

“Releasing & Responding”
January 14, 2017

ISAIAH 43:19- “Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” [NOTE: To His people Israel—entrenched in 70 years of captivity—the LORD called them to **“Behold”** (i.e., *embrace the amazing revelation*) that He was **“now”** bringing them an amazing **freedom—a “road” for them to walk on & a “river” for them to flow in!**]

CORE: Throughout Scripture (and life) **God brings release, and then calls us to a life-altering response—out of the ordinary; overcoming our limitations.**

2 KINGS 13:14-19- Elisha & King Jehoash

- **Two commands:**
 - **“Shoot the arrow”- recognizing there are things beyond your control; trusting God for a supernatural release; trusting Him to take you where you have yet to go**
 - **“Strike the arrow”- taking responsibility for the things entrusted to you by the Lord**
- **Elisha left the responsibility in the hands of Jehoash**
- **The king began with a promise of complete victory—yet settled for much less**
 - **He quit too soon**
 - **He expected too little**

In light of the amazing RELEASE Jesus bought for us in His breakthrough at the Cross AND...

In light of the astounding RESPONSIBILITY we have to be “lights in the world”—transforming the culture...

HOW DO WE AVOID MAKING THE SAME MISTAKE?

1. KNOW THAT WE ALWAYS HAVE CHOICES

- **History of “New Year’s Resolutions”—begun 4,000 years ago by Babylonians—in the springtime of each new year. We given one chance to make one choice to make up for the mistakes of the previous year. Result: faced each year with REGRET and FEAR.**
 - **Continued by the Romans 2,00 years later—in January—as an attempt to appease the scrutiny and anger of the false god Janus.**
 - **NOTE: Recent survey found 8% of people making NY Resolutions fulfill them. Why? Many set unrealistic goals; most stop trying after the 1st mistake.**
- ***C.S. Lewis, “ You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”***

- Every day is an opportunity to start fresh!
- Those who **CHOOSE TO MAXIMIZE THEIR OPPORTUNITIES**
 - Move beyond complacency → **SENSE OF URGENCY**
 - Move beyond the fear of death → **REALLY LIVE**
 - Move beyond the fear of failure → **TAKE RISKS**
 - Move past the fear of pain → **DISCOVER NEW STRENGTHS**
- Hard to find a story in the Bible where God became angry because people had too much faith; too much determination; took too many risks!

2. OVERRIDE YOUR EXCUSES

- Trust God's ability to do extraordinary things through ordinary people.
- "**Average**" is called "average"—because most people settle for it!
- All God has ever needed is someone who refuses to give up!
 - Never settle for less than:
 - The **calling** He has on your life
 - The **purpose** for which He created you
 - The **impact** He designed you to make in the world

3. SIEZE THE DISRUPTIVE MOMENTS

NOTE: This story is a contrast of 2 lives—Elisha ending his life fulfilling his calling—Jehoash settling for less. Yet, for Elisha, living life to the fullest began years before in a very **disruptive moment**. In **1 Kings 19:19-21**, **Elijah** throws his cloak on **Elisha** as he is working in his father's field. Receiving the mantle as a sign of God's calling on his life, he kisses his father & mother goodbye—honoring them. Then he literally "burns" his past and moves into his future (NOTE: He does not burn his relational bridges).

- The "disruptive moments" are moments we must choose between extending our past or embracing and creating our future.
- One of the inescapable themes of the Kingdom—we cannot grab hold of the future if we keep holding onto the past!
- Luke 9:62- "*No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God.*" (i.e., You can't follow Me into the future if you are holding onto your past—both failures & successes; insecurities and comfort zones).

CLOSING THOUGHT:

John was on the Island of Patmos (a cruel Roman prison camp). To the Romans, it was *their* day of vengeance on the Christian "rebels." Yet, to John it was "the *Lord's* day." Because he chose this perspective, he was receptive to God's revelation & intervention. "Immediately" ("*in a moment—in a new place*") he was "in the Spirit"—receiving a fresh revelation of Jesus—reigning over all things—ruling and restoring in the midst of international upheaval.