

ARE YOU INDISPENSABLE?

Scripture: John 3:29-30

Introduction

Not too long ago I stayed in my uncle's home in Houston. He had very recently suffered the loss of both his parents in a car accident. At the time, he wasn't living for God. When he realised that both his parents had been taken from him with one tragic stroke, he gave his heart to God.

Later I was talking to my cousin about the accident, he made the statement, "No Christian is indispensable". The tragic death of two resulted in the conversion of three.

God always has an alternate to fill any given position: no one individual is essential to God's plan. Even John the Baptist realised this, for he said, speaking of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

God has many reasons for dispensing with individuals: here are a few....

I. He dispenses with some as punishment

A. Saul

1. A man of the greatest potential

- a. Great in stature
- b. Gifted of the Spirit

And the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied among them.

I Samuel 10:10b

2. Surrounded by godly men

And there also went with him a band of men, whose hearts the Lord had touched.

I Samuel 10:26

II He dispenses with some as punishment

A. Saul

3. His self will

- a. Intrudes into the priest's office
- b. Failure to destroy Amalekites

4. Removed

B. Ahab

1. His idolotry

2. His theft of Naboth's vineyard

- a. His coveteousness
- b. Naboth's righteous answer
- c. Ahab's tantrum
- d. Jezebel's letters
- e. Naboth stoned

3. Elijah's prophesy

Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

I Kings 21:19

4. Its fulfillment

So the king died...and the dogs licked up his blood.

I Kings 22:37-38

II. He dispenses with others to remove stumbling blocks

A. Baalam

1. Was mighty with God

For I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

Numbers 22:6b

2. Considered cursing Israel for profit

- a. Princes come to him
- b. Prays, then refuses offer
- c. Greater princes come to him
- d. Again prays about the thing God told him not to do

II. He dispenses with others to remove stumbling blocks

A. Baalam

3. Does the very thing God told him not to do

4. His death

a. Caused Israel to sin by intermarriage

b. Died in battle—slain with Moabites

B. We must not be stumbling blocks

But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their conscience, ye sin against Christ.

III. He dispenses with others that their loss might be another's gain

A. John the baptist

1. Knew that his mission was not permanent

2. Realized that his fame would be fleeting

3. Knew that the one to follow would establish an everlasting kingdom

4. Knew that he was not indispensable

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:30

5. Left the scene and one greater took his place—humanity benefited

B. Churches lose members that other churches might benefit

Conclusion

Several years ago football fans in Baltimore watched gloomily as hospital attendants carried their star quarterback from the field. The only replacement seemed terribly inadequate. He was an untried rookie who had been rejected by the Pittsburgh Steelers and was considered too light for pro football.

Conclusion (cont'd)

Their gloom soon turned to glee as this rookie quarterback passed the team into championship contention. Within three years this man had guided the team from seeming oblivion to the league championship.

Few will remember the name of the man he replaced, but all will remember the name, Johnny Unitas. Because the star quarterback was not indispensable, the whole team benefitted