

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE

Under Siege

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE

2 Kings 6 & 7

SYNOPSIS

You may be under siege, but God has a plan. So, choose life, turn to God and he will magnify your steps.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Under Siege

Ever feel like everything is going wrong? Like you can't seem to make any headway? Like you're trapped with nowhere to go? Ever feel like the enemy has targeted you, personally? A similar situation happened in 2 Kings 6.

☞ 2 Kings 6:24-7:20 NLT

24 Some time later, however, King Ben-hadad of Aram mustered his entire army and besieged Samaria. 25 As a result, there was a great famine in the city. The siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty pieces of silver, and a cup of dove's dung sold for five pieces of silver...

...It was so bad that people were starving to death and began cannibalizing their own children in order to survive. The king was in despair for the city and got mad at Elisha and God...

...7:1 Elisha replied, "Listen to this message from the Lord! This is what the Lord says: By this time tomorrow in the markets of Samaria, five quarts of choice flour will cost only one piece of silver, and ten quarts of barley grain will cost only one piece of silver." 2 The officer assisting the king said to the man of God, "That couldn't happen even if the Lord opened the windows of heaven!" But Elisha replied, "You will see it happen with your own eyes, but you won't be able to eat any of it!" 3 Now there were four men with leprosy sitting at the entrance of the city gates. "Why should we sit here waiting to die?" they asked each other. 4 "We will starve if we stay here, but with the famine in the city, we will starve if we go back there. So we might as well go out and surrender to the Aramean army. If they let us live, so much the better. But if they kill us, we would have died anyway." 5 So at twilight they set out for the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there! 6 For the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the clatter of speeding chariots and the galloping of horses and the sounds of a great army approaching. "The king of Israel has hired the Hittites and Egyptians to attack us!" they cried to one another. 7 So they panicked and ran into the night, abandoning their tents, horses, donkeys, and everything else, as they fled for their lives. 8 When the lepers arrived at the edge of the camp, they went into one tent after another, eating and drinking wine; and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and hid it. 9 Finally, they said to each other, "This is not right. This is a day of good news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! If we wait until morning, some calamity will certainly fall upon us. Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace..."

...So, they went and told the gatekeepers what happened, and they, in turn passed the word on to the king. The king was suspicious, thinking it must be a trap, so he sent out some scouts to investigate. They found the story to be true and reported back to the king. Then the people of the city rushed out and plundered the Aramean camp and Elisha's prediction was fulfilled, including the death of the unbelieving officer, who was trampled when the people rushed out of the city.

Let's start with Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram. Ben-Hadad means "Son of the Storm god." When we are going through the storms of life, it can feel as though we are under siege. When your job



becomes difficult and the boss is harsh; when your finances are so lean that you are falling behind on your bills; when your closest relationships are falling apart... those are **storms of life**, ☞ which **can feel like a siege**.

You may feel like you are trapped with nowhere to turn. It may seem that everything is going wrong. Just surviving from day to day is getting harder and harder. Now it's starting to sound like the past couple of years for a lot of people. It's like Murphy's Laws...

--Murphy's Laws-- *Inside every large problem is a series of small problems struggling to get out.*

The past year or two has seemed just like that... once things begin to settle down, then another problem surfaces. The stress has been very heavy for a lot of people. This kind of stress can even cause people, including family and close friends to turn on each other, sort of like the cannibalism in our story. Paul called it backbiting and devouring each other in Galatians 5:15. And some will take it far enough to even get angry with God and his representatives, just like the king in Samaria.

The prophet Jeremiah admitted his frustration with God. In Jeremiah 20, he complained about how the word of the Lord only brought him ridicule and reproach. He even wished he had never been born. He was only hearing God's voice and speaking on his behalf, yet it caused him all sorts of trouble. Can anybody relate?

We all face storms of life. Some are attacks of the enemy and some are just the nature of this ☞ fallen world in which we live. But **God always has a plan**. Elisha was in the city under siege and the king blamed him for all the trouble, but he had a word from the Lord... "this time tomorrow..."

Amos 3:7

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

We also have a word from the Lord. Jeremiah 29:11 – *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* And Romans 8:28 – *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

No matter what is happening around you, God is working for your good. It doesn't always feel like it, but that is his promise. We have also had personal promises for OBC. For nearly 30 years, we have received prophetic words from various ministers at various times for Open Bible. Naomi and I have also received personal prophetic words which tend to align with those for the church. We have seen some tokens of fulfillment, but believe that the entirety of God's vision is yet to be realized. Here's a few of the prophecies:

- ☞ **Revival** will come and flow from here with the experience of the power of God.
- ☞ God will do **More** than we have imagined and his blessings are still coming.
- ☞ God will give us **Authority** in praying for the sick and healing of relationships.



These are God's promises to us, right here in Boone, Iowa.

The one concern we must be aware of is that of unbelief and cynicism. Some of you have been here with me for all of this; you've heard the same prophecies; and you may wonder if they're really true. I get that. I've had doubts as well. They're a long time in coming. But we must be careful to not let doubt become unbelief. It's the one thing that God doesn't tolerate. The officer that refused to believe was the one who got trampled and never received the promise.

So, what do we do? Choose life. That's what the 4 lepers did. They realized they were going to die one way or the other. Going into the besieged city would lead to death. Staying put would lead to death. But getting up and taking a step forward might possibly lead to life. They weren't so much filled with faith as they were driven by hunger.

David was full of faith and bold when he ran toward Goliath. Sometimes, however, we don't ☞ have that kind of confidence, but we can still **choose life**. The 4 lepers simply chose to move in the direction that gave a possibility of hope.

God invites us to choose life as well. Deuteronomy 30:19 says, "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life..." In the preceding verses he defines what it means to choose life: **☞ Lord, walk in his ways, keep his commands**. That's true life.

You may have been pounded by the storms of life; you may have wished you were never born like Jeremiah. You may have even allowed your frustration to become anger toward God. Perhaps you've even considered just giving up and walking away from the faith. But God is saying to you, "choose life." Keep on loving God; keep on walking in his ways; keep on ☞ keeping his commands. **Don't give up**.

The 4 lepers didn't give up. A lot of the rest of the city had given up, but they didn't. They actually had it worse than everyone else. They were already outcasts with a terrible disease. Now, they are starving just like everyone else. Yet, they didn't turn on each other. They didn't blame God. They didn't just sit there. They chose to live. They got up and began to walk. And as they walked a miracle took place. The Lord magnified their footsteps so that the enemy thought a mighty army was coming and they fled in fear.

When we choose life; when we choose to keep on loving God; to keep on walking in his ways; ☞ to keep on keeping his commands; when we choose to never give up, **God magnifies our efforts**.

- Moses had zero confidence, but he used his staff and God did miracles with it.
- David was just a boy, but he used a slingshot and God killed a giant with it.
- The nation of Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land on dry ground, but the river was at flood stage, flowing full force until the priests stepped into the water.



Listen to God's word in Revelation 3:8-10: *See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. 10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*

Perhaps you feel like you have so little strength. You might relate to Moses, with zero confidence. You might feel like you're just a child in the faith. You might relate to the Israelis facing the Jordan at flood stage. Whatever you're facing may seem overwhelming and impossible, but don't give up. Choose life. God will magnify your effort!

☞ Choose life today. **Even if you're not full of faith, be hungry!** The 4 lepers weren't driven by faith, but they were hungry and wanted to live. Let your hunger for more of God keep you going.

In Psalm 42, the writer is thirsty for God. He felt abandoned and overcome with grief. But he ☞ remembers how he used to go to the house of the Lord and chooses to put his **hope in God**.

☞ In Psalm 63, the writer talks about his hunger and thirst for God and chooses to **seek after the Lord**, giving him glory and praise with uplifted hands.

☞ In Psalm 84, the writer yearns for the Lord to the point of fainting, so he **cries out to God**. He even talks about the strength of those who choose to walk toward God. Even in the valley of weeping, those who choose to walk toward God, not away, will see things turn for the better. The ones who don't give up, but choose life, going toward God, will go from strength to strength.

The storms of life and the attacks of the enemy may have you feeling like you're under siege, and you may be tempted to just curl up and die. You may be discouraged and thinking about walking away from the Lord. But don't give up. Choose life. Choose to keep on loving God.

Even if you can only manage to take a few baby steps, do it. God has plans for your best. Your prayers might not be filled with faith, but you can take a step, just saying, "God I'm going to trust you." "I'm not going to just give up." That is a step toward God and he will show himself faithful. As you walk towards him, he will magnify your steps. The enemy will have to flee, and you will receive the promises. Then, as you experience God's faithfulness, do like the 4 lepers, and share what you find.

☞ You may be under siege, but God has a plan. So, **choose life, turn to God, he will magnify your steps, and you will receive the promises.**

Faithful Now