



“Share with Every Home”
2 Kings 7:3-9

Idea: God calls us to share His gift with others.

Intro: Americans spend annually over \$100 billion on sports, and over half of it is spent on sporting events, including tickets, transportation, food, and beverages. I believe it is safe to say that there are some sports fanatics in our land. What does a sports fanatic look like? How do you spot one?

Pictures of some sports fanatics:

- Saints fans
- Duke fans camping out for tickets
- Michigan fan in shock
- Cubs fans
- Alabama fan...enough said.

It’s not hard to spot a sports fanatic. The clear giveaway is the way they dress, the things they say, the things they do, and the things they buy. Sports fans are not ashamed to let others know who they’re favorite team is. For some reason, however, this fanaticism doesn’t always bleed over into the lives of many Christians. The sports fan is eager to let you know which team they stand with, but Christians too often are not eager to tell others.

Trevin Wax of LifeWay gives some reasons why:

- Some worry that witnessing to a stranger might seem distasteful and turn them away from the gospel.
- Others worry that witnessing to close friends or relatives might change something in the relationship. They don’t want to risk the friendship or damage their family ties.
- Some people fear rejection.
- Others worry that they don’t know enough about Christianity to give good answers.

Research shows that we have little reason to fear. Most unsaved people are not hostile to the gospel. In fact a great number of non-Christians are open to hearing about the faith of others. When you speak kindly and graciously about the gospel, you will find that most people react kindly and politely, even if they reject your call to repentance.

Regardless, we have the responsibility and privilege to share because God's heart is to bless every home. He wants to bless you, and then through you bless others. This is God's missiological strategy. Do you remember his promise to Abram in Genesis 12:2?

"...I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make you name great, so that you will be a blessing."

We are in a series whereby we are calling our church to "bless every home." We do this as we pray for, care for, share the gospel with, and disciple every home. We want to be a blessing.

Do you remember the simple acronym I shared with you last Sunday?

- **B**egin with prayer. – I will pray for the people in my life and in my community.
- **L**isten – I will listen to and discover the needs of others and the places where God is at work.
- **E**at – I will share meals and spend time with people in my life.
- **S**erve – I will respond to the needs of others and help them in practical and impractical ways.
- **S**tory – I will share the story of Jesus and what He is doing in my life with others.

Sharing the story of what God is doing is the theme of the passage we are looking at today. In 2 Kings 7 we find four leprosy men who were in a very desperate situation. If God didn't move in their lives, they were going to die. But God did move. He saved and provided for them. His provision was abundant, so the four men sought to share it with the rest of their countrymen.

Read 2 Kings 7:3-9.

Inquiry: When King Jehoram was king over Israel, Ben-hadad king of Syria and his entire army laid siege to the city of Samaria. They were encamped all around, making it impossible for the Israelites to come in or go out of the city. As a result, a severe famine swept over the people, which produced highly inflated prices for the humblest commodities. So scarce had food become that the people had begun to eat dove dung and their own children (6:25, 28-29). The dire state of Israel caused King Jehoram to seek the head of Elisha the prophet (6:31). Rather than look to God for deliverance, the king in his rebellion sought to put to death the prophet of God. But God was gracious. Elisha prophesied that deliverance would come to them the next day.

The lepers in our story are not named, but the truth is they could bear our names because their story is similar to our stories as Christ-followers. Let's look at this story as we seek to better understand how we can share with every home.

1. A Serious Dilemma

Now there were four men who were lepers at the entrance to the gate. And they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die?" – 2 Kings 7:3

The serious dilemma these four men faced stemmed from two realities: deteriorating condition and deadly complacency.

These men are in serious trouble due to the fact their condition is quickly deteriorating. The Bible tells us they had a disease known as leprosy. This disease is horrific. There have not been many diseases worse than that of leprosy. It literally eats away and corrodes your flesh. It can be deadly if not treated. In Bible times, this disease was greatly feared because there were not a lot of options to treat it. When someone contracted leprosy, he or she was basically banished from life in the community. The person had to live outside the city with the other lepers, and any time a leper passed by non-lepers, he or she would have to scream out, "Unclean! Unclean!" for fear of contaminating them.

These men are in a terrible state. They are dying of leprosy. Early I stated that these men could bear our names. The reason is we all have a disease. It is infectious, and it is deadly. This disease we all carry is called sin. In the Bible leprosy is often used as a symbol for sin. The idea is that we are to abhor sin like we would abhor leprosy. The Bible says we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). Like the leper, apart from Christ we are as good as dead.

These men were in the frying pan due to their leprosy, but it gets worse. They jumped out of the frying pan into the fire because of the famine. Their condition was deteriorating. There was a scarcity of food in the city. It was so bad that the people had begun to eat garbage and their own babies. It would have been even worse for the lepers who lived outside the city walls.

The situation was dire but it continued to get worse. Look at the last phrase in verse 3. *"Why are we sitting here until we die?"* This is a profound question that we all should ask of ourselves at times. They identified the complacency in their lives. If your situation is deteriorating and if you have become complacent, you need to do what these lepers did. Shake yourselves from your complacency. Get up and do something. The four lepers realized their situation was desperate and that complacency can kill.

Illust: In 1903 there was a small mining town in Alberta, Canada, known as Frank. It had a population of about 600 people. The town was developed at the base of a massive mountain called Turtle Mountain, which towered about 7,000 feet above the town. The reason the people settled Frank was because Turtle Mountain had rich seams of coal underneath the limestone faces. The coal was easily excavated from the limestone, so the people made a lot of money relatively easy from the mountain.

Turtle Mountain, however, had problems. Tremors would often shake the mountain, and they grew worse as shafts were cut into the mountain further destabilizing it. So unstable was this mountain that the Blackfoot Indians, who were native to the land, had named it "the mountain that walks." But the citizens of Frank ignored all the warning signs until April 29, 1903. Just after 4am that morning a major earthquake erupted, which caused an enormous piece of Turtle Mountain to break off and tumble down into the valley below. A rock face 3,000 feet long and 500 feet thick and weighing 100 million tons crashed into Frank, Alberta killing at least 76 men, women, and children. Most of the bodies were never recovered. They were buried under hundreds of feet of rock.

The people knew they were in danger. They knew the condition of the mountain was deteriorating, but they had become complacent. In fact the miners were actually happy at the tremors because they would literally shake loose the coal. They didn't even have to dig the coal out; they just shoveled it into their buckets. It was so easy, but their complacency killed them.

Listen, if you have not repented of your sin and placed your faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, today you have no reason to be complacent about your eternity. You need to shake yourself and come to Jesus.

The lepers were faced with a serious dilemma, but they made a strategic decision.

2. A Strategic Decision

If we say, 'Let us enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. So now come, let us go over to the camp of the Syrians. If they spare our lives we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die." – 2 Kings 7:4

They considered their options. They could go into the city and die because of the famine. They could be complacent and set there and die. Or they could go over to the Syrians and perhaps find help. The worse case scenario is that they die.

People all over our community are faced with a strategic decision today. They can come to terms with the deteriorating conditions in their lives and look to Jesus, or they can remain complacent to die in their sin.

The lepers took a venture of faith and chose to act.

3. A Surprising Discovery

... But when they came to the edge of the camp of the Syrians, behold, there was no one there...they went into a tent and ate and drank, and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and went and hid them.
– 2 Kings 7:5b, 8b

Death stared the lepers in the face; they had nothing to lose by going over to the Syrians. Slipping away at twilight they traveled to the edge of the encampment. As they moved cautiously into the camp, to their surprise they met no one – the camp was completely deserted.

Can you imagine what they were thinking as they walked past animals, tents, fires, food, clothing, and weaponry? They come into the camp hungry, sick, tired, and near death. To their surprise they find that no one is in the camp. Everything in the camp is theirs for the taking. Do you see the available provision God had made on their behalf? All the stuff left by the Syrians is there and available to them.

Here is a beautiful picture of God's grace. What did these lepers do to deserve these spoils? What battle did they fight? What victory did they secure? They did nothing except by faith venture out. In doing so they found God's gracious provision to be more than they could imagine. It was an abundant provision.

We are all sinners who have done nothing to deserve or earn the abundant and gracious provision of God. But God has worked for us. Verse 6 tells us that it was the Lord who caused the Syrians to flee and saved Israel. And it was the Lord who on the cross shed His blood making atonement for our sin. If you are in Jesus you have experienced His life to the full (John 10:10). Therefore, we have an amazing testimony to share with others. If we will look to Jesus, we will find in Him the blessings of God in this life and in the next.

4. A Subsequent Duty

The lepers were faced with a serious dilemma. That dilemma led them to make a very strategic decision, which resulted in them making a surprising discovery. I can imagine what they did when they entered the camp and realized that no one was there. They fell down over the first pot filled with meat and potatoes cooking on the fire, and they began to gorge themselves. Then they discovered the riches and began to hide them. At some point they came to their senses and realized what they were doing was not right.

Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news. If we are silent and wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come; let us go and tell the king's household." – 2 Kings 7:9

The temptation was for them to hoard and keep what they had found to themselves. Hoarding is sinful and ugly. Misers are ugly people.

Illust: Hetty Green was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Her father was a whaling captain. He owned a fleet of ships. There was no son born into her family, so Hetty learned to work in the family business. She learned how captain ships and how to manage finances. By her late teen years, Hetty had

become known as a shrewd businesswoman. Her parents died and left the entire estate to Hetty. She became wealthy overnight, but then she became super-wealthy by being a great businesswoman. She was cut-throat and became the richest woman in the world.

Hetty, though, was a miser. She was cheap. She owned one dress. It was dirty and tattered. She didn't like to spend money on soap. She certainly didn't like to spend money on new clothes. Her favorite meal was oatmeal, but she wouldn't cook it in her little rent house where she lived because she didn't want to spend money on fuel. She would take it to her office that a bank freely gave her. There she would set the tin bowl up on top of the heating register and warm the oatmeal up. That is how cheap she was.

Hetty had two children, Silvia and Ned. Ned injured his leg in a bad accident. Hetty wouldn't take him to the hospital to see a doctor. Instead, she took him to a free clinic for the poor. They refused to treat Ned because they knew who she was. Rather than taking her son to the doctor, Hetty decided to treat him at home. Eventually, Ned's leg had to be amputated. Hetty was ugly because she was a miser. She was known as the "witch of wall street."

You see it is a sin to hoard and keep to ourselves when there is plenty for all. It is one thing to hoard silver and gold, but it is even worse to hoard what is greater than them...the gospel.

The lepers said, "We are not doing right." They repented of their sin, and then they went and shared God's provision with the king and the people.

We need to repent of our sin and share God's provision with others.

Conclusion: God wants to bless every home here in Powhatan. And the way He wants to do it is to use you and me as His conduit for blessing. He wants us to share with every home.

Illust: There is an interesting character from the gold rushes of the late 1800s. His name is George Carmack. He lived with his wife way up north in the Yukon region of Canada. George was a prospector on the Bonanza Creek. This creek is a tributary of the Yukon River. George was prospecting for gold, and one day he discovered gold in the bottom of the creek. What he found turned out to be much more than a few nuggets. He found a major gold vein.

George did something that no one else would ever do. He told everyone about it. Most prospectors would have kept the discovery secret, but not George. He published the discovery, which became the launch of the Klondike Gold Rush. By sharing his discovery with others George and countless others became wealthy. He is the exact opposite of Hetty Green. He also had a nickname. George was commonly known as "Lying George" because people didn't believe him at first.

Listen to your pastor; we have something far more valuable than anything in this world. It is the free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. And God calls us to share His gift with others. He calls us to share with every home.

Have you received God's gift of life in Jesus Christ?

Are you actively sharing God's of life in Jesus with others?