

Sunday Morning Message

March 29, 2020

Title – *The Windows of Heaven*

Text – 2 Kings 7

Congregational Reading – 2 Kings 7:1 - 2

Introduction

Read 2 Kings 6:24 – 33 in order to explain the times that the people of Israel were living in. Remember, the Scripture says that “by Him all things consist”, meaning that nothing happens without God. God either causes it or at least allows it. The people of Israel were experiencing a horrible time of famine, which followed an extremely prosperous time. Famine will always follow prosperity when the people forget the God who prospered them in the first place.

Note – a piece of silver was a shekel (.4 oz. of silver). 80 pieces = 2 pounds; 5 pieces = 2 oz.

A cab may have been 2 pints. Doves dung may have been used as a last resort source for fuel.

v. 27 – The government was powerless to help.

v. 31 – Elisha became the object of blame. People will often blame the preacher or the church for their problems. Sometimes they cannot bring themselves to blame God directly, and they certainly don't want to look to themselves for responsibility, so they blame the representative of God - in this case, it was Elisha.

Illustration – We are certainly living in strange times today. We are all living and dealing with this COVID-19 corona virus pandemic. As of yesterday, over 30,000 have died around the world; almost 2,200 here in the US; and 140 in NJ. The cases and deaths are still growing.

We are all quarantined. Food and supplies are becoming scarce and prices are rising. Shoprite has security guards. People are fighting over products in the store. People are scared to get anywhere near their neighbors.

Though this pandemic is very serious and very concerning for our world today, the situation that the people of Israel faced here in 2 Kings was much more dire than ours; at least as our situation stands right now.

This account reveals what God can and will do if His people will simply turn to Him, and yield their lives to Him.

We are all dealing with what we call today a pandemic. In Bible days, a situation like ours would be called pestilence, which is another word for disease. The Bible certainly predicts that there will be pestilences in the last days. Widespread disease, such as we are facing today, can most certainly cause a famine. The stock market has dropped by a third from just a month ago. Though our government is working very hard to help people and keep our economy going, they have a huge task ahead of them. Things could get much worse before they get better.

Our situation is not exactly the same, and not as bad as the people of Samaria were facing, but I believe there are still parallels that we can make. If America and the resto of the world are going to come through this thing, it is going to be because God opens up the windows of Heaven and rids the world of this pandemic, and heals our land of all that this horrible disease destroyed.

But God can still open the windows of Heaven and bring a spiritual refreshing that can cure what ails this once wonderful nation. I am not so sure that it will happen, but I know it could happen, because God has promised that He would heal our land if we would turn back to Him.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." - (2 Chronicles 7:14)

I do believe that God can shield us individually from some of the ravages of this pandemic, if we will individually love Him, and live for Him; and even if He allows some of us to get this dreaded disease, He promises His grace to help us as we endure it.

God always opens the windows of Heaven when His people put Him first:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." - (Malachi 3:10)

Jesus promised that His people would be well taken care of, if we simply put Him first.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

Transition – Let's read this passage together, and see how God opened the windows of Heaven and reversed what seemed to be an impossible situation.

I The Prophecy of Elisha (vs. 1 – 2)

Note – v. 1 – "a measure" was approximately 7 quarts. A "shekel" was a bout .4 oz of silver.

Notice that after Elisha prophesied regarding the reversal of the famine, the King's "lord" (an official that served under the king) doubted.

God is not pleased with doubt. You and I need to trust what God says in His Word. He doesn't expect you to trust me, but He does demand that you believe what He says in His Word.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." - (Hebrews 11:6)

II The Discovery of the Four Lepers (vs. 3 – 11)

The famine was over. The food was available. Yet the majority of the people did not know it. They were blind to it. Who did God reveal it to: these four lepers. (Leprosy is a picture of sin in the Bible) God revealed His mercy and grace to these four lepers, and they were going to be responsible for sharing with the people.

Notice – at first they were going to keep it to themselves. Many of God’s people keep the grace of God to themselves as well. What a shame! We need to tell the rest of the people about the marvelous grace and provision of God.

Notice – at first the people did not believe them. We have to expect that there will be some people who will be hesitant to hear our message as we try to tell them about the Lord. Some will reject the message altogether. (Illustrate Hiroo Onoda – a Japanese soldier who continued fighting WWII for 29 years in the Philippines after the war ended)

III The Bounty for the People of Israel (vs. 12 – 16)

Notice here that the people of God did not deserve to receive this blessing from the Lord. It was simply the grace of God that they received it.

We don’t deserve God’s grace or His favor either, yet God has bestowed both upon us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Note – God does bless obedience – but obedience does not bring about God’s grace – faith brings about God’s grace.

IV The Tragedy of a Lack of Faith (vs. 17 – 20)

Whether America recovers from this pandemic or not will be determined by whether or not she turns back to God. I am praying that God will use this tragedy to bring many thousands to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. God can still heal our land, if we turn back to Him.

Regardless of what this nation does, however, you and I can still get through this thing, if we keep our eyes on the Lord. God may not heal us all physically from this terrible disease, but He will give us His grace, and He will take care of every need that we have, including the need for forgiveness, which guarantees us a disease-free and sin-free home in Heaven when we die.

Conclusion

God’s people – know this: He promises that He will never leave you or forsake you. Things are a little scary right now out there in this world, but “be of good cheer, because He has overcome the world. He will get His children through the other side of this pandemic. We simply need to keep trusting Him, and keep serving Him. Look for ways to be a conduit of His blessing to the people around you. Look for ways to communicate the love of God to people out there who are right now very afraid.

Don’t lose hope.

God was able to turn around this tragic situation in Israel, and He is well able to turn things around for us, if we will repent and turn back to Him as a nation.

But more importantly, God can eternally turn things around for you who are not yet saved, if you will repent and put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus will save you today if you will trust Him. He may not save you from this earthly disease, but He does promise to save you from the far worse, eternal disease, called sin.

We are all sinners.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23)

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12)

The payment for sin is death – eternal death as well as physical death.

"The wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23)

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die..." (Ezekiel 18:4; 20)

Jesus suffered death for our sins in our place.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

If you will simply trust Him, He will save you.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16-17)

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:9-10, 13)

Salvation is a free gift – you merely have to receive it.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)

If you are not saved, receive Him today.