we marked by covetousness?

Are we involving a testimony in disrepute because we have something in our home that ought not to be there? That's for you to answer. That's for me to answer. It's a very solemn thing. I would say the Lord is asking us this evening, what have we in our homes? And asking us to answer the question.

I don't want to speak about negative things because there are some delightful homes in Scripture. And I'm sure it must be one of the happier exercises in connection with the Scriptures to think of happy homes. [00:05:04] Thank God there are happy homes today.

So in this chapter we read about the dear woman who was very conversant with the movements of the man of God. Perhaps a warning to us that we are under scrutiny.

People do watch what we're doing, where we're going. And this dear man, perhaps he wasn't aware that he was under scrutiny. But this dear woman saw him and his movements. The man of God, he passed by continually.

And so she prepared a chamber for him. A place for him to be.

With a table, a chair, and a bed.

I'm sure that was a delightful home. He was a woman who was so concerned about the prosperity of

the things of God, that she says, I want to help. And I'll help by providing this room so that the man of God can be there [00:06:01] And he can enjoy fellowship. He can have a rest.

He can be at ease in that chamber. As your brethren, I'm not referring to myself, not by any means. I'm referring to a delightful home where fellowship can be enjoyed.

And so can we say this in our homes? That persons can enjoy fellowship there.

Not simply that we have a nice home. Thank God if we have. It's something to thank God for. But a place where we can really enjoy fellowship.

Talk about the things of the Lord. Encourage one another.

Help one another. Comfort one another. Real, true, encouraging fellowship in our homes.

That's something to have very worthwhile.

It may be splitting hairs, but I believe it to be true that there is a distinction in the literal sense between a house and a home. [00:07:01] We could have a beautiful building. We could have it nice to furnish.

We could have everything that we desire. It might not be a home.

We'd be reminded of love and oneness and being together.

And these things constitute a real home.

Some day that gladdens our hearts and makes us feel at rest, makes us feel that we are at home there. The very word itself indicates something to us that's fine, precious, and encouraging. So when a dear man of God was invited into that place and he saw spread out before him a meal on the table, the indication of this dear woman's concern for him, well he said, this is very encouraging. This is refreshing. This is sustaining.

And oh, how he would appreciate this kind of thing. Here was something in her home that was well worthwhile. Dear brethren, we all know in the work-today matters [00:08:04] how tiring contact with the world can be.

Continual struggle against evil and evil principles.

Continual listening in our ears, constant conversation of seeing God and all the things that we meet in everyday affairs in life. How distressing it can be to the conscience and how weary we can become. How wonderful then to prepare into a house where we can find rest.

The Lord speaks about rest for our souls. He can give this pre-eminently. And oh, how wonderful it is to find it in the company of the saints, real rest and peace from all the din and all the wickedness in this hostile scene.

When we come to the New Testament, we want to refer again to the executive sign first. We find this

woman, her husband, Sapphira, Ananias. [00:09:02] If you put them the other way, Ananias and Sapphira. And here they are, guilty of collusion in evil. It wasn't something that came upon them. We're all prone to failure, each one of us. In unguarded moments, we can fall away, we can commit sin. We all know this, only too well. But this wasn't an unguarded moment. This was premeditated, calculated. It was something that was done deliberately. And what a terrible thing that was. In those days, there was divine power to deal with the matter. It was dealt with. Dealt with most effectively. And the sin was dealt with for the Lord's glory.

I suppose if it happened in our day, we might have heard voices saying, well, dear brother and sister, they have given a great deal of the substance, we ought to be careful. If we lose this man and wife, the testimony will be weakened. But that never crossed their minds. [00:10:02] There was power to deal with the evil, and immediately afterwards, it says, the Lord added many of them.

And so the testimony was strengthened. There was a hope.

And the Lord had blessed them. He had saved them. He had given them substance. And yet, they weren't satisfied. They wanted to create an impression. Hypocrisy lay behind it. A desire for a grace, and yet no reality behind it. They wanted to be like a race. Who got the money, weighed it down, beat up the apostles.

They were those who acted in self-sacrifice. They wanted to have the honor of such a blessing, or such an act.

But they didn't want to face up to these responsibilities. They didn't want to be involved in self-sacrifice in the real sense of the word. And so they were really hypocrites. And it was all exposed and judged by what his hand think. A home should be devoted to cold, calculated, cunning deceit.

[00:11:06] And the Lord was able to deal with it. But then there are many homes in the New Testament. And I'm sure we'll hear something about them before this week's finish. But I only want to refer to one of them. The house of Philemon.

What a wonderful home.

I'm sure the saints, when they went there, they were glad of the visit. Glad to go there.

What does Paul say about it? Burrows of the saints are refreshed by a brother. A brotherly man.

When a man's standing on his self-importance offers dignity, a man was a brother in the real sense of the word. And when a man came into his home, he was greeted as a brother, he was treated as a brother, and received the refreshment that was in that home. Oh, how much we need this. The refreshment that comes from spiritual contact, blowing, I believe, from what we've heard so much already, [00:12:04] the appreciation of Christ and all the glories that belong to Him, and drawing, too, from what belongs to the Lord, and able to impart it to others.

The burrows of the saints are refreshed by the brother. If you think you have gone into the house of Philemon and been treated with a dissertation on the failures of brother so-and-so, or then you end those against this one and that one and the next one, do you think that would have been the treatment they would have received in the house of Philemon? There's nothing better than that.

That's the muck and the filth that belongs to this world. Quite common conversation. I'm not saying that right judgment hasn't to be exercised. That's always permissible, right judgment. But the criticism that the world so often involves itself in is not to belong to the Christian whole. I'm sad to say we do hear of those who are lost to the rights of the saints [00:13:03] because of unwise criticism in the homes of the saints.

The saints of God spoken about in a way that's beneath the dignity of the glorious One that we've been speaking about since we've come together, and beneath the dignity of the company that has been secured by Him. Lord, dear brethren, how careful we must be with outcomes in each other's company. And so Philemon refreshed the saints. What a wonderful thing that was, to refresh them. Those who have been in the East know the value of a drink of water, a drink of cold, clear water.

What a good thing it is. And I suppose we would get this, the simple act of courtesy that means so much that the Lord said we'd get a reward, a cup of cold water in his name.

I believe this was something better. The souls of the saints, the bowels of the saints, [00:14:03] were refreshed by him.

They went away to Philemon's home feeling a lot better than when they went in, feeling the value of a visit to this devoted brother. And it says that the assembly was in his house.

The church was in his house.

And you can think in that place, I don't know where you live, but where you live the saints would be seen going up to his home for a meeting night, and for the breaking of bread, and for the ministry of the Lord. Meetings, I believe, which are essentially of assembly character. And the saints met together in his home to have these occasions. What a wonderful privilege. Perhaps it indicates to the country where it was so large in those days, I don't say a large home, but they met together in his home and they enjoyed sweet fellowship centered in the Lord Jesus Christ. [00:15:03] It wasn't so much the refreshment that Philemon gave when they went to his home on those occasions, no, it was for a different matter. They would gather to the name of the Lord, not to the name of Philemon, gather to the name of the Lord in his house. And there was nothing in that home that was incongruous to that wonderful blessing of gathering to his name. What a privilege for any home that we could meet there to break bread, to pray, and to have the ministry of the Word of God.

It's this kind of man, Paul says, Philemon, I have the utmost confidence in you that when you receive this erring brother, or he was a slave before he was a brother, in fact, he was always a slave legally, but he was to return to Philemon no longer a slave, but a brother beloved.

And Paul could say, I have sufficient confidence in you, Philemon, [00:16:01] that your heart is large enough to receive this man back again and give him a proper place, first of all, in the assembly. Receive him as a beloved brother on all those wonderful days of that dear servant of God. He says, when you receive Onesimus, you receive me.

Any thought of dignity, adaption to the apostle? I mean, man's dignity?

Not a bit of it. He said, when you receive Onesimus, you receive me.

That's fellowship. And he says, Philemon, I know you'll do this.

And you'll receive him back also to his proper place as a slave without any thought of punishment because of what he had done. Just forget it all.

Forgive.

And that's one of the wonderful things to find in any home.

Forgiveness.

We're all marked by the same kind of spirit naturally.

[00:17:02] There's always an unforgiving speakiness if we let it find its expression.

Paul says to Philemon, don't be marked by what is natural. Be marked by what is spiritual. And let forgiveness operate in your home and receive this person back again. I'm sure you will agree with me that to visit the house of Philemon must have been a delightful experience and if he had said, or if he had been asked rather, the question, what have you got in your house? Well, he said, first of all, I'm very privileged to have the assembly in my house. And that's very wonderful. And secondly, I'm privileged to have stores of refreshments spiritually and I suppose too materially that I can give to the saints. And I'm very thankful that following the example of Christ, I have forgiveness in my home and I can extend that to those who require it. Lordy of Brethren, [00:18:01] there are many other things that Scripture indicates in the homes of the saints that we might well emulate. And in these last days, as we've heard so often, that when the enemy is attacking and ceaselessly attacking, there might be in our homes something that will be pleasurable for the heart of Christ. Now, another simple question and the answer to it is to you, to me, to us all.

What have we got in our homes?