

1. Several weeks ago, as it became clear that Covid-19 was going to change how we live our lives, I was reminded of a story that is found in the book of 2 Kings.
2. What struck me when I re-read the story was the fact that, although these are unprecedented times for us, they are not unprecedented times for God.
3. Not only was God not caught off guard, this isn't the first time God in the history of mankind has loved and lead and cared for his people in times of difficulty.
4. In **2 Kings, chapter 6, beginning in verse 24**, we find the story of the siege of the city of Samaria. Samaria was part of the nation of Israel.
5. The similarities of what they experienced then, compared to what we are experiencing today are too numerous to mention.
6. A siege is normally a military operation where enemy forces surround a town or building, with the purpose of cutting off essential supplies, so that those inside the town or building will surrender.
7. What a powerful picture of what is happening in our world today. The army of Aram surrounded Samaria and cut them off from the outside world.
8. I feel so cut off from the world around me.
9. I am so thankful that we can at least see each other today, but I long for so much more than just seeing others.
10. I am a part of a group of people who have gotten together every morning for years. And every day we text one another, but it's just not the same.
11. We have staggered the days and hours that the staff are in the office, and this past Tuesday, a day when we would normally all get together to meet and plan, I was overcome with this sense of missing our staff terribly.
12. I haven't shared a meal with our staff in many weeks, and I miss that terribly.
13. When this all started, I was going to visit a relative out of state, but decided not to so as to use caution.

14. I would just love to go sit down in a restaurant and have a good meal.
15. During this crisis, we have had people from the church go into the hospital, but I can't go visit them.
16. Members of our church are in nursing homes, and their family members can't go and see and touch and hug them.
17. I believe cut off is a perfect way to describe what we are experiencing.
18. And just like in the book of 2 Kings chapter 6, this fact of being cut off has produced some mind-boggling outcomes.
19. Let me share the entire story with you, and then I want to come back and break down just a couple of verses.
20. The army of Aram surrounds the city of Samaria, and as a result of the food supply being cut off, there is a severe famine that overtakes the city.
21. People are hungry. So hungry in fact that they become desperate.
22. One day as the king is out surveying the circumstances surrounding them, a lady approaches with an unthinkable problem.
23. Two neighbors, both of whom had a small child, made a pact with one another in an attempt to try and survive.
24. They eat the first lady's child one day, with the promise they will eat the second child the day after that, but the second mother reneges on the agreement, and won't allow her son to be eaten.
25. When the king hears this, he is absolutely distraught. Not only can he not believe it, there is nothing he can do about it.
26. But his distress doesn't last for long. In just a little bit his distress turns to anger, and his anger turns to blame, and his blame causes him to want to do things that are completely irrational.
27. But at the lowest depth of their despair, God promises to intervene. And in fact, through a series of miracles, God does turn the situation entirely around and works the circumstances out for their good. We'll get to that in a later week.

28. Before we look at the first couple of verses together, I want to point out and I want to lay as my foundation this morning the same truth that we see in this story of Samaria.
29. And that is that God is not surprised. God is not caught off guard. God is not out of his league or outside of his ability.
30. God is not panicked wringing his hands, wondering what to do next.
31. Your heavenly father is calm, cool, and collected. Your heavenly father has not lost an ounce of sleep over these things.
32. Now. I don't declare that in an attempt to downplay the significance of what you are personally dealing with right now, or what we are dealing with collectively.
33. The point is not to try and convince you that what you are facing is no big deal, and that because we trust in God we need to act as if none of this is a big deal.
34. I want to go on record as saying this. All of this. All the things we are facing, all the uncertainty, being in the dark about the future, waking up every morning not knowing what will happen next; all of these things are a very big deal.
35. They are real, they are having an affect on our lives, and they most certainly are a big deal.
36. My point is to remind you that **none of these things is a bigger deal than the Lord and savior that you serve.**
37. Jesus is still on the throne. Jesus still is who he says he is.

He is still.... **Elohim:** God of power and might.

Yahweh: The great I am.

Abba: Father/Daddy

EI Elyon: God most High.

EI Roi: The God who sees.

EI Shaddai: God Almighty

Yahweh Yireh: The Lord will provide.

Yahweh Nissi: The Lord is my banner.

Jehovah Rapha: Healer.

Yahweh Shalom: The Lord is Peace.

38. So, we're not ignoring the reality of our circumstances; neither are we ignoring the greatness of our God.
39. Instead, what I want to invite you to do is look beyond those things and consider what it is that God might be trying to show us and teach us through our experiences, right here and right now.
40. Because I can assure you. There is purpose. God is definitely up to something. Our heavenly father is trying to lead us somewhere.
41. The question is...will we listen and learn from what he is trying to accomplish in our lives?
42. Go back with me to **2 Kings 6:24-25** Some time later, Ben-Hadad king of Aram mobilized his entire army and marched up and laid siege to Samaria. **25** There was a great famine in the city; the siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a quarter of a cab of seed pods for five shekels
43. Here is the message I believe the Lord would have me share with you today.

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1. Verse 26 tells us that one of the affects of this great siege was that there was a great famine in the land. There was a shortage of food.
2. And the shortage of food wasn't just for a few hours, or for a day, or for a week. the famine lasted so long that what had been considered worthless before, now had tremendous value.
3. To help make sense of how long and severe the famine lasted, we are given a point of reference.
4. A donkey's head sold for 80 shekels of silver, and a quarter of a cab of seed pods for 5 shekels.
5. Let's first understand how much a shekel was worth.
6. In those days, a silver shekel, one silver shekel, would be worth about \$20 in today's money.
7. So, 80 silver shekels would be worth about \$1,600.
8. The famine had become so severe that it says that a donkey's head was selling for \$1,600.

9. Now. lets also put into perspective the value of a donkey's head prior to this famine.
10. First of all, before the famine, a donkey's head would be nearly worthless. Why?
- The donkey's head was considered unclean food. It was not meant to be eaten. Eating a donkey's head was an act of desperation.
 - Whatever meat that could be produced from a donkey's head was minimal at best. Probably not a single meal for one person.
 - Meat that came from a donkey's head tasted terrible. It was just not good food.
11. So, before the famine a donkey's head is considered basically worthless. But now it is worth \$1,600.
12. The second point of value we are given is an amount of seed.
13. It said that a quarter cab of seed was selling for 5 shekels.
14. A quarter of a cab of seed is 8 oz.
15. At \$20 per shekel, that cup of seed, enough to barely eat 1 meal, was selling for \$100.
16. Prior to the famine, that small cup of seed would have cost \$.07.
17. I want to draw your attention to two things here.
18. **The value of things change with the circumstances.** The value of things are not constant and true, they fluctuate. So we may have something today that we think makes us rich, and tomorrow that thing can be worthless.
19. **What we value can be taken from us in an instant.**
20. The second thing we need to know is that **as human beings, we have a tendency to place value on the wrong things in the first place.**
21. Without the Lord, we are terrible at assigning value to things.
22. Some things we think we can't live without, are really worthless in the grand scheme of things.
23. David in in the book of Psalms uncovered the futility of placing value on the wrong things.
24. **Psalm 33:16-21** The best-equipped army cannot save a king, nor is great strength enough to save a warrior. **17** Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory— for all its strength, it cannot save you. **18** But the LORD watches over those who fear

Him, those who rely on His unfailing love. 19 He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. 20 We put our hope in the LORD. He is our help and our shield. 21 In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name.

25. How do we know what we value? We value what we put our hope in.
26. David had seen it all. He had been in tight spots and jams most of us will never experience. And this was the wisdom he gained from those experiences.
27. A well-equipped army (an army with a bunch of stuff) can't save the king.
28. Great strength is not enough to save a man.
29. Your horse (car, bank account, retirement account, or whatever else you put in there) can't bring you victory.
30. The only one who can provide. The only one who can bring victory. The only one who can be counted on. The only one who is worthy of putting hope in. The only one who rescues us from death and keeps us alive in times of lack.
31. The only one who is a shield to protect us. The one who should have the highest value is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

1. Any other source of hope, value, or trust is misplaced, incomplete, not worthy, and worthless.
2. And it is in times like these that what really matters comes into view.
3. It is in times like these that our sources of hope and trust are really exposed.
4. What have these unprecedented times uncovered in your life as it relates to where you hope is?
5. Have you discovered that what you have been trusting in isn't really trustworthy at all?
6. I love this quote. "In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to."
7. Pray for help.
8. Have you trusted in the Lord as your savior?

9. Have you been trusting in sources of false hope? Ask the Lord to forgive you. Repent.
10. Ask the Lord to help you put your trust in him.