

A Miracle: Both Expected and Unexpected

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[This is a longer scripture reading than usual, but do take the time to read it – all. It is important for grasping this message.
j.v.ed.]

Please read with me this story from the Old Testament: 2 Kings 6:24 through all of Chapter 7. We'll read it from The Message paraphrase.

24 At a later time, this: Ben-Hadad king of Aram pulled together his troops and launched a siege on Samaria. **25** This brought on a terrible famine, so bad that food prices soared astronomically. Eighty shekels for a donkey's head! Five shekels for a bowl of field greens!

26 One day the king of Israel was walking along the city wall. A woman cried out, "Help! Your majesty!" **27** He answered, "If God won't help you, where on earth can I go for help? To the granary? To the dairy?" **28** The king continued, "Tell me your story." She said, "This woman came to me and said, 'Give up your son and we'll have him for today's supper; tomorrow we'll eat my son.' **29** So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I told her, 'Your turn - bring your son so we can have him for supper.' But she had hidden her son away." **30** When the king heard the woman's story he ripped apart his robe. Since he was walking on the city wall, everyone saw that next to his skin he was wearing coarse burlap. **31** And he called out, "God do his worst to me - and more - if Elisha son of Shaphat still has a head on his shoulders at this day's end."

32 Elisha was sitting at home, the elders sitting with him. The king had already dispatched an executioner, but before the man arrived Elisha spoke to the elders: "Do you know that this murderer has just now sent a man to take off my head? Look, when the executioner arrives, shut the door and lock it. Don't I even now hear the footsteps of his master behind him?" **33** While he was giving his instructions, the king showed up, accusing, "This trouble is directly from God! And what's next? I'm fed up with God!"

Chapter 7, verse 1 Elisha said, "Listen! God's word! The famine's over. This time tomorrow food will be plentiful - a handful of meal for a shekel; two handfuls of grain for a shekel. The market at the city gate will be buzzing." **2** The attendant on whom the king leaned for support said to the Holy Man, "You expect us to believe that? Trapdoors opening in the sky and food tumbling out?" "You'll watch it with your own eyes," he said, "but you will not eat so much as a mouthful!"

3 It happened that four lepers were sitting just outside the city gate. They said to one another, "What are we doing sitting here at death's door? **4** If we enter the famine-struck city we'll die; if we stay here we'll die. So let's take our chances in the camp of Aram and throw ourselves on their mercy. If they receive us we'll live, if they kill us we'll die. We've got nothing to lose." **5** So after the sun went down they got up and went to the camp of Aram. When they got to the edge of the camp, surprise! Not a man in the camp! **6** The Master had made the army of Aram hear the sound of horses and a mighty army on the march. They told one another, "The king of Israel hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to attack us!" **7** Panicked, they ran for their lives through the darkness, abandoning tents, horses, donkeys - the whole camp just as it was - running for dear life.

8 These four lepers entered the camp and went into a tent. First they ate and drank. Then they grabbed silver, gold, and clothing, and went off and hid it. They came back, entered another tent, and looted it, again hiding their plunder. **9** Finally they said to one another, "We shouldn't be doing this! This is a day of good news and we're making it into a private party! If we wait around until morning we'll get caught and punished. Come on! Let's go tell the news to the king's palace!" **10** So they went and called out at the city gate, telling what had happened: "We went to the camp of Aram and, surprise! - the place was deserted. Not a soul, not a sound! Horses and donkeys left tethered and tents abandoned just as they were." **11** The gatekeepers got the word to the royal palace, giving them the whole story.

12 Roused in the middle of the night, the king told his servants, "Let me tell you what Aram has done. They knew that we were starving, so they left camp and have hid in the field, thinking, 'When they come

out of the city, we'll capture them alive and take the city." **13** One of his advisors answered, "Let some men go and take five of the horses left behind. The worst that can happen is no worse than what could happen to the whole city. Let's send them and find out what's happened."

14 They took two chariots with horses. The king sent them after the army of Aram with the orders, "Scout them out; find out what happened." **15** They went after them all the way to the Jordan. The whole way was strewn with clothes and equipment that Aram had dumped in their panicked flight. The scouts came back and reported to the king. **16** The people then looted the camp of Aram. Food prices dropped overnight - a handful of meal for a shekel; two handfuls of grain for a shekel - God's word to the letter!

17 The king ordered his attendant, the one he leaned on for support, to be in charge of the city gate. The people, turned into a mob, poured through the gate, trampling him to death. It was exactly what the Holy Man had said when the king had come to see him. **18** Every word of the Holy Man to the king - "A handful of meal for a shekel, two handfuls of grain for a shekel this time tomorrow in the gate of Samaria," **19** with the attendant's sarcastic reply to the Holy Man, "You expect us to believe that? Trapdoors opening in the sky and food tumbling out?" followed by the response, "You'll watch it with your own eyes, but you won't eat so much as a mouthful" - proved true. **20** The final stroke came when the people trampled the man to death at the city gate.

I give no apology for the lengthy reading. We *ought* to be able to read the Scriptures – the whole context of the stories. I used to cut way back on the reading of the Word, to save time, and one day I thought the Lord said to me: “Since when is what you have to say more important than what I’ve already said?” ☺ And so we have read the entirety of this story. We needed to do that so we can understand the whole scene and appreciate the significance in its fullness.

It’s interesting to me that if you do some research on miracles in the Bible, or find books on miracles that are declared or described in the Bible, very often this particular story is ignored. But the reality of what we have just read is truly a miracle.

I felt your groans, although I didn’t hear them, as we read the latter part of chapter 6. What a horrendous story! The people were starving to death, and here we find two women arguing over a deal they had made to kill their children and eat them. Apparently one of the women participated in the eating of another’s child but then reneged to save her own. Yes, that is a *horrendous* story, and yet it is a true one.

I believe it to be a picture of a lot of things that are happening today. I have a daughter in her 50’s and it’s amazing to me to hear her say, “Oh, how things have changed since I was a young woman.” And I can respond: “I’m 23 years older than you – that’s not hard for me to recognize.” ☺

Things have changed. There’s a constant turn-over from what we used to know. “*He that is filthy, let him be filthier still*” (Rev.22:11). How many of you know that’s a scripture? How many of you know that’s a scripture that’s being fulfilled – today?

I really and truly cannot understand – or rather, I can’t grasp – the reports of iniquity that are happening these days, even in our own little circles. It is amazing to me that. . . . I’m just not going to go into it. All you have to do is watch the news. Well, if you are happy look at the news, but if you’re already depressed and you listen to the news, you’ll kill yourself. ☺ It’s not a happy report that we get about our world, day after day.

Now, the Scripture lays out this story to show the horrendous situation that existed in this particular place at this particular time in history. In view of that, along with our situations today, I believe Christians need to understand – the worst conditions offer the greatest opportunities!

I had sort of a short notice that I would be speaking tonight and thought, “Well, you know, I’ve been speaking for over 40 years. I certainly must have some message I could ‘warm up.’” ☺ So I began

going through some of my files, and the Lord stopped me short and declared: “I have another word to say through you.” And He directed me to what I’m sharing with you tonight. We could title it: “*A Miracle: Both Expected and Unexpected.*”

What is a miracle? If you look up the word in Webster’s Dictionary, it states: “A miracle is an event, or effect, in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws; it’s an extra-ordinary anomalist or abnormal event that is brought about by super-human agency.”

That’s in Webster’s. Read it again and be gripped by what even Webster has to say – “deviating from the known;” “transcending our knowledge;” “extra-ordinary;” “super-human.”

Why is it that Christians feel we have to make excuses for miracles? “Oh, you call everything a miracle, Iverna.” *Every* thing that goes beyond my natural comprehension – *everything* that happens that is greater than I can make happen myself – I call *miraculous!* And I believe it’s time for us – Christians – to learn to expect miracles! But we need to understand what that really is all about.

Miracles can be wrought only by Almighty power, as when Christ healed lepers saying, “*Be thou clean.*” Or, to the turmoiled waters He commanded, “*Peace. Be still.*”

What I’m saying is that miracles were performed directly by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit, by His Word – and by humans who were filled with that supernatural power of God.

If I asked this, and I’m not going to ask you for an answer, but if I did ask: “How many of you are looking forward to the Sunday Night Miracle Service here at the church – because you need a miracle?” I’m certain many hands would be raised – if I actually asked the question.

Then, if I asked you (the same audience) “How many of you are looking forward to Sunday Night’s service...” – remember, I’m not really asking.... But, “how many of you were looking forward to a Miracle Service – that you might perform a miracle?” Ahhhh... That makes you think, doesn’t it? The fact is, we line up as a bunch of “takers” over and over and over again.

Please understand this – if you have a *need*, you ought to come for prayer. I hope you know I believe that for a certainty. Let’s just put a period on that one right now. I truly believe that. But I think it’s time – especially for a body like this one who has had the incredible teaching and preaching and prophecies and opportunities to hear messengers from all over the world – it is time that the miracles begin to flow – *through you!*

Yet we are in service after service, and everything is pulpit or platform-centered and the rest of us sit there and – judge – or, rate – or, *evaluate*. ☺ “How good will this be?” and “How good will that be?” And “I hope Pastor gives me a word today....”

So we sit like giraffes in our seats – trying to get our heads up high enough that he spots us! ☺ [You didn’t think I noticed, did you? ☺] Each one hoping to hear: “Sister, I call you out.” “Brother, the Lord would say to you....”

Now I do thank God for pastor’s prophetic ministry. But I’m telling you, I know and am confident I have a word from God tonight. It is time for this church to begin to *flow in the miraculous* in the way God has gifted us! All of us.

I don’t have to convince you after the scripture reading that a miracle in their situation was desperately needed. Wouldn’t you agree? We know that just from reading this passage relating what has transpired. This isn’t a story about good people against bad people. It’s a story about *bad* people and *bad* people – needing God’s intervention.

No one – not anyone in this story – not Syria – nor Samaria – deserves the *grace of God*. No one has served Him. I’m speaking of the countries now. Neither of these countries as whole entities has served God rightly. Neither of these countries – Syria or Israel – has been walking in divine obedience so they can say: “I expect the blessings of God in my country.” They both deserve great judgment.

No wonder we hear throughout scripture, the cry of those who have been breathed upon by the Holy Spirit to recognize it: “*Oh, God, in judgment, remember mercy!*” (Hab.3:2). God must ultimately judge sin – sooner or later. In His grace and mercy, He allows for plenty of time, or room, for repentance to come, followed by reconciliation and restoration.

America *used to be* a country that legitimately could claim: “We walk under the illumination and guidance of the Almighty God. There is one God, one Lord, one Master.” We used to be able to honestly say that! But no longer. It *used to be* normal in this country to be a Christian. It was expected.

We all went to church – most of us – more than not. We believed in the Creator, Almighty God. We prided ourselves in our ethics and morality and good deeds – because we wanted the blessings of God to continue toward us. The *unusual* situation was when a person was not a Christian. Some of you are too young to remember that life or lifestyle. But that is the way it once was here in the USA – and not so long ago.

Christians didn’t all think *exactly* alike back then. You know – some dunked and some sprinkled; some had wine and some grape juice. There were differences in methodology, and in interpretation, and of doctrinal positions – but we served the same God and we recognized that common position. There was a sincere cry within the average person to serve and please Almighty God.

In one short lifespan, that has been snatched away! How did that happen?

Samaria was besieged by Syria in our story. Syria, who sat outside the gates of Samaria, prepared all of their own people to have plenty, but they cut off Samaria from outside supplies. They simply were willing to wait till those supplies ran out. In the meantime, Syria had plenty of water, plenty of food, plenty of clothes, plenty of everything.

They could just out-wait the inevitable. They could wait to see how long it would take to starve to death the people on the inside of the gates. Can you follow this story in your minds? Does it remind you of anything? Something in our contemporary times?

Just as surely, there has been an absolute *besieging* of our country – and it’s been so subtle. The “enemy” has been willing to patiently wait. We haven’t even realized we were under attack. But look – the blessings have been on the unbelievers.

The unbelievers, in letting down any protection of the believers, had to yield to one spirit or another (good or evil) – and *that which was filthy became filthier still*. So they were no longer just unbelievers of Christianity, they were yielded to the evil spirits that were hanging around waiting, prompting the take over this nation. Is this too heavy for you?

We in the Church didn’t see it happening because the only thing we knew was *love*. And we didn’t really understand love – we had “sloppy agape.” ☺ We just let – we allowed – anything to go unchecked. “Don’t take a stand against anything, you might hurt someone’s feelings; they might be *offended*. I know they probably shouldn’t say it like *that*, but what they really *meant* was...” What they meant was what they said!

We Christians were so *brain-washed* into winning the world by love.... Hello? That wasn’t love! Love corrects; love exhorts; love takes a stand for righteousness. Love refuses the falseness of teaching

that is anti-scripture. Love declares: “*There’s one God, one Lord, one Way.*” And that’s the Truth – there is **only one way!** His Name is Jesus!

Some people who were invited by other people to come hear me speak would respond by saying: “I didn’t care for her because she is so – extremely opinionated.” ☺ Well, I think it’s high time for Christians to become opinionated again – *if* – our opinions are *founded on the Word of God*. It can’t just be something we think up. You see, I care enough to speak up for rightness. That’s what love is.

I cared enough to correct my children as I raised them. I hope you do! I hope your children aren’t raising you, as I see in some homes. I hope we set limits because of our great love for our offspring. But this is what I hear from some parents, and so pathetically spoken, as if they can’t do anything about it: “Oh, but they threaten... They threaten to leave home.” My response to that? “Pack their bags! ☺ ... and leave the door unlocked! It’s not as good out there as they think it is, and they are going to come back.

Besides, when my son went through his rebellious state, I used to say to him –so frequently it’s a joke between us now – I used to say (and I sincerely meant this!) “You don’t have a chance. ☺ I don’t care what you learn to do – you don’t have a chance. I gave you to the Lord when you were born and you’re under a *covenant relationship* that *I* have with God – and there’s no way out for you!” And he’d snap back at me, “Well, you can’t make me do anything.” And I’d just agree, “I know. *I* can’t.”

I watched it throughout those four years – I’d simply watch God at work. Every time he’d get a new job, later he would find out he was working for a Christian. It would make him so angry. ☺ Then he’d go into some store and someone would witness to him. He’d call me and complain: “Mom, it’s like you’re sending them!” ☺

It’s called prayer, baby! ☺ That’s what mothers do! And it ought to be what daddys do as well. You see – we don’t give them up! We just give Him room....

Haven’t you noticed the penetration of the enemy into our whole society? There is like a troop of the enemy that has infiltrated many different countries over the decades but has waited for ours last. Think about that. It’s been a very gradual assault here – but assault it has been!

The reason the enemy had to wait until last with us is because, up until this time, we were half asleep. *Unaware* would be a kinder term. Unaware of the seepage that was coming into the teaching of a younger generation: “Just because your mom and dad believe that, doesn’t make it so.” “And just because...” “And just because your church...” “And just because....” “And just because....”

This more subtle kind of attack was designed to twist and warp the minds of our young people until it was abnormal in their thought-life for them to believe in God, or in Jesus Christ especially, as the only begotten of the Father. That was no longer a normal way of believing for them. And because we were snoozing, we allowed it to happen! Oh, yes, thank you. I’m seeing people raise their hands in agreement – because you know exactly how true this is.

The kids would come home from school with “I don’t quite understand....” But we didn’t attack that which caused them confusion. We felt, somehow, that *love* never attacked. I don’t know where we got that or still get it today! The Good Book surely does not support that! (cf. Num.25,31).

In the Old Testament, when the enemy troops came against God’s people, God enabled His people to attack! And take back everything that had been stolen – and a little more too! (e.g. Abraham rescued Lot – Gen.14:9ff; Saul against the Ammonites – 1Sam.15; David against the Philistines – 1Sam.23).

Until we, the Church, the universal church, begin to wake up and understand the power of God that resides within us individually – the *dunamis*-power that will produce miracles – that will do exceedingly and abundantly ...

Oh, it's so easy to say: "Now unto **Him** who is able to do..." (Eph.3:20). It's so easy to quote that! And it is undeniably true! Every word of it is true. But where is He? Come on. Think about it. **Where is He – today?**

We used to sing: "You ask me how I know He lives..." Are any of you old enough to remember that song? Can you finish it? "...He lives within my heart."

If I can honestly recite that verse in Ephesians (3:20), I need to pay attention to what it's saying: "Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that I can ask or even think!" It is "according to" – what? "to the power" – where? "that worketh in us." Again, how and where does His power work? It "**worketh in us.**"

Point to yourself. It's the power of God that works in you. It's the power of God that does "exceeding and abundantly above... according to the power ... in us!"

You do know, don't you, that you can exert that power effectively in your homes? You don't have to sit back and take the things you're putting up with – in the name of *love* – or is it just – *tolerance*? You need to get up in the morning with an attitude: "As for me – and my house – we will serve the Lord!" (Josh.24:15).

Do you have rebellious people living with you who say, "Well, I'm not going to...." You need to say, "You don't have a chance." ☺ Maybe you will only think it – or pray it in your private warfare – or say it in principle, but that needs to be the attitude in your own heart. If the devil comes back in every day, kick him out in the morning! And again the next morning! And again – as often as that rebellious person brings him back into your home. It's your home! Kick the devil out!

You see – you don't need me to come to your house to do that for you. You don't need your pastor to come. You don't always need someone from the church staff or some ministerial group to cast it out for you. Cast it out yourself!

There is a power of God within you. It's been there from the time you met Jesus Christ and asked Him to come into your life to be your Savior. From the time you declared, "You are Lord!" the Holy Spirit has been at-the-ready to work from within you. When you said "You are Lord," He thought you really meant it!

I am thrilled about these who came forward to receive Christ in salvation tonight. I am honestly thrilled! That's wonderful! But you have to know this is just a beginning for you. It's merely the beginning. Now you have the power of God resident within you. That's what it means to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. You can go out and claim some things – declaring God's truth.

When you're with people, old friends or family members or co-workers, and they do things that you don't believe in now, you just begin to say a quiet little prayer, "Lord, give me wisdom to know... whether I sock 'em or bless 'em." ☺ Or maybe this is better: "Lord, help me know how to *minister* to this person." ☺

If you're filled with the Holy Spirit, let *Him* do the praying. I've been with people lots of times when I was praying and they never knew it: "*mumble – mumble – mumble*" ☺ Under your breath you can pray in tongues. And when the Holy Ghost begins to pray, you will begin to see things happen. There comes a release with your kids. There comes a release between husband and wife. There comes a release of the tension.

Americans today are so full of tension and stress! They're so depressed. "I break that in the Name of Jesus! I loose you from that depression!" God never intended for us to live that way. And there's no true witness in it either. You can claim a new freedom in Christ!

But too often we hear it this way – in that little child's whiny, pathetic voice: "Oh, just pray for me. I'm having a hard time giving up this or taking on that. Our marriage has just been on the rocks for years." That's when I want to say: "Oh cut that out! Take the rocks out!"

IF YOU KNEW how frightened the enemy is – that you might take hold of this truth! You would SHOUT the victory!!

Without a miracle, this people – the people of Samaria – are absolutely doomed to starve to death, and the threat on Elisha's life will be effectively carried out. That's how bad things are. They're so hungry, they're eating one another! I could spend an hour on that alone. Today it's called GOSSIP.

"Well, then, what's going on here? I mean, how come Elisha is living there in this situation?" We just sang it: "*..to be salt and light in the world...*"

But we have our excuses, don't we? "Oh, but I just feel so badly when I'm around – *unbelievers*. I just feel – *dirty* when I get home from work.... It makes me so *uncomfortable* to be around them."

You know what, though – if you would turn this thing around, they're the ones that will run! They'll dread to see you walk in the door because there's so much *joy* in you – so much *peace* – and you won't gossip back. You're no fun any more! ☺ When they start one thing, you just say, "You know, I want to tell you a good thing that happened the other day. I was talking to the Lord and...." You'll almost be able to hear their squeals as they try to escape you – "Ohhhhhh! Ahhhhhh!" ☺

We used to sing a song in the church: "*What the world needs is Jesus – just a glimpse of Him.*" How are they going to get that? Not from someone that looks like them. Not from someone who talks like them. But from someone who possesses Him!

I see Him everywhere – because I look for Him. I see Him – in you. I look for Him! And I also see the hopelessness. Then I have to think, "You say you know Jesus? How long since you rang His doorbell?"

You cannot be hopeless and be a Christian! It is impossible to be a Christian, knowing Christ, having yielded your life to Jesus Christ, having made Him Lord, and yet say that you are hopeless! You see, let every man be the liar – let the Word be the truth! (cf. Rom.3:4). In Him, we have hope!

I'm really angry – can you tell? I'm really angry that Christian homes are in disarray and families are breaking up! It angers me! I hate the devil! Probably not as much as he hates me right now – but I hate him! And I want to put him to flight! I'm angry that businesses of Christians are struggling.

Yes, we all go through some things to *train us* – blah-blah-blah. We know that side too well. I think it's time for the other end of the teeter-totter to. . . I simply think it's time for the balance to stop being on "tilt." You see, we went crazy for a while as Christians and lost our *testimony* before the world because we lost sight of our *reason*. And we promised people things the Word never promised.

Years ago I was invited to visit a historic restoration of a slave market in South Carolina. I'd never seen such a place before. My hosts were taking me around to the various spots of interest. They showed me the auction block where the slaves stood, and the place from where the auctioneer did his speaking, and the covered places where those who were purchasing the people stood.

I stood there barely able to comprehend it all because it was so foreign to my thinking. And so my hosts were explaining the whole set-up to me – when suddenly their voices disappeared and I saw on the auction block – Jesus. I could see the multitude waiting as the auctioneer was promising things – hawking Him. “Ladies and Gentlemen! Here He is! Just take Him into your home – you’ll never have sickness again! You’ll never have a money problem! You’ll never have marriage problems! You’ll just have.... Here He is – turn around Jesus!” And I saw Him turn slowly on the block for all to view.

I was so overwhelmed. I quietly said to my hosts, “Please, may I go back to my hotel?” And they graciously took me there. I couldn’t even speak all the way back in the car, I was so heavily impacted. When I walked into that hotel room, I fell on the floor and cried out to Him: “Forgive me, Jesus. I have auctioneered You instead of preaching the Gospel.”

I don’t know why I’m preaching this message at this time or who it may be that needs to hear this. But I know He is communicating this truth once again. When I got up from that floor, I determined I would never promise you again anything that the Word doesn’t promise you.

I do promise you this tonight: *Greater is He Who lives in your life than the one in the world who is out to starve you to death!* Christians are starved today. They’re crying, “Oh, God. Send revival!”

We don’t even know what that means! What we mean when we say, “Send revival” is “Bless me again! I wanna be touched! I want to get! I don’t want any more pain. I want to be healed instantly. I want *something* to happen!” It’s always *me!* Me! Me! Me!

When our cry for Him rises beyond *us* to saying, “God, let the world see Jesus through me! Let the way I drive represent You. Let the way I do business represent You. Let the way I treat the poor be equal to the way I treat the rich.” That’s when He will respond in power.

Aw, Church, are you alive and well tonight? God is calling you to a higher place! We are going to know a victory in our lives like we have never known before. We are going to sow salt and light in the world!

It was because of the presence of Elisha in that city that it was not destroyed! Selah, Church.

What’s the name of our church? Church for the Nations. See our many flags hanging up there? And there’s more to come, too. Church for the Nations – it’s a good name. Is that all it is? A name? Or, are we really... are we the Church – *for the nations?*

Oh, it’s not just this group, in this building. Please understand – I know that. There are many people who have this concept of going to the nations and they are dedicated to reaching out as broadly as are we. And I do see different things happening – *good* things happening – in different churches. Don’t you envy that in them. Come on, people, let’s get our focal point back. God put us *here* – let’s become what God told us to become.

Every where we go, we’ll be salt and light – and salt and light – in the world! The Church doesn’t need it! Ours doesn’t. We have lots of salt – and light here. We don’t need to get together and exchange stories again. It’s the world that needs your prophetic gift. It’s the world outside these doors that needs your healing hands.

When people “just happen” to talk to you and they have problems, don’t you understand that the wisdom of God is resident within you? And you have answers? It’s time for us to be able to say, “I’m so glad you talked to me about this – because I know Someone Who has your answer. He lives within me. And just now as you were speaking, I got a word for you!” I double-dare you to get that bold! ☺

But I hear believers almost whine: “Well, what if they don’t wanna hear it?” They will – because, if nothing else, they’re curious. They may hesitate but soon they’ll say something like: “I don’t know....

Well, what is the word?" I promise you, they're going and open the door for you. Or it might be: "Well, I don't believe in that hokey *religious* stuff... but what is it you *think* you heard?" ☺ or, "I don't go for that kind of stuff.... but... what'd you hear?" ☺

God's going to set your tongues on fire! It's going to be a miracle here – and a miracle there. God's going to set your hearts on fire! God's going to take your eyes off of you and your little world – or – our tiny little world that we bring to Him – over and over and over and over – like He doesn't know what's going on? ☺ He wants you in His big world – "*For God so loved the...*" – big world He created. Not just your little world. And, God so loved that *He gave*. He gave His Son – to live within you!

These people sitting there in Samaria? There's no hope for them. Oh. Oh!-Oh!-Oh! But there is one hope! The Word!

"Well, the *word* – the Word? What word?" "Here we are starving, Elisha. The enemy's camped on the outside of these gates and you're prophesying?" I can just hear this conversation. Listen now: "*You've got it!* And you can live on that – or you can die in spite of it."

Look back through your life and think of the times that a keen word – a word fit – just the right word was spoken to you (cf. Pr.15:23; Is.50:4; 25:11) and you just *poohed-poohed* it. You were so unconvinced: "Oh, yeah, well I don't know if that's really God. You know, I heard that sometimes this prophet's on and sometimes he's not." ☺

Let me tell you how you'll have no problem knowing if it's God or not – by the way the word hits you. There's a piercing sword that's two-edged when it comes from the mouth of God, and there's no question as to where it came from!

Elisha said, "Yeah, I see the situation. I'm cognizant. I read the paper! I watch the news." You don't have to spend much time in negative talk with *friends*. You only need to say, "I understand. It's every bit of what you just said. Boy, isn't that the truth? But I'll tell you something else: 'Thus saith the Lord!'"

You see, the Word of the Lord always precedes a miracle! Whether it comes in prophetic form, or through the written word, or when Jesus walked this earth – you look them up: "*I will – Be thou healed*" (cf.Mt.8:3) "*Go and wash in the pool of Siloam*" (Jn.9:7). A word – a word – a word.

I sit in these pews and hear a clear, pure *word*. Over and over and over and over again. And I wonder: where does it go? How do we dare groan: "I'm just *starved* for a move of God. I'm just *so hungry*..." You don't have a fork? There's good meat served here. It's time for us to assimilate it into our being – and apply it to our living levels.

Elisha says to the king's messengers (2Kngs.7:1) "Not to worry! I know it looks awful right now! But I'm telling you, by tomorrow – it won't look so awful." And I can almost hear their mocking replies: "Oh, sure! By tomorrow! It'll all be better." I don't think any who heard his words believed him. Certainly, they never thought that might be God speaking!

The enemy is quick to enter the scene (or our minds) and say, "How could *that* be? How *could* it be? You gonna have ten thousand – in this church? Heh-heh-heh. Oh, right! Heh-heh-heh. This I gotta see. Maybe you will; maybe you won't."

But some will believe. Some will believe the word of the Lord. Some will dare to lay hold to it and agree: "I say, 'Yes.' – I say, 'Yes!' – I say 'Yes!'"

There were those who did not expect a miracle. But in the mercy and grace of God, they *witnessed* one.

Some of you hangers-on – standers-around-the-edge – doubters – twisting your hands and looking for anything out of order.... I don't fear things out of order – because it shows movement. If you don't *move* anything it never gets out of order.

You'll still witness some great things. They're going to happen. You'll be so surprised: "WOW. I didn't know... I didn't know God could do *that!*" Well, you *know* it now. So – what'll you *do* now? Now that you know....

Let me ask you something: If you need healing, answer me this – why should He heal you?

"Well, His Word says He's a healer." He is. But why should He heal you? "Well, I know I'm not *worthy*...." That's not the point. You get an F on the test. ☺

Why should He heal you?

He should heal you – *so that* – you might be a **living witness of the greatness of your God!** Everything He does, He does for His own demonstration to a world. That's LOVE!

God loves the *world* so much, and He knows that He is the *only hope* for the world – for a lost and dying generation. And He knows that you are *His* only hope for the world knowing Him. Selah. Yes, let that sink in deeply to your understanding.

Four lepers. Unclean – unwanted – unable to be in the "in" circles. Relegated to sitting outside the gates. Not accepted by the enemy – not accepted by the people in Samaria. Not accepted by anyone. They were a whole society of their own. And they sat there dying, just like the others did inside. It was hopeless. At least it *looked* hopeless.

Then they had a thought, seemingly out of nowhere: "What do we have to lose? Nobody wants us – nobody wants to touch us. If we just sit here, we're going to die – if we go out to the Syrian camp and the enemy's there, they're going to kill us. That'd be faster."

You do understand that's the logic of every suicidal person, don't you? Such deep sadness and despair: "People tell me I'll go to hell if I kill myself – but – I'm so depressed; life's so awful.... Maybe I won't. At least I'll get out of this one." Bang.

So one leper said to the others, "We have nothin' to lose. Let's just throw ourselves on the enemy." They were not expecting a miracle! – Oh, may God grant understanding for this. So they walk into the enemy's camp – *unaware* – that Someone had already been there – to threaten the enemy....

You have no idea the power of your prayers! Aw, Church – you who have loved ones far away from God and you think it's absolutely impossible.... Your prayers touch the heart of God. He goes on before you and *He* begins to clear out the evil and the enemy. Your assignment is to pray. You ask God. You intercede. And then you can begin to expect a phone call – "Dad – Mom – you'll never believe what happened to me! I went into the enemy's camp – just like I've been doing – and the enemy wasn't there! Instead, everything he possesses was left behind."

Oh, we often quote here – Proverbs 28:1 – "*The righteous are bold as a lion but the wicked flee when no man pursueth.*" That's almost a funny scripture. Well, it's funny if you have my sense of humor. The wicked flee – and no one's after them! ☺

You see – that's the power of intercession. That's when the Lord has already gone before you.

The Bible says here that they heard things that weren't (2Kngs.7:6). They heard – somebody coming after them! They heard – the hoofbeats of horses. They heard – the threat of death! And they were so frightened they left everything behind and got out fast.

Now, *whom* has God chosen to be the heralders of the victory? Neener – neener – neener! ☺ He chose the lepers – the nobodys – the down-and-outers – not the biggest preacher on television. He chose – lepers! Outcasts. The most unlikely.

Why did He choose them? They weren't expecting a miracle? They didn't have faith! Well, they had a little faith, maybe – because they *moved*.

It's like some people you've witnessed to out on the streets and when you suggested they pray the salvation prayer after you, they responded something like this: "Well, I don't really believe all this, but I'll try it." ("Hallelujah," you think.) "Pray this prayer then: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.'" And you heard their rather bored and almost lifeless echo: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." "Forgive me of all my sins." And the echo sounded like they thought this was the most inane thing they'd ever done, but recite it they did. ☺ And so you faithfully continued: "Save me by Your grace." "...and Save me by Your – Your *grace*?" and then you could hear their total amazement as His truth began to sink in. "Oh, whoa!"

And you just had to ask: "What happened?" "Well, I – I don't know, I felt somethi... I fee... I feel so – so clean!" "Yeh-yuh! That's Him!" Hello, Church.

Then they go to church (and we kick them out ☺). No, not this church. Every one – every nation – high and low – rich and poor – believers and unbelievers – great people of faith and people with only an ounce – they're all welcome here. They're all needed. They're all wanted.

But, do they all witness Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit – in the person they sit next to when they do come? We have to face that, Church.

Miracles began with the spoken word. Death also began with a spoken word.

Remember the one who was the king's number one man? The one he leaned on? Whom the king appointed to a great position of authority? The king said, "You go and guard the gate" (2Kngs.7:17ff).

This is the man who made fun of Elisha – the one who spoke against the prophet, the man of God – the one who laughed at the prophetic word (2Kngs.7:2). And because of his own words, he spoke death to himself.

Standing in that great position of *man's appointed authority* at the gate to the city – [He that hath an ear, hear it... Every minister will understand this.] Standing in man's appointed authority, he was brought to his death by the mob of people trying to save themselves. Too heavy? Or, necessary? We have to hear this... It's a wake up call, Church.

Do we *really* want a move of God?

We have a pastor who prays for it. We have a pastoral staff who prays for it. We have a ministry staff who prays for it. But we can't bring it by ourselves. We can dedicate ourselves and the ministries to it – and really mean it. And I promise you – I know this to be true.

And – we have the prophetic word that God wants to do some things in this Body. But you're the ones that open the gates so that God can make it happen.

Think about it.

I'm going to ask you for a hand-raise response to a question, then I'm going to pray and I'm through. I believe this word is going to go on working in your lives.

Now, here's my question: How many would say, under conviction of the Holy Spirit, "Lord, I have not been salt and light in the world, and from this night on, I want to be." If you mean that, lift your hand, and if you don't mean it – don't play games. If your hand is raised you're saying: "I really want to be the salt and light that I have not been in the world around me."

Now, Lord, You see these hands – and hearts – and You know the lives that are represented by them. I pray a fresh and new anointing to each one; I pray a new spirit of boldness to reach them. I pray that all timidity shall be gone from their lives and I ask that the prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit will begin to be spoken from their lips. I pray for a new authority in prayer in their lives.

I pray for their families and homes to come together – quickly – that they might be a living testimony of the grace and power of the miracle-working God Whom we serve. I pray that before this week ends, there shall be a miracle performed by You *through these people*. In the Name of Jesus.