

Elijah/Elisha – Standing Alone

Week 20 – The End of Mercy

Transition: Last week we covered the story of someone we'd already met...the woman in Shunem. In that story, God had raised her dead son back to life (through Elisha). In this story, Elisha warns her of a coming famine, so she and her family move elsewhere. In the process of leaving and returning, God continues to shower her with blessing.

Context: This week we are studying a strange interchange between Israel's prophet (Elisha) and Hazael, who is the right-hand man of Ben-hadad, the king of Syria. Hazael is sent by the king to inquire if the king will recover from his illness, but finds out much, much more from God's spokesman.

Opening Questions:

- When has someone shown you great mercy? Share the story and how it impacted you.
- Is there an occasion where you had to confront someone with difficult news? What was it about? What emotions did you experience through the process?

Scripture/Storying: 2 Kings 8:7-15

Discipleship Questions:

- What is your overall reaction to this passage? What impression does it make on you and why?
- Elisha is known by non-Israelites as "the man of God." What qualities do you think are evident in someone known as a man or woman of God? What can you do to establish and develop a godly reputation among non-believers?
- Discerning God's will through difficulty is a common tension people experience. Ben-Hadad clearly desired to know God's will about his recovery. When have you desperately wanted to know God's will concerning a challenging situation? Share the story and how it turned out.
- It seems Hazael is embarrassed because Elisha exposed the motives of his heart. Have you ever been embarrassed when the intentions of your heart came out? What happened and what did you learn from it?
- In v11, Elisha begins to weep. When Hazael asks him why he's weeping, Elisha replies that it's because he knows how much death and destruction Hazael will inflict on the Israelites. What makes you weep? When have you wept for someone in sin and judgment is looming? If you know a person in this situation stop and pray for them.
- Jesus wept over Jerusalem in Luke 19:41-44. Why did Jesus weep? How is this both similar to and different from Elisha's situation? How might Jesus weep for us today?
- Hazael's actions confirm Elijah's prediction of him (1 Kings 19:15). What does this tell us about God's sovereignty over the kings and nations? What does this tell us about God's sovereignty over the nations in today's world?
- What is the Holy Spirit teaching you through this story? How does it impact the way you think and live?

Prayer time: This week we are praying for Redeem All Ministries, a ministry that Providence supports.

- Pray for our upcoming leadership seminar in December as we start selecting topics and speakers.
- Pray for spiritual insight to determine the most fruitful area(s) for our next church plant(s).
- Pray that we will leverage the conference's momentum to propel us forward throughout 2024/25...that we will have an enduring sense of urgency during the rapid discipleship growth happening in Zimbabwe.
- Pray for wisdom to prioritize community engagement effectively, recognizing the complexities and overwhelming physical needs characteristic of third-world countries.