

# BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

## Learning from Those Who Walked Before Us

### Three Questions, Two Answers, and a Miracle

2 Kings 6:24-7:20

INTRODUCTION: The passage of Scripture that brings encouragement and instruction to us this morning begins in 2 Kings, chapter 6. In chapters 6 & 7 we find three questions. I think all of us have asked at least one of these. A few of us have asked them all at one time or another.

Ahab has been replaced by Jehoram as King of Israel.

God has taken Elijah to heaven in a chariot of fire without death laying its hands upon him.

God will not be without a prophet, and He has chosen and anointed Elisha as the man of God.

BUT THINGS ARE BAD IN ISRAEL. We can identify: while the Pandemic is abating, still much is wrong in our country and world.

- King Ben-Hadad of Syria has mounted a siege against Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.
- The siege has been most successful and a famine has engulfed the people.
  - How bad was it? The head of a donkey was selling for the equivalent of \$1,600. Do you know how little meat there is on a donkey head?
  - This next part I would not even say in the pulpit, except that I am quoting directly from Scripture: A pint of dove's dung was selling for \$100.
  - Bro. Mike, do you mean they were eating dove's dung? No, not really. Dove's Dung was the name of a flower with tiny little seeds that could be eaten. So a pint of tiny little seeds, think sesame seeds, was selling for \$100!
  - But the description of the extent of the famine in 2 Kings 6 gets even worse. People were killing their own children and cooking their bodies for food. This is no exaggeration. This is what was happening. Read 2 Kings 6:28-29. Things were bad in Israel!
- When the King of Israel heard about people killing their own children for food he tore his clothes in desperation and blamed what was happening on God.

- The king could not put his hands on God, so he and his bodyguard headed to the house of God's man, Elisha, with the intent to lop off the prophet's head.
- No doubt Elisha tried to calm the furious king encouraging him to trust the Lord.
- To which the king asks the first question:

**QUESTION 1 – 2 Kings 6:33 NKJV ... then the king said, "Surely this calamity is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"**

Have you ever asked a question like that?

- Maybe after Hurricane Michael when the insurance or repairs just kept taking longer and longer?
- Maybe during COVID when you felt isolated, couldn't work, couldn't do a lot of things you wanted to do, and couldn't get rid of that mask!
- Maybe for you it was another tragedy or hardship, but sometimes you asked like the king did...

### **WHY SHOULD I WAIT ON THE LORD ANY LONGER?**

The answer comes a little later in the text, but for now let's continue the story and hear the second question.

- Elisha tries to offer hope to the king.
- He says, "Listen, by tomorrow God is going to fix everything. There is going to be plenty of food for everyone. There will be so much that you will be able to buy a five pound bag of flour for \$2.00.

The king's bodyguard interrupted the prophet and spoke the next question.

**QUESTION 2 – 2 Kings 7:2 NKJV 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?"**

Have you ever wondered this? Has there ever been a problem so big, a hurt so deep, a need so overwhelming, that you doubted the Lord could or would meet the challenge?

### **IF THE LORD WOULD MAKE WINDOWS IN HEAVEN, COULD THIS THING BE?**

- Elisha is getting fed up with these guys from the palace who have no regard for God.
- And the prophet declares to the king's bodyguard, "You shall see it with your eyes, but you will never eat any of it."

Now we go to the main characters of the story. Their names are Harley, Farley, Charley, and Clod. What's the matter? You don't believe me? It's right here.

**2 Kings 7:3 NKJV** Now there were **four leprous men** at the entrance of the gate; ...

OK, I know the Bible doesn't give their names. But they were real people with a very real story that is going to give us answers to these questions and one more. And I don't want to tell you this really neat story calling them Leper number 1 and Leper number 2, etc.

So I borrowed these names from a man named Bill McKey who I first heard tell this story a lot of years ago. He called them Harley, Farley, Charley, and Clod. I never forgot those names, and I never forgot their story, so I hope you won't either.

Now, if you think the famine was hard on the king, his soldiers, and all the regular citizens of Samaria, think how hard it was on four lepers.

- Nobody would hire them.
  - Would you want Harley or Farley serving you in the restaurant? Farley comes out of the kitchen with hot food headed for your table calling out UNCLEAN, UNCLEAN!
  - Would you want Charley or Clod to deliver your mail? So every day you go out to the mailbox with gloves on. You bring the mail in and you have to wash it with hot water before you open it.
  - So, look. There's just no jobs for lepers.
- That's why they were at the entrance gate of Samaria. They begged for a living. They only got what others were willing to share.
- So since everybody was starving to death, how much do you think Harley, Farley, Charley, and Clod were getting to eat?

So they are the ones who asked the third question.

**QUESTION 3 – 2 Kings 7:3 NKJV** 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?**"

Harley calls a group meeting. He says, "Look guys, we have three choices.

- We can stay here by the gate begging and starve to death.
- We can go deeper into the city, but still nobody is going to give us anything. We will still die.

- Or we can go outside the gate, march to the Syrian camp, and maybe they will take us prisoner and feed us. The worst thing that can happen to is that we die, and that is for certain going to happen if we don't go."

So they set out at twilight to head toward the Syrian camp.

- Now they are not trying to sneak up on anybody. They just want to surrender. So they bumble through the brush and make all kinds of noise so they don't surprise some soldier on guard who panics and lops off one of their heads.
- Meanwhile, in one of the Syrian outposts, the soldiers hear something.
- The Scripture says that God causes them to hear such noise that they conclude that the king of Israel has hired outside forces to come and attack them in the Syrian camp.
- So the soldiers go running into the camp screaming, "The Hittites are coming, and the Amorites and the Perizites! And they're all coming to get us!"
- And soldiers start bailing out of their tents in their pajamas. They leave their swords and spears and start running up the road heading back to Syria. They don't even take time to saddle their horses or load the donkeys. They just high tail it out of Dodge, I mean Jerusalem.
- So when Harley, Farley, Charley, and Clod finally get to the camp, they peak through the foliage on the bushes and the place looks empty.
  - The tents are still there.
  - The horses and donkeys are all tied up.
  - But there is not a single person stirring.
- I can picture it now. Harley calls a meeting.
  - He says, "Clod, I've been thinking. You've been in the group a long time, and I think it's time that we give you some increased responsibility. You've earned it!"
  - Clod kind of puffs out his chest a little.
  - Harley says, "I want you to go over to that Syrian tent over there and look inside."
  - Clod says, "Harley, I can't do that. There's probably a big ole Syrian in there just waiting to lop off my head!"
  - Harley says, "Now come on Clod. It's time for you to be a leader among men. We're right behind you."

- So, Clod goes over to the tent. He opens the flap and leans in and suddenly disappears. The next thing that happens is Clod disappears inside. And all Harley, Farley, and Charley can hear is the sound of eating.
- So, Harley, Farley, and Charley go over to the tent and step inside. There's Clod with a big ole turkey leg in one hand and a glass of goat's milk in the other. There's food everywhere. They've found the mess hall! And these four poor lepers who were like a day from starving to death start digging into the food.
- After they have eaten all they can hold, Harley says, "Let's check out the other tents."
- So they go to the next tent and they find gold and jewels. So they each gathered up the riches and went out and dug a hole and set up the First National Bank of Harley and the first National Bank of Farley, and so on.
- Then they go back to the dining tent for another round of food and drink. And they are leaning back in fullness and comfort such as they had never known when Harley speaks words of mystery.
- He says, literally from the Old King James Version, "We do not well."
- The other three say, "We do not well? What do you mean? We've never done so well in our lives!"
- Harley says, "We are not doing right. While we have plenty to eat, everyone in the city is still starving to death. We must go and share this good news."
- So they went back and told the soldiers at the gate. The soldiers checked it out, and sure enough, the lepers were telling the truth. The Syrian camp was empty.
- They sent word to the king, but he didn't believe it. He thought it was a trap and the Syrians were just trying to draw them out of the protection of Jerusalem's walls.
- Finally, he sent out riders on the only horses left in the city to check and see if the Syrians were really gone. And the riders rode past the camp and followed a trail of abandoned weapons and clothes. And they came back and told the king the good news.
- Word spread through the city that abundant food was in the abandoned camp of the Syrians for the taking.
- The king sent his bodyguard to keep order among the people. His last words were, "Alright, everybody, line up."

The Bible says, "...the people trampled him in the gate."

By the end of the day, you could buy a 5 lb. bag of flour for \$2, just like the prophet of God had said, and everybody got the answers to their questions.

### **QUESTION 1 – WHY SHOULD I WAIT ON THE LORD ANY LONGER?**

### **QUESTION 2 – IF THE LORD WOULD MAKE WINDOWS IN HEAVEN, COULD THIS THING BE?**

### **QUESTION 3 – WHY ARE WE SITTING HERE UNTIL WE DIE?**

### **QUESTION 1 – WHY SHOULD I WAIT ON THE LORD ANY LONGER?**

The king learned what we all need to know. Just because God is not acting on our timetable, does not mean He is not working.

- God's ways are higher than our ways.
- God loves us, and He has promised to care for those who are His children through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Are you God's child through faith in Christ? You can be.
- If you are His child, learn to wait upon the Lord, trusting and praying fervently.

### **QUESTION 2 – IF THE LORD WOULD MAKE WINDOWS IN HEAVEN, COULD THIS THING BE?**

The king's bodyguard saw the answer come, but he never enjoyed the benefits because of his doubt.

- Folks, never doubt what God can do. Nothing is impossible with God!
- It is true that there are some things that God chooses not to do that we want Him to do.
- But God never chooses to break His Word. What He has promised, He will do. He will never leave us or forsake us.

### **QUESTION 3 – WHY ARE WE SITTING HERE UNTIL WE DIE?**

And Harley, Farley, Charley, and Clod got their answer too.

- God had purpose for their lives.
- Others may have been willing to abandon them on the trash heap of life, but not God.

- He allowed these outcasts to be the ones to discover a great miracle of His grace.
- And then the Spirit of God reminded them that they needed to share the good news of that miracle with all the others who needed to hear it.
- Folks, that's the blessed privilege God has given to each of us who have eaten of His goodness and drunk from the cup of His salvation.
  - There are so very many around us, some of them relatives and friends, who need to hear the good news that God has demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
  - People who have given up on waiting for the Lord,
  - People who do not believe that God can do miracles or save them,
  - God has shared the blessings of His work in our lives so we can tell them. Go, and make disciples!

We do not well if we enjoy the benefits and don't share it with anyone else.