

A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS

In the days of Elisha, the people of God were experiencing a great dearth. Much of their trouble stemmed from the fact that the Syrian army had encompassed Samaria and had cut off supplies from entering the city. God's people had resorted to paying great sums of money for a donkey's head (2 Kin.6:25). In the midst of famine, Elisha prophesied that the people would soon be able to buy provisions and feast (2 Kin.7:1). One of king Jehoram's lords could not imagine how this could be done, even if God opened the windows of heaven (vs.2), to which Elisha replied that this man would see it come to pass, but would not eat of the bounty because of his unbelief. In the night, God had caused the Syrian army to flee (vs.6). Four lepers had determined that death was certain if they stayed outside the city, or if they entered into Samaria, so they chose to throw themselves on the mercy of the Syrians (vv.3-5). When they arrived, they found the Syrian camp abandoned, and all of their provisions left behind. Having stumbled upon this bounty, the lepers could have lived by the philosophy of "to the victor goes the spoils." Instead, notice their reaction: "Then said they one to another, 'We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household'" (2 Kin.7:9).

Here were four lepers, who no doubt had been mistreated and stigmatized, especially during the time of the famine. Most likely the inhabitants of Samaria did not care to see to the needs of these four during times of plenty, much less during times of hardship. It must have been very tempting for them to hoard this new-found treasure for themselves, refusing to share it with those who likely had tuned out these four poor souls. Yet, these realized that holding their peace would bring God's wrath upon them. They knew that the right thing to do was to share this abundance with others.

Christians are in a similar position as these four lepers. We have been blessed with the treasure of the Gospel (see Matt.13:44-46), and have been granted the bounty of every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus (Eph.1:3). How dare we sit back and hold our peace, when so many others are experiencing a famine of God's word and provisions in their lives? Such silence will certainly bring upon us the wrath of God, for we have been commissioned to tell others the good news (Mark 16:15; Matt.28:19; 2 Cor.4:3). Christians should certainly desire that others come to know and enjoy the blessings of being in the Father's house, the church (1 Tim.3:15). Every day that we live upon this earth can and should be a day of good tidings, knowing that we have the opportunity to teach others the truth of God's word. Perhaps such a story as that of the lepers helps us better understand what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 5:14: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." As we reflect upon all of the blessings and benefits we enjoy through the blood of Jesus Christ, it compels us to tell others

so that they might come to know him and obey him. As they song asks, “Will you not tell it today?”

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