

## The Lord Fights our Battles – But we still have to show up OR Listen – Believe - Obey

### Backstory:

Israel is in a really bad place. Syria has besieged Samaria and the army of Israel is there. A famine has struck Samaria and there is no food. Inflation has gone out of control. Things are so bad that 2 Kings 6:24-30 tells one of the more horrific stories of the Bible that indicates just how dire the situation is.

Then Elisha delivers this prophecy.

**2 Kings 7:1-2** 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.’ ” <sup>2</sup> 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.”

- Hear the Word of the Lord – God has a promise for the nation, and it is a good one. But the first step in obtaining this promise is to hear the Word.
  - **Romans 10:17** So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
  - The word and is usually kai. Here it is de. It should be translated as but. Possibly moreover. So then faith *comes* by hearing, but by hearing the word of God.
- The second step after hearing is believing the word of God.
  - The officer did not believe the word and made it known he doubted.
  - **James 1:6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.
- There is a third step – Acting on your belief. But if there is no belief, there is no action.
  - **James 2:17** Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
  - **Lack of action is where faith goes to die.**

**2 Kings 7:3-4** 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? <sup>4</sup> 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.”

- 4 men who knew that they would die no matter what decide to venture to the Syrian camp to try to get food only because they had nothing to lose.
- This is not faith. This is desperation. But in fairness to these men, I doubt they got to hear the word of the Lord.

**2 Kings 7:5-8** 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. <sup>6</sup> 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!” <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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*.

- These desperate men discovered that God had destroyed the Syrian army.
  - Sometimes God will have to bring people to desperation to get them to act on His promises.
  - We often make prayer a last resort.
  - When the results don’t come as quick as we want we often stop trusting.
- God had fought this battle for Israel. Has Israel benefitted from this victory? – No! At least not yet.
- Who did benefit from it at this point? Those who went down there.
- God had previously struck the Syrian army blind and delivered them into the hands of Israel. That was not enough for Israel to trust in God again. Now He destroys another of their encampments.

- But those in Israel who went to sleep that night still feared an enemy that had already been defeated.
  - **Luke 10:19** Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
  - **Colossians 2:15** Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.
  - Our enemy has already been defeated. There should be no fear nor giving him the time of day.
  - Fear of an already defeated enemy also caused Israel to go hungry for another night. They could have been partying. Instead they were starving.

**2 Kings 7:9-11** 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.” <sup>10</sup> 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.” <sup>11</sup> And the gatekeepers called out, and they told *it* to the king’s household inside.

- The proper response to experiencing the promises of God – tell others!
- If they had kept this to themselves, they still would have died, they would have just prolonged their deaths. But by telling everyone, they saved themselves and Israel.

**2 Kings 7:12** 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.’”

- When we do not trust the Word of God, we become paralyzed in fear.

- What good does the promise of God do for them if they stay where they are? What will happen to the provisions in the defeated encampment?
- They heard the Word of God, but they did not believe the Word of God. Therefore they could never obey the Word of God. And the promises of God become of no effect to them.
- This is the same as the forgiveness of God. And our salvation. And our righteousness. And everything else.

**2 Kings 7:13-16** 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.” <sup>14</sup> Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, “Go and see.” <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.

- Finally, with great trepidation, they check to see if God kept His promise.
- It was only when the people went out they received the promise of the Lord. And it was exactly as He promised.
- Are there ever promises of God that He has given us that we are hesitant to step into and possess?
- Why does God do it this way? This develops our faith. This is how we learn to trust Him completely.

**2 Kings 7:17-20** 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.”

<sup>19</sup> 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.” <sup>20</sup> And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

- The officer that openly doubted never walked in the provision of God.
- Doubt is the thing that prevents us from walking in the full promises of God.

### **God gives us a model.**

#### 1. Hear His word.

- This implies listening to Him.
- This also means not just trying to believe for whatever we want, but listening to what He wants.
  - I can be guilty of praying for what I believe is the answer instead of asking what He wants to do in this situation.

#### 2. Believe His word.

- Faith is the key to operating in the spiritual.
  - **2 Corinthians 5:7** For we walk by faith, not by sight.
  - **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

#### 3. Obey His word

- Without acting on the belief, is it actually belief?
  - **James 2:18** But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.