

## **THIS DAY IS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS**

II Kings 7: 1-20 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Here's hoping this message today will fill your heart, and thrill your soul, and still your fears. We have arrived at a message that speaks about God's mighty ability and His mighty desire to supply all our needs. As a nine-year old boy, over 65 years ago, when Dad had his first heart attack, I fell into the role as the eldest son of doing a man's work. It wasn't easy to shovel over a ton of stoker coal from the front yard into the window of our basement where we had our coal bin. Every time our old hand auger stoker coal furnace burned up a ton, we had another ton of coal delivered to our front yard, dumped, and it was my job to shovel the stoker coal into our basement coal bin. Those were the days when our family of seven children lived on \$200.00 a month, when all our supporters remembered to send support to Dad and Mom as they were home missionaries in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Appalachia. Dad superintended the Kentucky Mountain Mission headquartered in Hazard, Kentucky. During those days, Mom was prolific in writing songs as her outlet for living out her faith and expressing her love and worship to the Lord. Many of Mom's songs I sing to this day, but one of my favorite songs fits the message today: "My God Shall Supply." It is a powerful testimony to the many miracles God did in our lives living on Middle Big Creek. "My God shall supply, supply your every need; to rush about and worry so, Is unbelief indeed. The banks of earth may close; not so the Bank of Heaven, According to His riches in Glory, By Christ Jesus, your need will be given." Every time God comes through for us, that day is a day of good news.

Our message today is all about what happens when the Word of the Lord is given, what happens when it is believed, and what happens when it is not believed. For many of us, we have no real measure of how vital it is that we believe His Word and that we remain among those who believe His Word. Five ways this is true!

### **THE WORD OF THE LORD IS GOOD NEWS FOR HUNGRY SOULS WHEN IT IS GIVEN BY MEN AND WOMEN OF GOD WHO BELIEVE IT.**

(I.) Notice II Kings 7: 1. "But 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." All throughout the history of the world, God has messengers, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and He has you and me as His people to whom He has given the Word of the Lord. In times of crisis, God wants His word to be given in a message to His people, and to those who will respond to the Gospel and become His people. But whether the lost respond to the Word of God and believe, God's message is good news and God calls on men and women, boys and girls who believe His Word to deliver it.

King Joram had quit waiting on the Lord. Elisha had told him doubtless to wait for God's supply, but King Joram could wait no longer. God knew that the unbelieving city of Samaria did have His remnant in the city, but the vast majority of the city like their king, were men and women who worshipped idols—Baal, Asherah, Chemosh, Molech, and many other gods. Elisha, listening to the voice of the Lord of Hosts, told the king and his messenger, v. 1—"Hear the Word of the Lord: Thus, says the Lord." The message summary was, "By tomorrow, about this time, there will be plenty of food to eat at the gate of Samaria. The inflationary prices of food will drop drastically, as fine flour and barley will cost only about twice the price it once was in the time before the Syrian siege.

Miraculous intervention is still available today, beloved. God is still on the throne. To every humble heart that will be open to the Word of the Lord, to that person, the Word will generate faith. For the besieged city of Samaria, the next morning, the hungry souls both spiritually and physically would awaken to God's miracle. Sometimes we receive God's miracles and we don't even acknowledge it. For others of us, after receiving His miracles, we long to go back to the good ol' days before God sent His provision. Dave Egner recently told a touching story of a pilot who had a habit of asking his copilot to take the controls as he took off from his hometown in Minneapolis. The copilot noticed the pilot staring intently out the window on each flight, for a few minutes before retaking the controls. Finally, the copilot's curiosity got the best of him, so he asked the pilot, "What do you always look at down there?" The pilot answered, "Do you see that little boy fishing on that riverbank? Many people fish on that river. I used to fish from that same spot when I was a kid. Whenever a plane flew over, I would watch it until it disappeared, and I would wish and pray to God that I could be that pilot." Then, with a sigh, the pilot added, "Now I wish I could be back down there fishing with that little boy."

Beloved, almost all of us forget at times that real joy comes not in getting our way, what we want, but in wanting what God gives us. Then we get close to God. The prophet Elisha lived in the center of God's will and he could have said like David, in Psalm 23: 1, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, or I lack nothing. Today, I have come to tell you all afresh. In the siege of life with all its frustrations, all its problems, its trials, its sicknesses, its misunderstandings, its tribulations, its persecutions, its turmoil, and all its attacks of disease, danger, and despair, the Lord is my shepherd too. I don't wish I were doing anything other than what I am doing this moment--delivering the Word of the Lord to you today. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not, I must not, and I will not want. The Word of the Lord is good news for hungry souls like you and like me, especially if we are men and women, boys and girls, people of God, who believe in His Word. Secondly,

**THE WORD OF THE LORD IS ABOUT GOD’S PLAN TO REDEEM THE LOST AND HE CAN USE US OR LEPERS TO FULFILL HIS WORD. (II.)**

Notice II Kings 7: 3-5 and 8. I love God’s plan and His promises. II Corinthians 1: 20 is so beautiful. “For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our “Amen to God for His glory.” Think of this word to King Joram and his messenger on whom Joram leaned. It was such a sweet message of hope on the way within 24 hours. As Psalm 119: 103 states, “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.” If you believe in God’s Word, then when you hear it, you can taste it, spiritually speaking. The psalmist said, in Psalm 34: 8, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.” All king Joram and his messenger had to do was to delight in what was coming. They did not. Be careful how you listen and what you tune your heart to. The last words of Jesus to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 is repeated seven times. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Remember Jesus’ words in Luke 8: 18. He said, “Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away.” Think of these helpless, dying lepers.

Things were bad inside the city, but outside, it was worse. Little did King Joram realize as he left Elisha’s home that outside the gate of Samaria, four miserable and starving lepers were soon going to be the instruments in God’s hands to lead the way to announce the end of the Syrian siege and the discovery of a boundless amount of food—greater than all the food we can see in Smiths, Albertsons, and Walmart here in Rock Springs. The tents of these multiplied tens of thousands of Syrians was filled with provisions to keep the siege going for months to come. It was an incredible supply of food. For the Israelites who counted lepers as contagious, it was their custom to provide no refuge for them within their walls. They were placed outside the walls of Samaria, unfortunate sufferers with this terminal disease losing toes and fingers and becoming disfigured. They were left to the mercy of people passing by or coming to the city to sell their wares. You can be sure that the Syrians were not feeding these lepers. The Israeli practice of taking garbage outside the walls of Samaria for lepers to pick through, that plan was gone, as the city had no scraps left for the 4 lepers.

Outside the stricken, besieged city of Samaria, these four outcasts, lepers, diseased, terminal men, seen as the offscouring of Samaria, were about to be part of God’s miracle. Weak and despised, how could God redeem the besieged city of Samaria through them? Beloved, God was up to the challenge. He never runs out of options. God’s Word is clear in I Corinthians 1: 27-29, where He declares to us, “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in

the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.” If the city of Samaria was starving, those within had nothing of scraps or leftovers to throw over the wall to the lepers. In front of the lepers was the host of Syria, and the lepers had no expectation of food from them, but had they asked, it would probably have been a speedy death for them. This is the story of salvation. God has to bring us to see our hopelessness—that there is no human answer. Everyone of us must admit we have no power over our own lives. We must not trust in ourselves, and God helps us by stripping us of all our controls. Each of us is no better than those four lepers. None of us have any hope outside of the mercy and grace of our sovereign God.

Before God saves us, like the lepers, we must give up all our schemes and resolve to give ourselves up. If they entered the city, they would starve with those inside. If the Syrians killed them, death would be quicker than sitting at the gate of Samaria and starving. Maybe the Syrians would give them a meal before killing them. So, as twilight came, and the sun went down, starting a new day for the Jews, the lepers broke camp at the city wall, and boldly walked to what they thought was their death—walking into the Syrian camp at dusk. To their astonishment, the camp of the Syrians, at the edge, at the center, and at the far end—wherever they looked, was deserted of soldiers, but full of food, drink, silver, gold, clothing, treasures of all kinds, and they started making trips, hiding the loot, doubtless changing clothes from their rags, filling their famished stomachs, and drinking water until they were amazed. Beloved, if God can use lepers, quit saying—“After all my sin, after all I’ve done, after all my disobedience, after all my rebellion, after all my sin, my shame, and all my disappointing of God and others, God cannot use me. Think again. Those that think they are worthless are great candidates God is ready to use. He doesn’t call the equipped. He equips the called. Thirdly,

**THE WORD OF THE LORD BRINGS GIFTS THAT CANNOT BE  
HOARDED, OR HE WILL JUDGE US FOR OUR GUILTY SILENCE. (III.)**

Notice II Kings 7: 9-11. Has God given you gifts? Use them or lose them. You cannot hoard them and keep them? The man who buried his talent, lost it to the man who was given ten talents. God gave all of us a conscience. We know when we are doing wrong. We know we are not doing right. These lepers knew the law of God, the Word of God. This day was a day of good news. They knew if they kept what they had for themselves until morning light, punishment would overtake them. They knew in the morning, all Samaria would know the siege was over, and they would be found, punished, and maybe worse, die for keeping their good news to themselves. God judges us as believers when we refuse to witness to others of His great good news. It’s not just about you or me. It’s about God’s bigger plan.

It's the story of God's redeeming love—as He wants to use us all to bring redemption to our lost world. We each are, and we play a part, but our prideful thoughts must be left behind. We like to think inside as we look at others, “Your life is all about me helping you.” If we think that, God will have to bring us lower to bring us to true repentance. These lepers knew that guilt was mounting as they began to hoard their treasures. People were dying in the city, and they were convicted of their guilty silence, their sin. We are responsible to tell the king's household. We must go. But they could have said, “Is it rational for us to help those who cast us out of their city? We have no obligation as outcasts. We have been labeled, despised, forsaken, and spit upon. But God in His working by His Holy Spirit in their hearts made them know, “We must obey God. It is a sin not to tell King Joram and the city.”

When we sense guilt for the first time, we as sinners need to submit to each other and to God. Notice, they spoke to each other and listened to each other. As Jews, if they knew any part of the law, they knew Leviticus 19: 18 which declares, “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Beloved, the moment you are convicted of sin, bearing a grudge, bitterness, or raging anger, God commands that you confess it before Him and before others. He commands us in James 5: 16, “Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another that you may be healed.” Sin demands confession, repentance, turning from sin, and without confession and repentance, sin will bring on judgment, and punishment. But I bring you good news today. Good news. We must stop sitting idly at the city gates, sick of our sin, and waiting to die. The good news is found both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, it is clear God knew as He still knows, you and I cannot keep His law. We step over the line. We go astray—“all we, like sheep have gone astray.” (Isaiah 53: 6) As lepers, and stray disciples, God has a plan. Turn to Jeremiah 31: 33-34 where God says, “I will put my law within you and I will write it on your hearts. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and his brother saying, “Know the Lord, for you shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive your iniquity, and I will remember your sin no more.” And Ezekiel 36: 25-26 adds, “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.” Fourthly,

**THE WORD OF THE LORD WILL COME TRUE AS HE HAS ORDAINED IT AND HE USES MIGHTY, AWESOME MIRACLES TO ACHIEVE IT.**

(IV.) Notice II Kings 7: 6-7, and 12-16. Think of what God did! This is not a sight miracle but a sound miracle. Listen to the Word of the Lord. King Joram should

have believed the Word of the Lord and said, “Elisha was right,” but his logic chose to believe this was a ruse by the Syrians.” How foolish Joram was! He was untrusting of the Word of the Lord. He was doubtful along with his captain who had mocked Elisha. Thank God one of the king’s servants urged Joram to send some of his men to investigate. How much worse would it be to die at the hands of the Syrians than to starve to death in Samaria. Beloved, when the Lord fights for you, for you and your spouse, for you and your family, for you and your church, or for you and your country, watch out. Little wonder God did it differently than when he defeated the Moabites. That was a sight miracle of digging ditches, God filling them Himself with water from a flashflood, making the water look like blood. This miracle was what God made the Syrians hear—they thought they heard an army of Hittites or Egyptians coming after them. The Syrians knew what they heard and it was real—however God made the sound come to their ears. They left everything, and as they ran they left their extra baggage behind, their weapons, and some of the beleaguered servants must have fallen down, and when the scouts went out to check, they must have heard the story of panic, and 25 miles from Samaria to the Jordan was strewn with the traces of their headlong flight. The messengers Joram sent doubtless came across some disabled fugitives who told them the amazing story of this horrifying stampede. God’s Word came true, and the price of fine flour and barley was exactly what Elisha predicted! God never lies. Fifthly,

**THE WORD OF THE LORD IS BAD NEWS FOR THOSE WHO MOCK IT, DOUBT IT, AND LIVE TO SEE IT FULFILLED WITHOUT TASTING IT.**

(V.) Notice II Kings 7: 2, and 17-20. Romans 6: 23 states clearly, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This captain of Joram mocked Elisha, saying that even if God, like at Noah’s flood, opened the windows of heaven and rained fine flour and barley, Elisha’s word from the Lord would not come true. Elisha said, “You will see the miracle, but not taste it.” How tragic for this man! When king Joram saw the city waking up to hope, and rushing out of the gates, he put his captain at the gateway to regulate the surging mass of stampeding and starving Samaritans. The pressure of the famished multitude was too great for him to restrain them. In the deadly stampede, the captain was flung to the ground and trampled to death in the eagerness of the people to find food. The Word of the Lord lived on, but the man, who denied that Word was killed. He saw the fine flour and the barley, but he never got to eat a bite of it. Jesus said, in Matthew 21: 42-44, “The stone the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore, say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” This day is a day of good news—don’t make God’s Word bad news by unbelief.