PROCLAIMING GOOD NEWS IN BAD TIMES

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** [**2 Kings 7:9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Kings%207.9)**-11….**3And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? 4If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.5And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.6For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.7Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.8And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.9Then they said one to another, 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.10So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.11And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.

**INTRODUCTION**

**1. In the period of Israel's history known as "The Divided Kingdom"**

 **(ca. 931-722 B.C.)...**

 **a. The nation was divided into two parts**

 **1) The kingdom of Israel in the north with Samaria as its capitol**

 **2) The kingdom of Judah in the south with Jerusalem for its**

 **capitol**

 **b. The weakened condition of both kingdoms left it open to attacks**

 **by other countries**

 **1) Some near …. (e.g., Syria Moab, Ammon)**

 **2) Others from afar (e.g., Assyria, Babylon)**

**2. We read of one siege of Samaria in** [**2Ki 6:24-29**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ki%206.24-29)

 **a. Orchestrated by Ben-Hadad, king of Syria**

 **b. Which brought a terrible famine upon the city of Samaria**

**3. Among those suffering in the famine were four lepers...**

 **a. They discussed their plight –**

[**2Ki 7:3-4a**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ki%207.3-4a)

 **b. In desperation they decided to surrender to the Syrians –**

[**2 Ki 7:4b**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Ki%207.4b)

 **c. To their surprise, they found the Syrian camp abandoned –**

[**2 Ki 7:5-7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Ki%207.5-7)

 **d. At first, they boasted in their newfound riches –**

[**2Ki 7:8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ki%207.8)

 **e. But upon reflection, they knew they needed to tell others what**

 **they found, and did so –**

[**2Ki 7:9-11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ki%207.9-11)

 **-- There is a valuable lesson we learn from the four lepers,**

 **especially when they said:**

**"This day is a day of good news..."**

**4. In this message today,I will share the following 3 things...**

 **a. Some parallels between the lepers then, and ourselves now!**

 **b. The consequences of keeping silent when we have good news to**

 **share**

 **c. Why some people may be keeping silent today!**

**Allow me to begin then with some...]**

**I. SIMILARITIES THEN AND NOW**

1. **IN EACH CASE WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A FAMINE...**

 **1. BACK… Then, it was a famine for food.**

 **2. TODAY…it is a famine for the blessings only God can provide!**

 **a. Our famine today is related to the problem of sin –**

[**Ro 3:23**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%203.23)**….23For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

 **b. Yet God provides the free gift of salvation –**

[**Ro 6:23**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%206.23)**….23For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

1. **IN EACH CASE, THERE IS AN ABUNDANCE FREELY AVAILABLE...**

 **1. Then, there was plenty of food in the Syrian camp**

 **2. Now, there is an abundance of spiritual blessings in Christ!**

[**Ep 1:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%201.3)**; 3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:**

[**Re 22:17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%2022.17)**…17And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

1. **IN EACH CASE, THERE ARE THOSE WHO FOUND WHAT THEY NEEDED...**

 **1. Then, it was the four lepers**

 **2. Now, it is the Christians who have experienced the joys of**

 **salvation!**

 **D. BUT HERE IS WHERE THE SIMILARITY OFTEN ENDS...**

1. **The lepers knew what was right, and did it**

 **a. They knew they would be wrong by keeping silent**

 **b. They knew punishment would befall them if they kept the**

 **good news to themselves**

 **-- So they went back to the city and told the good news!**

1. **Many Christians are not like these lepers...**

 **a. Despite it being "a day of good news", they remain silent!**

 **b. While many die of spiritual starvation, they feast on the**

 **gospel!**

 **-- Do they not consider that what they do is wrong?**

1. **WE DO WELL TO LEARN FROM THESE LEPERS...**

 **1. What they said of themselves at first, may be true of us: "We**

 **are not doing what is right. This day is a day of good news,**

 **and we remain silent."**

 **2. What else they said may also be true of us: "If we wait until**

 **morning light, some punishment will come upon us."**

**[In reasoning among themselves, they considered the consequences of**

**keeping silent in a day of good news.**

**My Question to us today is…….**

**Have we considered the consequences of keeping silent with the good news of the gospel?]**

**II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF KEEPING SILENT**

 **A. WE FAIL TO KEEP THE GREAT COMMISSION...**

 **1. Jesus wanted His disciples to observe ALL that He commanded**

 **-** [**Mt 28:18-20**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%2028.18-20)

 **2. Included is the command to "Go and make disciples..."**

 **-- Keeping silent is not what Jesus commanded!**

 **B. WE FAIL OUR MISSION AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD...**

 **1. As the privileged people of God, we are to proclaim the**

 **praises of God –**

[**1Pe 2:9-10**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%202.9-10)**….9But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;10Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.**

 **2. Especially in regards to:**

 **a. How God "called you out of darkness into His marvelous**

 **light"**

 **b. How we "who had not obtained mercy...now have obtained**

 **mercy"**

 **-- How can God's "own special people" do this while keeping**

 **silent?**

 **C. WE WILL ANSWER TO GOD FOR FAILING OUR MISSION...**

 **1. Just as God told Ezekiel, whom He made to be "a watchman for**

 **the house of Israel"**

1. **Ezekiel was to warn the wicked –**

[**Ezek 3:17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ezek%203.17)**….17Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.**

 **b. If Ezekiel failed to warn the wicked, the wicked would die**

 **for his own sin, but Ezekiel would also be held**

 **accountable! –**

[**Ezek 3:18-21**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ezek%203.18-21)**18When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.19Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.20Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.**

 **2. Today, the church is God's "watchman" to the world!**

1. **We are to take the gospel to every person! –**

[**Mk 16:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%2016.15)**…15And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

 **b. Those who have not heard will die in their own sin, but we**

 **will be held accountable if we gave them no warning!**

**[Despite the consequences of keeping silent, many Christians do not**

**tell others about the good news of Jesus Christ.**

**Why is this so? Here are some possibilities...]**

**III. WHY MANY KEEP SILENT**

1. **FOR SOME, IT MAY BE THEY ARE STARVING THEMSELVES...**
2. **They may have experienced the joy of salvation in the past...**

 **a. But through negligence they have failed to grow, and have**

 **forgotten the blessings of salvation**

[**2Pe 1:8-9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Pe%201.8-9)**….8For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.9But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins**

 **b. In a real sense, they have returned to a state of spiritual**

 **famine!**

1. **Therefore, they have little or nothing to share with others**

 **2. Those who are enjoying the blessings of salvation will want to**

 **tell others…**

1. **As Philip did when he found Jesus .**

[**Jn 1:43-46**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%201.43-46)**…..43The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.44Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter45Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.46And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.**

**Don't you have any "good news" worth sharing?**

 **B. FOR SOME, IT MAY BE OUT OF FEAR OR DISCOURAGEMENT...**

 **1. If "fear" keeps us silent, remember that:**

 **a. First place in the list of those consigned to the lake of**

 **fire are the "cowardly" –**

[**Re 21:8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%2021.8)**….8But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.**

1. **God does not want us to be fearful –**

[**2Ti 1:7-8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ti%201.7-8)**….7For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.8Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;**

1. **Boldness can come through prayer…**

[**Ac 4:29**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ac%204.29)**,**[**31**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ac%204.31)**; 29And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,**

1. **If "discouragement" keeps us silent, then remember:**

 **a. The principle of sowing and reaping - cf.**

[**Ga 6:9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ga%206.9)**…9And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**

 **b. The example of our Lord Jesus - cf**

[**He 12:1-3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%2012.1-3)**….12 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,2Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds**

 **-- Fear and discouragement, as problematic as they may be, come**

 **be overcome with faith and perseverance!**

 **C. FOR MANY, IT MAY BE THE IDEA THAT IT IS TOO COMPLICATED...**

 **1. As though in order to teach someone, one needed:**

 **a. A master's degree in inter-personal communication**

 **b. Fours of Bible in college, or some other specialized**

 **training**

 **2. In reality, our task is really quite simple...**

 **a. To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ –**

[**Mk 16:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%2016.15)**….15And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

 **1) Which can be presented in the simplest of terms - cf.**

[**1Co 15:1-4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2015.1-4)**; 15 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;2By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.3For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;4And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures**

 **2) Note that in the book of Acts, the gospel was normally**

 **presented in just one lesson!**

 **b. We are not obligated to teach the non-Christian beyond the**

 **"first principles"**

 **1) Only if they accept the "first principles", will they**

 **ready to receive the "second principles"**

 **2) E.g., why teach people about "Christ's church" (its**

 **organization, work, worship, etc.), if they are not**

 **willing to obey Christ elementary commands pertaining to**

 **faith, repentance, confession and baptism?**

 **3) Such "second principles" can be left to those "pastors**

 **and teachers" who are especially gifted in that area**

1. **Sharing the "gospel" is easy, provided we:**
2. **Follow the words of Peter –**

[**1Pe 3:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%203.15)**…..15But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

 **1) Give the Lord a special place in your heart**

 **2) Prepare yourselves to be ready to give a reason for the**

 **hope that you have**

 **a) E.g., that Christ died for your sins and rose again**

[**1Co 15:1-4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2015.1-4)**….15 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;2By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.3For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;4And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**

 **b) E.g., that you responded to the gospel as proclaimed**

 **by Peter and the apostles –**

[**Ac 2:36-38**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ac%202.36-38)**….36Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.37Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?38Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

1. **Follow the words of Paul –**

[**Col 4:2-6**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col%204.2-6)**; ….2Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;3Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:4That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.5Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.**

[**Ep 6:19-20**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%206.19-20)**….19And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,20For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

1. **Pray for opportunity - cf.**

[**1Co 3:5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%203.5)**….5Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?**

 **a) It is the Lord who provides the opportunity**

 **b) And He gives it to those who are prepared and praying**

 **2) Pray for wisdom - cf.**

[**Jam 1:5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jm%201.5)**….5If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.**

 **a) To make the most of the opportunity**

 **b) To say the right thing in the right way at the right**

 **time**

 **3) Pray for boldness**

 **a) To have the courage to speak when given the**

 **opportunity**

 **b) To be able to say what people need to hear, not**

 **necessarily what they want to hear**

**CONCLUSION**

**1. Brethren, if we are silent with regards to the "good news" (the**

 **gospel), then the words of the four lepers is true of us:**

 **"We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we**

 **remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment**

 **will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell..."**

 **-** [**2Ki 7:9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ki%207.9)

**2. Yes, "let us go and tell" a world that is spiritually starved about**

 **the feast God offers through His Son Jesus Christ!**

 **a. Let us share with others what we ourselves have found!**

 **b. Let them experience the joy, the peace, and the love that only**

 **God can give!**

**3. Indeed, "This Day Is A Day Of Good News" because it is the "day of**

 **salvation", and no one should receive the grace of God in vain!**

[**2Co 6:1-2**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Co%206.1-2)**….6 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.2(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**

**Will we who have been so richly blessed accept the responsibility**

**Christ has placed on us? If our fervor has died down, then we should**

**remember the words of Jesus:**

 **"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your**

 **first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen;**

 **repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly**

 **and remove your lampstand from its place; unless you repent."**

 **-** [**Re 2:4-5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%202.4-5)