

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Dec 10

MONDAY

The king of Syria leads his army against Samaria, the capital of Israel. Because of the siege, there is a terrible famine in Samaria. Once, as the king of Israel is touring the outer defenses, he comes across a woman who is telling a most gruesome story of people committing cannibalism.

READ: II Kings 6:24-29

This is one of the saddest episodes we read of in a long list of sad episodes involving Israel because it didn't have to be. Remember, this all came about because of the refusal of the King and the people to follow the Lord. Instead, they chased after their own devices, and that path leads to destruction. No wonder we are exhorted to follow the Lord in all our ways for all our days. That means today, too, in whatever it is we are planning on doing.

TUESDAY

Hearing the woman's story, the king tears his clothing as a sign of remorse. He pledges that he will have Elisha's head that very day. Sometime later, Elisha is at home when he predicts that the king's messenger is coming to get him, with the king right behind him. Sure enough, they both show up.

READ: II Kings 6:30-33

The king blames Elisha. How pathetic is that! The messenger always gets blamed. The blame game is part of our culture, too. It's always the other guy's fault. Or society's. Or my parents'. Or yours. Anybody's but mine. Let us not play that game. When we come before the Lord, let us be honest in how we present ourselves: guilty, vile, and helpless, we; spotless Lamb of God was He! There is no need to blame anyone. The need is to deal with the sin in my own life! Long before we cast that first stone.

WEDNESDAY

Elisha declares some real discount prices on food, meaning that the famine will end tomorrow. One of his advisors there expressed his doubts and Elisha predicts that although there will be lots of food, that man would not taste it. Meanwhile, four lepers in Samaria decide that despite the Syrian army's siege, they would sneak out of the city and search for food.

READ: II Kings 7:1-4

The four lepers picture mankind in our helpless situation. There is no way, they conclude, that they have any hope of surviving unless the Syrians show mercy and allow them to do so. There is no way that mankind can escape the wages of sin and have a right standing with God unless God shows mercy

and acts on our behalf. Is it not amazing to you that God does that?! That's my story and yours today - that when we were without hope, Christ died for us, and in doing so, procured our salvation. For beggars such as you & me!

THURSDAY

The four lepers are surprised to find that the Syrian army gone – leaving in such a hurry that even their belongings and food supplies are left behind. They find gold and silver, too. They hide that for later on.

READ: II Kings 7:5-8

The Lord made the Syrian army hear the noise of chariots and horses and the armies of the Hittites and the Egyptians (even though there were no armies, horses, or chariots). *And they arose and fled.* God's ways are totally marvelous, aren't they! God just sent the sound like He sends the rain. And it started to be noisy. Our trust is well-placed when we place in God. He can do anything. He can send the sound of battle which scatters the army.

FRIDAY

The four lepers are in the middle of gorging themselves and hiding their new-found wealth, when suddenly, they remember that the rest of the population of Samaria is starving to death. So they hightail it back to Samaria.

READ: II Kings 7:9-11

We can't read this part of the story without thinking that there's a similarity to the believer who is feasting on the goodness of salvation in the middle of a world staring for the truth. How can we just sit here and be filled day-after-day and Sunday-after-Sunday and never tell anyone else about it? How can we enjoy the banquet knowing that others are fighting each other over crumbs?

SATURDAY

The king is suspicious when he hears from the four lepers that the Assyrian army has departed. "It's a trap," he tells his advisors. One of them suggests that he send out the cavalry and check out the lepers' story. Of course, their story does check out, and soon, all Samaria is eating again.

READ: II Kings 7:12-16

"Check it out." We say that when we tell someone about a TV show we think they might enjoy, or a sale at Penney's or a new recipe. Can we apply that to spiritual things - to the things of God? Can we tell people to check it out? Yes we can! In fact, we do that all the time without saying anything, by the way we live our lives before them. "Check out the reality of the changed life," we are saying. "Watch the way I live my life for God and see Christianity in action."