

## Why Should I Wait For the Lord? - 1

(2 Ki. 6:24-7:20)

This sermon, the third of our series on God, Elisha, and Israel, was preached last Jan. 30, 2011 at GGCF, Escario St., Cebu City.

### Introduction

When you study 2 Kings, remember the reason why the author of Kings wrote it. His purpose is to teach Israel important lessons of how to trust God in good times and bad and what will happen if they do so. The lessons are what theologians call, “Deuteronomic,” based on Deut. 11:26-28. If Israel obeys Yahweh, Yahweh will bless them. If she does not obey Yahweh, Yahweh will curse them. 2 Kings is a narrative of how the nation of Israel obeys and disobeys God; and how God blesses and curses them.

At this point of the miraculous ministry of the prophet Elisha, Samaria, a key city in the northern kingdom of Israel, is besieged by Syria (READ v. 24). Nobody can get in to bring food; and nobody can get out to get food. The result is a terrible famine in the city (READ v. 25). The famine is so bad that people are now forced to eat a donkey’s head, which they did not normally eat (Lev. 11:3) and dove’s dung.

Can you imagine eating dove’s dung? According to the law of supply and demand, low supply with high demand means high prices. So a donkey’s head now costs eighty shekels of silver. A shekel is about 11 grams. Eighty shekels is 880 grams of silver. Now that’s very expensive for just a donkey’s head. One-fourth of a kab of dove’s dung is now sold for five shekels of silver. A kab is about 1 liter; so one-fourth of a kab is one-fourth liter. One-fourth liter of dove’s dung now cost 55 grams of silver. That is very expensive indeed for dove’s dung.

Have you experienced economic hardship and have gone hungry? I remember during the economic crisis back in the 70s, life was so hard that we were forced to eat fried grasshoppers (“apan-apan”). I remember seeing fried grasshoppers on our table. But grasshoppers eat only plants; and I think they are good to eat. I read somewhere that in 2009 (?), two out of ten Filipinos ate only once a day for several months. At least, they could still eat some food. But the people in Samaria have no more food to eat.

When Jehoram, the King of Israel faced Elisha, he said, “*This trouble is from the LORD! Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?*” (v. 33). Have you asked yourself that question before? *My husband is irresponsible and my kids are disobedient. Why should I wait on the Lord? If I don’t lie, cheat, and bribe others in business, I will lose my business. Why should we wait for the Lord? I now have the chance to go to the USA and become a TNT (“tago na tago” – always hiding as an illegal alien). Why should I wait on the Lord? We will find some of the answers to that question in our text today.*

I see here three negative reasons why you should wait for the Lord, and three positive reasons why you should wait for the Lord in hard times. Today, we will look into the three negative reasons and next Sunday, the three positive reasons.

### Desperate Measures You Will Regret

The first negative reason why you should wait for the Lord in hard times is: Because If You Don’t, You’ll Resort to Desperate Measures that You Will Regret Later. (READ 6:26-27) The threshing floor and the winepress here are symbols of divine judgment. You can feel the frustration of the King here. The King was saying, “*If Yahweh cannot help, then how can I? Where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or winepress?*” The King seems to be saying that there is no help to be found in divine judgment. King Jehoram then asked the woman her problem. The woman told him about her deal with another woman (READ vv. 28-29). This woman was so desperate that she resorted to cannibalism. But the other mother hid her son and broke the deal. I think the woman who killed her son regretted it for the rest of her life.

Why then should you wait for the Lord in hard times? Because if you don’t, you will do bad things that you will regret later on. “*No Christian guy has courted me yet, while there’s this handsome, nice non-believer who loves me. Why should I wait on the Lord?*” Because if you don’t, marrying an unbeliever is an act of disobeying God that will give you more pain and trouble later on. If you learn to trust God and wait on Him today, you will do things that will block the blessings of God upon your life.

## Deceitful Finger-Pointing

The second negative reason why you should wait for the Lord in hard times is: Because If You Don't, You'll Blame Somebody Else, Even God. (READ vv. 30-31) When King Jehoram blamed Elisha for the calamity, what does that tell you about his faith in Yahweh? That tells me that he did not trust Yahweh. If he was trusting Yahweh, he'll stop blaming anybody.

But think about it—Elisha is the mouthpiece of God. If King Jehoram blames Elisha, who is he really blaming? Yes, he's actually blaming God. The truth is: the king has nobody to blame but himself and Israel. This calamity is happening because of Israel's sin. Long ago, Moses prophesied that if Israel will disobey Yahweh, Yahweh shall curse her (Deut. 11:26-28).

What did Paul tell us in 1 Thess. 4:3-8? (READ). When you don't like what God is telling you, you despise God. In other words, you blame God.

Look at v. 30. In the OT, kings and prophets would wear sackcloths as a mark of mourning. It's a public mourning, so they wear sackcloths publicly. When King Jehoram mourned, instead of going to God in prayer, he blamed Elisha.

Let's look again at his words in v. 33. (READ) Why does he know that the crisis is from the LORD? Why does he know that he should wait any longer? It's possible that the prophet Elisha already told him before that the Syrians will come. It's possible that the prophet Elisha must have told him that they will surround Samaria; and that there will be a famine. Maybe that's why the king blamed Elisha for this trouble. But Elisha must have told them also that they need to trust in the LORD for He will take care of them in hard times.

God does not promise you that you won't go into hard times. But God promises to give you His grace in hard times. He promises to see you through hard times. Our job is to keep trusting the Lord in hard times. Because if you don't wait on the Lord, you will get into the blame game and blame somebody.

What happened next? (READ vv. 32-33) What happens when you blame somebody? You do desperate, stupid things. Here, King Jehoram sent his assassin to kill Elisha. But by the power of God, Elisha sees the assassin coming to him and why he is coming. He asks the elders to shut the door and block it. Then he says in v. 32, "*Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?*" This is amazing stuff, because Elisha could actually see miraculously that the king is following right behind the assassin. Maybe the king regretted his action and tried to catch up with the assassin to give him a message.

Look at v. 33, because it shows that the king has caught up with the messenger. Note the king's message to Elisha. (READ v. 33) Listen! If you'll Blame Somebody Else, Be Careful of 3 things: Be careful that you don't blame the messenger for the message. Be careful that you don't also blame God for it. Be careful that you don't do anything stupid.

## Divine Judgment

The third negative reason why you should wait for the Lord is: Because If You Don't, God will Judge Your Unbelief. (READ 7:1) To the King's cry of anguish, the prophet Elisha answers with a word of hope. This word is a prophetic word direct from God. Tomorrow, Elisha says, a seah of flour (about 7.3 liters) shall be sold for a shekel (about 11 grams). Two seahs of barley (about 14.6 liters) shall be sold for a shekel (11 grams). What does this mean? The law of supply and demand—when food supply is more, and the demand is low, food prices shall be low. This means that food shall come very cheap, because it shall be plenty. That is good news indeed! It comes at a time when people are eating donkey heads and dove dung. It comes at a time when mothers are cooking their children. It comes at a time when a helpless King is in a killing fury.

But it's still tomorrow, not today. Would it not be easier if we could just see some signs of God's help today? Sometimes, God will send no signs, because he wants us to exercise faith in His Word. "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen*" (Heb. 11:1, NKJV). If there are no signs, then it is of faith. If there are signs, then it is not of faith. For faith is not faith if the object of faith is seen already.

But how did the King's right hand man react? (READ v. 2a) He refused to believe God's Word. It seems like he was saying, *"Even if the Lord will make windows of heaven, and pour out grain like rain, there will still be famine tomorrow."*

He's saying that what God says will happen, will not happen. That's unbelief. Unbelief says that what God has promised will not happen. Unbelief says that what God has said is not true.

(READ v. 2b) As divine punishment, Elisha prophesied that he will see it happen, but he will not live to enjoy it. We ask now, how did this prophecy happen to that unbelieving man? Look with me in vv. 16-20.

(READ) To make the story short, the four lepers discovered that the Syrians fled in the night. They fled believing that Israel's friends have sent a large army to them. They left behind plenty of food. When the lepers told the King, the King sent out scouts to check it out. When they came back and confirmed it, all the people ran out of the gates to get the food. And so it happened that a seah of flour was sold for a shekel; and two seahs of barley for a shekel.

But what happened to the right hand man of the king? He got trampled down by the people of the gate. He saw it, but did not live to enjoy it.

So why should you wait for the Lord in times of trial? Because if you don't, due to your unbelief, God will judge your unbelief.

### **Conclusion**

Yahweh is dealing with Israel harshly because of her sin. But He is also dealing with Israel graciously, when she is obeying His covenant. In this time of divine discipline, King Jehoram wants to get out by making a shortcut. Isn't that how we face God's trials sometimes? We want to bail out by our own shortcuts, believing that our solutions will solve it. But the more we do it on our own, without waiting on the Lord, the more we get into trouble, the more pain we get.

Look at what Elisha said, *"Tomorrow about this time."* Did you hear that? Are you about to give up? Don't give up! God's answer might come sooner than you think! It might not come today, it might come tomorrow. It might not come now, it might come later. Whether it will come today or tomorrow, it will come!

If God's answer does not come today, your responsibility as a kingdom believer is to trust God and obey Him today. God's promise to the heroes of the faith did not come in their lifetimes. They did not see it in their day. But they kept on trusting God. God commended them for their faith (Heb. 11). Learn from God when you face your trials. While you're learning, wait for the Lord.

So why should you wait for the Lord any longer? Because if you don't, you'll resort to desperate solutions that are wrong, and that you might bring you more pain. Because if you don't, you'll start blaming somebody else. But it shows that you are not really trusting God. You might actually be blaming God for it! Wait for the Lord, because if you don't, God will judge your unbelief and you will lose God's rewards.

*"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"* (Heb. 11:6, NKJV). But what will happen if you wait for the Lord? The Bible says in Isa. 40:31, *"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint"* (NKJV).