

"The Famine and the Provision"

Part 3

2 Kings 6:24-7:20

Introduction: The last time we were together we were looking at the famine and the siege of 2 Kings 6. We have looked at how both the famine and the siege were God's hand of chastening upon His people because they had turned away from Him. But instead of heeding to the chastening the king hardened his heart and he blamed Elisha for what was happening. The king even made a vow to kill Elisha and he sent out an executioner to carry out his vow.

Notice 2 Kings 6:30-33

The king actually thought he was doing the will of God by taking the life of Elisha. This was the result of the king given over to madness. He had rejected and suppressed the Truth of the Lord and he had now gone so far that God had given him over to his own sinful heart. Jesus had foretold of the same thing when speaking with His disciples.

John 16:1-3

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

² *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

³ *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

When the king and his executioner arrived at the place where Elisha was abiding Elisha had a message for them.

I. The Announcement

Notice 2 Kings 7:1

The announcement was that in 24 hours the famine would be over. Food would be in an abundant supply and the siege would also be over for the food would be sold in the gate.

Now before we move on from this announcement I need to touch upon the lack of repentance and Israel turning back to God. We had looked at how God had brought the famine and He had brought the siege. The cannibalism had been foretold as something that would happen if Israel turned away.

Leviticus 26:27-29

²⁷ *And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;*

²⁸ Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

²⁹ And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

All of this was clearly the chastening of the Lord but now in chapter 7 we see it is about to all come to an end and there is no sign of repentance and there is no sign of turning back to God. So, what do we do with this? How are we supposed to understand this in light of God's Word?

This is to be seen as MERCY and GRACE.

Lamentations 3:21-24

²¹ This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

²² It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

²³ They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

²⁴ The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Ezekiel 33:11

¹¹ Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

It is God's desire that everyone would turn away from their sin and turn to Him in repentance. One of the ways in which God works in the lives of the unsaved is by showing mercy and grace. Let me show you what Paul wrote concerning the Reformed Sinner in Romans 2.

Romans 2:1-4

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

² But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

³ And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Let me show you what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

God shows what some refer to as "common grace" to all who live in the world.

God works differently in every person's life. Some have come to Jesus because they were on the bottom in life. Others have come because they recognized the goodness, grace and mercy of God on their lives. The end of the famine and the siege would come because of grace and mercy. God would not permit them all to perish so He will extend His loving hand to them.

But the way in which He ends the famine is a way in which He will be sure that He gets all the glory and no one else.

II. The Heralds

Notice 2 Kings 7:2-4

The Holy Spirit now focuses upon 4 lepers who were outside the city at the entering of the gate.

Before we get too deep into the 4 men which God will use to reveal the miracle let us first of all consider the location of these 4 lepers. They were outside the camp which was exactly where the Law declared they should be.

Leviticus 13:44-46

⁴⁴ *He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head.*

⁴⁵ *And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.*

⁴⁶ *All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: **he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.***

The point we need to see here is that the king and the people of Israel were diligent in carrying out the ceremonial part of the Law. But there was much of the Law which they neglected and ignored. This is a danger that even true believers must be careful not to fall into. This was often the practice of the religious leaders of Jesus day.

Matthew 23:23

²³ *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

Let me show you how Saul was guilty of the very same thing.

1 Samuel 15:

Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

² *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.*

³ *Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.*

⁹ *But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.*

¹⁴ *And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

*22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? **Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.***

Saul did not carry out the Word of God and so he and the people saved Agag alive as well as the sheep and the oxen and they all attempted to justify what they had done by stating they could use the animals to sacrifice unto the Lord. But God made it clear that OBEDIENCE was better than sacrifice.

Now let me explain how this applies to our lives. There are believers who attend church regularly and they serve the Lord by their giving or with their gifts and their talents and abilities. But there are certain practices in their lives which they refuse to give up and in their sinful hearts they justify what they are doing by pointing to the sacrifices which they offer to the Lord. But from all of this we can see that God desires OBEDIENCE more than sacrifice. God wants us to live in obedience to His Word. That does not mean that we can pick and choose the parts we desire to obey. But we are to walk in obedience to all of God's Word. To live as Israel or as Saul does much damage to our testimony for there are people who can see straight through the hypocrisy.

Now let us get back to the 4 lepers. These will be the 4 men whom God will use to discover the food in the camp of the Syrians. God will not use Elisha, nor will He use the elders, nor will He use the sons of the prophets. He will use 4 men whom no one would expect God to work through. He will use 4 men who were outcasts of their society.

Application:

This is exactly the very thing which God's does today. He works through common ordinary people who are able and willing to be used by Him.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence.

This means that God desires to use you and me, but we too must be willing. Let us notice the attitude of the 4 lepers.

Notice 2 Kings 7:3-4

Their reasoning was, if they sat still and did nothing they would waste their lives and die. If they went to the camp of the Syrians possibly the Syrians would save them alive. If the Syrians killed them at least they died trying to make a difference. This would be better than just sitting at the gate or in the city starving to death.

Application:

Let us learn a very important lesson from these 4 men. There are so many opportunities around us to serve the Lord, but we must get up and go. Too many believers sit around and convince themselves that they cannot make a difference and their entire life gets by and they have done very little. There are those who sit by and wait for God to open doors and many times these people also waste their entire lives doing nothing.

Let me just say that God cannot steer a parked car. In other words, it is when we are up and moving that God directs our steps.

Proverbs 16:9

⁹ A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

Psalm 37:23

²³ The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

III. The Miracle

Notice 2 Kings 7:5-7

God was the One who had moved their hearts to get up and go because He had performed a miracle in which the Syrians had heard the noise of battle and they therefore thought Israel had hired the Hittites and the Egyptians to attack them. The Syrians therefore

fled their camp and left behind all their food and supplies. This was the way God chose to save Israel from the famine and the siege.

Application:

This should make us wonder how many times God has went before us to open doors, or to move hearts but we missed it because we were not willing to move. Maybe it was because we chose to stay in our comfort zones or maybe it was because we allowed someone else to convince us that what we were about to do was too much work or that what we were about to do was a waste of time.

Let me just say that when God stirs our hearts to get up and go then we need to be quick to move. We have no idea how God will work in the lives of those whom we will meet as we follow Him. To sit still and do nothing is to miss the hand of God at work in the lives of others or in our own lives. To sit still and do nothing is sin.

James 4:17

¹⁷ Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Conclusion:

Let us learn to be sensitive to the prodding of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are surrounded by hundreds of thousands of people who do not know Jesus Christ, nor do they know of the love of God. They are all people whom God loves. When God stirs our hearts to speak to others lets be diligent and let us remember that God goes before us to prepare the hearts of others. We are called only to plant seeds of the Gospel. It is God who gives the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:6-9

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.