

## CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING GOD

II Kings 6: 24—7:2 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Today God is turning our attention to the act of obedience, the gift of surrender, as well as the dire distress of disobedience and the solemn agony of rebellion. To introduce our message, I want to quote part of a poem by Robert Frost written to tell the American story of becoming a free land when once we were part of England. This poem, “The Gift Outright,” is for me a picture of what God can do for any people who will follow Him. The poem was written in 1936, but Robert Frost did not publish it until 1941, a few months after the United States entered World War II. Although it achieved a level of familiarity and fame among the American public, “The Gift Outright” received special attention when Robert Frost recited it at the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy on January 20, 1961. Robert Frost had originally planned to recite a poem entitled “Dedication,” that he wrote for the inauguration. However, because of the glare of the sun and his poor eyesight; he was eighty-seven years old at the time, he was unable to read his own copy of the poem. That’s why he recited “The Gift Outright.” Listen to his words!

“The land was ours before we were the Land’s. She was our land more than a hundred years Before we were her people. She was ours In Massachusetts, in Virginia, but we were England’s, still colonials, possessing what we still were unpossessed by, Possessed by what we now no more possessed. Something we were withholding made us weak Until we found out that it was ourselves. We were withholding from our land of living, And forthwith found salvation in surrender.” For me, Robert Frost pictures how we as Christians can possess salvation, but not let salvation possess us. He pictures how we can be possessed by what we no longer should be possessed by. He pictures how we can withhold from ourselves what Jesus bought for us at Calvary, if we will only surrender. The front of our bulletin cover has words that Charles Stanley is famous for saying, “Obey God and leave all the consequences to Him.” This picture of having something given to us outright, but not possessing it, reminds me of the millions of American men and women who have received the gift of marriage outright, and yet in the absence of loyalty to a wife or husband, what was meant to be the most satisfying state on earth—marriage, is bartered, relinquished, and forsaken for a mess of pottage, just as Rudyard Kipling once said, “The more you have of the others, the less will you settle to one.” Temptation makes us think as believers we are stuck in a rut obeying Jesus, stuck in a rut, being faithful to one spouse, and stuck in a rut being faithful in worshipping God and God alone. Temptation from the enemy makes us look upon the sacred gifts of God as “same old, same old,” and in our decisions to spice up our lives, we begin to see with jaundiced eyes the gifts of God, outright, given to us by God’s grace, as no better than moldy bread, clabbered milk, and maggot infested fresh meat. Temptation leads us to believe the devil’s lies until we wake

up in bondage and for the first time in years, with repentant, open eyes we see how we have spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of His covenantal love, and outraged the Spirit of grace. That's what King Joram and the people of Israel did with God. And in the face of their sin, they were not repenting.

The land of Israel in the days of Elisha was under the rule of Ahab's wicked son, Joram. The blessings of believing God were over and over being illustrated in the miracles God enabled Elisha to perform. Yet, Joram and the people of God were slaves who had committed adultery with God. They had gone outside spiritual union with God to become captives, faithless prostitutes in bondage to Baal, Molech, and Chemosh, dead idol gods who could do no miracles—they could do nothing. As we read the text, I am reminded of Francis Shaeffer's book, "How Shall We Then Live?" You may be saying, "How can things ever get this bad with God's people? Why would God's people ever stoop to such awful actions as this text presents to us? Beloved, there is no limit to how low we can go if we let go of the promises of God, if we disobey His Word, His will, and His divine promptings, and if we decide to do our own thing, our own way, and we reject obeying God's commands. Let's take time to examine five consequences of disobeying God.

**WHEN WE CLING TO SIN, WE MAKE OTHERS TO SIN WITH US, AND TOGETHER WE FACE THE SEIGE OF SIN ON OUR SOULS.** (I.) Notice II

Kings 6: 24. "Afterward, Behadad, king of Syria mustered his entire army and went up and besieged Samaria. King Joram in II Kings 3: 2 had not repented. Though we may not realize it, all of us are being watched, not just by our children, or our spouse, but by other believers and unbelievers. When we sin, and especially when we cling to sin, refusing to repent, the result of our continued rebellion against God in sin takes a toll not only on us, but on those who have been modeling after us. Go back to II Kings 3: 1-2 and read, "In the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, Jehoram (Joram) the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned 12 years. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord...he clung to the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from it." That was around 896 BC. Three years later, in 893 BC, unrepentant sin in King Joram led to unrepentant sin in all Israel. God promises us all that when we cling to sin, the consequences on us and others will become awful—we will face a siege of judgment. Here all Israel, especially the capital city of Samaria was under a Syrian siege. The city was in distress—a siege from God. The Israelites knew the consequences of disobeying God in Deut. 28: 48 where God said, "Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything."

A city besieged for months or years ultimately will fall. Once more in Israel, the people of Samaria were in great straits. The besieging army of Syria was at their

gates. The horrors of famine were within their walls. The people inside Samaria's walls were reduced to insane extremities, as their women began to cook and eat their own children. To open the gates to the Syrians meant death or captivity. But the longer they remained within their walls, the more certainly death and starvation stared them in the face. This was the promised consequence of Israel forsaking God. Ultimately, our sin brings us to our knees. Baal, Molech, and Chemosh were not able to help them in the day of their calamity. They forsook the living God. It is an evil day for us when we turn our back upon God's Word, His commandments, His will, His promptings, and His Son. Repeated sin always brings calamity! Sin hardens our hearts and blinds our eyes to hope or repentance. Secondly,

**WHEN WE WALK AWAY FROM GOD'S COMMANDS, WE PLACE OURSELVES OUTSIDE HIS DIVINE PROTECTION.** (II.) Notice II Kings 6: 25. "And there was a great famine in Samaria, as they besieged it, until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and the fourth part of a kab of dove's dung for five shekels of silver." The blessings of believing are myriad.

Deuteronomy 28: 1-14 give us a picture of those who are living in obedience under the protective hand of God's blessing, His anointing, and His loving care. Listen to the Word of the Lord. Proverbs 13: 15 is inevitable when we walk away from God. "The way of the transgressor is hard." You won't be safe outside of God's hand of protection. For Samaria, the long siege of Syria was working like a neutron bomb inside Samaria's walls. Things were tragic, desperate, and collapsing on their heads. Jeremiah the prophet who probably wrote II Kings, tells us that a donkey's head was being sold for eighty shekels of silver. Who today would pay a dime for a donkey's head? Yet in desperate times, every part of an animal is worth something to eat—head cheese from a donkey, anyone? Sounds pathetic! The price 80 shekels of silver—worth \$20.70 per shekel today, so a donkey's head was costing the equivalent of \$1,656 dollars. No rich man stayed rich long in Samaria – for hunger reduced all the people to tragic hopelessness. A kab of dove's dung—yes, they were making dove's dung soup or something with bird droppings. A kab is a pint so a fourth of a pint is a half a cup of dove's dung cost 5 shekels of silver, which is the equivalent of \$103.50 today. Can you conceive of figuring out a way to quench ravishing hunger pains with 1/4th of a kab or a half cup of dove's dung? Beloved, we may minimize this passage and say, "I will never let things get this bad for me." I warn us all. How bad can things get? Worse than you ever imagined when we like prodigals run away from our Father's house, and we are picking our food out of hog slop. Stay inside God's will. Stay close to Jesus. Obey His Word, His will and His promptings by His Holy Spirit. David exulted in God in Psalm 138: 7 saying, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble; You preserve my life; You stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand delivers me." Which will it be—God's blessings or a costly donkey's head or dove's dung? 3rdly

**WHEN WE REBEL AGAINST GOD, WE BECOME SO ADULTERATED WE TURN IN MISDIRECTED PASSION ON THOSE WE LOVE. (III.)**

Notice what the king asked the woman in distress and listen to the interchange in II Kings 6: 26-29. We have to tremble in terror as we read, in verse 28, “This woman said to me, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’” Rebellion against God leads to the destruction of God’s gift of natural affection. This shocking episode when King Joram was stopped when passing by on the wall by this woman appealing to him for help; what is this all about? Before the king knew the truth of the woman’s pleading with him, all King Joram could say was, “Don’t ask me for help. Ask the Lord. If He won’t help you, just know that all we have inside these walls of Samaria are empty barn-floors, and dry winepresses.” But when he heard her revolting tale as she cried out to him for help, this evil king was emotionally busted. He was a wreck. Think of it! This woman had a proposal made to her that she should give her son for food the day before, and that the two of them would eat the other’s son the next day. This crying woman had shared her boiled son with this other mother, fulfilling her part of the bargain, and now, this second woman had hidden her son from her. Can human nature, in dire extremities, ever descend to such revolting deeds? History records that the prophecies in Scripture are true, and the instances in history are not a few.

Can such consequences come on us if we continue to rebel against God? Hear the word of the Lord! God’s word promises that revolting passions take over in our lives when we continue in sin. Listen to Deut. 28: 45. “All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes that He commanded you.” What are these consequences? I tremble to read these words, only six verses, but listen, for “Thus, saith the Lord!” Deuteronomy 28: 52-57 declares the consequences of continued rebellion against God. “They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land. And they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the LORD your God has given you. And you shall eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the LORD Your God has given you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you. The man who is the most tender and refined among you will begrudge food to his brother, to the wife he embraces, and to the last of the children whom he has left, so that he will not give to any of them any of the flesh of his children whom he is eating, because he has nothing else left, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in all your towns. The most tender and refined woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because she is so delicate and tender, will begrudge to the husband she embraces, to her son and to her daughter, her afterbirth that comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears,

because lacking everything she will eat them secretly, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in your towns.”

It is a sacred blessing when we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, when we trust and obey. It is a divine warning that we have no idea how bad life can get if we choose to rebel against the Word and the commandments of the Lord. Here is the most tragic tale of the consequences of rebelling against God. This true story in history makes our stomachs turn; it makes our hearts quail and quiver, and it makes our spirits be filled with horror, anger, and we revolt at this actual happening. Hunger is a blessing. Hunger means we are healthy. Hunger stimulates us into action. Hunger is the mainspring that keeps us alive and moving and working and living and loving. But when hunger becomes intense and unappeasable, Hunger will set all moral commandments aside in defiance. Hunger will break through stone walls, it will shatter thrones, and break up empires. Hunger is among the primary duties of rulers to keep the hunger of their people appeased. Alas for Joram, as he got to know too vividly, about the groans of his people that were becoming like the rumblings underground of a soon volcanic eruption. God save us all from rebelling until God’s judgment becomes this strong. Fourthly,

**WHEN WE SEE THE AWFUL RESULTS OF DISOBEYING GOD, WE BLAME GOD AND HIS SERVANTS RATHER THAN REPENT OF SIN.**

(IV.) Notice II Kings 6: 30-33. King Joram said in verse 31, “May God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today.” King Joram dispatched the very captain on whom he himself leaned. He sent him to retrieve to him the man he blamed for the famine. Elisha knew from the Holy Spirit his beheading was imminent, but in a calm spirit, in the city of besieged Samaria, Elisha told his sons of the prophets sitting in his house, and the elders seated there with him, “Do you see how this murderer has sent to take off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold the door fast against him. Is not the sound of his master’s feet (that was King Joram) behind him? And while he was still speaking with them, the messenger came down to Elisha and said, (What he said was doubtless a reflection of what Elisha had told king Joram) He said, “This trouble is from the Lord! Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?” Picture the scene, beloved. King Joram was a hypocrite of a man—playing both sides of the picture—worshipping Baal, Asherahs, Molech, and Chemosh, and yet being ready to play the part of a repentant king. How do we know? Verse 30 is plain. “When the king heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes—his kingly robes—now he was passing by on the top of the wall—and the people looked, and behold, he had sackcloth beneath the torn kingly robes, beneath on his body. King Joram could play the part of worshipping Almighty God or all his idols. God said, in Exodus 20: 3, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” So, playing the part of a believing Israelite, he tore his clothes and revealed

what he had been covering up. This evil king was playing both ends against the middle, pretending to support two opposing gods, in order to gain an advantage from a situation. Now Joram did what millions do today. He acted like a humble, humiliated king, but his religion didn't go very deep. Rather than repent, and call his nation to repentance, he blamed God and His prophet, Elisha. There was a measure of mixed sincerity in his penitence. He had learned to listen to the counsels of Elisha. He tried to "wait on the Lord" for deliverance, while trusting in his other gods. In his outburst of angry passion, he uttered a death threat on the prophet, but then after sending for Elisha's head, he repented, hurrying behind his captain to reverse his order. We know we are still living in unrepentant sin when we refuse to admit our guilt before God and others. We know we are still unrepentant when we blame God, others, our spiritual leaders and pastors, everyone but ourselves for our misery. Fifthly,

**WHEN WE HEAR GOD'S WORD, AND DO NOT BELIEVE IT, WE WILL SEE GOD'S MIRACLES BUT NEVER TASTE THEM FOR OURSELVES.**

(V.) Notice II Kings 7: 1-2, especially v. 2. "If the Lord Himself should make windows in heaven, could this thing be? But Elisha said, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it." God looked down on Elisha, under this death threat, and Israel in the awfulness of His judgment. The captain whom Joram send to cut off Elisha's head quoted, no doubt, what Joram said, "This trouble is from the Lord! Elisha never corrected that statement for it was true. Waiting at the door held fast, the captain went on to say the king's words—"Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" Beloved, I rebuke these words. I have heard them year after year even among God's people who say to God—"I've waited long enough for a husband or a job, or for a new house." I take matters into my own hands. "I'll cut off some heads, I'll go find a man or a woman regardless of what they believe, or I'll go into deep debt and get what I want and live in poverty in a house I cannot make enough money to pay for." Now listen to the captain when Elisha delivered the word of the Lord about God's miracle on its way. Listen as I read II Kings 7: 1. "Hear the Word of the Lord; thus says the Lord, "Tomorrow about this time, a seah, 7 quarts of fine flour shall be sold for a silver shekel and two seahs of barley—3 and one half gallons for a silver shekel. What a dramatic reversal that would be by tomorrow. Then the captain said what he believed—he countered the man of God who spoke under the prompting of the Holy Spirit. He mocked Elisha. Notice verse 2. Joram must have been a subdued man when he heard the prophecy of yet one more miracle ahead for his city. Joram had come to the end of his waiting, but God's prophet told him he must wait 24 more hours. The captain with the sword in his hand now turned from killing Elisha to mocking him. Beloved, to the humble heart open to the Word, faith is generated, to the proud, the Word makes the heart harder. The same sun that melts ice, hardens clay. The captain would see the miracle but never taste it. That story is ahead. O taste and see...