

## Are You Stuck in a Rut?

**Introduction:** In 2 Kings 6 and 7 we read of a time when the King of Syria came against Samaria, in the days of the prophet Elisha. The Syrians mounted a prolonged and tight siege against this city.

The king of Israel and the people of Samaria were stuck. There was no way out and no chance of a breakout. They found themselves surrounded and contained within the walls of the city day after day, for a long time. They were stuck in a rut. Day after day, there was no change in their situation.

In fact, things became so desperate that people started eat non-kosher meat (like a donkey's head, and at a high cost) and they started even talking about eating their own children to survive.

Perhaps you and I have never had to face such an extreme situation. However, have you ever felt as if you are encircled by the enemy with no way out, and no way through?

Have you ever felt stuck in some sort of rut:

- Perhaps a habit you can't seem to break,
- Or some enemy that you can't seem to be able to defeat,
- Or perhaps you feel like you are in a rut, spiritually speaking – your relationship with God used to be different, there was greater passion for Him and now it seems as if your prayers never rise above the ceiling of your room.

If so, today's message is for you. We are going to learn about how to get out of a rut, about getting unstuck, moving forward, about breaking every siege, and defeating the enemy!

Our text today is taken directly from **2 Kings 7:1-6, 9**. However, let us start with verses: 3 and 9.

*3 Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we **sitting** here until we die?"*

*9 Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain **silent**. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household."*

During this siege, four lepers had been 'sitting', 'silent' and in a rut! These were people trapped not only by the long siege but trapped in their own condition too.

Sitting, silent and in a rut - it is easy sometimes to find ourselves there: no longer moving towards our goals, demotivated, stuck in cycles of defeat and discouragement.

What I find remarkable about this story is that these lepers who had reason to be more discouraged than anyone else, had the courage to stand up, to take action, to do something – instead of accepting their 'fate', instead of resigning themselves to defeat

and death. In this story, I see 3 very important keys to get out a rut and break through the enemy's lines:

### 1. Take action.

The 4 lepers rebelled against the rut they were in. They took action regarding their own situation. They didn't wait for anyone else, they didn't complain about anyone else. They just took action on their own.

These lepers didn't say, 'why God?', or 'why doesn't the king do something about this?' – no they said, '*why are **we** sitting here until we die?*' They took responsibility for their own destiny.

a) There are 3 types of people: accusers, excusers and choosers.

- **Accusers** – blame everyone else for their inaction
- **Excusers** – justify their failure and rationalise why they're not moving towards their goals.
- **Choosers** – choosers accept responsibility for their own happiness. They make choices that propel them forward.

And if they make a mistake, they admit it too. They fess up, they own up to their mistakes:

**Proverbs 28:13** - *He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy*

Choose to take action!

b) There are 4 great motivators of action:

- **Pain** (that was the case with the "Prodigal son". He took action when he hit rock bottom)
- **Pressure** (In 1Kings 17:7 we read about how Elijah had to make a move because the brook he relied upon to survive the drought dried up)
- **Perspective** (Saul of Tarsus became the Apostle Paul when he saw a vision on the Road to Damascus. Nothing will get you into action and out of a rut like insight, inspiration and vision!)
- **Passion** – there isn't a greater motivator than passion.

However, action is always a choice. Make a choice to do something, to swim upstream, to rebel against your situation, to break out.

### 2. Believe that things can and will change.

This whole story is here in the Bible so we know that things can change regardless of how bleak and hopeless they may seem. The situation at this time was so critical, famine was so acute, that people had started talking about eating their own children. They had reached what seemed like irreversible and imminent defeat and death. At that point, Elisha prophesied:

**Verse 1-3** - *Then Elisha said, “**Hear the word of the Lord.** Thus says the Lord: ‘Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’”<sup>2</sup> So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, “Look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?” And he said, “In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.”*

What a turnaround, what a breakthrough! In 24 hours everything was going to change radically. One word from God changed everything!

How do you believe? How do you get to a place of faith? – “*hear the word of the Lord*”. Faith comes by hearing. Find God’s word for your situation and believe it. The officer didn’t and therefore couldn’t partake of that blessing. In order to get unstuck, find God’s word, hear it, believe it and ... speak it! Follow the advice of the lepers: don’t remain silent. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!

When Elisha declared the Word, everything changed. It only took 24 hours. Take action and believe that things can change!

### **3. Don’t wait for ideal circumstances.**

*9. Then they said to one another, “We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king’s household.”*

*If we wait until the morning light...* Taking the journey back in morning light would have been ideal but they understood the importance of ‘**now**’. “**This day** is a day of good news” – this day. We have no promise of tomorrow.

- a) Some people are stuck in a rut because of procrastination (‘one day I will beat this addiction’, ‘one day I will lose weight’, ‘one day I will get on fire for God’).
- b) Some of us are still stuck in a rut because we are waiting to have all the ducks in a row, for all the circumstances to line up.

**Ecclesiastes 11:4 NLT** - *Farmers who wait for **perfect weather** never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest.*

Perfectionism can lead to procrastination. We keep telling ourselves. ‘*it is not the right time, it is not yet perfect.*’ Perfectionism paralyzes potential because if we can’t do it perfectly, we won’t do it. The 3 most powerful words to getting out of the rut are, “**do it now!**” We are not guaranteed another hour, another day, but **we have now**. If we say, someday, it probably means never. The greatest tragedy of life is to waste it.

## **Conclusion**

So here’s how you can get out of your rut:

- Take action (don’t be an accuser or an excuser – be a chooser. Choose action)
- Believe that things can and will change

- Start now – What can you start doing now? What steps can you take towards your goals today?

Finally, I just would like to read **Philippians 3:13-14**

*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

The Christian life was always intended by God to be a life action and movement, of growth also – never of stagnation, never of being stuck in a rut.

We need to press forward towards those things that God has for us. I believe that some need to stop living in the past. The past can also be a rut. We need to forget the past and press towards the future God has for us.

Spiritually speaking many of us may have stopped growing and moving towards the greater things of God. It is time TODAY to take action, to stir ourselves up and go for more of God.