

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 9 Impossible Things

Reading: 2 Kings 6. 24-33; 7. 1, 2, 16-20

24 And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.

27 And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?

28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow.

29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.

31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the

elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?

33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the Lord what should I wait for the Lord any longer?

1 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.

17 And the king appointed the lord on

whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

18 And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of

Samaria:

19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

20 And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

Address

This was real trouble, terrible trouble, that God's ancient people were in in Samaria. There was this awful famine because the city was besieged by the enemy's army, and the famine became so intense that the people even sank to cannibalism. "Then Elisha said." When man could do nothing, when the case was impossible, when it was certain death, destruction and despair, "Then Elisha said," and what he said almost seemed ridiculous: "To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." In other words, they had not had anything to eat till now; we read of the terrible price they gave even for a donkey's head. But now they were going to have plenty, the best-quality food, and plenty at a cheap price, and not next month, or even next week, but, "to morrow about this time." It was so impossible. There was a nobleman there, a lord, and he laughed at it. He mocked at it. "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."

There are two things here. One is that our God can do impossible things. It is an easy thing for our God to do impossible things. That is a great point when we meet for prayer, that we are coming to the One who can do impossible things. It is an easy thing for Him to do impossible things. There is nothing too hard for Him. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." And the second thing: the word of the Lord shall stand. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." The faithful God. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" His word shall stand in mercy and in judgment, and all His promises are sure. Not one can fall to the ground. However impossible, "sooner all nature shall change, than one of God's promises fail." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." As we meet for prayer, beloved friends, hold those two things fast: that God can do impossible things, and that His word will always stand. And do not just hold

them fast at the prayer meeting. Hold them fast when you go home, in your family, with all your concerns there.

I did not read the greater part of the chapter [concerning what followed], but how could this impossibility take place? Well, during the night, the night following, there were a few lepers and they were dying of starvation. One of them said, Let us go and give ourselves up to the enemy, the Syrians. If we stop here, we shall die of hunger. If we go into the city, we shall die of hunger there. If we go to the Syrians, they might kill us, but it would not be any worse, we should just die. But there is the possibility that they may be merciful to us. Of course, you cannot help thinking of that *who can tell?* of a feelingly-needy sinner. If I stay away I perish, but if I go to the Saviour, the worst is, I can perish.

“I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For, if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die.”

Then you see,

“But if I die, with mercy sought,
When I the King have tried,
This were to die (delightful thought!)
As sinner never died.”

So they came to give themselves up to the invading army. When they came there, there was not any army; there were not any Syrians. What had happened? The Lord had caused them to hear a noise in the night. They thought it was an army coming against them, and they fled. “The wicked flee when no man pursueth.” O what an easy thing it is for God to overturn the enemies of His people! They thought they heard a noise, and they fled.

So here was food in plenty, and treasure. You can imagine the delight of these poor lepers. They were eating to their fill and helping themselves to all this precious treasure. Then one of them said, “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.” And so they went into the city to tell this joyful news. We have had more than one at Bethel over the years who has been affected by that word, “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."

And of course it was too good to be true. The king sent out his spies, but they came back – everything the lepers said was true, and so all this treasure and all this food was gathered into the city. And so it came to pass as the Lord had said. "So a measure of fine flour *was* sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley" *were* sold "for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord." Do not forget, there is judgment as well as mercy. That lord on whose hand the king leaned, who had mocked at the word of God, the people surged forward in their hunger and he was trampled to death underfoot.

This is one of the wonderful accounts of the Word of God, and it should be such an encouragement to us in prayer, and then when we are back in our own homes, especially this: "To morrow about this time." Well, they thought "to morrow about this time" they would be dead, but they were not. Perhaps you think of "to morrow about this time." "*Even there* shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Even "to morrow about this time." What have you got "to morrow about this time"? Do you believe that even before then the Lord can appear, even before then the Lord can answer your prayers, even before then that the Lord can turn your captivity? "To morrow about this time." Well then, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 30th June, 2003