

From Famine to Fullness

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Evangelism: The God Who Seeks and Saves Series

2 Kings 6:24-7:20

One of the most horrible things a person can ever read about or ever see is the effects of a famine upon a nation. A couple of years ago the eyes of the world were focused on North Korea, which had suffered ten years of chronic food shortages after the Soviet Union collapsed back in 1991 and it stopped sending food and other economic aid. Then North Korea suffered a series of natural disasters – floods and drought and terrible winters. But because of the pride of the terribly repressive dictatorship, the North Korean government for five years refused to admit that there was a terrible shortage of food and that millions of North Koreans were starving. By the time the North Korean government was willing to admit, in the year 2000, that its great communist experiment was failing, its estimated that 2 million North Koreans died. Another 5 million were severely malnourished.

The public food distribution in North Korea was sending out about 350 calories of food per day per person. That's the rough equivalent of 1 slice of pepperoni pizza from Pizza Hut, or 1 sesame bagel, or ½ cup of Ben and Jerry's Chubby Hubby ice cream, or 4 tablespoons of peanut butter, or 1 bean burrito from Taco Bell, or 1 light turkey sandwich from Grinders, or a medium vanilla ice cream cone from Dairy Queen. People in the countryside were reduced to trying to live on some mix of ground up twigs, tree bark, and leaves. They pressed this into a kind of noodle, but it had almost no nutritional value and it caused internal bleeding and dysentery. Many of the school children dropped out of school because they were too weak to study. They and their parents were collecting seaweed, or climbing up in the mountains to find edible grasses to eat.

It is hard to believe in obese America that famine has been a constant in the history of our world. After the surrender of Germany at the end of WWII, much of Europe was reduced to a point of starvation. Millions and millions of Europeans were left as refugees. Their homes were destroyed. All of their farm animals were killed. The fields hadn't been planted in years. How many of you are old enough to remember your mother or father saying to you, "You need to finish your dinner because there are millions of children in Europe who are starving."

In our lifetime we have seen famines in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda. Today we are going to take a look at a terrible famine that devastated the nation of Israel back in the Old Testament. We're also going to look at how God intervened, miraculously ending the famine. As we get ready as a church to

enjoy a series of Fall Festival activities this next week (I'll be talking about it in just a moment), I want to share with you a message from 2 Kings 6 and 7, a message I've titled, "From Famine to Fullness." Let's pray.

2 Kings 6:24-29 Some time later, Ben-Hadad king of Aram mobilized his entire army and marched up and laid siege to Samaria. There was a great famine in the city; the siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a fourth of a cab of seed pods for five shekels. As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him, "Help me, my lord the king." The king replied, "if the Lord does not help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor? From the winepress? Then he asked her, "What's the matter?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we'll eat my son.' So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son so we may eat him,' but she had hidden him."

Let me give you the context for this horrific story. At the time that this story takes place, the nation of Israel was split in two, very much like America was split in two at the time of the Civil War. The northern kingdom, containing ten of the twelve original tribes of Israel, was called Israel and had its capitol in the city of Samaria. The southern kingdom, containing only two of the original twelve tribes, was called Judah, and its capitol was in Jerusalem.

So the nation of Israel was split in two and the northern half of this nation was attacked by a coalition of forces led by the Syrian king Ben-Hadad. Now, you need to understand that in the ancient world cities, especially key cities, were protected by high walls. So when an enemy army swept into a country the local population and its army would run into the city, close the city gates, and they were safe behind these high city walls.

So what the enemy army would do was surround the city walls and lay siege to the city. And that's what you read in v. 24, *Some time later, Ben-Hadad king of Aram mobilized his entire army and marched up and lay siege to Samaria.* When an army laid siege to a city, they wouldn't permit anyone in the city to leave, they wouldn't permit anyone to enter, there were no food shipments into the city. The tactic was designed to starve the local population into submission.

And that's what happened. We read *There was a great famine in the city; the siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a fourth of a cab of seed pods for five shekels.*

If you read back in Jewish law found in the Torah, you would discover that eating of donkeys was forbidden to the Jewish people. But their fate had sunk to such a low level that they were now not only willing to eat what was forbidden, but also they were willing to eat the most disgusting part of the donkey, the donkey's head. Just as after WWII, if you read history, you discover that many refugees

were reduced to eating stray cats and dogs, and even mice and rats. It is simply not uncommon in history for people to be reduced to eating things they never thought they would eat just to stay alive.

And so we see that food prices have skyrocketed even for the most disgusting things. And the people's situation becomes so desperate that the nation reaches the lowest point that humanity can reach. They actually begin to engage in cannibalism. We read in v. 26, *As the King of Israel was passing on the wall, a woman cried to him, "Help me, my lord the king." The king replied, "If the Lord does not help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor? From the winepress?* In other words, "I can't come up with food for you. There is no grain at the threshing floor. There are no grapes at the winepress. What can I do? Even though I am a king, I can't end the famine. I'm a mere mortal man."

Then he asked her, "What's the matter?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we'll eat my son.' So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son so we may eat him,' but she had hidden him."

There are few stories in the whole of the Bible that are more inhumane than this little incident in 2 Kings. We read of a woman eating the corpse of her dead son. And the complaint is not that her situation was so desperate. She was forced to eat the corpse of her dead son. Her complaint is that she had been deceived and the other woman didn't share her son. The people's condition had become so miserable that this woman engages in the most unnatural of acts, doesn't mourn for her son, and complains only that another woman doesn't share with her.

You know, one of the most horrible facts of history is that the awful incident recorded here doesn't stand alone. At least two other times, just in the history of the nation of Israel, we read about the nation being reduced to cannibalism. During the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem 200 years later, the same horrible things happened. We read about them in the book following Jeremiah titled Lamentations. It was also called in history, "Wailings." It concerned the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem and the terrible events that occurred about 600 years before the time of Christ.

Jerusalem was lay siege to once again by the Romans in the year 70 AD. Jesus prophesied about the dark days that would occur when Jerusalem was besieged in Matthew 24 when he said that there would be great distress unequalled from the time of the world till now and never to be equaled again.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, wrote about the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans and the conditions in the city. He said that the hunger of the Jews in Jerusalem was so intolerable that it obliged them to chew everything, including leather sandals, and the leather belonging to their shields. They pried it off and

gnawed. The Jews were eating wisps of old hay. More than 600,000 Jewish bodies were thrown dead over the wall. Finally, in a passage too terrible to read, Josephus describes scenes of cannibalism that took place before the Romans finally broke in and burned the city of Jerusalem to the ground.

The people were so miserable. They were so hopeless that they found themselves eating things that they thought they could never eat and doing things they thought they would never do.

Friend, let me ask you a question. Have you ever been so desperately unhappy, so utterly miserable in your life or situation that you did something you thought you would never do? That perhaps for years you criticized other people for doing? That because of some long-term siege that laid to your life, you got so hard that you didn't care anymore about common decency or basic Christian morals? Have you ever been so miserable that you did what you never thought you would be willing to do? If we don't turn to Christ in the midst of severe crisis our morals almost always will degenerate.

Now, why all this horror? Why did God allow the city of Samaria, and later on in history the city of Jerusalem to be laid siege to twice? All the suffering, famine, and starvation?

Well, God threatened all these things against his people, if they violated their covenant with him by worshipping and serving other gods and repeatedly disobeying the commandments of God. People say today, "What difference does it make, if the bulk of people in America worship the Lord or we worship some other gods or we just worship our bodies and nude images of ourselves? What difference does it make?" "What difference does it make of what we give our hearts to and our bodies and minds to?"

People ask today "Does it make any difference at all if I obey the Lord, follow his commands, or if I just do my own thing? Why shouldn't I just please myself and say yes to all that I want rather than no?"

In the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 28, after God announces through his servant Moses a 6-fold blessing that will come to the nation, if they were obedient to the Lord, we read of a 6-fold curse that will come upon the nation for disobedience. Part of the curse was that an enemy nation would lay siege to Israel. V. 52, *They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high-fortified walls you trust in fall down. They will besiege all the cities throughout the land your Lord your God is giving you. Because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters the Lord your God has given you.* And it goes on to describe terrible scenes of cannibalism that will occur. It is part of the curse of the covenant.

Now, it is important to be clear that America is not God's covenant people. The passages we are reading here do not directly apply to our national life today. But it is not hard to see in so many areas of our national life that our country is experiencing a curse for our radical disobedience to the Lord. A curse on our security and safety. A curse on our economy. A curse of different terrible diseases both physical and emotional. A rise of occult activity. A curse on our families. A curse of natural disasters. Disobedience to God brings a curse. Everything is cursed – our bodies, our minds, our government, our relationships.

This is what was going on in Israel in 800 BC in the story that we are reading about. And in many ways, this is what is going on in our world today.

And so it is in this context of a people cursed that we read the good news of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to remove the curse, to break the curse, to release people from the curse for everyone who trusts in him. This is what the apostle Paul is talking about in Galatians 3:13, where he says, *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us*. Christ has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. Free ourselves from the curse that rests on us because of our continual disobedience to God. The good news of the gospel is that the curse that rested on us has been transferred to him. When Christ hung on a cross, he didn't die for his own sins. Paul writes, in Galatians 3:13, *He became a curse for us*.

The Bible lays out two roads for people, the road of cursing and the road of blessing. Those who refuse to trust in Christ, to submit their lives to Christ and his rulership, those who refuse to surrender themselves to Christ completely or in some areas of their lives are going to experience a curse either over their whole life or in those areas of life where they live out of submission and out of obedience to Christ. Those who trust in Christ and yield fully to Christ, experience for themselves the release from the curse, freedom from the curse, a breaking of the curse and a giving of blessing.

And it is the good news of blessing that the prophet Elisha promises to a besieged nation in 2 Kings 7:1. Here's what we read, *Elisha said, "Hear the word of the Lord. This is what the Lord says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria."* Food prices will return to normal because food will be abundantly provided for you in 24 hours.

Now, this is one of the most extraordinary prophecies in the entire Old Testament. In one day, the folks had been reduced to starvation and cannibalism, in one day, 24 hours, there will be no more famine, no more starvation, we'll all be eating and drinking. Food prices will return to normal levels. What an amazing promise. From utter starvation for an entire city, complete normalcy in one day.

Now the response of the officer in v. 2 is a classic statement of disbelief. V. 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."*

This officer was saying to the prophet of God, "What you are announcing, this great message that you are telling the people right now, is too good to be true." In other words, "No way. I hear what you are saying, but it just can't happen. It's just too good to be true."

You know, we all find ourselves in the position of the officer as it pertains to one or another promise made by God to us. No way. I know this promise is coming through a prophet or an apostle in the Bible, or Jesus himself, but no way. It's just too good to be true.

I wonder which of God's promises in the Bible causes you to say the same thing as the officer did. I'm sorry, I'd like to believe that; I used to believe that; but it's just too good to be true.

What about the simple promise found in 1 John 1:8 that says, *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* How many of you stumble right at the first step of believing the gospel? That no matter how many times you've heard it, you still find it impossible to believe that you could be entirely forgiven for what you have done. Or for what you've failed to do. Many of us, if we were honest, would say, "I've heard [maybe from the time you were little] the gospel message, the good news, that God will forgive my sins and transfer my guilt onto his Son Jesus and that is the meaning of the cross. I understand that God's judgment is the only one that counts and that God is willing to declare me innocent on the basis of what Christ has done. That trusting in Christ plus nothing will allow me to receive forgiveness. But I simply find it impossible to believe that it's that easy. It's just too easy. It's just too good to be true. There's got to be something I must do to pay for my sin."

How many of you live in that kind of state of continual guilt and anxiety over sins you have confessed? How many of you refuse to simply accept the promise of forgiveness offered to you in the gospel? That you feel that you must add to the precious blood of Jesus Christ your own penance, your own kicking yourself around, your own inner vows, your own religious activity and neurotic promises.

Talk with a person who was raised with lots of religion. Talk with a person who was raised in a very legalistic church where they learned from the time they were small that basically Christianity is all about your external behaviors. You know, shaping yourself up so that you make yourself acceptable to God? That you make sure you always appear to be doing well. That Christianity is basically

having the right appearance, pretending that everything in your life and in your family is going perfectly. That you are supposed to smile when you are hurting. Talk with a person, as I have hundreds of times, who basically has been trained in the mindset that Christianity is all about external behavior, performance, pretense, and what we look like to each other. Try to convince that person that all they really need to do is just trust Christ and keep on trusting Christ. Tell the person who has been raised with all the trappings of religion that you can enjoy God's love for you, you can enjoy intimacy with God, you can get freed up from your performance based life and all the pretense and all the living based on appearance to other people. And what you will hear back, as I have heard literally dozens and dozens of times, "Yes, I hear what you are saying, but it just seems so good to be true."

What promise of God do you regularly disbelieve in your life? Maybe you are a person who has a very difficult marriage. Your marriage has been in crisis for a long time. God makes you a promise that two people who really submit to his plan for marriage can enjoy a life-giving marriage despite the damage from the past. I know many of you would say you just don't believe having a life-giving marriage is possible for you at this point in your life. You don't believe you or your spouse can change or your feelings can change even with God's help. Or that reconciliation is possible for you. It's just too good to be true.

Do you understand that the good news of the gospel touches every realm of life? Most of us don't believe the promises of God. Jesus says that in coming to him we will know the truth and the truth will set us free. Do you believe, friend, that Christ can set you free from everything you are currently trapped in?

I want to speak personally to some of you. The promise of Jesus Christ is that Christ can set you free from your homosexuality. He's done it for many others in this congregation. He can do it for you. Christ can set you free from your addiction to pornography. He's done it for many others in this congregation. He can do it for you. Christ can set you free from your anxiety attacks. He's done it for many others; he can do it for you. Christ can set you free from eating disorders and bingeing and purging and anorexia. He's done it for others in this congregation; he can do it for you.

Friends, has God made you any promises by the Holy Spirit, or in his written word, that you have continually said to God, "It's just too good to be true." Perhaps you've been the recipient of several prophecies regarding the return of one of your children to the faith. God has spoken to you by his Holy Spirit. I want to encourage you today, believe the promise of God! Has God spoken to your heart and said that you could be a good mother, or a good father despite the absence of role models growing up? Believe the promise of God.

I have observed that people who have experienced a severe famine in their lives, a famine of love, a famine of relationship, a famine of approval and affirmation,

often respond the way that this officer did. “Yes, I hear what you are saying, but it’s just too good to be true. Because of the famine I’ve gone through, this neglect, this abuse, this suffering that occurred in my life, I just find it too good to be true that God is good and will be good to me, if I trust in him.” Well, sometimes you can argue with a person all day long about whether a promise of God that we read about in scripture, the good news of the gospel, whether in fact it’s true or not. You can argue all day with yourself or another, trying to convince yourself or someone else that God’s promises found in his word are true. You can run through all the apologetics and theology and sometimes after all the arguments and debate, the best thing you can say to yourself, or the best thing you can say to others is the logic of the lepers found in vv. 3-4.

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? 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.”

The logic of the lepers – my life is not working at all now, what have I got to lose by trusting in this promise of God? Ask yourself; is your present approach to life working for you? Is your life really fabulous and great now? If it’s not, what do you have to lose by trusting in God’s promises?

I think of a woman who has had a series of terrible relationships with men, one loser after another. You say to that woman, “Look, if you stay as you are now in your current relationship, you are just going to end up as one more big disaster. You are going to blow yourself up again.” It’s like the old Alcoholics Anonymous’ definition of insanity. Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results.

If you just keep living the same old insane way, you are going to produce the same results again in your life. Nothing you’ve done so far has worked for you; why not reach out for Christ? Moving to California won’t fix you. Trading in spouses won’t give you the happiness that you hunger for. One more night in front of the TV, one more drink, a change of jobs, won’t fix things. What do you have to lose? Why not try trusting in Christ?

That’s the logic of the lepers. If we stay where we are, as we are, we’re just going to be miserable and die. I don’t know if this will work, maybe it will, maybe it won’t, but I have nothing to lose. Why don’t you try to listen once in your life to what Jesus has to say? Maybe he really knows something about the way to happiness. Maybe Jesus, just maybe Jesus is really smart. That he knows how life is supposed to work.

Perhaps for some of you who are familiar with church history, as you read the leper’s logic in vv. 3-4, it occurred to you that this sounds very much like the

argument raised by one of the great philosophers and mathematicians back in the 17th century named Blaise Pascal. Let me paraphrase Pascal's argument against atheism. He said, "Well, listen, if you are right and there is no God and there is no heaven, then when you die the only thing you have to look forward to is rotting in the ground. That's the best you can hope for, if you're right." Pascal said, "If you're wrong and I, a Christian, am right, then your rejection of God is going to land you in hell." Then he went on to say, "If I, as a Christian, am wrong and you, the atheist, are right, then when I die, I guess I'll rot in the ground. But I've lived a good moral life. I've gotten wisdom for my marriage, my child-raising, and my work life. If I am right, then I enjoy God's presence now and in the future I enjoy eternal life with Christ. Mr. Atheist, the best you can hope for is rotting in the ground. The worst is experiencing hell forever. What do you have to lose by trusting in Christ?"

You know, a change in your life, a change in someone else's life is as simple as the logic of the lepers. We've got nothing to lose.

Now, the lepers make an amazing discovery in v. 5, *At dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. When they reached the edge of the camp, not a man was there, for the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of the chariots and the 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!" So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and their donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives. The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp and entered one of the tents. They ate and drank, and carried away 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.*

There is this amazing discovery by the lepers. They have this extraordinary experience. They say, "The only thing we wanted to happen to us is just not dying. What we are experiencing out in the Aramean camp goes beyond our wildest dreams. The only thing we were sort of hoping for was not starving to death. We said, 'We've got nothing to lose. We're going to die here anyway.' And then we stumble into this extraordinary provision."

Friends, the lepers experience in 2 Kings 7:5-8 is so much like the experience of people who come to Christ and grow in their relationship with him. I have found over and over again that people who find Christ and grow in Christ say, "This is so much more than I ever expected to me in my wildest dreams. I came to Christ, I prayed with you, Rich, at a weekend service. I prayed with my friend in my office. I prayed with my mother. I prayed and came to Christ because I was unhappy. I was bored and frustrated. I had just gone through a divorce or separation. Things in my life were not working out. I was financially successful and successful in my career, but there was an empty place."

“And I would have been satisfied with just a little bit of an emotional boost, a little comfort, a little help with my kids, my marriage. Like the lepers in this story, I never expected the oceans of blessing that would fall on me when I stepped into this room called faith. I never expected that Christ would change my whole life for the better. That I would gain new friends and enter into a new family called the church. That I would find answers for the really big questions that have always bugged me. Answers like how do I deal with my past? How do I deal with pain in my life? Or some of the things I went through as a child or as an adult? I discovered how I could love and be loved. I never expected that when I came to Christ he would show me how I could become a better human being.”

If I could update the experience of the lepers, coming to Christ is like going to a wedding. And what you expect that you are going to is one of those white Protestant weddings, really stuffy, almost completely absent of almost any kind of emotion or passion, some peanuts and those white chalky mints in a paper cup, and an old woman handing you some awful tasting punch in a little plastic cup. And you think that’s the kind of wedding you are going to. And it turns out to be this Jewish blowout wedding, or like the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” where people are actually not whispering to each other, but they are happy, laughing, dancing and singing, and they are eating massive quantities of food. And you come away from the evening saying, “This is so much better than I expected.”

Everyone who truly comes to Christ and grows in him has the experience of the lepers. This thing about a personal relationship with Christ is so much better than I ever would have expected.

Now this amazing discovery that the lepers found had to be shared. V. 9, *Then they said to each other, “We’re not doing 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.” So they went and called out to the city gatekeepers and told them, “We went into the Aramean camp and not a man was there—not a sound of anyone—only tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents left just as they were.” The gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported within the palace.*

I love this picture of lepers recognizing that it would be selfish to keep the good news to themselves, recognizing further that they will be punished if they keep the good news to themselves, and instead going and telling the gatekeepers who shout the news within the palace. This is a really wonderful picture of evangelism. You know, for a lot of folks when they hear the word “evangelism” they think of people imposing their religious perspectives or their views of life and truth on other people, judging the world and telling everyone else how stupid they are and how only my perspective makes sense.

To paraphrase what Don Williams was saying about the definition of evangelism, evangelism is a leper telling a starving city where to find food. You don't need to starve anymore. Here's where you can find food.

See, to bring this down to earth, friends, people are starving for God. There is a thirst, a hunger for God in us that is as real as any of our longings – our longing for food, our longing for drink, our longing for relationship. We were made for God. People everywhere are starving for God, whether they know it or not. U2 spoke of the spiritual starvation of an entire generation with their song, "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For."

I've climbed the highest mountains.

I've run through the fields

Only to be with you; only to be with you.

I've run, I've crawled, I've scaled these city walls

Only to be with you

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

I've kissed many lips

Felt the healing in her fingertips

It burned like fire, this burning desire

I spoke with the tongue of angels

I've held the hand of a devil

It was warm in the night

It was cold as stone

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

That's the real experience of people working in the largest law firms downtown and driving Porsches. That's the real experience of single moms who are dating another loser. "But I still haven't found what I'm looking for." Most folks just give up the search- I guess life is just about little private moments of happiness- I'll probably never find the really big truth with a capital T.

The reason we do Fall Festival each year is to be like the lepers, to share the good news with other people about what we've discovered about Jesus. That it is really possible in this life to find what you are looking for. You don't have to give up the love you are looking for, the direction you're looking for, the hope you are looking for, you can find it in Jesus.

You talk with people all the time who are struggling with some problem in life. Young adults, one of your friends come to you and describes this horrible relationship they are having with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or some terrible sin that is going on in their lives. Older adults, you talk with someone in your office, who complains to you about their marriage, or a rebellious child. You are constantly talking with people who are saying to you underneath their complaints, "I still haven't found what I'm looking for." I'm starving for God.

And you know, if you are a follower of Christ, that Jesus can help them. I say this in love, but like the lepers, if you know Jesus is true, how can you keep this to yourself? The reason for Fall Festival is so that at least one time a year we can remind ourselves as a Christian family that good news is for sharing. It's not, "Hey, I've found a great church and a great God; my life has really changed for the better. I've got so much now. I'm really satisfied." It's the lepers' statement, "We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we're keeping it to ourselves."

Will you at the end of the service buy a ticket for you and a friend, or for you and a family member to go to the women's coffee house on Thursday night? If you are a guy, will you go up to the table and pick up a ticket for you and someone else to go to the men's chili dinner? Bring someone out to church services. These events are going to be totally guest sensitive, I guarantee you. I promise you that you and your guest will not cringe, no matter how non-religious your friend is, you are not going to be cringing by something someone will say.

Risk it. Maybe if you extend an invitation this week to a neighbor or a friend, you'll be turned down. Maybe 3 people will turn you down. So what? You're out \$10? Even if no one takes you up on it, what are you out? \$10? \$15? The price of a movie ticket and a jumbo pail of popcorn? What are you out? I'm going to ask you men and women to go out and buy a couple of tickets after the service. Take a risk. Ask the Lord to give you someone.

And the net result in this story is that the king investigates the lepers' claims and here is what we read in vv. 14-15, *They selected two chariots with their horses, and the king sent them after the Aramean army. He commanded the drivers, "Go and find out what has happened." They followed them as far as the Jordan, and they found the whole road strewn with the clothing and equipment the Arameans had thrown away in their headlong flight. So the messengers returned and reported to the king. Then the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So a seah of flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel, as the Lord had said.*

The good news announced through the prophet was not too good to be true. And the good news announced through Jesus Christ to you and to me is not too good to be true. You and I can find what we are looking for. If you'll be honest today and say to God, "I'm not satisfied with my life the way it is. There are a whole lot of things that are not working. I may be succeeding in business or succeeding financially, or succeeding in this or that area, but there is a part of me that is really unsatisfied." Then in a moment, I'm going to ask you to pray with me. With the lepers' logic, I would say to you, if you stay doing what you're doing, you're only going to have the same results. Why not reach out in faith and grab a hold of Christ? What have you got to lose? Let's pray.

From Famine to Fullness

Rich Nathan

September 21-22, 2002

Evangelism: The God Who Seeks and Saves Series

2 Kings 6:24-7:20

- I. The Curse Upon the Nation
 - A. The Curse Applied (2 Kings 6:24-29)
 - B. The Curse Removed (Galatians 3:10-14)
- II. The Gospel to the Nation

- A. The Gospel Disbelieved (2 Kings 7:1,2)
- B. The Gospel Embraced (2 Kings 7:3,4)
- C. The Gospel Experienced (2 Kings 7: 5-8)
- D. The Gospel Announced (2 Kings 7:9-11)
- E. The Gospel Investigated (2 Kings 7:12-16)