

A Word from Pastor Chuck

C A L V A R Y C H A P E L D I S T I N C T I V E S



VENTURES OF FAITH—PART 3

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

In the previous issue, I gave some personal examples of stepping out in faith. Here, we turn back to the Old Testament. The city of Samaria was under siege by the Syrians. The conditions had become so bad that they were selling a quarter of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces. The women had turned to cannibalism. One woman cried out to the king, saying, "This woman and I agreed to eat our babies. We boiled my baby and ate it, but now she has hidden hers. Make her produce it so we can eat it." The king tore his clothes and said, "God help me if I don't get the head of that prophet, Elisha!" He was blaming God for his problems (2 Kings 6:24–33).

Elisha was an interesting prophet. He had such close communion with God that he was surprised when God didn't show him things. I'm always shocked and surprised when God has shown me something. But Elisha was so tuned in that he was surprised when he didn't see something coming.

Elisha was in his house with his friends when he started talking to himself, "Hmm, can you beat that?" So his friends asked, "What's going on?" He replied, "The king is sending a guy down here to get my head. When he knocks on the door, open it and pin him with the door. Elisha's friends did as he asked and held him there. Then

The story continues. Four leprous men were living in the garbage heap outside of the city of Samaria. They normally ate the garbage thrown over the wall, but because of the famine, they were starving. One of them looked at the others and said, "**Why sit we here until we die?**" (2 Kings 7:3). "There's no sense going into the city, so let's go over to the Syrians' camp. Maybe they will have mercy and give us a crust of bread that we might live, or maybe they will kill us. But so what? We're going to die anyway." Their venture in faith began on the sliver of hope that maybe they would be given a crust of bread.

I'm amazed that many churches don't come to this same place as the few people left look around at each other. I'm surprised they don't say, "Well, why just sit here until we die? Let's venture out. Maybe it will work, and maybe it won't; but if it doesn't, no matter, because we're dying anyhow."

Many ventures of faith have been made on that premise. Who knows what God might do? Let's step out. Let's give God a chance. The story of Elisha concludes: The Syrians heard noises that they interpreted as Egyptian chariots. They figured that the king had hired the Egyptians as mercenaries, and panic broke out. They

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the king rode up with the prime minister and said, "This calamity is from the Lord. Why should I wait for Him any longer?" Elisha replied, "Don't worry. Tomorrow by this time, they will be selling a bushel of fine flour in the gates of Samaria for sixty-five cents." The prime minister scoffed at the promise of God, saying, "**Behold if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And [Elisha] said, 'Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof'**" (2 Kings 7:2).

Why did the prime minister stagger at the promise of God? Because he tried to humanly figure out how God could do it. Many times, that's when we get into trouble. We've tried everything, and we've had to conclude that it's impossible. We're prone, just like the prime minister, to say, "How could such a thing be?" Elisha said, "You'll see it, but you won't eat. Your unbelief will keep you from profiting from the work of God."

began to flee, so when the four lepers came to the first tent, they found supper on the table, but no one to eat it. They ate, grabbed the treasure, went to the next tent, and found the same thing. It was empty of men, but filled with food.

As they were grabbing the loot, one of them said, "Hey, fellows! We'd better tell those in town what God has done. If we hide this and hoard it for ourselves, mischief will come to us." They returned to the city and cried to the guard on the wall, "The camp of the Syrians is empty. There's plenty of food for everybody." When the report came to the king, he said, "It's a trap. The Syrians know how hungry we are, so they pulled back into the shadows and are going to pounce on us and kill us once we enter their camp. Don't let anybody out of the gates. Keep them barred."

Oh, the tragic cost of unbelief. It keeps us from partaking even when God has provided abundantly. May we believe and act on the promises of God and be swift to venture out in faith when He is working. ➡

All verses above are quoted from the King James Version.