

God is Faithful to His Promises

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[0:00] 2 Kings chapter 6, we're going to pick up the reading in verse 24 and read on into chapter 7 through verse 20, the end of the chapter.

Sometime 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 80 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 wine press? 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 will eat my son. So we cooked my son and ate him.

[1:07] The next day I said to her, give up your son so we may eat him. But she had hidden him. When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his robes.

As he went along the wall, the people looked and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body. He said, may God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if the head of Elisha, son of Shaphat, remains on his shoulders today.

Now Elisha was sitting in his house and the elders were sitting with him. The king sent a messenger ahead. But before he arrived, Elisha said to the elders, Don't you see how this murderer is sending someone to cut off my head?

Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold it shut against him. Is not the sound of his master's footsteps behind him? While he was still talking to them, the messenger came down to him and the king said, This disaster is from the Lord.

Why should I wait for the Lord any longer? Elisha said, hear the word of the Lord. This is what the Lord says. About this time tomorrow, a sea of flour will sell for a shekel and two seas of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.

[2:32] 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.

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.

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 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.

So 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. The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp and entered one of the tents.

[3:51] 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.

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. The king got up in the night and said to his officers, I will tell you what the Arameans have done to us.

They know we are starving, so they have left the camp to hide in the countryside, thinking they will surely come out and then we will take them alive and get into the city. One of his officers answered, Have some men take five of the horses that are left in the city.

[5:04] Their plight will be like that of all the Israelites left here. Yes, they will only be like all these Israelites who are doomed. So let us send them to find out what happened. So 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 sea of flour sold for a shekel and two seas of barley sold for a shekel, as the Lord had said.

Now the king had put the officer on whose arm he leaned in charge of a gate and the people trampled him in the gateway and he died.

Just as the man of God had foretold when the king came down to his house. It happened as the man of God had said to the king, About this time tomorrow, a sea of flour will sell for a shekel and two seas of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.

[6:25] The officer had said to the man of God, Look, even if the Lord should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen? The man of God had replied, You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it.

And that is exactly what happened to him. For the people trampled him in the gateway and he died. If some of you are wondering tonight why 2 Kings 6 and 7, I'll give you an explanation for that.

Having finished up 1 Timothy last time, I was not ready to dive into a new series. I'll be gone the next three Sunday evenings and won't be preaching here.

And so this comes from the fruit of my own reading through the Scriptures. I read through this passage and several things were striking to me. And so we have it before it tonight.

I love a good story. And I think most of us love a good story. And the Bible is full of good stories. It tells about great men and women of faith and their amazing deeds.

[7:41] We love to hear about David slaying the great Goliath. The supernatural strength of Samson has enthralled generations of children and adults ever since the tale was told.

Noah building a massive ark, loading it with animals being preserved from a flood that covered the whole earth, still amazes us. We love to hear of Elijah's showdown on Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal and calling fire down on his waterlogged sacrifice.

And the fire actually fell. We love these stories. Tales of the dead being raised to make children and adults set up with wide-eyed, close, careful attention.

Prophecies given and fulfilled amaze not only those who saw them in their day, but amaze us who read them thousands of years later. I thought of an entire nation walking through the sea on dry ground.

It still fills us with wonder. What remarkable things have taken place. But if we stop with thinking that these are just some good stories, then we've missed the point.

[8:54] And even if we stop with admiring the key figures in these stories and saying, what a godly man or godly woman that was. What a remarkable thing he or she did. We still miss the point.

To focus on the individual in the story is to miss the great and mighty God who is behind this story. The God who is faithful. The God who is working out the redemption of His people.

All leading up to the coming of the Son, Jesus Christ. Who would save His people from His sins. To just see the stories for stories is to miss the point of the big story.

Which is God preserving and saving His people. Well, we've read before us tonight another remarkable story. This one is about Elisha. Boy, there's a string of fascinating things about Elisha in 2 Kings.

I hope you don't just pass over the historical books when you read and say, well, it's just this king lived and he reigned and he died and then his son reigned in his place. And so I don't really need to know that.

[9:57] No. Dig into the historical books. Get into 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. And yes, even 1 and 2 Chronicles. Which are a little bit more tedious at times.

Dig into those and find some of these marvelous stories and learn something about the great God behind all of these stories. During these days that we've just read about, Israel and Judah are not in good shape.

They've disobeyed the Lord. They've had kings that have led them astray. The king that's on the throne right now, during the time of Elisha, is Joram. And he's the son.

We don't really know Joram or Jehoram, depending on where his name occurs. Two different spellings of his name. But we don't know too much about him, but we know his dad. His dad was wicked king Ahab.

Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab. And this is his son that's on the throne now. And the Israelites have abandoned their God. They are worshiping false gods. They are sinning against their God.

[10:57] And so, God is bringing judgment against them in various ways and various times. But he has kept faithful servants like Elisha in the land. Sometimes we get Elijah and Elisha confused.

Elijah came first and Elisha was the successor. And Elisha had a double portion of the spirit that was on Elijah. You know some of the great things Elijah did. Imagine a double portion of that spirit. And then he got a little bit of an idea of what Elisha was like. A remarkable man with remarkable gifts. And God enabled to do remarkable things.

And this story shows just a little bit of what God did through Elisha the prophet. And remember, don't just be amazed tonight by a man, but by that man's God.

There was a famine in the land because the wicked Arameans, the people from Aram, we know them as Syrians today, had come and laid siege to the city of Samaria.

[11:59] Samaria was where the kings of Israel lived. It was where they reigned from. It was a key city in the land of Israel. And now siege has been laid against it. And what siege means, if maybe some of you kids don't know, it means they surrounded the city and they didn't let anybody or anything come in or out of the city.

You can imagine tonight if enemies of Grace Fellowship Church surrounded our church, they wouldn't let us come in, anybody else come in, and they wouldn't let us who are here go out. And they would cut our phone lines so that we couldn't call for help. And they would cut off our water supply so that we wouldn't have any running water in the building to drink or to flush the toilets or to do anything.

And they would cut our electricity so that we wouldn't have any light or any air conditioning to keep us cool. And they would cut off every source of life and hope until we were inside, were so miserable and so helpless and so hungry and so thirsty that we would come out and surrender and give ourselves up.

Well, that's what they did, not just with one building, but with a whole city. They surrounded the city of Samaria and they cut off everything, every hope that these people had. And so that siege remained for so long that pretty soon there was a famine.

[13:13] No food could come in. They couldn't go outside of the city to get anything and people began to starve. They began to get hungry. And so they would do anything for food.

They were desperate. They would eat a donkey's head. A donkey which was an unclean animal to the Israelites. That was going at a high price. And our NIV softens this up a little bit.

A quarter of a cob of seed pods for five shekels. If you check the margin, you'll see dove dung. We call it bird dew. You know what?

People were selling it and eating it. I've got an office just over in the other building and I look out my window and on the windowsill, apparently when I'm not there, birds roost there because it's covered with bird dew.

And people would go around and collect that. It would be like going out here and scraping off those windowsills. And then they'd sell that so that people would have something to eat.

[14:15] Something to live on. That's how desperate people were for food. And just to show even worse how bad things got.

Two women. It's alright. Sometimes things surprise us and we take a moment, we have a chuckle, we relax, and we're amazed even at the power of God and thunder that He can shake us out of our seats for a moment.

That's the same God that we're talking about here. Things got so bad and the people were so hungry that two women made a horrible pact together to eat one of their sons one day and the other the next.

Now we can't imagine such a horrible thing, but we've never been that hungry either, have we? And surely not everyone in Samaria stooped to such a level, but some were that desperate.

And this was a fulfillment of a prophecy that had been made. You don't have to turn there, but back in Deuteronomy 28, God proclaimed blessings that would come for obedience and curses for disobedience.

[15 : 30] He said, however, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you. And then one of the curses that's listed, because of the suffering that your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters, the Lord your God has given you.

And so the people of Israel have disobeyed and the curses are coming true. God keeps not just His promise of blessing, but His promise of punishment as well.

And so these women eat their own children. We don't have any kind of idea what sort of hunger that must be. My kids tell me that they're hungry. They're starving sometimes.

And maybe you kids have said that, I'm starving, Mom. No, you're not. We don't have the first clue what hunger like this is. Let's pause for a moment to ask a question.

Because these ladies had some serious problems. They had lost faith. They didn't believe in the God of Israel anymore. Do you have faith in the most impossible of circumstances?

[16 : 43] Because that's what Israel was facing here. Impossible, unimaginable circumstances. The situation was hopeless. And what do you do in hopeless situations? I hope you don't make the mistake that these women made.

I don't suspect that any of you would eat your own children. But do you see behind their problem, it's not just that they did something horribly wicked. It was a sign that they no longer trusted God. It was a sign that they had abandoned hope in the God who had provided for them to that point. They took matters into their own hands. This isn't showing initiative. It's not being creative about how to make ends meet. It's a denial of belief in who God is.

They don't trust Him anymore. If they ever did in the first place. If they really believed that God was on His throne and faithful to His people, they never would have resorted to violating God's own law. Have you ever found yourself in a situation like that where you think that the only way out is to sin? The Lord has backed me into this corner and the only possible way out is for me to break His law.

[17 : 48] You know what? I don't believe the Lord will put you in a situation like that. As soon as you find yourself thinking that way, realize that you're taking the first step away from faith in God and His promises.

You're saying you don't believe that God can deliver you. And so you're going to have to do it on your own without His help. Now it is fine to work hard and to be creative and find ways to make ends meet.

But the first thought of sin in order to do so should send us running back to God and His promises. If you're having financial trouble maybe. And you've trusted God to provide and bless your efforts and you're working hard at those efforts and you make sacrifices and you're wise and discerning with the money that you do have and you're careful but you're still struggling and things are beginning to look hopeless.

The house is almost in foreclosure as many people in our country find themselves in such a situation. And collectors are calling on past few bills and you begin to think of other ways.

I've worked as hard as I can. There's nothing more I can do. Maybe I can fudge my tax return this year and get a bigger return that will actually help me pay something off. Maybe a few extra groceries in the cart without paying for them.

[19 : 04] I'll just miscount the cash register at work and skim a little off the top. Now none of these sound as horrible as eating your own children. But they're just as much a denial of God and a pronouncement of your own lack of faith in Him and His Word.

Would you ever sin to deliver yourself from a situation that you think is hopeless? I think these ladies are instructive for us.

What do our actions tell us about our faith and our faithful God? Maybe you haven't quite gotten to the point of violating God's law to fix the situation you don't think God is able to fix.

Sounds pretty bad to say that. That there's something you don't think God can do, doesn't it? But that's what behavior like this says. I don't think you can handle this one, Lord. So I'm going to bend or break your rules to make sure I do handle it.

Maybe you're not quite there yet, but maybe you are sinning in your response to it. Whatever trial, whatever trouble is coming in what you perceive to be God's inattention or inability to help you.

[20 : 12] Maybe you're worrying about it. And yes, worry is a sin. Jesus said, do not worry about tomorrow. Paul said, do not be anxious about anything.

When we worry, we disobey God. Maybe it's moved from worry to despair and hopelessness.

These two sins in the face of a faithful God. When you worry and despair, you might as well say, God, I don't believe that you can or that you will help me.

May God deliver us from an attitude or actions like these women had. That's just to show the severity of what's going on in the land. How severe the famine is.

The extent to which people will go to make sure they can eat. And these ladies, then, eating their own children or one of the children, pushes the king over the edge.

He said, if the Lord doesn't help you, where can I get help for you? And he's right. I think his attitude is wrong, but he is right that the Lord is the only one that can deliver him. And he wants Elisha's head on a platter.

[21 : 13] I mean, if the man can do all these other wonders, read sometime what happens up to this point with Elisha. And surely, Elisha is known in the land. And if Elisha can do all of these great things, why can't he make food appear?

Why can't he do something? So, it's going to be Elisha's head on a platter for the king. No repentance from the king. No recollection that they're reaping what they've sown.

No call for repentance. He just wants somebody to be held accountable and might as well be Elisha, that man of God. And Elisha diffuses the situation by forecasting an abundance of food the very next day.

Now, naturally, there's some skepticism. Even if for some reason the Arameans were to leave, it would take a while for the economy of Samaria to get back on its feet. It would take a while to have food shipped in from the other cities in Israel to deliver them.

There's not going to be grain flowing like Elisha says the next day. But this isn't just Elisha spouting off. This is a promise from the Lord. Hear the word of the Lord.

[22 : 13] This is what the Lord said, a promise from God. But God had fallen out of favor in Israel. His word was no longer highly regarded, as we can tell from the servant's response. The windows of heaven should open.

Could such a thing happen? You see the doubt. We'll talk about him in a moment. But God was no longer thought to be anything significant in Israel. And you can tell by these people's attitude.

What a sad state of affairs. And you have to ask, has God fallen out of favor in your sight? Has He ever had favor with you? Do you treat the word of the Lord like these people did? No big deal.

No, no, no, no. I believe in God's word. Well, if you do. And some people are like these Israelites. And they don't respect God's word. And so this book never comes off the shelf.

It never is picked up off the desk. It's never opened. It's never read. You say, oh, I respect God's word. Do you read it? And when you read it, do you pay attention to it?

[23 : 12] And do you learn from what you read? And do you take it with you through your week? Or are we practically, though we would never say something like this servant, are we sometimes practically a little bit like it?

It's the word of the Lord. I need something. I need something more concrete, tangible. I need something that's going to help me. What is our attitude? You might never say this will never happen, but our actions and our attitudes towards God's word will show where our heart is.

When you come to hear it preached, do you listen to it? Do you absorb it? Do you take it in? Do you pray that God would apply it to your heart? Or do you just come and say, I know I should be at church and so I'm here, but I don't really care what God's word has to say to me.

I've never seen this God. I've never heard Him. I've disobeyed His supposed laws. Nothing bad has really happened to me yet. And so I'm not really concerned about what His word says. I don't want to get ahead of the story.

We've just read it. You know what happens to the man who expresses his doubt. But just identify that attitude that disregards God and His word. That's a dangerous place to be to think that God's word is no big deal.

[24 : 23] To come to the point where you no longer honor the word of the Lord. And so the servant, standing next to the king, he makes the mistake of a lifetime look.

He says, even if the Lord should open the floodgates of heaven, could this happen? And his doubt is immediately rebuked. You'll see it with your eyes, but you'll not partake of it.

Your distress will not be relieved. Bishop Hall says, the Almighty hates to be distrusted. God, who is ultimately trustworthy and faithful, does not look with favor upon those who doubt and distrust as this man did.

We talked about a general bad attitude towards God and His word, but let's be a little bit more specific. What is your attitude towards the promises of God? Do you believe them?

Oh yes, you say. I believe the promises of God. Do you really believe the promises of God? Do you live like you believe the promises of God? This man rejected them out of hand.

[25 : 32] What about you? You wouldn't do that. You wouldn't pick up God's word and read a promise and say, oh, this will never happen. But do you really believe what God says? You might say, well, we don't have a specific promise like the one they had here that's tailor-made for our situation.

But you do have the promises of God's word that apply to all of His people. Do you truly believe them? Do you believe that my God will meet all your needs?

Do you believe that my God will meet all of your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus?

All of them. Every one of them. Without exception. Do you believe that He will meet everyone?

Even the one that you are in the midst of right now, whatever difficulty you are facing at this moment that seems so big that you will never get over it, do you believe that God will meet that need?

Do you believe that His divine power has given you everything you need for life and for God?

Everything. Because sometimes we seem to get to a point where we go, I just don't have what I need to get through this.

[26 : 47] I can't. I'm not able. Do you believe that His divine power has given you everything? Do you believe that He is working all things together for good, for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose?

I don't see how any good could ever come from this. God's Word tells us all things. Do you believe that He will never leave you or forsake you?

You're in the midst of a trial right now and maybe you've begun to wonder, has my God left me or forsaken me? Do you believe the promise that He never, ever will?

Are you like the servant of the King? No way. If God is faithful to His promises, then why am I in this situation in the first place? Maybe there's particular trouble.

You don't have a direct prophecy from God like Elisha's day. But suppose for a moment you did. You receive a promise from a reliable source like Elisha that you will be delivered from your difficulty and it will happen tomorrow.

[27 : 55] I wonder how many of us would laugh like Sarah did when she was told that she was going to bear a child. Do our prayers reflect our faith in the promises of God?

Do we pray believing that God is able to hear and answer us according to His good and perfect will?

Do the promises of God thrill our hearts or do they fall flat when you hear them read or preached?

You think, well, that may be true for some, but it's obviously not true for me. These are all signs that we don't really believe the promises of God. Maybe we wouldn't give voice to our doubts like this servant, but our attitude often all too similar to His, I fear.

Sometimes it seems almost like we want to hear anything except the promises of God in our trouble. We want somebody to confirm us in our despair. We want somebody to pat us on the back and say, you're right, I've never seen anything this bad before.

And there really is. No, we almost want somebody to join our pity party. And it seems as though in those situations, sometimes the promises of God are just almost, your eyes are rolling.

[29:08] Don't tell me that. That's not what I want to hear right now. But it's what we need in those situations. It's the only thing that can give us hope in those situations. whether it is some impossible financial situation or some employment situation that is beyond our hope or you're at the point of exhaustion after months of non-stop work and it seems there's no end inside or there's some impossible problem with your children that is ongoing that is causing you to despair.

What you need is the promise of God. And you need to believe it with faith. We serve a great God, dear people. The promises of God should be caused for rejoicing, not for doubt.

And so Elisha rebukes him. You'll see it, but you won't receive it. You have to wonder if that king's servant's heart didn't flip-flop at that moment. His heart didn't sink.

Just for a moment, he knows Elisha. He knows what he's done. And all of a sudden, maybe there's something to the promise. Maybe I won't partake.

We don't know. And I want to ask another question. I want to ask it carefully tonight because I don't want to bruise any smoldering, or quench any smoldering flax tonight.

[30:28] But I wonder sometimes if our doubt of God's promises, sometimes as it did for this man, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If that servant had believed Elisha and believed God, he would have lived to partake of the bounty the next day, but he didn't because he doubted.

And I don't want to create undue guilt in those here tonight with strong faith who are still facing suffering that God has not yet seen fit to deliver you from.

I don't want to call into question your faith, but perhaps there are others who have stopped believing. And so we're not receiving the blessing they could. We have to be so careful interpreting providence and why some people are called to endure suffering and others not at particular times, but we should at least ask ourselves the question if we've been doubting God and His promises.

And make sure that our faith is strong by God's grace. Well, let's finish the story here. The scene cuts away from Elisha and the king and the servant.

And all of a sudden, we're with four lepers at the gate of the city and we wonder, why four lepers? What's the point of this? Why are we introduced to these four characters? Well, here they are.

[31:44] The lepers and unfavored people in Israelite society. They're outcast. They're unclean. They're not even allowed to set foot inside the city. And the Arameans, not too concerned about this lepers' camp outside the city.

They don't care what happens to them. And so here they sit. And they're going to either die of a vile disease eating away at their flesh or of the hunger that's gnawing at their stomachs.

And so they begin to consider their options. Why not go over to the camp of the Arameans and surrender ourselves? And if they receive us, great! They'll probably feed us. And if they kill us, okay, we're going to die anyway.

We're going to... Either the disease or hunger is going to kill us. And so off they go to investigate. And if what they found wasn't written here in God's Word, you'd never believe it.

Do you believe in miracles? This is amazing. I love this part of the story. The Arameans, this great, mighty, strong army of Syrians. These are grown men.

[32:40] These are seasoned warriors we're talking about here. And they've surrounded the city. They've crippled the city of Samaria. It's how great and mighty their army is. This great army, they hear a noise.

They hear the noise of chariots and horses and a great army coming against them. And so, can you picture it? I mean, this happened in history. This took place.

Grown men jumped up out of their tents and they said, the Israelites have hired the Hittites or the Egyptians or some mercenary army to come against us. They're yelling, oh no, we've got to run. And they run for their very lives.

They don't even get on the horses that could help them go faster. They're in such a disarray. This great, organized, mighty, powerful army reduced to knocking knees and cowardly running at a sound of an army that didn't even exist.

An army that wasn't even there fleeing in mass. Numbers later, we find out that they're shedding clothing and equipment as they go. There's a trail of it and follows them all the way back to Syria.

[33:49] There was no army, but the Lord had caused them to hear the sound. How cool is this? God just disperses the army by making them hear a sound.

The wicked flee when no one is pursuing. It could be nothing less than the hand of God. It begins to look like maybe Elisha knew what he was talking about after all.

At this moment, that doubtful servant, he's probably asleep in his bed with no idea of what's going to happen the next day. And these lepers, they walk into the camp planning on surrendering themselves, but there's no guards at the outskirts.

Can you imagine these four lepers as they walk into this camp that's been abandoned? And all is strangely quiet except for the noise of some horses. They're looking.

They come to the first tent. They pull back the door. And there's food spread there before them. But nobody's there. And you do what any starving person would do.

[34 : 50] They start to eat. They eat and they drink and they're filled. They're silver, there's gold, there's clothes and they take it and they hide it and come back to the second tent. And then it strikes them, what we're doing is not right.

What we're doing is not right. This is a day of good news and we're keeping it to ourselves. So they correct their initial selfishness and decide to go and tell Samaria fearing judgment on themselves if they don't.

This isn't the point of the story but I think we can learn from the lesser to the greater if they understood their obligation with such great news to go and to tell those who are in such great need about how to have physical life.

That's the lesser. Now take it to the greater. Shouldn't we who have the great news of not just physical life but eternal life take it to those who have such great need and tell them about it?

We should say this is a day of good news and are we keeping it to ourselves? And so let us go and gladly tell of the abundance and bounty we found in Christ.

[35 : 58] And so they go. They go and tell. They can't get in the city. They're lepers. And so they tell the gatekeeper and the gatekeeper shouts it through the city and eventually it gets back to the king. And now the king doubts. And I understand his doubt.

He knows the Syrians better than we do. A crafty army. Perhaps it's a trap. I think I'd rather have heard him say this is likely the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord through Elisha but to be prudent let's make it sure it's not a trap.

But the first thing out of his mouth is doubt. Oh surely it's a trap. He's gone away and we'll come into the camp and then they'll kill us. Well they go. They check it out. It's not a trap.

And so the Israelites plunder the deserted airman camp. A measure of flour sold for a shekel two measures of barley for the same price and the promise of the Lord is proved faithful yet again. Why do you doubt?

Oh ye of little faith. He provides for his people. Took a long time. Took so long that things were as desperate as we read of earlier. But finally the Lord delivers his people.

[36 : 58] You've been suffering for a long time. seem as though there is no end in sight to your trouble. Your difficulty. Don't give up hope in the promises of God.

He delivers on his promises in his own good timing. And we could almost wish the story ended there but it doesn't. There's still the servants who doubted the word of the Lord.

He was put in charge at the city gate and he saw that abundant provision. Flower, barley being sold for just a mere shekel. where the day before the horse of a donkey went for 80 shekels.

The grain is flowing freely. The storehouse windows of heaven have been thrown open. And this man who doubted is trampled in the excitement to have food again.

And you see how it's repeated again for us at the end. How Elijah made the promise and how he questioned it and his being trampled to death is repeated as though it's emphasized for us.

[38 : 10] This danger of doubting the promises of God. Just as God made good on his promise to provide food that next day he made good on his promise that the man who doubted it would not partake of it.

And God is good to do that. Faithful to fulfill his promises. Faithfulness to his people but also faithful to fulfill his promise of judgment on all who reject him.

I hope we learn from the story that God is faithful to his people. That we should always believe in the promises of God. I hope we see that faithfulness of God coming through us most clearly through his son.

Some of these Israelites were still trusting in the Messiah who was to come. And I hope you are trusting in that Messiah tonight. All of God's promises are yes in him for no matter how many promises God has made they are yes in Christ.

And so through him the Amen is spoken by us to the glory of God in 2 Corinthians 1. God's fulfilling this promise here in 2 Kings 7 is a sign that he would fulfill the greatest promise to send the Messiah to save his people.

[39:22] Israelites and Gentiles alike would be saved from their sin. God's great faithfulness is seen in his faithfulness to save. That promise has been kept and we are the beneficiaries of it tonight.

Do you know what it is to have believed in Jesus who has been given for us a promise that was made and kept by God? Praise God if you have. Pray to him if you haven't and find your hope in him.

And I hope when you hear this story and others like it that you're not just amazed at Elisha and the fleeing Aramean army but be amazed at the awesome power of God who is able to do all that he says he will do and take comfort because the same God that was on the throne in the days of Elisha is still on the throne today and as he fulfilled that promise and delivered his people then he is able to fulfill this promise and deliver you now from whatever trouble and difficulty and trial you are facing what then shall we say to these things if God is for us who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own son but delivered him up for us all how will he not also with him freely give us all things? Did God make good on the promise to send his son?

We know that he did that's our hope our trust then he will make good on his promises to be faithful to you his people and we can find great comfort in it tonight may he encourage our hearts to have faith and not to doubt our father we thank you that you are faithful we pray that you would forgive us for our lack of faith we pray that you would strengthen our faith to believe the promises that you have set down for us in your word promises as true today as the day they were written because you do not change you're the same yesterday today and forever and we thank you that we have you on the throne working all things together for good for your people and we pray that we would take comfort in it in the midst of our trouble in the midst of our difficulty our pain our suffering may we look to you and to your word and not despair and not look away from you and your word but find our hope and our comfort there and especially in Christ who is our hope the surety of sins forgiven through his perfect work may we find comfort in that tonight knowing that even should we suffer through all of our life yet in glory we will be once and for all delivered from all the things that weigh us down in this life in this earth and so we look forward to that day and we say come quickly

[42:09] Lord Jesus and until you come strengthen our faith and save lost sinners draw others to yourself may we not be guilty of hoarding the good news for ourselves but give us grace to tell it to others that they might hear of this glorious God who is faithful to his promise to his people we are your people we bow before you and give you thanks and praise this night help us as we go from here into the world strengthen us to believe the promises of your word and to live in the light of them we ask in Jesus name Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen may may!

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