

I Got Nothing Left To Lose

- **Give Honor**
- **Pray**
- Desperation can make you do some really crazy stuff. You ever been so broke and hungry that you keep looking all through the fridge and cabinets just hoping something new will pop out at you? Like, you've looked in the fridge 5 times, and all you got is some ketchup. Then you look in the pantry and all you got is a couple pieces of bread and a handful of chips, so you transform into Gordon Ramsey and concoct a sandwich out of these ingredients. While you're at, it you remember that you've got some olives in the back of the bottom shelf of the fridge, so you throw them on there too. The whole time, you know the likelihood of your stomach is being messed up something terrible is increasing by each bad decision, but at least you won't feel hungry for a little while. Well, that is pretty much what happened in 2 Kings chapter 7.
- **Reference Scripture**
 - 2 Kings 7:3-4 “**3** Now there were four leprous men outside the city gate, who said to one another, “Why should we sit here until we die? **4** If we say, ‘Let us enter the city,’ the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; but if we sit here, we shall also die. Therefore, let us desert to the Aramean camp; if they spare our lives, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.”
- **Background**
 - Starting in chapter 6, the army of the kingdom of Aram has besieged the city of Samaria and has inflicted a famine upon the people so great that what little bit of unwanted resources are left have to be bought for exuberant prices, and when that ran out people even resorted to eating their own children. At the end of chapter 6 and the beginning of chapter 7 the prophet Elisha has promised that within 24 hours flour and barley will be in abundance and the inflammatory prices will be dropped.

- On the heels of this promise in verse 3 we find 4 leprous men outside the city of Samaria. If you think the people inside the city have it bad, you can't even imagine how bad it must have been for those lepers that were forced into a life of begging. It hard enough to be a beggar, but when the people you're begging from have nothing you know things have taken a turn for the worse.
 - These lepers were outcasts from society, from family and friends, and especially from the religious. They were in a position that their only chance of hope was a risk. Inside the city was famine and death, and outside the city was the enemy's camp. And this brings us to our first point.
- **Desperation Can Birth Boldness** – “Why stay here until we die?”
 - They had finally got to the point that they said, “what’s the worst that can happen”.
 - Sometimes the greatest steps of faith are taken when there’s nothing left to lose. When we are in a situation where we feel forgotten, when we feel marginalized and hated, when we feel like outcasts, and like we have no other options. It is right there that God can use our lowest moments to give us courage to act in ways that bring about miracles.
 - Even now, it seems that America is increasingly becoming harder to live in. What was once a shining beacon of hope is quickly becoming a place of hardship. Crime is rampant, politics are corrupt and crazy, storms are raging to ravaging our cities, sickness is widespread, and the church seems to be losing more and more of its mind. What few of us that are left with any kind of conviction are looking around wondering what in the world God is doing.
 - My encouragement for you today is that in this moment of desperation we must be willing to step out and take the risk. Take the risk to love right. Take the risk to live right. To the risk to have integrity. Take the risk to stand up for what is right. Take the risk to evangelize and touch the world

around us. Yes there may be consequences and repercussions, but I got nothing left to lose.

- We serve a God that is faithful in our desperation. Esther saved a whole nation of people because of her boldness in Esther chapter 4. In Luke 15 He rewarded the prodigal son for coming back to his senses while sitting in the slop of a pig's pen. In Matthew 14 Peter walked on water, even if it was for just a few scary seconds. Our God rewards those who are willing to take the boldest steps of faith
- **God's Unseen Provision** – “When they reached the edge of the camp, no one was there”
 - As they stepped closer and closer to the enemy's encampment, they were surprised and relieved with the good news that no one was there. God had caused the enemy to hear the sound of chariots, horses, and a great army and flee 25 miles away to the Jordan river, dropping what possessions they could grab all along the way.
 - The lepers do what any starving person would do during a famine, they ate their fill of food and started to loot the tents that were full of food, gold, silver, and garments. Even the horses and donkeys were left behind.
 - But in the middle of all of this abundance they began to tell each other, “What we are doing is wrong.” They realized that they had been blessed so abundantly that they were in the wrong if they didn't share with the rest of the city of Samaria.
 - Imagine, in whatever situation you're in right now, that you all of a sudden became so blessed that you felt bad about not sharing it with someone else. THAT'S BLESSED! They went back and told the city about what they had found, and the promise of the prophet from the day before had come to pass.
 - Your lack of boldness to act isn't just holding back your blessing, but also the blessing of others. In fact, they begin to realize that if

they don't tell anyone about the good news that they will be punished for with holding it. So, not only is your inaction holding back a blessing, but also withholding your testimony when you do receive the blessing is worth punishment as well.

- **God Uses the "Supposed" Least Likely**

- On the surface of this story, the four lepers seem to be the least likely people for God to use to save a city from famine. These are supposed to be the beggars, not the suppliers.
- Scholars have for years tried to find out who these unnamed lepers are. However, Rabbinical teachers, such as rabbi Rashi (11th cent.), rabbi Radak (12th cent.), and the Jewish commentary Sotah (6th cent.), teach that the four lepers are Gehazi and his sons.
- If you take a step back to 2 Kings 5 you will see that a general named Naaman is cleansed of leprosy and offers the prophet Elisha a gift for his healing. Elisha refused the gift, but his servant Gehazi chased after Naaman when he left and deceived him into believing that Elisha had sent him to receive part of the gift from Naaman. When Gehazi returned to Elisha the prophet called him out for his greed and disobedience and told Gehazi that he and his son would take on the leprosy of Naaman.
- It's amazing what this timeline infers. At the end of chapter 5 Gehazi and his sons are cursed with leprosy for their greed, chapter 6 starts this new story of besiegement and famine, and this leads the four lepers, Naaman and his sons, to go to the enemy camp. Instead of reacting with greed, Gehazi and the others recognize if they keep this blessing to themselves that they would be in the wrong. This means that Gehazi had learned his lesson and changed his actions. The very next chapter, chapter 7, starts with Gehazi in front of the king, recounting all the great deeds of Elisha. How would Gehazi, an unclean leper, be permitted in front of the king, and

why would he be bolstering the man who had cursed him? Unless he and his sons had been healed due to their obedience.

- So, really, these weren't the "least likely" people to save the city at all. God knew that Gehazi would sin, He knew that his leprosy would put him in a hard position of desperation, He knew that Gehazi would learn the lesson and change his character, and He knew that those actions would fulfill the prophecy of Elisha and save the city.

- Conclusion
 - We all go through trying times, and many of those afflictions are due to our own decisions. However, God is not surprised or taken back by your failures. In fact, in those hard times of desperation, if you repent, change your direction, and just take the risk of walking by faith, God will bless your obedience. And beyond your own blessing, He can use you to bless others. Better than blessing, He can restore you, because what good is blessing if you are not whole enough to enjoy it?