

"THIS DAY IS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS"

2 Kings 7:9-11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the period of Israel's history known as the era of "The Divided Kingdom" (ca. 931-722 B.C.)...
1. The nation was divided into two parts:
 - a) The kingdom of Israel in the north with Samaria as its capitol.
 - b) The kingdom of Judah in the south with Jerusalem for its capitol.
 2. The weakened condition of both kingdoms left them open to attacks by other, aggressive countries who were looking to extend their own boundaries.
 - a) Some near by (e.g., Syria, Moab, Ammon).
 - b) Others from afar (e.g., Assyria, Babylon).
- B. We read of one siege of Samaria in 2 Kings 6:24-29- *"Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad king of Aram gathered all his army and went up and besieged Samaria. 25) There was a great famine in Samaria; and behold, they besieged it, until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a fourth of a kab of dove's dung for five shekels of silver. 26) As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" 27) He said, "If the LORD does not help you, from where shall I help you? From the threshing floor, or from the wine press?" 28) And the king said to her, "What is the matter with you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29) "So we boiled my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."*
1. This onslaught on Samaria was orchestrated by Ben-Hadad, king of Syria.
 2. A most telling result of the blockade was that it brought a terrible famine upon the city of Samaria.
- C. And, among those suffering in the famine were four lepers...
1. They discussed their predicament, trying to determine the best course of action for THEIR own behalf - 2 Kings 7:3-4a- *"Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why do we sit here until we die? 4) "If we say, 'We will enter the city,' then the famine is in the city and we will die there; and if we sit here, we die also."*
 - a) I believe we should consider the noteworthiness of the fact that though they were LEPERS, with that incurable disease, they were still desirous of prolonging and sustaining their lives!
 - b) Sometimes, while frustrated and forlorn, feeling useless and insignificant, and although distraught and annoyed, we STILL cling tenaciously to this earthly life, don't we? SINNERS do the same things regarding their lifestyles!
 2. In desperation, these lepers decided to surrender to the Syrians - 2 Kings 7:4b- *"Now therefore come, and let us go over to the camp of the Arameans. If they spare us, we will live; and if they kill us, we will but die."*
 3. To their surprise, they found the Syrian camp abandoned. 2 Kings 7:5-7- *"They arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Arameans; when they came to the outskirts of the camp of the Arameans, behold, there was no one there. 6) **FOR THE LORD HAD CAUSED** the army of the Arameans to hear a sound of chariots and a sound of horses, even the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, "Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us." 7) Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their donkeys, even the camp just as it was, and fled for their life."*
 - a) At first, the four lepers splurged in their newfound riches. 2 Kings 7:8- *When these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they entered one tent and ate and drank, and carried from there silver and gold and clothes, and went and hid them; and they returned and entered another tent and carried from there also, and went and hid them."*
 - b) But upon reflection, they knew they needed to tell others what they found, and did so. 2 Kings 7:9-11- *"Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. **THIS DAY IS A DAY OF GOOD***

NEWS, but we are keeping silent; if we wait until morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household." 10) So they came and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and they told them, saying, "We came to the camp of the Arameans, and behold, there was no one there, nor the voice of man, only the horses tied and the donkeys tied, and the tents just as they were." 11) The gatekeepers called and told it within the king's household."

c) There is a valuable lesson we learn from the four lepers, especially when they said: *"This day is a day of good news."*

D. In this study, we shall notice.

1. Some parallels between the lepers then, and ourselves now.
2. The consequences of keeping silent when we have good news to share.
3. Why some people may be keeping silent today.

I. LET US FIRST GIVE CONSIDERATION TO SOME OF THE PARALLELS, BETWEEN THEN AND NOW

A. **IN EACH CASE**, there is a *FAMINE*...

1. **THEN**, it was a famine for food
2. **NOW**, it is a spiritual famine in so many lives today for the blessings that only God can provide!
 - a) **Our famine** is related to the problems of sin – **Rom.3:23**
 - b) **EVEN SO**, God provides a remedy with His **GIFT OF SALVATION**. **Rom.6:23**

B. **IN EACH CASE**, there is an *ABUNDANCE* that is freely available...

1. **THEN**, there was plenty of food in the Syrian camp.
2. **NOW**, there is an abundance of spiritual blessings in Christ! – **Eph.1:3**; **Rev.22:17**- *"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."*

C. **IN EACH CASE**, there are those who *FOUND* what they needed.

1. **THEN**, it was the four lepers who "stumbled upon" the answers to their greatest needs!
2. **NOW**, it is the Christian who can experience the joys of the Lord's salvation!

D. But **HERE IS WHERE THE SIMILARITY OFTEN ENDS**.

1. Those lepers knew what was right, and what was expected of them, **AND THEY DID IT!**
 - a) They knew they would be wrong by keeping silent
 - b) They knew punishment would befall them if they kept the good news to themselves -- So they went back to the city and told the good news!
2. **NOW, TODAY**, many Christians are **NOT LIKE** those lepers.
 - a) Despite it being "a day of good news", they remain silent!
 - b) While many die of spiritual starvation, they feast on the gospel! -- Do they not consider that what they do is wrong?

E. We would all do well to learn from the behavior of these lepers.

1. What they said of themselves at first, may be true of us: *"We are not doing what is right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent."*
2. What else they said may also be true of us: *"If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us."*

In reasoning among themselves, they considered the consequences of keeping silent in this day of good news. Have we considered the consequences of keeping silent with the good news that WE have?

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF KEEPING SILENT ARE A REAL BURDEN ON THOSE WHO WOULD ACCEPTABLY SERVE GOD!

A. Unpleasing consequences are upon us when we fail to go to others with that great commission.

1. Jesus wanted His disciples to observe ALL that He commanded - **Matt.28:18-20**
2. Included is the command to *"Go and make disciples..."* -- **Silence is not what Jesus commanded!**
- B. When we're silent, we fail our mission as the people of God...
 1. As the privileged people of God, we are to proclaim the praises of God - **1 Pet.2:9-10**
 2. Especially in regards to:
 - a) How God "called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"
 - b) How we "who had not obtained mercy...now have obtained mercy" -- How can God's "own special people" do this while keeping silent?
- C. When we're silent, we will answer to GOD for failing our mission.
 1. Just as God told Ezekiel, whom He made to be *"a watchman for the house of Israel!"*
 - a) Ezekiel was to warn the wicked – **Ezek.3:17**
 - b) If Ezekiel failed to warn the wicked, the wicked would die for his own sin, but Ezekiel would also be held accountable! - **Ezek.3:18-21**
 2. Today, the CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST is God's "watchman" to the world!
 - a) We are to WARN by taking the gospel to every person! **Mk.16:15**
 - b) Those who have not heard will die in their own sin, but we will be held accountable if we gave them no warning!

Despite the consequences of keeping silent, many Christians still are not telling others about the good news of Jesus Christ...

III. BUT, WHY WOULD SO MANY OF GOD'S PEOPLE BE KEEPING SILENT?

- A. For some, it may be they are starving themselves...
 1. They may have experienced the joy of salvation in the past...
 - a) But through negligence they have failed to grow, and have forgotten the blessings of salvation - cf. **2 Pet.1:8-9**
 - b) In a real sense, they have returned to a state of spiritual famine!
 - c) Therefore, they have little or nothing to share with others
 2. Those who are enjoying the blessings of salvation will want to tell others
 - a) Even as David did in his psalm - cf. **Psa.32:1-11**
 - b) And as Philip did when he found Jesus - cf. **Jno.1:43-46** -- Don't you have any "good news" worth sharing?
- B. For others, it may be out of fear or discouragement...
 1. If "fear" keeps us silent, remember that:
 - a) First place in the list of those consigned to the lake of fire are the "cowardly" – **Rev.21:8**
 - b) God does not want us to be fearful - cf. **2 Tim.1:7-8**- *"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. 8) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,"*
 - c) Boldness can come through prayer - cf. **Acts 4:29, 31**- *"And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, 31) And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness." **Eph.6:19-20**- *"and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."**
 2. If "discouragement" keeps us silent, then remember:
 - a) The principle of sowing and reaping - cf. **Gal.6:9**- *"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."*

- b) The example of our Lord Jesus - cf. **Heb.12:1-3**- *"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."*-- Fear and discouragement, as unsettling as they may be, can be overcome with faith and perseverance!
- C. For many others, it may just be the idea that it is too complicated...
1. As though in order to teach someone, one needed:
 - a) A master's degree in inter-personal communication
 - b) Fours of Bible in college, or some other specialized training
 2. In reality, our task is really quite simple...
 - a) To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ – **Mk.16:15**
 - 1) Which can be presented in the simplest of terms - cf. **1 Cor.15:1-4; 2:2**
 - 2) Note that in the book of Acts, the gospel was normally presented in just one lesson!
 - b) We are not obligated to teach the non-Christian beyond the "first principles"
 - 1) Only if they accept the "first principles," will they be ready to receive the "second principles."
 - 2) E.g., why teach people about "Christ's church" (its organization, work, worship, etc.), if they are not willing to obey Christ's elementary commands pertaining to faith, repentance, confession and baptism?
 3. Sharing the "gospel" is easy, provided we:
 - a) Follow the words of Peter - **1 Pet.3:15**
 - 1) Give the Lord a special place in your heart
 - 2) Prepare yourselves to be ready to give a reason for the hope that you have
 - a) E.g., that Christ died for your sins and rose again - **1 Cor.15:1-4**
 - b) E.g., that you responded to the gospel as proclaimed by Peter and the apostles – Acts 2:36-38
 - b) Follow the requests and admonitions and examples of Paul – **Col.4:2-6**- *"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3) praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4) that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. 5) Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6) Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."* **Eph.6:19-20**- *"and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."*
 - 1) Pray for opportunity - cf. **1 Cor.3:5**- (1 Cor 3:5) *"What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one."*
 - a) It is the Lord who provides the opportunities for us TO SERVE and to BE SERVED!
 - b) And He gives it to those who are prepared to go and who are praying for the chance!
 - 2) Pray for wisdom - cf. **Jas.1:5**
 - a) Pray for wisdom to make the most of the opportunity.
 - b) Pray for wisdom to say the right thing in the right way at the right time!
 - 3) Pray for boldness.
 - a) To have the courage to speak when given the opportunity

- b) To be able to say what people need to hear, not necessarily what they'd like to hear!

CONCLUSION:

1. Brethren, if we are silent with regards to the "good news" (the gospel), then the words of the four lepers is true of us: ***"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..."*** **2 Kings 7:9**
2. Yes, "let us go and tell" a world that is spiritually starved about the feast God offers through His Son Jesus Christ!
 - a) Let us share with others what we ourselves have found!
 - b) Let them experience the joy, the peace, and the love that only God can give!
3. Indeed, ***"THIS DAY IS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS"*** because it is the "day of salvation", and no one should receive the grace of God in vain! - **2 Cor.6:1-2**- ***"And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain-- 2) for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"--"***
4. Will we who have been so richly blessed accept the responsibility Christ has placed on us? If our fervor has died down, then we should remember the words of Jesus: **Rev.2:4-5**- ***"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5) 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent."***
5. ARE YOU IN NEED OF REPENTANCE?