

Sermon Title: “Don’t Block Your Blessing”

October 4, 2020

Biblical Passage: 2 Kings 7:1-11

Passage Background and Summary

The passage takes place in a famine. It begins with the prophet Elisha prophesying that the famine will end and the food market will be back to normal the following day; however, one of King Jehoram’s servants sees it as impossible. As a result, he will see but not be able to participate in the miracle. The miracle comes through the actions of four leprous men outside the city gate who are starving and must take a risk in pursuing food. They cannot go back to the city where there is famine and they cannot remain where they are outside of the city gates or they will starve to death. So, they take a risk in going to the Aramean camp and notice that it is deserted. The Arameans have left because “the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots, and of horses, the sound of a great army...” They fled in fear and “abandoned” everything in their camp. The leprous men had their fill of food, drink, silver, gold, and clothing then felt that what they were doing would be wrong if they did not tell the king so they told the gatekeepers who took the message to the king.

Sermon Points

At the time of the passage, there was famine in the land; the people were hungry but couldn’t afford to eat. In some ways, this experience mimics ours in America today. Before the pandemic, 45 million people struggled with food insecurity. Yet, coronavirus has left millions without stable employment so now more than 54 million are experiencing food insecurity. Food is an unaffordable luxury. There was the story of two women, who planned to eat their sons. One woman ate her son but the other hid her son. The king was horrified by the story, and they could see the sackcloth under his clothes representing mourning, repentance, and/or a prayer of deliverance. Yet, his outward appearance differed from what was going on in his heart.

You can block your blessing with an unclean heart. King Jehoram began to blame Elisha the prophet for what was going on. That’s what weak people do, whether a king or president. They don’t take responsibility for what’s happening and seek scapegoats. Outwardly they may appear to be repentant, but inwardly there has been no change. We all have to be aware of what is in our hearts, and we also have to be careful not to blame others for the errors of our ways. Just like God forgave Israel and gave them another chance, he does the same for us. King Jehoram soon realized the disaster was from the Lord. It was a result of Israel’s sins. Sometimes God allows us to come to our senses by experiencing the consequences of our poor choices. Much of what we experience today are consequences of America’s original sin of racism, unfaithfulness to God, and failure to live up to what we profess as a nation.

King Jehoram was also disappointed that Elisha has urged him to repent and wait on God. Help would come if he would just wait on the Lord. It is often difficult to be faithful amid suffering and disaster. Thus, the second way you can block your blessing is failure to wait on the Lord.

God has a purpose in the waiting. When God asks us to wait, God's teaching us how to trust him. Sometimes God places us in situations where all we can do is wait, like where we are right now. While we are waiting, God can develop his character, love, and grace in us. It is not easy to wait. Waiting is a discipline and it takes discipline to wait. Waiting is being confident that God is working everything out for your good.

Still outside the city gates, another scene was taking place. He leprous men had decided they couldn't stay in their current state of starvation and would seek food. Similarly, inaction will get us nowhere. Inaction will block your blessing. There are times when we must move and no hesitate. We must be willing to take a risk, and we have to dream for what is possible in the nation and in the future. Inaction will cost you something but stepping out on faith will allow God to move. The leprous men discovered the food and knew that this news was not something they could keep to themselves. They had to love their neighbors, and we have to love our neighbors because we cannot be free until all of us are free.

Reflection Questions

1. What disaster are you experiencing right now?
2. Share a time in your life when your outward appearance didn't reflect what was taking place internally?
3. How do you protect yourself against an unclean heart?
4. Have you ever failed to take responsibility for something you caused or contributed to? Why, what happened?
5. How can we address the consequences of our sins and of America's sins?
6. Have you ever moved or acted when God instructed you to wait? What happened?
7. Why is it sometimes easier to make the choice of inaction rather than stepping out on faith?
8. Has God ever used someone or something unexpected to speak to you?