

PLEASANTLY SITUATED BUT BAD AND BARREN – PART TWO

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.

We are back, friends. We are back to 2 Kings 2:19-22.

Pleasantly Situated but Bad and Barren.

2 Kings 2:19-22

¹⁹ *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."*

²⁰ *And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.*

²¹ *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.'"* ²² *So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.*

PRAYER:

As we search the scripture again, dear Lord, to conclude what we started last time, refresh our memory, and give us new insight. Touch our innermost beings...in Jesus Name. Amen.

We said that the title of our discussion or message is, Pleasantly Situated but Bad and Barren. These were words picked up from the text. It is about the situation of Jericho. Elisha was just coming from the moving experience of seeing his master Elijah taken to heaven by a whirlwind. Such an amazing thing! A man without dying, going straight to heaven! So he moved from that excitement, came to Jericho, and the men of Jericho approached him with the problem that they had in the city. They said to him, *"Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant..."*

The situation of this city is pleasant. It is pleasantly situated: positioned, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren.

We decided to break down this discussion into three parts:

- The situation of Jericho, that is, the positioning of Jericho,
- The sickness of Jericho,
- And the solution to the sickness of Jericho.

We have already looked at the situation of Jericho. Jericho was beautifully situated, like what was said of Mount Zion in Psalms 48:2. Mount Zion, beautifully situated: the joy of the whole earth; but unlike Mount Zion Jericho was beautifully situated but did not produce joy: but sadness, because it was barren and bad.

The sickness of Jericho was that the water supply was polluted. Crops grew, flowered, but did not produce fruit. They died. You can say then that the crops and the fruit trees in Jericho were experiencing constant abortion.

And I said last time that that may typify some of us who may appear externally beautiful, externally okay, who may even be serving effectively and enthusiastically in church; but deep down we're bad and unfruitful. And that is because the water of life that should produce the fruit of righteousness that will attract people to God – that water is polluted for a number of reasons: polluted by self-righteousness (self-righteousness is when we try to please God by our own effort), by our stubbornness, by our prayerlessness, by our sinful conduct.

To put it simply, they came to Elisha, the representative of God in Israel, and told him what the problem was.

Friend, won't you take your problem to God? Some of us go to God with our problems as a matter of last resort, when we have tried all else and they failed – then as matter of last resort we go to God. No: there is nothing impossible with God.

The solution of Jericho's sickness.

Elisha recommended two things: a new bowl and salt. And he went to the source of the water and cast the salt there; and then he said, *"Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'"* If you are going to be a vessel of the Master you must contain salt. No wonder Jesus says of His disciples, *you are the salt of the earth.*

And last time we mentioned some of the things that salt does. It serves as a preservative, retarding decay and spoilage; it adds flavor to a bland, tasteless unenjoyable world; salt creates thirst for God and His righteousness. Salt also, when you apply it to a wound, it irritates and causes some discomfort, but it will stop putrefaction of the wound. It will facilitate healing. If we Christians no longer serve as preservatives, no longer add flavor, no longer cause the world to thirst for God and no longer irritate the sick world, it is likely that we have lost our saltiness. And that is a very scary thing.

In the light of what Jesus says in,

Matthew 5:13

¹³ *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men...”*

May it not be so with us, in Jesus Name. We have seen what Elisha asked for. He asked for a new bowl: a clean vessel, and salt. Let us see what he did. ²¹ *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.’”* Elisha applied the salt at the source of the water supply, the source of the unfruitfulness of Jericho.

What is the source of our unfruitfulness, friend? It is our hearts – our inner man. Many of us focus attention on the external; and some people – that is the beginning and the end of their holiness. Holiness is a matter of the heart. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. We may look good and pleasant on the outside; but it is what we are on the inside that matters most to God.

Proverbs 4:23; God gives us this admonition.

Proverbs 4:23

²³ *Keep **your** heart with all diligence,
For out of it springs the issues of life.*

No wonder Jesus says in,

Matthew 5:8:

⁸*Blessed are the pure in **heart**,*

For they shall see God.

Only the pure in heart will understand or comprehend what God is saying and doing. Seeing! If I am talking to you and I say, do you see what I'm saying, I'm saying do you understand what I'm saying? Seeing God in a sense means understanding God. Seeing God means associating with God, seeing Him in time and eternity later. The Christian life, that is the life of Christ in the believer is first lived in the heart from where it flows out to touch those around us for good. It is a life of dependence.

Before you can produce this character of Jesus Christ, friend, if you are a believer, you must be dependent upon Him, because it is He that would produce that life: Not you. Christianity is not a matter of what I'm doing or what I will do, as much as it is a matter of what Jesus has done.

Are you living a life of dependence? But you ask me, but how do I know if anybody is living a life of dependence? How do I know if I'm living a life of dependence? The life of Jesus Christ is a very perfect example of a life of dependence. For everything Jesus did and said here on earth He depended on the Father. That's why He said, I can of myself do nothing. And that's why He says in John 15:5, apart from Me, you can do nothing. Jesus depended upon the Father. The Holy Spirit came upon Him mightily and through the Holy Spirit He did everything He did. And of course to demonstrate a life of dependence He prayed like no body else in the history of man. That is the evidence that you are depending upon God.

A prayer less Christian is a Christian who is depending upon himself or herself. I will be misleading you, friend, if I do not tell you that it was not Elisha, not the new bowl, not the salt, that healed the bareness and death of Jericho – it was God. Listen to Elisha again. Elisha said in verse 21: *“Thus says the LORD: ‘I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.’”*

How often do we see Christian's, especially Ministers of the Gospel, take credit for what God does? Some even call themselves deliverers, miracle workers, when

it is God alone and God only who works and performs miracle. That may be the explanation or the reason why God is silent pretty much in our day.

Let us look up to God with whom nothing is impossible, and from whom all blessing flows, that He may heal our spiritual barrenness and spiritual death. May I add that He is able to heal physical barrenness also...in Jesus Name. We shall no longer be just pleasantly situated; we must be fruitful, we must not look good only on the outside, we must be good inside out. By this we place the Lord Jesus Christ on positive display, and thereby attract nonbelievers to Him.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You again for the time we have spent with You and with one another in radio land. May You, dear Lord, change us. Change us from inside out. Remove the barrenness, remove all that is bad, that we may be fruitful and glorify Your Name, in Jesus Name we pray. Amen!