

Elisha, the Prophet of Grace

10) This Is A Day Of Good News

'And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver. Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" And he said, "If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son.'"

Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body. Then he said, "God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today." But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And the king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then the king said, "Surely this calamity is from the LORD; why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

(2 Kings 6:24-33)

- ✓ **Ben-Haddad surrounded the city of Samaria to starve the people into surrender**
- ✓ **In times of apostasy there is a famine for the word of God** *"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, 'that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it'" (Amos 8:11-12)*
- ✓ **In a time of famine: 1) People will eventually eat anything; 2) They will attack one another. That's what legalism leads to. 'If you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!' (Gal.5:15)**

- ✓ **People were looking to the king (man)**
- ✓ **Did the famine bring the king to repentance?
No, he was angry with God and Elisha**
- ✓ **He laid the guilt at the door of the only one who was innocent - Elisha. This is a picture of the cross where our guilt was laid upon the only sinless One**
- ✓ **The cross is the greatest manifestation of the sin of the human race and the love of God**
- ✓ **In the midst of this crisis and the king's rage and murderous intention, Elisha sat quietly and confidently in his house**

'Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.'" So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.'"

(2 Kings 7:1-2)

- ✓ **God heard the wicked words of the king and responded not with judgment, but with mercy. Elisha announced that within 24 hours there would be an abundance of food for everyone**
- ✓ **Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more. Judgment is God's strange work. He is slow to anger. Methuselah**
- ✓ **God is found by those who do not seek Him. Sinners do not seek after God - God seeks sinners**
- ✓ **The king's officer could not conceive of anything getting through the Syrian army**
- ✓ **Faith brings us into grace. Only the unbelieving would not partake of it**

'Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there. For the LORD had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives'

(2 Kings 7:3-7)

✓ **These lepers were not welcome in the city. They would soon die from the famine if they stayed by the city. If any food became available, they would certainly be the last to receive it. So they decided that their chances were better if they surrendered to the Syrians**

✓ **They were outcasts to those inside the city, enemies to those outside. Too bad for anyone; but chosen by God to be the first to discover the good news and then to share it with others, 1 Cor.1:26-30**

✓ **These were the instruments God chose to save the city**

- ✓ **When they arrived at the Syrian camp, it was fully supplied with food but no one was there**
- ✓ **God caused them to hear the noise of the angelic host as if it was chariots and horses**
- ✓ **The sound came from the north and the south, so the only way of escape was across the Jordan**
- ✓ **The siege of Samaria was over – but no one in the city knew it or enjoyed it**

'And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it. Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household.'"

(2 Kings 7:8-9)

***First the lepers ate, drank and clothed themselves, going from tent to tent. The riches of Christ are so bountiful**

***Then they realized the good news must be shared with others**

***If the gospel makes us turn in upon ourselves and end there, we have not understood it**

'We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard' (Acts 4:30)

'And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak' (2 Cor.4:13)

'So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact." And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king's household inside. So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.'" And one of his servants answered and said, ***"Please, let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, I say, they may become like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see."***

***...Therefore they took two chariots with horses;
and the king sent them in the direction of the
Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." And they
went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all
the road was full of garments and weapons
which the Syrians had thrown away in their
haste. So the messengers returned and told the
king. Then the people went out and plundered
the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour
was sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley
for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD'
(2 Kings 7:10-16)***

***They could only speak to the gatekeepers. There were many people they could not speak to, but they were faithful to speak to the ones they could**

***These in turn told it to those in the house and these to the King. And they communicated to others until the news eventually reached the king**

***Jesus' ministry was able to be duplicated and exported by ordinary people. Making disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples...**

***To the king, the news seemed too good to be true. That's the gospel!**

***Once the news was verified it spread like wildfire**



'Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria." Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?" And he had said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died'

(2 Kings 7:17-20)

***The news brought by the lepers took the city from famine to feast. Like the prodigal son, they went from being starved to partaking of the fatted calf**

***The unbelieving officer had to personally supervise the people's access to the food and he was trampled to death. He saw others enjoying the blessing but he missed out. Such is the fate of the unbeliever**

***The good news of the gospel is that God's anger against sin is over. His wrath was discharged upon Jesus on the cross. God is now reconciled to the world**

***The gospel is His invitation to individuals to be reconciled to Him**

***We cannot remain silent, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God' (2 Cor.5:19-20)**