



Despair and Deliverance Part 1

“Why Stay Here Until We Die?”

2 Kings 7:1-4

Scripture

Elisha replied, “Hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Lord says: ‘About this time tomorrow at Samaria’s gate, six quarts of fine flour will sell for a half ounce of silver and twelve quarts of barley will sell for a half ounce of silver.’ ”

² Then the captain, the king’s right-hand man, responded to the man of God, “Look, even if the Lord were to make windows in heaven, could this really happen?” Elisha announced, “You will in fact see it with your own eyes, but you won’t eat any of it.”

³ Now four men with a skin disease were at the entrance to the city gate. They said to each other, “**Why stay here until we die?**

⁴ If we say, ‘Let’s go into the city,’ we will die there because the famine is in the city, but if we sit here, we will also die. So now, come on. Let’s surrender to the Arameans’ camp. If they let us live, we will live; if they kill us, we will die.” CSB

Quote Of The Day

“Now, God be praised, that to believing souls gives light in darkness, comfort in despair.” — William Shakespeare

In the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia, there's a special display for a rickety, home-made aluminum kayak. This tiny, makeshift boat seems out of place in the midst of displays for impressive Navy vessels and artifacts from significant battles on the sea. But a bronze plaque tells museum visitors the story behind this kayak's heroic makers.

In 1966, an auto mechanic named Laureano and his wife Consuelo decided that they could no longer live under the oppression of Cuba's communist regime. After spending months collecting scrap metal, they pieced together a boat just barely big enough for two small people. Then Laureano rigged a small lawn mower engine on the back of the kayak. After months of planning, on a moonless September night, sitting back to back and wearing only their swimsuits, they set out in the treacherous Straits of Florida. They had only enough water and food for a couple of days. Finally, after they had floated in open water for over 70 hours, the U.S. Coast Guard found and rescued the couple in the Florida Keys.

Was it worth the risk to find freedom? Laureano thought so. Years later, he said, “When one has grown up in liberty, you realize it is important to have freedom. We lived in the enormous prison which is Cuba, where one's life is not worth one crumb. Where one goes out into the street and does not know whether or not one will return to one's home, because the political police can arrest you without warning and put you in prison. Before this could happen to us, we thought that going into the ocean, and risking death or being eaten by sharks, is a million times better than suffering under political oppression.” Citation: *Matt Woodley, managing editor, PreachingToday.com; source: From a plaque and display in the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia*

Laureano and Consuelo made a makeshift boat, sailed the open sea and risked dying in the ocean so they could live in freedom.

WHY? They asked themselves and were motivated by this important question: “WHY STAY HERE UNTIL WE DIE?”

Sometimes either by our own actions or no fault of our own life comes crashing down around us and leads us to despair.

Despair— The complete loss or absence of hope. To experience grave concern or anxiety. To feel or display deep distress.

2 Kings 6-7 is a true and powerful story of Despair and Deliverance.

The Inhabitants of the city of Samaria were in great despair!

At this point in history the nation of Israel was divided in two kingdoms and Samaria was capital of the Northern Kingdom. Samaria was unique because it was built on a hill approximately 300 feet high. Samaria was surrounded by mountains on three sides and had a great view looking to the west down into the Jezreel Valley— also known as the Valley of Armageddon. People in the city of Samaria could look down into the valley and see clearly for miles.

2 Kings 6:24 Some time later, King Ben-hadad of Aram brought all his military units together and marched up and laid siege to Samaria. CSB

Samaria was being attacked!

The Aramean army was assembled in the Jezreel Valley below the capital city of Samaria and had laid siege to it.

The phrase “**laid siege**” means—to attack with intent to cramp, to confine, to cause distress and literally defeat and destroy the Israelites.

Everyone in Samaria was trapped, there was no way out of the city and nothing or no one was coming into the city.

The inhabitants of Samaria were suffering and dying.

2 Kings 6:25-31 So there was a severe famine in Samaria, and they continued the siege against it until a donkey’s head sold for thirty-four ounces of silver, and a cup of dove’s dung sold for two ounces of silver. ²⁶As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, “My lord the king, help!” ²⁷He answered, “If the Lord doesn’t help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor or the winepress?” ²⁸Then the king asked her, “What’s the matter?” She said, “This woman said to me, ‘Give up your son, and we will eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.’ ²⁹So we boiled my son and ate him, and I said to her the next day, ‘Give up your son, and we will eat him,’ but she has hidden her son.” ³⁰When the king heard the woman’s words, he tore his clothes. Then, as he was passing by on the wall, the people saw that there was sackcloth

under his clothes next to his skin. ³¹He announced, “May God punish me and do so severely if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today.”

Because of the siege Samaria experienced a severe famine. The famine was so severe people were paying the equivalent of \$1,700 for a donkey’s head to eat. They were paying nearly \$80 for a cup of dove’s dung and even worse women started eating their own children.

At this point in time the people of God were in great Despair and there was no hope in sight!

Despair— The complete loss or absence of hope. To experience grave concern or anxiety. To feel or display deep distress.

Words of wisdom to remember in times of Despair.

In times of Despair:

Do not be Foolish vv.26-29

As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, “My lord the king, help!” ²⁷He answered, “If the Lord doesn’t help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor or the winepress?” ²⁸Then the king asked her, “What’s the matter?” She said, “This woman said to me, ‘Give up your son, and we will eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.’ ²⁹So we boiled my son and ate him, and I said to her the next day, ‘Give up your son, and we will eat him,’ but she has hidden her son.” CSB

Don’t be foolish:

We make matters worse when we think and dwell on foolish thoughts.

Positive solutions in desperate times never come from foolish thoughts.

Don't be foolish:

We make matters worse when we rationalize foolish behavior.

In times of despair satan makes stupid things make sense and sinful things look attractive.

These women made a deal with each other to kill and eat each others babies!

Don't be foolish:

We make matters worse when despair clouds our judgment

- * Do not make decisions when we are **Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired.**
- * Isolation doesn't make things better
- * Substance abuse doesn't make things better

In times of Despair:

Do not become Angry or Bitter vv.30-31

When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his clothes. Then, as he was passing by on the wall, the people saw that there was sackcloth under his clothes next to his skin. ³¹ He announced, "**May God punish me and do so severely if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today.**" CSB

When we become angry and bitter in our despair— we believe wrong things, we say wrong things and we do wrong things.

King Joram's despair caused anger and bitterness and he declared to kill Elisha the prophet of God.

In times of Despair:

Do not be Afraid v.32

Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. The king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger got to him, Elisha said to the elders, “Do you see how this murderer has sent someone to remove my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door to keep him out. Isn’t the sound of his master’s feet behind him?” CSB

Elisha the prophet of God was not afraid of the king’s messenger or his message.

In times of despair and fear remember God’s Word—

Isaiah 41:10 “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand.” CSB

When we focus on our despair and our fears we become a hostage to them.

In times of Despair:

Be Patient v.33

While Elisha was still speaking with them, the messenger came down to him. Then he said, “**This disaster is from the Lord. Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?**” CSB

Be patient— we do the worst things when we do not wait on the LORD.

Gary at Hardee’s— stuck his hand in the grease!

In times of Despair:

Pay attention to the Word of the LORD 2 Kings 7:1

Elisha replied, “**Hear the word of the Lord!** This is what the Lord says: ‘About this time tomorrow at Samaria’s gate, six quarts of fine flour will sell for a half ounce of silver and twelve quarts of barley will sell for a half ounce of silver.’ ” CSB

In times of despair it is important that we “Hear the Word of the LORD.”

Four reasons to “Hear the Word of the LORD:

1. The Word of God gives us Truth in times of despair

Proverbs 30:5 “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who take refuge in him.” CSB

Four reasons to “Hear the Word of the LORD:

2. The Word of God gives us Wisdom in times of despair

Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline.” CSB

James 3:17 “. . . the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense. ¹⁸ And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who cultivate peace.” CSB

Four reasons to “Hear the Word of the LORD:

3. The Word of God gives us Peace in times of despair

John 16:33 “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.” CSB

Four reasons to “Hear the Word of the LORD:

4. The Word of God gives us Hope in times of despair

Promises found in the Bible offer hope in times of despair.

Romans 15:13 “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” CSB

In times of Despair:

Do not be a Debby Downer or listen to Debby Downers v.2

“Then the captain, the king’s right-hand man, responded to the man of God, **“Look, even if the Lord were to make windows in heaven, could this really happen?”** CSB

The king’s right hand man was a **“Debby Downer!”**

“Debby Downer” is a term used to describe a person who frequently points out negative aspects of situations and dampens the mood.

“Debby Downer” usually refers to someone who highlights problems, is doubtful about positive outcomes, carries a pessimistic outlook, and communicates grim realities in conversations.

God cannot and God will not bless doubters!

A “Doubter” is a person that is unconvinced, uncertain, and unlikely to believe God can do anything.

Doubters have at least four characteristics in common:

1. Disbelief v.2

Doubters do not believe God can or will do anything great that is why they doubt!

2. Discouragement v.2

Doubters speak words and display actions that are discouraging to others.

Discouragement is not a spiritual gift!!

3. Disobedience v.2

Doubters live in denial and disobedience refusing to trust God and obey God's Word!

4. Defeat vv.17-20

The king had appointed the captain, his right-hand man, to be in charge of the city gate, but the people trampled him in the gate. He died, just as the man of God had predicted when the king had come to him. ¹⁸When the man of God had said to the king, "About this time tomorrow twelve quarts of barley will sell for a half ounce of silver and six quarts of fine flour will sell for a half ounce of silver at Samaria's gate," ¹⁹this captain had answered the man of God, "Look, even if the Lord were to make windows in heaven, could this really happen?" Elisha had said, "You will in fact see it with your own eyes, but you won't eat any of it." ²⁰This is what happened to him: the people trampled him in the city gate, and he died. CSB

God has the power to do great things in our life and in our world but it WILL NOT COME TO PASS in the life of those who doubt!

In times of Despair:

Do not be Foolish

Do not become Angry or Bitter

Do not be Afraid

Be Patient

Pay attention to the Word of the LORD

Do not be a Debby Downer or listen to Debby Downers

