

So that Everybody Can Eat

Matthew 22:9

Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.

Illustration

5th Grade School Patrol

So excited because I go posted at one of the intersections that was really far away from the school. First of all, instead of getting out of class 10 minutes early like the rest of the school patrols I got to get out of class an additional 10 minutes ahead of them. So I'm getting out of class 20 minutes early. Go to the bicycle cage, unlock my Schwinn bicycle and head out to my post at the intersection of Heidi and Heath Rd.

Towards the end of my shift. We're about to wave our flags or the "Official Flag Off" and head back to Ft. Caroline Elementary School headquarters for reports and debriefing. Up walks a girl. I knew her. Had seen her in the hallway. She was kinda cute but I was on duty and would not let the youthful beauty of this 5th grade girl distract me from my sworn duty "to serve and protect".

Held my flag in my hand. If I held it back then everyone was supposed to stop on the sidewalk behind me. If I extended the scepter of power then they could safely and legally cross the road.

So I held my staff of authority by my side indicating to all they were to stop until the orders were given.

I look at her, she looks at me, we make eye contact, once again I suppressed my feelings of awe and wonder at her 10-year-old beauty and in that brief moment of time something happened. She bolted. She crossed illegally - Breaking the law!!!

I did what every 5th grade school patrol would have done. I threw down my flag, grabbed my Schwinn bicycle and began a hot pursuit... I never lost visual contact with the defendant.

First house, second house, third house, I started gaining ground. Now I'm closing in on the suspect. White female, approx. 5' 4", skinny build, long dark black hair wearing shorts, sneakers and a light colored top. Last seen at the intersection of Heidi and Heath road fleeing the scene of the crime on her bicycle.

By the fourth house I caught up with her. She ditches her bike and flees on foot in between two houses. I jump from my 21-inch Schwinn patrol car and initiated pursuit on foot.

She reaches a fence and realizes she has nowhere else to run from the LAW and drops to the ground. I immediately run up on her, reach to the back pocket of my white cotton/ poly blend school patrol pants and grab my "Written Statement Journal" and No 2 pencil and stand victoriously over the apprehended suspect.

She turns to me and says, "So I guess you're going to report me now aren't you"

I said you better believe it. Give me your name and homeroom teacher.

I am definitely going to report you! Do NOT QUESTION MY AUTHORITY! 😊

I acted on my authority.

2 Kings 7:1-2

¹ Elisha replied, "Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria."

² The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?"

"You will see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha, "but you will not eat any of it!"

Transition

I. Faith moves the hand of God.

A. Unpack text

1. Explain the situation.
2. God's people were in the cycle of **rebellion**, **punishment** and **pain**, **repentance**, God's **forgiveness** and **renewal**, **stagnation** and then **rebellion** once again.
3. This cycle of madness was repeated **over** and **over** and **over**.
4. Now they were in the process of punishment and pain.
5. They had rebelled and were eating the fruit of their disobedience.
6. The city was now surrounded by their enemies, all supplies had been cut off.
7. The Arameans were camped outside of the city walls just waiting for the Israelites to die off or surrender so they could take the city.
 - a. Things had gotten so bad that some of the people had resorted to **cannibalism**.
 - b. They were starving to death.
 - c. Desperate had already come and gone.
 - d. This was next level stuff.

The king blames Elisha for the siege, perhaps reasoning that Syria still wants to eliminate the prophet. Ironically, the king seems to forget how Elisha protected Israel from the Syrians in those instances. He is now acting toward Elisha the way Ahab acted toward Elijah (cf. 1 Kgs 18:1–15). He considers his chief asset a liability, his best friend an enemy, and swears to have the prophet killed.

Meanwhile, Elisha sits in his home, speaking with the city's leaders. Gray thinks the leaders' presence in Elisha's home indicates their opposition to the king, but Hobbs probably is right to infer rather that these men held Elisha in high regard. Elisha instructs the visitors to lock the door to bar the king's assassin, but the man arrives too quickly. Once in Elisha's presence, however, the messenger does nothing. The author concludes this portion of the episode by noting the king now believes that the Lord has caused their problems, so there is no need to allow the Lord's prophet to live. Why not simply kill Elisha or turn him over to the Syrians and hope the enemy will leave?

8. The King gets so mad he pursues Elisha.
9. Now he demands some answers from the prophet.

B. Interesting that even the King

“This disaster is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?”

In other words... This mess is God's fault and since your God's man we don't need you any more so let's go kill Elisha. For some reason when the messenger gets to Elisha's house he doesn't follow through with the violence.

2 Kings 7:1

¹ Elisha replied, “Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.”

C. In other words things are about to turn around.

1. It might look like there is no way out.
2. You are out of options.
3. You are in a lose / lose situation --- but God is about to do something that you have never seen before.
4. Little did they know the answer was on the way.
5. God's help was on the way.

D. The messenger does not believe him.

“Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?”
 “You will see it with your own eyes,” answered Elisha, “but you will not eat any of it!”

1. Elijah says fine, It will happen, you will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it.
2. In other words – It will happen, but you won’t benefit from it.
3. It will happen for other people but since you lack faith it won’t happen for you.
4. Faith unlocks the door.

E. Faith is the commodity of heaven.

1. Faith is what moves the hand of God.
2. God responds to faithful obedience.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

- F. His lack of faith in the word of the Lord caused him to miss what God was doing.
1. He had gotten **so bitter** and **so cynical** and **so jaded** and so **blinded by his current circumstances** that when help was on the way he would not believe it.
 2. Elisha had a provable track record.

First, he doubted the power of God.

- If God willed it, He certainly could **make windows in heaven** and drop down food from the sky for the hungry, besieged city of Samaria.

Second, he doubted the creativity of God.

- In the mind of the king’s officer, the way food could come to the city was from above, because the city was surrounded by a hostile, besieging army.
- He had no idea that God could bring provision in a completely unexpected way. “How often faith breaks down in this way!
- It knows that God is, and that He can act. But it only sees one way, and refuses to believe that such a way will be taken.
- The supply came without the opening of heaven’s windows.” (Morgan)

Third, he doubted the messenger of God.

- Though the promise was admittedly hard to believe, the king's officer could have and should have believed it because it came from a man with an established track record of reliability.
- Unbelief questions the truthfulness of God's promise itself.
- Unbelief says, "This is a **new thing** and cannot be true.
- Unbelief says, "This is a **sudden thing** and cannot be true."
- Unbelief says, "There is **no way** to accomplish this thing."
- Unbelief says, "There is **only one way** God can work."
- Unbelief says, "Even if God does something, **it won't be enough.**"

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

- From this particular passage we see that the central feature of faith is confidence or trust.
- In the Bible, the object of faith is God and his promises.
- A clear example of this is Abram's encounter with God in Genesis 15.
- In response to God's promise of countless descendants, Abram "believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." (Gen 15:6).
- Commenting on this, the Apostle Paul writes, "No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised." (Rom 4:20-21).

So faith means putting your trust in God and having confidence that he will fulfill his promises.

Application

- It's time to use our faith.
- It's time to step out in faith.
- It's time to put our faith in action.

II. God uses desperate people.

2 Kings 7:3-4

³ Now there were four men with leprosy at the entrance of the city gate. They said to each other, "Why stay here until we die? ⁴ If we say, 'We'll go into the city'—the famine is there, and we will die. And if we stay here, we will die. So let's go over to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, then we die."

A. Unpack Text

1. Outside of the city gates are four men.
2. Bible tells us they have leprosy.
3. They couldn't even go inside because they were contagious.
4. Things were really bad on the inside – on the outside things were much worse.
5. These guys are probably only a few days away from starvation.
6. They start thinking.
7. If we stay here were gonna die.
8. If we go into the city the famine is still there and were gonna die.
9. If we go over to the camp of the Arameans they just might kill us **but... they might not.**
10. Out of the three options boys there is **only one** with a **potential favorable outcome.**
11. So they left the leper colony and shuffled their way down the road to where the Aramean army had set up camp.

B. Some of you may find yourself in a rut.

1. If you keep doing the same thing you will continue to get the same results.
2. If you keep thinking lifeless thoughts you will breed lifelessness.
3. If you keep allowing yourself to run in the same circle again and again expecting the same results you are going to be greatly disappointed.

2 Kings 7:5-7

⁵At dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. When they reached the edge of the camp, no one was there, ⁶for the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!" ⁷So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives.

Illustration

They did not know what God had already done for them.

So they went to bed in their ignorance.

It was their ignorance that kept them in despair.

Had they just known that night would have been different.

Application

- There are many in this area who went to bed last night in despair because they did not know what God has already done for them.
- They don't know of his mercy.

- They don't know of his joy.
- They don't know of his hope.
- They don't know of his life.
- They don't know so they remain in despair. Grabbing at straws of happiness.
- We have an opportunity this year to do something about that.

Theme is everybody.

1. Everybody worship.
2. Everybody study and pray.
3. Everybody give.
4. Everybody serve.
5. Everybody go.

Illustration

- So far this year we have given through missions, benevolence, community outreach over
- **Missions, benevolence, community and Big Day Food Outreaches**
\$102,000.
- In addition to that weekly we have given away thousands upon thousands of pounds of food.
- **Meat and Dairy – 18,426 pounds = \$92,130**
- **Bakery – 2,737 pounds**
- **Produce – 4,416 pounds**
- **Dry goods – 15,979 pounds**
- **Chemical (Soaps, disinfectants, cleaning supplies, lotions) – 1,226 pounds**
- 42,784 = 21.4 tons
- If you say 1 pound of meat is \$5.00
- If you say bakery, produce, dry goods and chemical is \$2.00 pound that (\$92,130 + \$48,716 =
- Weekly food giving
\$140,846
- Total
\$242,846
- Round down to \$125,000 + \$102,000 = \$227,000
- Year to date tithe and offering giving
\$438,585

- So our giving back to the community and the world is over 50% of what came in through our regular undesignated tithe and offerings.
- **So much for all the church wants is your money.**

2 kings 7:8-11

⁸The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp, entered one of the tents and ate and drank. Then they took silver, gold and clothes, and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also.

⁹Then they said to each other, “What we’re doing is not right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let’s go at once and report this to the royal palace.”

¹⁰So they went and called out to the city gatekeepers and told them, “We went into the Aramean camp and no one was there—not a sound of anyone—only tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents left just as they were.” ¹¹The gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported within the palace.

C. They enjoyed the blessings of God.

1. Unpack

D. They decided they couldn’t keep it all for themselves – they had to share.

1. Unpack.

Illustration

- Financial Situation of the church.
 - Good news and bad news.
 - Good news is that giving is up from this time last year.
 - Bad news is that inflation has outpaced the giving.
 - In short we are currently at about a \$35,000 deficit.
 - In addition to that we recently were given the unfortunate news that two of our rooftop HVAC units were condemned due to the hazardous conditions of the gas heating portion.
 - Last Friday we had two new units put on the roof. \$44,000
 - We were surprised by this and it was not in the budget so the church has to borrow the money.
 - The deficit combined with the two new rooftop units is \$79,000.
 - I spent three days praying and fasting and here is what I heard.
1. Cut back where you can.
 2. Do not back down on the vision to reach people.

- a. The last 4 months at LifeChurch have produced more fruit than the previous 2 ½ years.
 - b. This year we have seen over 40 say yes to Jesus.
 - c. 19 or 20 people water baptized.
 - d. We have grown in attendance.
 - e. We have grown in church membership
 - f. Enough food has come through our hands to provide over 40,000 meals to this community.
3. Trust me for the provision.
 4. Step out in faith.
 - a. Cast the vision to raise an additional \$100,000 for the Next Generation.
 - b. \$100,00
 1. Pays off the HVAC units saving us money on interest and allowing us to focus on reach the next generation.
 2. Strengthens the church financially so we are not operating in a deficit.
 3. Gives us resources to be able to keep moving forward quicker and more aggressively to reach the next generation.

Illustration

- Lack of faith is like leaning on a shovel and asking God for a hole.
 - c. Scrap Metal money.
 - d. Plaque from 2018.
 - e. March and pray.

God gave instructions to Israelites about how to walk into the promise land. He told them what to do, when to do it and how to do it.

I am stepping out in faith in acts of obedience.

I do not believe it is the will of God for his church to be **in lack**.

I do not believe it is the will of God for his church to be **harnessed**.

I believe it is the will of God for his people to be **overcomers** and for his church to **grow and prosper**.

I believe it is the will of God for his church to be **successful**.

God is doing something significant and now is the time to strike the ground.

III. God will accomplish his word!

Isaiah 55:11

¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Matthew 16:18-19

¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”