

## *“The Problem and the Prophetic”*

I have a friend who is a traveling evangelist and conference speaker. He has a ministry up in the San Francisco area and is seeing crazy responses to the Gospel in the Bay area. He was telling of a story from when he was first saved and started serving in ministry. When he was about a year and a half old in the Lord, he was serving in college campus ministry and was asked to come speak and minister in a church in Hawaii. How many know if you are called to go speak in Hawaii, you go? At the end of the service the pastor of the church and the evangelist were praying for a long line of people. One lady comes up to the pastor and says that her baby had died in the womb, and the doctors were threatening that if she did not get an abortion, she was putting her own life in danger. This lady was far along in her pregnancy, and this was a very difficult situation for anyone to minister to. The evangelist out of nowhere yells out, “You and your baby will live!” The pastor looks at the evangelist like, “What in the world are you saying?” The pregnant woman collapses in the arms of the evangelist crying as if it were the only thing she was holding on to for hope.

The evangelist went home and was now second guessing his prophetic word. He called a trusted friend and said, “Did I do the right thing? I felt this word well up in my belly and I couldn’t hold it in.” The evangelist said, “what if I am wrong?” Then the friend said, “What if you’re right?” A year later the evangelist is invited back to the church (which should have been an obvious sign). While the evangelist is ministering a lady comes up to him and says, “Do you remember me?” The evangelist did not until the husband came up to her with a baby. It all dawned on him. The lady said, “It was a crazy journey, but we held on to that word, and the Lord gave us a healthy baby boy that we named David after King David.”

Friends, every day you and I will face the tension of being stuck in the middle of a problem and the prophetic. The title of today’s message is “The Middle of the Problem and the Prophetic.” It is my goal and my prayer today that we see the power of our declaration in the middle of something impossible. Specifically, we are going to look at the story at the end of 2 Kings 6 and beginning of chapter 7. If you have your Bibles, please go with me to 2 Kings 6 and we are going to begin in verse 24.

While you are turning there, let me break down what is happening in history during this story. I have a picture here on the screen that will help us in our understanding. The Kingdom is divided. In 1 Kings around 930 BC Solomon died, and son Rehoboam reigned the kingdom split. There were 10 tribes to the north known as Israel whose capital was Samaria. There were two tribes to the south known as Judah whose capital was Jerusalem. After the split the northern kingdom continued for about 200 years until the year 722 BC when the Assyrians swept down conquered the two tribes and took them captive to Assyria. The southern kingdom Judah lasted about 132 years until 586 BC when the Babylonians took them captive. At that time, they took over Assyria which led to the entire world basically.

The spiritual situation is not good. In all the northern kingdom’s history, there were about 20 kings and all of them were bad. They rebelled against God. The southern kingdom had about 19 kings in its time and out of 19, 8 of them were revivalists and trusted God. Overall, the people of Israel were not following the Lord even though they knew of the consequences.

One of those consequences is what we are going to see here in 2 Kings 6. Let's pick up in verse 24:

***24 Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad king of Aram gathered all his army and went up and besieged Samaria. 25 There was a great famine in Samaria; and behold, they besieged it, until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a fourth of a kab of dove's dung for five shekels of silver.***

The king of the Arameans besieged the northern kingdom capital of Samaria. A siege was a popular military method used in those days of walled or fortified cities. The army would prevent anything or anyone coming in or out of the city. The tactic was to starve the inhabitants of the city until they surrendered. Keep in mind, there was already a famine in the land due to their rebellion. There a natural famine and things are tight, but now they have to live off whatever is in the city because they can't leave. It gets so bad that a donkey's head is being sold for eighty shekels of silver. I don't know how many of you carry shekels in your wallet or purse today but let me breakdown this cost. A shekel was roughly 11 grams of silver and was worth a day's wages at that time. In Texas the average pay for a day laborer is \$20. For an 8-hour shift that's \$160 for a modern-day shekel. A donkey's head was sold for 80 shekels of silver. \$160 multiplied by 80 is \$12,800. Basically, a donkey's head was going for a decent used car. This is so bad but a donkey's head for a meal does not scare a Mexican. There would be donkey tacos de lengua, Cabeza, etc. But that's not the important part. It showed how bad the situation as that a donkey's head was being sold for over \$12,000. Let's also throw in the fact that the land was already in a natural famine due to their sin and now they were being sieged. A donkey was not kosher. They were forced to eat things that went against the laws of God. But it gets much worse. Let's pick up in verse 26:

***26 As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" 27 He said, "If the Lord does not help you, from where shall I help you? From the threshing floor, or from the wine press?" 28 And the king said to her, "What is the matter with you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29 So we boiled my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son." 30 When the king heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes—now he was passing by on the wall—and the people looked, and behold, he had sackcloth beneath on his body. 31 Then he said, "May God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today." – 2 Kings 6:24-31 NASB1995***

When the king heard this horrific story, he didn't repent, and he didn't turn back to God. What he did instead was blame the man of God, the prophet Elisha. It is sad but it is a reality that when times are so bad or you have been waiting so long to receive an answer from God, you begin to doubt and question. Now, here is the turning point in the story. The king of Israel is panicking but the man of God Elisha is prophesying. You will have two options when faced with a trial. You can either panic or prophesy. Look what Elisha says in chapter 7:1:

***Then Elisha said, "Listen to the word of the Lord; thus says the Lord, 'Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel,***

*in the gate of Samaria.” 2 The royal officer on whose hand the king was leaning answered the man of God and said, “Behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, could this thing be?” Then he said, “Behold, you will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat of it.” – 2 Kings 7:1-2 NASB1995*

You can read the rest of the story on your own time, but the prophets declaration came true. God had sent a noise that confused the enemy, and they fled thinking they were under attack. Four lepers decided since they were going to die anyway to go over to the enemy’s camp and beg for food. When they made it to the camp, they discovered the place deserted. Israel ended up plundering the camp and the royal official died when getting trampled as the prophet had said.

Here's the main point: when the world panicked, the man of God prophesied. We are in the world but not of the world and as children of God our response needs to be different in an evil world.

*Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. 5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.*  
– 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 NASB1995

The problem with spiritual gifts is that every so often they get abused by church leaders. When church leaders get it wrong or false prophets are set out for their own gain, it causes a fear in the body of Christ. The spiritual gift of prophecy is not complicated at all. How many people in this room believe that you can talk to God and God talks to you? How many believe that? Awesome, you are all prophets. If you can ask God something and find an answer from Him, you can walk in the prophetic. The difference is that that prophecy is hearing God for someone else. It is giving an encouraging and edifying word from the Lord to someone else. The gift of prophecy is not fortune telling, fire/brimstone, or manipulation like we have seen so often. True prophecy is delivering God’s heart to others. So, in order to get better at prophesying in the middle of a problem, we need to get better at being intimate with God and hearing from God.

### **#1 – Being prophetic means being Pure.**

Rebecca Crawford’s dad Gene gave a great message yesterday in the men’s group about living in the presence of God. He said the goal is to get in it and never leave. I heard one pastor say, “The presence of God is like a hot shower on a cold day...once you get in, you don’t want to get out.” But Gene said something really cool. He said in Jesus’ day, shepherds would take their flocks out to a common grazing area in the open fields and mountains. Then at night all the sheep would come to a common area where there were multiple sheep fold or pens. The sheep didn’t have ear tags or markings to tell which sheep where which. All the shepherds had to do was call out their own sheep. The sheep knew the shepherd’s voice and would only go to the voice they knew. Jesus would later say in John that He was the Good Shepherd and His sheep know His voice. If you want to walk in a stronger prophetic gifting, it begins with hearing the voice of God clearly.

Matthew 5:8 tells us that the pure in heart will see God. I believe that the holier your heart is, the better you hear God.

You don't need a poetic and eloquent, flowery "word from God" to walk in the prophetic. You simply have to declare truth from the Lord. Here's a little secret...if you declare the Bible you will always be a 100% accurate prophet. I have so many friends who walk in the prophetic and they often give "a word from God" that is from the Word of God. We need to prophesy the Scripture over our lives, over our families, over our situations. Especially if you are the head of the house...you need to determine in your house you will only speak life and truth.

## **#2 – Being prophetic means being Unreasonable.**

If you didn't know this already, Kingdom math does not make sense to the world. The world says you can't feed 5,000 people with only a sack of lunch. Kingdom math says it will multiply out of nothing. The world says you can't walk on water...until the Savior takes a stroll on top of Galilee. When you are truly walking in the prophetic you may look a little silly. The doctor may say cancer, but you say, "I am healed in the name of Jesus." The boss may say you are laid off, but you say, "Thank You Lord for the better job you have for me." Elisha looked completely unreasonable when he said in literally 24 hours we will be back to regular priced food and abundance. But without that prophetic word would the miracle had happened.

## **#3 – Being prophetic means being Convinced.**

When I was in middle school we had to do a project about animals. We had to pick an animal and do a report in the form of a small book. Then we had to take those little books and go to the elementary school and teach first graders about our chosen animals. I picked an orangutang because that is my favorite animal if you didn't know. They are silly and they make me laugh. So they paired me up with this little boy and I was supposed to teach him all about orangutangs. I came to the part in my report where I had illustrated all the different types of food the orangutang would eat. The little first grader stopped me and said, "That's wrong, monkeys only eat bananas nothing else." I told him, "No, they can eat more than just bananas." He screamed back at me, "No monkeys only eat bananas." I said, "Can I get a new kid?" There was no convincing this kid. Now that was blind stubbornness, but we need to have a small bit of that to walk in the kingdom of God. The world is constantly going to tell us we can't, it's impossible, or negative words. We need to stand against that and speak truth from the Lord. But here's the thing...you will only defend what you believe. Gabriel's best friend back in California posted something on Instagram I loved. He said, "Pray about it as much as you think about it." Won't that preach?