

REV. CORNELL C. SUDDUTH, SR.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2020

“SHARING THE GOOD NEWS” 2ND KINGS 6:24-25, 7:1-11 (NIV)

THIS MORNING LET US DEAL WITH THREE THINGS FROM THE SCRIPTURE TEXT.

FIRST OF ALL LET US LOOK AT THE CONDITION OF SAMARIA, WHICH AT THAT TIME WAS THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL. BENHADAD, KING OF ARAM OR SYRIA, AND HIS ENTIRE ARMY MARCHED INTO SAMARIA, THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL, AND BESIEGED IT.

BENHADAD, KING OF ARAM OR SYRIA, AND HIS ENTIRE ARMY, MARCHED INTO SAMARIA, AND TOOK CONTROL OF THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL.

SCRIPTURE DOES NOT INDICATE TO US THAT THE ISRAELITES PROVOKED THE SYRIANS TO GO UP AGAINST THEM. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO APPARENT REASON WHY THE SYRIANS DECIDED TO GO UP AGAINST THE ISRAELITES AND PUT THEIR CAPITAL CITY UNDER SIEGE. NEVERTHELESS, BENHADAD AND HIS ENTIRE SYRIAN ARMY MOBILIZED THEMSELVES AND PLACED SAMARIA, ISRAEL'S CAPITAL CITY, UNDER SIEGE. ISN'T THAT THE WAY IT SOMETIMES IN LIFE. WE ARE MINDING OUR OWN BUSINESS, DOING GOD'S WILL TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY, AND OUT OF NOWHERE, SEEMINGLY UNPROVOKED, SATAN AND HIS IMPS, MOBILIZE THEMSELVES AGAINST US AND PUT OUR LIVES UNDER SIEGE.

DOING THE BEST WE CAN TO REMAIN HEALTHY, AND OUT OF NOWHERE, UNPROVOKED, SATAN AND HIS IMPS MOBILIZE THEMSELVES AND PUT OUR HEALTH UNDER SIEGE. DOING THE BEST WE KNOW HOW ON OUR JOBS AND OUT OF NOWHERE, UNPROVOKED, SATAN AND HIS IMPS PUT OUR JOBS UNDER SIEGE.

DOING THE BEST WE KNOW HOW IN OUR FAMILIES, AND OUT OF NOWHERE, UNPROVOKED, SATAN AND HIS IMPS MOBILIZE THEMSELVES AND PUT OUR FAMILIES UNDER SIEGE.

DOING THE BEST WE CAN IN OUR MARRIAGES, AND OUT OF NOWHERE, UNPROVOKED SATAN AND HIS IMPS MOBILIZE THEMSELVES AND PUT OUR MARRIAGES UNDER SIEGE. DOING THE BEST WE CAN IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND

OUT OF NOWHERE, UNPROVOKED, SATAN AND HIS IMPS MOBILIZE THEMSELVES AND PUT OUR RELATIONSHIPS UNDER SEIGE. AND YES, EVEN IN OUR CHUCHES DOING THE BEST WE AN, AND OUT OF NOWHERE, UNPROVOKED, SATAN AND HIS IMPSMOBILIZE THEMSELVES AND PUT OUR CHURCHES AND OUR CHURCH WORK UNDER SEIGE. HOWEVER, WHEN THESE THINGS HAPPEN. DO NOT BE ALARMED BECAUSE AFTER ALL THAT IS SATAN'S JOB. **1ST PETER 5:8 (KJV)**, ENCOURAGES US TO "BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, AS A ROARING LION, WALKETH ABOUT SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR".

JESUS SAID IT BEST RECORDED IN JOHN 10:10 (KJV), "THE THIEF COMETH NOT, BUT FOR TO STEAL, AND TO KILL, AND TO DESTROY; I AM COE THAT THEY MIGHT HJAVE LIFE, AND THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY". ONE CONDITION OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL WAS SAMARIA, THEIR CAPITAL CITY, WAS UNDER SIEGE BY AN ENEMY.

A SECOND CONDITION OF SAMARIA WAS BECAUSE THEY WERE UNDER THIS SSEIGE, THEY WERE EXPERIENCING A FAMINE. BECAUSE THEY WERE UNDER SEIGE, THEY WERE EXPERINCING A FAMINE BECAUSE NO GOODS COULD GET IN THE FAMINE HAD GOTTEN SO BAD THAT EVEN THE FIELDS WITHIN THE CITY WERE UNYEILDING AND UNPRODUCTIVE. I WONDER IS THERE ANYONE IN THE SANCTUARY TO DAY WHO HAS BEEN IN A FAINE OF ANY KIND WHERE IT SEEMED AS IFEVERYTHING AROUND YOU DRIED UP? BECAUSE NO GOODS COULD GET INTO SAMARIA, THINGS THAT USED TO BE INEXPENSIVE AND IN ABUNDANCE, WERE NOW HIGH PRICED AND SCARCE TO BE FOUND. A DONKEY'S HEAD WHICH USED TO BE INEXPENSIVE WAS NOW HIGH PRICED. YOU MIGHT WONDER WHAT THEY USED A DONKEY'S HEAD FOR BUT MAYBE INSTEAD OF EATING HOG HEAD CHEESE THEY ATE DONKEY HED CHEESE. OTHER ITEMS THAT USED TO BE IN ABUNDANCE AND INEXPENSIVE, WERE SCARCE AND COSTLY. NOT ONLY WAS SAMARIA UNDER SEIE BUT IT WAS ALSO EXPERIENCING A HARSH FAMINE. THERE WERE ENEMIES OUTSIDE, AND THERE WAS EMPTINESS INSIDE. AS WE HAVE ALREADY SAID, ON THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN, SATAN WILL ALWAYS BE COMING AGAINST US ATTEMPTING TO PUT US UNDER SIEGE, BUT WHEN HE DOES HE MUST NEVER FIND US EMPTY.

DARE I SUGGEST THAT TODAY'S WEAKENED STATE OF OUR CHURCHES IS NOT BECAUSE SATAN IS ATTACKING THE CHURCH, BUT RATHER BECAUSE THE CHURCH

IS EMPTY OF GOD'S WORD AND CONSEQUENTLY EMPTY OF HIS POWER. LET ME BREAK IT DOWN FOR US.

IT DOES NOT MATTER IF A CHURCH HAS A MILLION DOLLAR BUDGET, IF THE CHURCH IS VOID OF THE WORD OF GOD THEN THAT CHURCH IS VOID OF THE POWER OF GOD. ANY GIVEN CHURCH COULD HAVE CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS HANGING FROM THE CEILING BUT IF THAT CHURCH'S MINISTRY IS NOT HANGING ON THE WORD OF GOD, SAID CHURCH IS JUST HANGING.

THE CONDITION OF SAMARIA, ISRAEL'S CAPITAL CITY, WAS UNDER SIEGE AND IT WAS IN A FAMINE. LASTLY, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST, LET US LOOK AT THE CONDITION OF FOUR MEN. SCRIPTURE TELLS US THEY WERE LEPERS. THE HEBREWS WORD THAT WAS TRANSLATED LEPROSY, WAS ACTUALLY A WORD USED FOR VARIOUS DISEASES AFFECTING THE SKIN. ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THESE FOUR MEN DID NOT HAVE LEPROSY, IN THAT THEY HAD SOME FORM OF SKIN DISEASE, ACCORDING TO LEVITICUS CHAPTER 13 UNTIL SUCH TIME THEY WERE CLEARED BY THE PRIEST, THEY WERE TO BE QUARANTINED. APPARENTLY THEY HAD YET TO BE CLEARED BY THE PRIEST AND WERE LIVING AMONG THEMSELVES UNDER QUARANTINE. THESE FOUR MEN OF SAMARIA, WITH THAT SKIN DISEASE. ALREADY LIVING UNDER QUARANTINE, WERE ALSO NOW LIVING UNDER SIEGE BY THE SYRIANS AND STARVING BY THE FAMINE.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO MISSED THAT, LET ME SAY THAT AGAIN. THESE FOUR MEN, LIVING IN SAMARIA WHO HAD LEPROSY, OR SOME FORM OF SKIN DISEASE, AND WERE ALREADY LIVING UNDER QUARANTINE, TO ADD INSULT TO INJURY WERE ALSO LIVING UNDER SIEGE AND UNDER A FAMINE.

SOMETIMES WHEN IT RAINS IT POURS.

THIS IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH, AND THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT I'M GOING TO MAKE I'M GOING TO USE CODED LANGUAGE AND IF YOU GET IT YOU GET IT AND IF YOU DON'T YOU DON'T, BUT THERE IS A SAYING THAT SAYS, WHEN SOME FOLK SNEEZE OTHER FOLK GET PNEUMONIA. AND IN THE WORDS OF THE LATE REV. TROY COLE, I'M GOING TO LEAVE THAT ONE ALONE. THESE FOUR MEN WITH LEPROSY REASONED AMONG THEMSELVES AND ASKED THE QUESTION, "WHY ARE WE SITTING HERE DOING NOTHING JUST WAITING TO DIE". THEY DECODED TO GO TO THE CAMP OF THE SYRIANS AND PLEAD FOR MERCY, THEY FIGURED IF THE SYRIANS KILLED THEM THEY WERE GOING TO DIE ANYWAY, BUT IF THEY

SPARED THEIR LIVES, THEN THEY WOULD LIVE. IF I WERE TO GIVE THIS SERMON A SUB TOPIC IT WOULD BE 'NOTHING TO LOOSE, BUT EVERYTHING TO GAIN'.

OR WHAT ABOUT THIS AS ANOTHER SUB TOPIC, 'NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED'. **LAMENTATIONS 4:9 (NIV)** READS "THOSE KILLED BY THE SWORD ARE BETTER OFF THAN THOSE WHO DIE OF FAMINE. RACKED WITH HUNGER THEY WASTE AWAY FOR LACK OF FOOD FROM THE FIELD". AT TWILIGHT THESE FOUR LEPERS, WENT INTO THE SYRIAN CAMP.

ISN'T IT INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THESE FOUR LEPERS CHOSE TO GO INTO THE CAMP OF THE SYRIANS AT TWILIGHT? YOU SEE, TWILIGHT HAPPENS TWICE IN ONE DAY. ON THE ONE HAND, TWILIGHT COMES AT THE SETTING OF THE SUN, AS NIGHT BEGINS TO FALL. AT THE EDGE OF NIGHT THESE FOUR SKIN DISEASED MEN WENT INTO THE SYRIAN CAMP. I WONDER HOW MANY OF US HAVE BEEN AT THE EDGE OF NIGHT.

THE EDGE OF NIGHT WHEN IT SEEMED LIKE DARKNESS WAS ABOUT TO COMPLETELY COVER THAT SITUATION YOU WERE DEALING WITH, OR MAYBE MORE CORRECTLY, THAT SITUATION THAT WAS DEALING WITH YOU. I WONDER HOW MANY OF US HAVE BEEN AT THE EDGE OF NIGHT WHERE IT SEEMED AS IF THERE WAS NO HOPE. I WONDER HOW MANY OF US HAVE BEEN AT THE EDGE OF NIGHT WHERE IT SEEMED AS IF DEFEAT WOULD BE SURE AND SWIFT. I WONDER HOW MANY OF US HAVE BEEN AT THE EDGE OF NIGHT WHERE IT SEEMED AS IF OUR BURDENS WOULD CRUSH US INTO GRANULES OF SAND. AT TWILIGHT, AT THE EDGE OF NIGHT, THESE FOUR LEPERS WENT INTO THE ENEMY CAMP TO PLEAD FOR MERCY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, MAYBE IT WAS THE OTHER TWILIGHT THAT THESE FOUR LEPERS DECIDED TO GO INTO THE SYRIAN CAMP. THE SECOND TWILIGHT IS RIGHT BEFORE THE SETTING OF THE SUN. THE SECOND TWILIGHT IS RIGHT BEFORE DAWN. THIS SECOND TWILIGHT IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT TO US BECAUSE IT IS SAID THAT THE DARKEST HOUR IS RIGHT BEFORE DAWN. THE DARKEST HOUR IS RIGHT BEFORE TWILIGHT. I WONDER HOW MANY OF US WHO BECAUSE OF THE DARKNESS THAT SURROUNDED US ALMOST THREW IN THE TOWEL, BUT SOMETHING, OR SHOULD I SAY SOMEONE, KEPT TELLING US TO HOLD ON AND HOLD OUT! I WONDER HOW MANY OF US, BECAUSE OF THE OVERWHELMING DARKNESS THAT ENGULFED US, ALMOST GAVE IN AND GAVE UP, BUT A STILL

SMALL VOICE KEPT SAYING TO US, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU".

THE SONGWRITER SAID IT THIS WAY, "I ALMOST LET GO, I FELT LIKE I JUST COULDN'T TAKE LIFE ANYMORE, MY PROBLEMS HAD ME BOUND, DEPRESSION WEIGHED ME DOWN, BUT GOD HELD ME CLOSE SO I WOULDN'T LET GO, GOD'S MERCY KEPT ME SO I WOULDN'T LET GO". **PSALM 30:5B REMINDS US**, "WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMES IN THE MORNING".

AT THE EDGE OF THE BREAKING OF THE DAY, THESE FOUR LEPERS WENT INTO THE SYRIAN CAMP. AT THE SAME EDGE OF NIGHT, OVER IN THE SYRIAN CAMP, GOD WAS WORKING IT OUT FOR THEM. AREN'T YOU GLAD THAT AT OUR EDGE OF NIGHT GOD IS WORKING IT OUT FOR US? AT THE SAME BREAKING OF THE DAY, GOD CAUSED THE SYRIANS TO HEAR THE SOUND OF A GREAT ARMY, AND THEY CONCLUDED THE ISRAELITES SUMMONED THE HELP OF OTHERS AND WERE COMING IN MASSIVE NUMBERS TO DESTROY THEM. THEIR FEAR LED THEM TO ABANDON THEIR CAMP, LEAVING EVERYTHING BEHIND.

WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ARRIVED IN THE CAMP OF THE SYRIANS, THEY FOUND EVERYONE GONE, BUT EVERYTHING THERE. WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ENTERED THE DESERTED CAMP, THEY FOUND PLENTY OF FOOD TO EAT. WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ENTERED INTO THE DESERTED CAMP THERE WAS PLENTY TO DRINK. WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ENTERED INTO THE DESERTED CAMP THEY FOUND CLOTHES, SILVER AND GOLD. THERE WAS SO MUCH IN THE DESERTED CAMP THEY BEGAN TAKING ITEMS OUT OF THE CAMP AND HIDING THEM OUTSIDE THE CAMP. THEY RETURNED A SECOND TIME, TAKING ITEMS OUT OF THE CAMP AND HIDING THEM OUTSIDE THE CAMP. THEN IT OCCURRED TO THEM THEY WERE NOT DOING RIGHT BECAUSE IT WAS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS AND IF THEY WAITED UNTIL MORNING TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS THEN SOMETHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM. SO THEY WENT TO SAMARIA AND STOOD OUTSIDE THE CITY GATE, AND SHOUTED THE GOOD NEWS TO THE GATEKEEPERS.

WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ARRIVED IN THE CAMP OF THE SYRIANS, THEY FOUND EVERYONE GONE, BUT EVERYTHING THERE.

WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ENTERED THE DESERTED CAMP, THEY FOUND PLENTY OF FOOD TO EAT.

WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ENTERED INTO THE DESERTED CAMP THERE WAS PLENTY TO DRINK.

WHEN THE FOUR LEPERS ENTERED INTO THE DESERTED CAMP THEY FOUND CLOTHES, SILVER AND GOLD.

THERE WAS SO MUCH IN THE DESERTED CAMP THEY BEGAN TAKING ITEMS OUT OF THE CAMP AND HIDING THEM OUTSIDE THE CAMP.

THEY RETURNED A SECOND TIME TAKING ITEMS OUT OF THE CAMP AND HIDING THEM OUTSIDE THE CAMP.

THEN IT OCCURRED TO THEM THEY WERE NOT DOING RIGHT BECAUSE IT WAS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS AND IF THEY WAITED UNTIL MORNING TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS, THEN SOMETHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM. SO THEY WENT TO SAMARIA AND STOOD OUTSIDE THE CITY GATE, AND SHOUTED THE GOOD NEWS TO THE GATEKEEPERS.

THE GATEKEEPER THEN SHOUTED THE NEWS TO THOSE IN THE CITY. THE REPORT REACHED THE KING, WHO THOUGHT IT WAS A TRAP, BUT AFTER HAVING SOME OF HIS MEN CHECK IT OUT, HE FOUND THE REPORT FROM THE FIVE LEPERS TO BE TRUE. IT WAS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS AND IT BECAME THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH OTHERS.

AS THE LORD WOULD HAVE IT, TODAY I HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS AND IT IS INCUMBENT UPON ME TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS, BECAUSE IF I DON'T SOMETHING BAD MIGHT HAPPEN TO ME. I'M REMINDED OF WHEN JESUS SAID, RECORDED **IN LUKE CHAPTER NINE VERSE TWENTY-SIX FROM THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION**, "IF ANYONE IS ASHAMED OF ME AND MY WORDS, THE SON OF MAN WILL BE ASHAMED OF HIM WHEN HE COMES IN HIS GLORY AND IN THE GLORY OF THE FATHER AND OF HIS HOLY ANGELS".

IT IS MY DUTY TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF THE SAVING GRACE OF JESUS THE CHRIST.