

### **Introduction: Four Lepers (2 Kings 7:3-11)**

Four rag-tag men find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place. They have been ostracized from the city they love and find themselves living the life of lonely outcasts. No, they didn't have COVID, but something far more severe, dreaded, and contagious, i.e., leprosy. Their days are filled with scrounging for food and their nights are left exposed to the wild. It's only a matter of time until this disease eats into, eventually ulcerates, and then rots through, their entire bodies. So, they live on the outside of the city wall of Samaria praying that their deaths would come sooner rather than later. And that sooner might come even sooner than they can imagine.

### **The Syrian Siege**

The mortal enemies, the Syrians have surrounded their city and are months long into the process of "seizing" it. The ancient military strategy of seizing was a drawn-out tactic of cutting off all essential supplies into a city. Nothing gets in and nothing gets out. Eventually, the city's habitants have a choice to make, either surrender or starve. However, the Syrians have created another problem for the lepers (when it rains it pours). To breach the city gate to be saved from the Syrians meant immediate death by stoning. However, to leave the shadow of the city walls meant certain death by the sword of the Syrians. Talk about being impaled on the horns of a dilemma! Have you ever heard the expression, "Darned if you do, darned if you don't?" Well, as it turns out the lepers have some vim, sweat, and pucker. They reason among themselves, "If we are going to die, let's die trying" (2 Kings 7:4). So, at nightfall they venture out and as they approach the Syrian camp they discover, to their greatest surprise, that it has been totally evacuated.

Miraculously, God had caused the Syrians to hear what they thought was a great army advancing to rescue the Samaritans. In their panic they fled, leaving behind, not \$80 billion in weaponry, but enough food and water to feed the entire city AND enough silver and gold to pay off the national debt (lol). The lepers have bumbled, fumbled, and stumbled into an amazing discovery. They had just hit the mega-lottery! Initially, they decide to hoard all this treasure and food for themselves, and who can blame them, "Finders' keepers losers' weepers" right?

### **Salvation Series**

Today we continue our "Salvation" series. We have spent the past few weeks celebrating this "Great" and "Gifted" salvation that is obtained by the "Grace" of Jesus Christ and our "Faith" in him alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). We have also seen that we have been *saved-to* the abundant life now and amazing future in heaven, and we have been *saved-from* an empty life now and a horrible future in hell. How many of you are glad that you have found this amazing salvation in Christ?

### **Moral Obligation**

However, with any great find comes a moral obligation to share it. I would even say that not to share it would not only be a breach of ethics but also a crime. For instance, in 1953 the American virologist,

Jonas Salk, discovered an effective vaccine for polio. Compelled by his incredible find, he could do nothing else but share it with the rest of the world. In so doing, not only was he able to eradicate one of humanity's most frightening diseases, but he also fulfilled his moral obligation. How many are glad he did?

Similarly, Scottish physician, Sir Alexander Fleming discharged his obligation after he discovered penicillin in 1928. Are we glad we no longer need to use leeches to treat our infections?

The same can be said for French biologist and chemist, Louis Pasteur. After painstaking years of research and endless experimentation, he discovered, in 1862, a way to kill deadly microbes and pathogens in liquids such as water, beer, and milk. He did this through a process called pasteurization. Because he shared his amazing discovery with the rest of the world, we can now raise a glass to our lips with confidence we won't catch a bacterium. Can anyone say, "3 Cheers?"

I could go on, but if any of these brilliant men kept their amazing discoveries to themselves, who knows how many more people would have died from simple diseases and how different life would be today?

### **Paul's Obligation**

Saul made an amazing discovery on the Damascus Road when he encountered the resurrected Jesus Christ. It was there that he found Christ as the superior person, power, privilege, and pleasure of all.

This encounter instantaneously transformed Saul into Paul and from Jesus' greatest antagonist to his greatest protagonist, from his strongest detractor to his strongest advocate, and from church destroyer to church builder. Now why did Paul go public with his miraculous conversion? He had everything to lose and nothing to gain. He could have been one of those quiet Christians that don't want to offend anyone or be pushy with their faith. But at great personal price, he was bold and vociferous with his amazing discovery. In 1 Corinthians 9:16, he tells us why:

*Woe, to me if I do not share the gospel.*

The "woe" here literally means, "May I go straight to hell if I don't share the gospel." Paul deeply felt this moral obligation to share the greatest news of all, i.e., what God did through his Son to save hell-bent-sinners and reconcile them back to himself. This was Paul's "salvation obligation," and why the Bible routinely calls us good news spreaders such as witnesses, evangelists, missionaries, and ambassadors.

### **The Four Lepers' Decision**

After a night of rollicking in their new-found treasure and glutting themselves to the full, the four lepers begin to grow a conscience. This prompts a conversation. They look at one another and confess (2Kings 7:9):

*We are not doing right. This is a day of good news, and we are keeping it to ourselves. Let's go at once and report this to Samaria.*

Their amazing discovery made the lepers morally obligated to the city of Samaria. To keep it to themselves would have said in effect:

*You didn't love and value us.  
Therefore, you can all go to hell as far as we're concerned.*

But instead of hoarding all the blessings for themselves they went back and told Samaria of their amazing find. Because they did, they saved the city and went from absolute zeros to legendary heroes. From the humanitarian “Hall of Shame” into the humanitarian “Hall of Fame.” We know who they are millennia later, because of their momentous decision to share their amazing find and not to keep it to themselves.

### **Conclusion**

Bay Pointers, we have made the greatest discovery in Jesus Christ. Let's make sure we enter the Church “Hall of Fame” by sharing with everyone we can what we have found in him.