

1 Kings 22:10-28

¹⁰ Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them.¹¹ Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns and he declared, "This is what the LORD says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.'" ¹² All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. "Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious," they said, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand." ³ The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, the other prophets without exception are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably." ¹⁴ But Micaiah said, "As surely as the LORD lives, I can tell him only what the LORD tells me." ¹⁵ When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or not?" "Attack and be victorious," he answered, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand."¹⁶ The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"¹⁷ Then Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'" ¹⁸ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?" ¹⁹ Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the multitudes of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. ²⁰ And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. ²¹ Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' ²² "By what means?' the LORD asked. "I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said. "You will succeed in enticing him,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.' ²³ "So now the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you." ²⁴ Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. "Which way did the spirit from^[a] the LORD go when he went from me to speak to you?" he asked. ²⁵ Micaiah replied, "You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room." ²⁶ The king of Israel then ordered, "Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king's son ²⁷ and say, 'This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.'" ²⁸ Micaiah declared, "If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me." Then he added, "Mark my words, all you people!"

Introduction

A major company was looking for a new Marketing Director. After much advertising and many applications, three candidates entered the final selection process. The first one in for the final interview was asked him a simple question: "What is 2+2?" He wondered if it might be a trick question and then simply answered 4. The Managing Director looked at the Board, shook his head and thanked him for coming, but he wasn't the candidate they were looking for.

The next one in was again asked this simple question: "What is 2+2?" He paused, thought about it and then replied that statistically it was a number between 3 and 5. The Managing Director smiled and Board was quite impressed. The candidate was thanked and ushered out.

The last candidate was also asked the simple question: What is 2+2. Without batting an eyelid he replied: "What do you want it to be?" And he was hired on the spot.

We have a word for this "fudging the truth", this inclination to make truth what you want it to be- we call it, "SPIN". "SPIN" was originally an acronym, "Significant Progress In the News." "SPIN" refers to the highly manipulative tactics used to sway audiences away from a true presentation of the facts. The techniques of SPIN include: 1) selectively presenting only the evidence that supports one's position; 2) non-denial denials OR non-affirming affirmations; 3) phrasing in a way that assumes unproven truths; 4) euphemisms to disguise one's real agenda; or, 5) disguising bad news by placing it on the back of more important or more favorable news. Skilled practitioners of SPIN are sometimes called "spin doctors".

On this Father's Day as we consider 1 Kings 22, look at some examples of spin-doctors, and hear God as he says, **"Don't Listen to the Spin-Doctors."**

Ahab & the Spin Doctors

Ahab, the evil king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel had his spin doctors – 400 so-called prophets who were probably in it for the money rather than to serve God. Most of the time that probably didn't matter to Ahab because he had turned his back on God and worshipped idols. So he likely liked it when these prophets flattered him and told him that things were okay.

One day when Ahab and Jehoshaphat, the king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, met in Samaria they discussed Ramoth-Gilead that Ahab had won in a war with Syria, but Syria had not handed over. Ahab asked Jehoshaphat if he would go to war to take over Ramoth-Gilead which would provide a buffer on the north of Israel's territory east of the Jordan River. Jehoshaphat, whose son was married to Ahab's daughter, said, "I'm with you. But let's first seek the counsel of the Lord (22:5)." This is where the 400 false prophets end up before Ahab and Jehoshaphat saying, "Go for it! God will give you the victory!"

But Jehoshaphat is a godly king and suspects that these prophets are nothing more than "spin-doctors." So he asks, "**Is there not a prophet of the Lord whom we can inquire of (22:7).**" Ahab responded that there is one named Micaiah but he said, "**I hate him because he never says anything good about me.**" Jehoshaphat insisted that they consult with him so Ahab summoned Micaiah.

In the meantime a false prophet named Zedekiah presented a set of horns – a symbol of power – to represent the power with which he predicted Ahab would crush Ramoth-Gilead. All the other false prophets said, "Amen!"

Ahab & Micaiah

When the messenger sent for Micaiah, found him, he told Micaiah to say what the other prophets were saying. So when Micaiah appeared before the kings, he said – probably with sarcasm – the same thing the false prophets were saying. But Ahab, as much as he liked to be flattered and liked to feel secure, knew spin when he saw it. So he said, "**How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?**"

So Micaiah told Ahab about the vision of heaven where the Lord asked his angels who would entice Ahab to go to war. But God's holy angels would not do that. But just as Satan appeared before God in the Book of Job an evil angel appears before God and volunteers, "**I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of his prophets.**" So God said, "**Go and do it.**" So Micaiah explained that Ahab's prophets said what they said because God, in his judgment on Ahab for turning his back on God, not listening to God's prophets, and doing all sorts of evil, was letting the lying spirit guide the false prophets to lead Ahab to his destruction as God had previously promised.

Was God here sinning? Was he causing Ahab to sin? No. James 1 reminds us that God is not tempted to sin nor does he tempt anyone. Ahab loved lies and hated God's truth. So God was saying, "You're will be done."

It was at this point that Zedekiah, the guy with the horns, stepped in, slapped Micaiah, made fun of him as if he was delusional. Micaiah responded, "Just wait. You'll find out the truth when you are hiding for your life because what I say is true."

Ahab ordered Micaiah to be thrown in prison until Ahab returned safely from battle. Micaiah responded, "**If you return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me.**" Then he added, "**Mark my words, all you people.**" He was saying, "You'll see that my words are true."

But Ahab listened to Zedekiah and the spin-doctors. He went to battle and died exactly as the Lord said he would in a previous chapter. It drives home the point, "**Don't listen to the spun-doctors.**"

Jesus & the Spin-doctors

As Jesus spoke to his disciples and other people, he emphasized this very point. "**Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.**" False teachers, or shall we call them biblical spin-doctors, may look good and act nice; their teachings may even start with the Word

of God, but as they point their own spin on things they can lead people away from God. Not only may they be lost, those who listen to and follow them may also be lost.

The Danger of Spin-doctors Today

Remember what the Lord teaches us in 1 Kings 22. Keep in mind what Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount – **Don't listen to the spin-doctors.**

The danger of SPIN is that it can serve to make people quite content with the illusion of truth rather than the reality of truth. Unfortunately, in our culture, many seem to be content to live with illusions and SPIN rather than with the truth. David Wells in his book, "Losing Our Virtues" observes, "This is the first time a civilization has existed that, to a significant extent, does not believe in objective right or wrong." In other words, when we lose any objective measure of what is right or wrong, true or false, we are far more vulnerable to give and receive "SPIN" rather than truth. We are far more likely to make truth "what you want it to be" rather than what it is.

This is the result of the lying spirit – the devil and the demons – who want us to believe that the Bible is fiction and at best a book of fables. They use different mediums and messages to try to convince that there is no God to whom we are accountable, that there is no hell, no sin, no need for a Savior, no bounds when it comes to sex or marriage, no responsibility except to self. They want us to believe that heaven is what you make life on earth. The devil will try to deceive us to think that meaning and value in life is based on what you have or achieve, where you live, or in who you know. The lying spirits around us try to dupe us to believe that life's problems are best dealt with through abuse of substances, sole reliance on human solutions, and anything that does not have God in it.

Even within the visible Christian Church lying spirits move false teachers to put spin on Bible teachings so that we hear things like, "**Since God so loved the world and Jesus died and rose again for everyone, everyone is going to heaven,**" leaving out the part about "**whoever believes.**" Or the lying spirits move spin-doctors to take the Bible truths good works are the result of being saved by grace through faith in Jesus, and spin them so that people think that our good works are what prove us worthy of God's forgiveness. The spin-doctors, enticed by lying spirits say, "Since you're saved through faith in Jesus, there's no need to go to church, belong to church, or fellowship with people because they are all a bunch of hypocrites." That, we are. Nevertheless, God wants us to not forsake assembling together in worship, spiritual growth, service and fellowship. Listening to and following the spin-doctors is like building a house on sand. So in love God says, "Don't listen to the spin-doctors!"

Build on the Truth

Therefore, Jesus says build your lives anchored firmly on the rock-solid foundation of him and his Word. Jesus and his Word tell us the truth about God, the origin of things, what is good and what is not. Certainly Jesus and his Word expose sin and condemn us as sinners. But they also hold before us the pure gospel that tell us that Jesus is our God-man Savior who lived, died and rose again to remove sin's curse and bring us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. They assure us that heaven is our home and that there will be the resurrection and glorification of the body. Jesus and his Word tell us that there will be trials that God allows in love, but God will be with us. He encourages us, "Build on him and his Word. Know it well.

Fathers, along with teaching your sons and daughters all kinds of practical things about life, a major responsibility and privilege you have, is to make sure your children know Jesus and his Word well. While all the other things will benefit them in time, they will not get them into eternity. But Jesus will. Therefore take seriously the job to raising your children to know Jesus both by your example and instruction. Show them Jesus and his Word are important to you. Equip them so that when the spin-doctors do their thing in person, in books, on TV, through the radio, via the internet, on social media sights, you will say to yourself, "I'm not going to listen. (DRS)