

## PLEASANTLY SITUATED BUT BAD AND BARREN – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Greetings, friends! Thank you, again, for letting me into your homes this hour. I am going to speak today on *Pleasantly Situated but Bad and Barren*. And it is taken from 2 Kings 2:19-22

2 Kings 2:19-22

*<sup>19</sup> Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren." <sup>20</sup> And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. <sup>21</sup> Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'" <sup>22</sup> So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.*

PRAYER:

*Lead us now, dear Lord, as we go through the scripture to see the lessons that You would want us to learn; and teach us, we pray, Spirit of God, in Jesus Name. Amen!*

In the previous verses, Elijah has just been snatched away to heaven by a whirlwind, not a chariot of fire with horses of fire. That is in 2 Kings 2:11. The chariot of fire with horses of fire only served to separate the two prophets: Elijah and Elisha. But it was by the whirlwind that he went to heaven. God has a way of separating people when he plans to do something unusual with somebody. One that comes to mind quickly is Acts 13:2 where the bible says:

Acts 13:2

<sup>2</sup> *As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”*

When God wants to use you for something important to Him, He may need to separate you: separate you from people, separate you from things. Elisha came from that moving experience of seeing a mortal man ascending to heaven without tasting death. What can't God do? No wonder in Jeremiah 32:27 we read,

Jeremiah 32:27

<sup>27</sup> *“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”*

This rhetorical question has the obvious answer: nothing – absolutely nothing is too hard for You. Elisha got to Jericho where the men of the city met him to complain of the big problem they had in the city.

2 Kings 2:19b

<sup>19</sup> *Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees;*

I mean – anybody can see that. Anybody knows that the city is well situated, but the water is bad, and the ground barren. From what the eye can see, the city of Jericho was pleasantly situated but it was bad and barren.

Let us wrap our discussion around the following outline:

- Situation of Jericho
- Sickness of Jericho
- And solution to the sickness of Jericho.

#### A. SITUATION OF JERICHO

Jericho was pleasantly situated, the bible says. This reminds us of what Psalms 48:2 says of Mount Zion. In the King James Version:

Psalms 48:1-2

<sup>1</sup>*Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised*

*In the city of our God,*

*In His holy mountain.*

<sup>2</sup>*Beautiful in elevation,*

*The joy of the whole earth,*

*Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north,*

*The city of the great King.*

But unlike Mount Zion, Jericho was beautifully situated, but produced sadness and death – instead of joy. Jericho is considered one of the oldest cities in the world – about six miles from the Dead Sea. It was known as the city of Palm Trees, releasing sweet from its beautiful vegetation. At a glance or superficially, the city was pleasant to behold – but bad and barren. Literally, the city caused barrenness. This leads us to the second point.

#### B. THE SICKNESS OF JERICO

What was really the problem with Jericho? The root of the problem was its water supply which contained harmful minerals, I suppose, that caused barrenness and death. In other words, Jericho's water supply was polluted. Crops and trees grew, but before they could produce fruit the fruit will drop off and the crop or the tree would wither. You could say that the crops and the fruit trees in Jericho were experiencing abortion constantly.

By way of application, some of us may be like Jericho. We appear beautiful externally – even enviable to some. We dress beautifully; we serve enthusiastically in the church and in the community, and even speak Christianese – the Christian language, but deep down we are bad and unfruitful: barren. Never forget that the primary objective of God was and still is to recreate sinners through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, not first and foremost to take them to heaven – but rather to bring heaven

down into their hearts, thereby drawing other sinners to God, through the heavenly living of such recreated sinners. No wonder Jesus says in,

John 15:8-9

<sup>8</sup> *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples...*

In verse 16,

<sup>16</sup> *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

Fruitfulness! You know...according to Jesus, in John 4:14, He gives us the water of life when He comes to indwell us. And that water of life should produce fruit. But unfortunately, when this water is polluted: polluted by willfulness, polluted by stubbornness, polluted by self-righteousness – trying to live the life of Christ by our self-effort, polluted by our prayerlessness, polluted by our affinity for false teachings and following counterfeit spirits that mimic the Holy Spirit...when this water is polluted we will become barren. The men of Jericho saw the predicament their pleasantly situated city was in and sought the help of God through His representative in Israel – Elisha: God’s prophet.

Now we come to:

#### C. THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF JERICO

How did Elisha solve the problem of Jericho? How did Elisha solve the problem of Jericho’s barrenness and death? The answer is in 2 Kings 2:20-21

2 Kings 2:20-21

<sup>20</sup> *And he said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him. <sup>21</sup> Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt*

*there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'"*

Notice what Elisha asked for and what he did. He asked for a new bowl and salt. It is significant that he asked for a new bowl, not an old bowl. To solve our problem or barrenness and unfruitfulness: we must present a new bowl to God, in the form of a bowl or vessel purged of ignoble things – and sanctified or set apart for His exclusive use.

That is what you find in,

2 Timothy 2:20-21

*<sup>20</sup> But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. <sup>21</sup> Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*

The Master's vessel must have salt in himself or herself: salt that serves as a preservative – by retarding decay or spoilage. The Master's vessel must have salt in himself or herself: salt that adds flavor to a bland and tasteless unenjoyable world or society. The Master's vessel must have salt in himself or herself – salt that creates thirst for God and His righteousness.

Do you know that they say that you can lead a horse to the stream, but you cannot make it drink – but not if you first of all feed it salt which will induce thirst in the unwilling horse? When the Master's vessel has salt, people will thirst for God when they see such a vessel.

#### PRAYER

*Friends, are you such a vessel? If you are not – why not? If you are not – why not now? Why don't you say, Jesus You died for my sins; forgive me, and come into my heart, and make me Your vessel: vessel of honor set apart for His exclusive use. Let it be so for you, in Jesus Name. Amen!*