

WHEN WE STEP OUT, GOD STEPS IN (2)

Text: 2 Kings 7:3

We often find ourselves in a dead-end situation where nothing seems to be working. We have tried everything but still there is no change. In this story, there are lessons we can learn about stepping out and pressing on regardless. When we step out (in faith), God steps in (with power)!

1. A crisis is a miracle in disguise (6:24-31)

- The city of Samaria faced a crisis: they were under siege and there was a desperate famine. People, including the king himself, had given up on God (6:33).
- Sometimes, it may seem there is no hope. Death or discouragement may seem to be all around us. As individuals and as a church we may feel uninspired or numb. But there is always hope.
- The king blamed Elisha because he had earlier allowed the enemy king to escape (6:23, 31)
- A crisis is a miracle in disguise. We cannot expect a miracle without first running into trouble. Every crisis is also a challenge.

No disaster, no deliverance.

No solecism, no solution

No offence, no opportunity.

No fault, no forgiveness.

No predicament, no prophecy.

No calamity, no conquest

No questions, no answers.

No sickness, no healing.

No death, no resurrection.

No failure, no faith.

No mountain, no miracle!

(See B.Chant, Walking with a Limp, 57f)

2. The promise of God is the foundation of faith (7:1, 2)

- There was a promise of provision from God
- What are we going to do with God's promises? We can choose to believe or disbelieve. Elisha chose to believe; the captain chose to disbelieve.
- What promises are we claiming? There is a promise to meet every basic human need.
- See 1 Kings 8:56; Psalm 145:13; 2 Corinthians 1:20

3. Faith demands decisive action (7:3, 4)

Counsellors talk about people being ‘stuck’ in unresolved situations. These four men had three choices—

- Go back—the past
- Stay—the present
- Go on—the future

When we step out, God steps in. These men made a decision to do *something*.

Don’t just sit around passively. We can always do something! Remember: Not to decide is to decide. Remember the woman who anointed Jesus with perfume. Others condemned her. What she did was embarrassing! (Imagine if you had been Jesus and a prostitute did this to you.) But Jesus said, ‘She did what she could’ (Mark 14:8; Matt 14:30; 1 Sam 14:6).

When we seem to be ‘stuck’ there is always something we can do.

- Sickness—obey James 5:14f; memorise healing Scriptures
- Poverty—give to someone even poorer
- Job—get busy, even without salary
- Marriage—find new ways to act in love
- Kids—write one more letter... Pray for wisdom...
- Witnessing—try something different
- Call of God—go to Bible College; start saving; begin a cell group.
- Baptism in the Spirit—speak out in faith.
- Writing a book—start with a word
- Prophecy—speak out
- Local church—get involved: there is something for everyone to do

Why stay here till we die!

4. When we step out, God steps in! (7:5)

We may ask—

- *Who am I? What can I do?* The four lepers were nothing. They were the worst possible choice for winning a battle. But ‘God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise’ (1 Corinthians 1:27. See also Job 8:7, Zechariah 4:10.)
- What if we get it wrong? Well, at least we tried.
- *What if it’s not God’s will?* Let’s stick to the things that we know ARE God’s will.
- Question: How often did Jesus rebuke people for too *little* faith? How often did he rebuke people for too *much* faith?

5. God’s provision is more than we can imagine (7:8)

- The lepers sounded like an army to the Syrians. So God can transform our stumbling steps of faith and make them a march of conquest (7:5, 6).
- God can do far more abundantly than all we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20,21).
- God has promised to fulfil His purposes through us. Maybe now; maybe in heaven.
- The windows of heaven *can* be open! (7:2)

6. Challenge

Let's make up our minds to do something now! What is an area where you can step out?

- Following Jesus?
- Baptism in water?
- Baptism in Holy Spirit?
- Call to ministry?
- Involvement in the church?
- Trusting God to supply a great need

When we step out in faith, God steps in with power.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Remember: You don't have to answer all the questions. First do those that seem most helpful to you.

Read 2 Kings chapters 6 and 7.

Biblical

1. If this were a story about four great warriors, rather than four lepers, would it be easier or more difficult to identify with it? Why?
2. Can you find out the contemporary equivalent values of the sums mentioned in 7:1? How would you describe these prices if you had to pay them today?
3. How did God help the lepers? (5, 6).
4. Twice the writer says this happened at 'twilight' (5, 7). Is this an historical detail or could there be a lesson here for us? If so, what?
5. What does 'open the windows/floodgates of heaven' mean? (2, 19). In Genesis 8:2, it refers to a downpour of rain. What do you think it refers to here? Or in our lives today? See also Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28; Act 2:17-21, 33.

Personal and practical

6. Think about the captain (2, 17-20). What did he do wrong? What can we learn from this?
7. Are there unsatisfactory aspects of your life that you have just accepted? Is it time for you to say, 'Why stay here till I die?' How can you take the initiative? What could you do?
8. What promises can you claim to meet your situation right now?
9. Read #6 above. How can you respond?
10. In what other ways does this story challenge us?

Memorise: 2 Kings 7:3

Hint for memorising: You can do this as a group by repeating phrase by phrase aloud together until you can say the whole text in one hit. Don't forget to learn the reference as well.

About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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