

“This Day Is A Day Of Good Tidings”

Introduction. In the period of Israel’s history known as the “divided kingdom” (931-722 B.C.), the nation was divided into two parts: the kingdom of Israel in the north with Samaria as its capital and the kingdom of Judah in the south with Jerusalem for its capital

The weakened condition of both kingdoms left it open to attacks by other countries such as Syria, Moab, Ammon, Assyria, and Babylon. We read of one siege of Samaria in 2 Kings 6:24-29 which was orchestrated by Ben-Hadad, king of Syria and brought a terrible famine upon the city of Samaria.

Among those suffering in the famine were four lepers. In 2 Kings 7:3-9, they first discussed their plight and in desperation decided to surrender to the Syrians. To their surprise, they found the Syrian camp abandoned. At first, they splurged in their newfound riches, but upon reflection, they knew they needed to tell others what they found, and did so. There is a valuable lesson we learn from the four lepers, especially when they said, “This day is a day of good tidings.”

In our study, we shall notice some parallels between the lepers then, and ourselves now, the consequences of keeping silent when we have good news to share, and why some people may be keeping silent today.

I. *Parallels Then And Now*

- A. In each case, there is a famine.
 1. Then, it was a famine for food.
 2. Now, it is a famine for the blessings only God can provide.
 - a. Our famine is related to the problem of sin (Romans 3:23).
 - b. Yet God provides the free gift of salvation (Romans 6:23).
- B. 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 (Ephesians 1:3; Revelation 22:17; Isaiah 55:1-2).
- C. In each case, there are those who found what they needed.
 1. Then, it was the four lepers.
 2. Now, it is Christians who have experienced the joys of salvation (Hebrews 6:1-6)..
- 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 withheld the good news, so they went back and told the good news.

2. 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?
- E. We do well to learn from these lepers.
 1. What they said of themselves at first, may be true of us: "We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace."
 2. What else they said may also be true of us: "If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us."

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 (Matthew 28:18-20).
 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 proclaim the praises of God (1 Peter 2:9-10).
 2. 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, who was "a watchman for the house of Israel."
 - a. Ezekiel was to warn the wicked (Ezekiel 3:17).
 - b. If Ezekiel failed to warn the wicked, the wicked would die for his own sin, but Ezekiel would also be held accountable (Ezekiel 3:18-21).
 2. Today, the church is God's "watchman" to the world!
 - a. We are to take the gospel to every person (Mark 16:15).
 - b. Those who have not heard will die in their own sin, but we will be held accountable if we gave them no warning (2 Corinthians 5:10)!

III. ***Why Many Keep Silent***

- A. For some, it may be they are starving themselves.
 1. 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 (2 Peter 1:8-9).
 - b. In a real sense, they have returned to a state of spiritual famine; therefore, they have little or nothing to share with others.

2. Those who are enjoying the blessings of salvation will want to tell others.
 - a. As David did in his psalm (Psalm 32:1-11).
 - b. As Philip did when he found Jesus (John 1:43-46).
- B. For some, it may be out of fear or discouragement.
 1. If "fear" keeps us silent, remember that:
 - a. First in the list of those consigned to the lake of fire are the "cowardly" (Revelation 21:8).
 - b. God does not want us to be fearful (2 Timothy 1:7-8).
 - c. Boldness can come through prayer (Acts 4:29-31; Ephesians 6:19-20).
 2. If "discouragement" keeps us silent, then remember:
 - a. The principle of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:9).
 - b. The example of our Lord Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3).
- C. For many, it may be the idea that it is too complicated.
 1. In reality, our task is really quite simple.
 - a. We preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15).
 - i. This can be presented in the simplest of terms (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2:2).
 - ii. 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."
 - i. Only if they accept the "first principles," will they be ready to receive the "second principles."
 - ii. Why teach people about all the facets of the church (its organization, work, worship, etc.), if they are not willing to obey Christ's elementary commands pertaining to faith, repentance, confession and baptism?
 2. Teaching the "gospel" is easy, provided we:
 - a. Follow the words of Peter (1 Peter 3:15).
 - i. Give the Lord a special place in your heart.
 - ii. Prepare yourselves to be ready to give a reason for the hope that you have.
 - 1) E.g., that Christ died for your sins and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
 - 2) E.g., that you responded to the gospel as proclaimed by Peter and the apostles (Acts 2:36-38).
 - b. Follow the words of Paul (Colossians 4:2-6).
 - i. Pray for opportunity (2 Thessalonians 3:1).
 - 1) It is the Lord who provides the opportunity.
 - 2) And He gives it to those who are prepared and praying.

- ii. Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
 - 1) To make the most of the opportunity.
 - 2) To say the right thing in the right way at the right time.
- iii. Pray for boldness (Acts 4:13).
 - 1) To have the courage to speak when given the opportunity.
 - 2) To be able to say what people need to hear, not what they want to hear.

Conclusion. If we are silent with regards to the “good news” (the gospel), then the words of the four lepers in 2 Kings 7:9 are true of us. We need to “go and tell” a world that is spiritually starved about the feast God offers through His Son Jesus Christ! Let us share with others what we ourselves have found. Let them experience the joy, the peace, and the love that only God can give. 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 (2 Corinthians 6:1-2). 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 in Revelation 2:4-5.