

I. The Unexpected Game Plan

I have told you all week long that I was going to finish up the book of Proverbs today, but we are going to do that next week. What makes a good quarterback in a football game is a quarterback that always has a game plan that you are going to go with. As a quarterback, they put it together all week, but there are times in the game when the coach calls in a play from the bench. A really good quarterback is really comfortable when that happens. He does not get nervous, he does not fall apart, he simply realizes that the coach, who is the ultimate one over the team, has decided that there needs to be a special play come in because of the circumstances that he sees in the game.

Getting that into a biblical concept for us, I always allow God the ability to call in a play from the bench because I think that that is, when I said a good quarterback, I am not saying I am a good preacher, I am not making that comparison. I am making it considerable, calling something in from the bench. It is a thing where most pastors cannot do that. Most of them have their game plan set, and if anything rattles that, it falls apart.

I was taught and trained, and I teach this today, and I try to teach you to be this way. I think that any real child of God who really claims he knows the Bible, and I am not saying that you do not obviously, but I think you ought to be so in tune to the Word of God that you could be going, and this actually happened to me one time, that you could go to a Bible conference to preach as one of the preachers. Everybody has their assignment, and you were sent your assignment three weeks before or four weeks before, and you say you had the book of Job that you needed to lay out that we were studying books of the Bible. So you worked diligently on that. So there you are sitting on a platform, it is your turn to preach, and the lady is singing. There is always an indication that you are up next, and the pastor leans over and he says, "Boy, I am sure glad that we made the switch and the change because we are really interested in what you got to say." And you look over and say, "What switch was that?" And he says, "Well, originally you were going to do the book of Job, but we sent you an email last week that now you are doing the book of Galatians."

You ought to be able in ten seconds or less to stand up there and lay out the book of Galatians just as cleanly as you would have laid out the book of Job. That is where the Bible says you preach the word in season and out of season. That was Jim Dariszkiewicz at the funeral. He is the kind of young man that he can preach the Word of God in season or out of season. That is where a lot of our people are in our church.

I want to tell you, some things happened this week in our country, and I think that they need to be addressed. I think that, and so God kind of threw in a play from the bench. I got up this morning like I always do. I went through Proverbs 30. It is an incredible message. I was looking forward to preach it. I wanted to say some things about what I need to, what I am going to preach on to you about now. But I was just going to breathe through it. God clearly, I had about ten

minutes before I had to go up and get ready, and God came down and said, "I do not want you to preach that out of Proverbs. You can preach that next week. But here is what I want you to preach because this is where our country is, and this is where your people are, and this is what they need to hear." So I ought to say this, if this is not any good today, believe this on God because I only had about nine minutes to put it together. So I just want to cut myself some slack here.

If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to 2 Kings chapter 6. I want to deviate from Proverbs, and I think that given on where we are at in the country and how it is impacting all of us, we are now in our sixth week of what we would call our lockdown. You can see, if you are paying any kind of attention, that around this country it is taking its toll on people. We are now seeing protests across this nation in cities over the lockdown.

Let me just say something here, and I have got to clarify a few things. I am all for the lockdown. I think it is a good thing. If you saw on the news last night, almost in every state people are protesting and having rallies at the capitals because of the lockdown. I am not against the lockdown. I think some of it has been extreme. But if you saw on the news last night, the beaches in Florida are filled with people. It is a thing where I think in some cases that they went too far with it.

I think to tell you that you cannot walk across the street to check on your neighbor, or you cannot go fishing by yourself someplace, or you cannot go to Walmart and buy food but you cannot buy garden hoses or fertilizer. I mean, hey, look guys, you cannot get your hair cut anywhere, but they will not let you go buy something to cut your own hair. Lord knows you ladies need your hair done, and you cannot go to a beauty parlor anymore, but they will not let you do it yourself. You stay at home and you want to go out and garden. Okay, you get twenty-five feet between your neighbors. And yet if you need grass seed, you cannot buy it. Your kids are out of school, and they are sitting around the house, but yet you cannot go to Walmart and buy a game for them to play.

I get it. I understand. I get that. I understand that we need to have our six-foot space. I get it. A lot of people are wearing masks. I wore one at the bank the other day. It was a bad experience. I am not going to do that again. It is a thing where we are, there has to be a balance in it. Do you know what throws things out of balance? I am going to tell you, fear. Fear is what throws things out of balance.

So far, this is going really good. So keep cross your fingers, pray that I can keep up that when I am doing here because I am getting a lot of things in coming in from the bench here as I am going along here. We are fast approaching on all of this, and this is where the problem comes in. I am not the first one to tell you I do not have all the answers for everybody else. I am not concerned about everybody else in the world. I am concerned about my church and you. You are the only ones I am accountable to. Anybody else wants in on it, that is fine. But I have a responsibility to lead you through this time.

A lot of pastors, their idea of leading their people through is standing up in a parking lot, and there is a car that drives through, you give them this, or this, or whatever you want to do, and you

bless them. You lay your hands on their hood, their engines stop burning oil, and off they go. That is not what I want to do. I want to give you something from the Word of God that is going to last and help you through this time. That is my job.

We are fast approaching a terminal point where the cure for this virus is going to be worse than the disease itself. It works for a while, but I am telling you, the depression rate across this country is unparalleled. Suicide is going off the chart. Social violence and problems with people are going crazy.

If you ever want to see where our country is from 1912, in 1912 the Titanic hit an iceberg. The Titanic was a ship that everybody said that God Himself could not sink. On a cold night, God fixed that problem. But what it did, where the world looked at it and said that, when it happened it broke the back of the civilized nations, and it led to a great revival because everybody realized and turned back to God because there was nothing that God could not do in just a heartbeat. We are seeing today, back then the whole nation turned to God over a terrible tragedy. We are seeing today that in the midst of this virus that is sweeping across the world, this pandemic, this terrible thing that is claiming so many people's lives and older people's lives who have all the extra conditions that are making it hard for them, instead of turning to God, we are turning to drugs. We are turning to alcohol.

A lady said on the thing this week, she says, "I was always told my whole life that you cannot stay in bed all day. The good thing about the virus is now I can stay in bed all day, and I am saving the world." Of course, that is our approach to it. That is the way the world looks at it. But for you and for me, it needs to be different. This is the time where Christians need to follow the principles. I understand that.

I have spent the last, whether you know it or not, and I did not know this was coming, but I knew, how many times have I told you something was coming? I am telling you right now, I have spent the last sixteen, seventeen years of my life as your pastor preparing you with principles, examples, the Bible to get you through not only this, but whatever else comes our way. The world may fall apart with uncertainty and fear, but we as God's people have to hold the line. That is what we need to do.

I have done everything I know how to do. I have cut every quarter. I have done everything I could try to do to meet the needs for us to hold that line and to lead us through this time. That is my job. I think a lot of times God's people never really get inside the mind of God to be able to see why God does what He does or in certain situations why He does what He does.

Our government has said that we can have groups of ten people, and churches, some of them are meeting in groups of ten like we are, and then have ten out there all over the place that are staying within the guidelines of all that stuff, and that is a good thing. Some others say, churches say, "No, that is not what we are going to do." I do not care how anybody else looks at it. I look at things and try to look at things the way God sees it. I think you could have been like Michigan where you cannot even walk across the street to talk to somebody, that you cannot go check on your family, that you cannot do anything. What do you see when you see what we are up against and how God has provided for us?

I look at the ten-person rule. There are some states that say you can only have five. Some say you cannot have any. I look at it as the fact that God gave us that ten rule because that is what He knew we needed. It is obviously a defining moment for all of us. I get that, but my question is, when you look at what is going on in our own country, forget the world, when you look what is going on in our own country, in our own state, what do you see? What do you see God doing that you can use to, by God's design, to be able to do and carry on what we do?

I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know what the mind, I know the mindset, I know what people say. They will say, "Well, what can you do with ten people?" Well, let me tell you something. God one time fed five thousand people with just a few fishes and a couple loaves. So I think He has a plan for what He wants to do. We have our teams of ten. When we had our final meeting together here five or six weeks ago, I asked the leaders in this church to step up and to take a team because I needed you to do for me with my people what I could not do for them. You have all done an incredible job. You really have. I cannot complain.

I want you to know that this is a defining moment, not just for our country. I think we understand now and look across the board that this is not a slam against the Democrats or the Republicans. I think they are both equally worthless. This is a defining moment for everybody. It is certainly a defining moment for God's people. What do you see? All right, so your world has got disrupted. You cannot go to work. You cannot do this. You cannot go eat in a restaurant. You cannot go. Okay, I get all of that. For most of God's people, that is the end of the world. For you and for me who have the principles of the Word of God, it is never the end of the world. You just find another way within what God has given you to do to accomplish what God has called you to accomplish. How am I doing so far? Good.

At the end of the day, all we have is the Word of God and each other. Fear would and will scatter us, but the principles will hold us together. What happens in times like this, and I get it, this is not a criticism on anything or anybody. It really is not. My job today is to try to give you perspective, to try to help you understand, to keep things in perspective, because when fear comes in, we are all scared. When fear comes in, that is the first thing that goes out the window is your perspective.

I am not minimizing it at all, please. I am not one of these guys that says, "You know, let us go out and rally around the courthouse and protest." No, no, no, no, no. I am staying within the rules. I understand, but I also understand why people are not. What I got that keeps me between the rules, but allows me to work for God within those rules is what they do not have. That is the principles of the Word of God, knowing that God has a plan even in this. Can you see that? Or have you taken yourself completely out of it because of your fear?

I listen to the president every night. Give me a headache. But I listen for things that I need to know. He said something last night that I think is a great perspective. Again, I am not minimizing anything. If you are an older person, and you have some other issues, you need to be very careful. I think you need to really, really, really be careful. I think in everything that we do, we need to follow the rules, and we need to be careful. We shut down volleyball. We will shut down softball if we have to. We will shut down the Memorial Day picnic if we have to. We will shut

down camp if we have to. We are not going to roll the dice and say, “Well, because we are Christians, we are just going to do what we want to do.” That is stupid.

Last night he said very clearly, and I just sat there and took for a minute to sink in. He said for every one hundred thousand people, just take one hundred thousand people and line them up. That is a lot of people. In our country for every one hundred thousand people, eleven people are going to get the disease. Now what is the percentage of that? Again, I am not suggesting we throw that caution to the wind and I will go to the beach this afternoon. I am trying to put it into perspective.

Hey, look, I know God’s people are afraid. Churches are canceled. People do not want to get around anybody. Everybody is running scared. I get that. But back in the 1500s and the 1600s, the real fear that God’s people had was in the middle of the night that the Roman Catholic Church was going to break down your door because you went to church and you had a Bible that you believed, how they often torture you and in front of your face, throw your kids into a bunch of wild pigs for them to be eaten before you would deny Christ. Now you want to trade what you got for what they had. Stories like that do, puts it into perspective. You think we got it tough?

I have told you the story many, many times. One of my heroes, my military heroes, is a guy by the name of Dick Winters. Dick Winters was the company commander of Easy Company in 506, 101st Airborne Division, which we all know as the great miniseries, the Band of Brothers, when everybody ought to watch something in their life and then watch the Pacific after that. But they were in the Battle of Bulge. If you know anything about military history, they were completely surrounded by the German generals and the German 6th Army, 6th SS, and they were completely surrounded as the Germans in the middle of the winter when nobody expected attacked and tried to get Antwerp Belgium and went through Belgium and pushed the American lines so far in that this called the Battle of the Bulge because it bulged the line. They completely surrounded Bastogne, which is in Belgium. I have been there a couple of times. It was a key because five or six roads came in and came out, and it was a hub, and they had to have Bastogne.

They threw the 101st Airborne, 82nd Airborne, and some of those guys in there, and they were completely surrounded. They were thrown in so hastily that some of those guys only had two or three rounds of ammunition. It was the coldest winter in Europe, and most of them did not have time to get their winter clothes, and they had no food. They had no hospitals. If you got wounded, you hoped that the freezing of the blood stopped it from bleeding. They had nothing. They had no medical supplies. They had nothing. They are completely surrounded.

A news reporter came in and was interviewing the troops, and he said to Dick Winters, who was the commander again of the 506 paratroop infantry division, he said, “Do you know and what is your feelings about Bastogne and the 101st Airborne being completely surrounded?” He looked at him and he said, “We are paratroopers. We are supposed to be surrounded.”

I want to say to you this morning, we are God’s people, and we are supposed to be surrounded. We are supposed to have the forces of hell try to stop us in everything that we do. But that is who we are. We are God’s people. We need to play the man when nobody else will. Be smart, absolutely. Be fearful, absolutely not. You hold the line with your families, dads. You hold your

line with each other, and we hold the line for our church. We do not allow fear to override what God has given us. As my old father in the Lord said many, many years ago, never doubt in the darkness what God gave you in the light.

II. The Story of Elisha and the Syrian Army

With that being said, I want you to turn to 2 Kings 6. You are probably already there. I want to talk to you about being surrounded. I want to talk to you about being afraid. I want to talk to you about two men. One who saw what God was doing. The other one could not see what God was doing. The one who saw what God was doing, he got the job done. The one who could not see it was afraid. This is the kind of two kinds of Christians you are going to find going through what we are going through.

I want to read for you 2 Kings 6, and I am going to start in verse 8.

2 Kings 6:8-17

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?

And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

Father, we ask You to take today and help us in all of our fears and our anxieties and all the unknowns that are out there. Help us to know, Father, that the unknown does not exist in the child of God's life because we have one who understands the plan that is against us and will reveal that plan to us, Lord, if we just stay with the Word of God. Lord, let us see what we are in today around us and understand how that we are to work our way through this. We will be thankful and praise You and give You the honor and glory in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

III. The Cast of Characters

I just read you the story. Let us break down our cast of characters.

1. The King of Syria
 - The King of Syria
2. Elisha, the Man of God
 - Elisha, the Man of God
3. The Young Man, the Servant
 - The Young Man, the Servant

IV. The Response to Being Surrounded

The King of Syria comes down and they get surrounded, Elijah and his young kid. The King of Syria is upset, verses 13, 14 and 15, that Elijah found out his plan. His goal, as the goal that we are up against today, is to stop us. Again, respect it, follow the rules, but understand it. He is upset about two things: the man of God finding out his plan and then the man of God revealing his plan to others.

This is why the devil wants to stop you. We are going to talk about it next week when we get into the book of Proverbs because there are four last things in Proverbs that are all about the Antichrist. We have seen everything come through there, the Israel, this and this and that. Now we are going to see the last thing, four absolute incredible things that God is going to tell you about the man of sin. The devil does not like that. This is why he wants everybody to use all the new Bibles because all the new Bibles destroy everything that you could do to try to find it.

In 14, 15, 16, we see the response. Elijah had a school for the prophets. He took young men and he trained them in the things of God, much like I do here, except we allow women. Back then that was not part of the culture. But it is today. Just as he had a school for the prophets, I have a school for the prophets. We are going to meet next Saturday morning at 9:30. Every time we have a Thursday night Bible study or a Sunday morning, in my mind I combine all those three

together as the school because when we have our time together on Saturday morning through the Institute I can reach and grab and pull everything together to put it into a picture for you. It is a thing that Elijah had a school for the prophets where he took young men and he trained him.

They are going to go into a battle here, just like we are in a battle. They are going to be completely surrounded. I want you to understand that. You and I today in our country and the world has been completely surrounded by a disease that through no fault of anybody here or anybody in our country, probably nobody in Europe, has surrounded us. That is the battle.

I am going to tell you right now whatever battle you are faced with as a child of God, whether it be this one or another one, or something in your own life that you have to deal with, you are going to look at it two ways. You are going to look at the battle from a human perspective which is going to produce fear. Or you are going to look at it from God's mind and God's perspective, and that is going to produce faith. It is just that simple. That is where we are at today.

Again, I am not minimizing anything. If you think I am going up here to tell you all this or you can all go to the beach this afternoon or go picket the state house or whatever, you are wrong. I am telling you Romans 13 says that we obey the laws of our country. I just thank God that God used in the heart of the kings in the hand of the Lord. I just thank God that He allowed us to have ten people that we can put you all over the place and accomplish what we can accomplish. Yeah, we would all like to be here. I understand that in many of our cases you are locked down, you cannot go to work, you cannot do this, and it gets to you. The news, listening to the news every day will get to you. All you hear is how many died. You do not hear how many have survived.

For me, I cannot speak for you. I really, and I would not even begin to. But for me, I always have to do things, study things, read things, and then run them through the Word of God and put everything in perspective. I do not allow myself to get out of perspective. I am not saying that I do not. I am just saying my rule is, and when I do, I do not get straight out too far because I know how dangerous that can be. All that does is produce fear. All that does is allow you to be afraid of things that you do not need to be afraid of if you just see it from a God's standpoint. Getting God's mind is the key. It is just that simple.

Look at verse 16. This is the great verse. This is his response. This ought to be our response.

2 Kings 6:16

Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

You see, he knows something that nobody else knows. The young kid is panicking. The young kid is looking at the circumstances of being surrounded. Elisha is looking at it from God's standpoint, and he is saying to himself, "I am a prophet of God. I am supposed to be surrounded. What are you whining about this morning? We are supposed to be surrounded. If it was not this, it would be something else."

God's people have gotten so satisfied and so fluffy in their lifestyle. They have everything that they want. When a little discomfort comes in and you get just a few things taken away from you, we all fall apart. We pay more attention to Fox News or CNN or whatever the case may be than

the very Bible that God gave you. You forget the great principle that I do not care how much the world is against you. It is not about who is against you. It is about who is for you.

V. Five Principles for Being Surrounded

In this story, there are five great principles that I want to give you. There are five great principles about where we are at. I want you to know, the real issue today is not how much the world is against us or this disease is against us or the devil is against us, however you want to label it. The real issue today is how much God is for us. In His divine providence and love for us in this state, in this city, thanks God for our leaders who He allowed us to have at least ten together. We today have ten all over this city, staying within the rules, but yet at the same time we are not going to lose touch with each other. It is just that simple.

Our job through all this is to hold the line. It is an easy word to say that when we are all meeting together, is it not? How many times I have told you the story of a rear guard action, and I have talked about our job in holding the line. When it is nice times and it is easy times, it becomes a punchline. It becomes a nice thing to say. We are up against it right now. This is where the rubber meets the road. This is where are we really going to hold the line or are we just like everybody else out there? Maybe if that is what you want to do, it is okay with me. Cancel Bible study, I will cancel this, I will cancel that. Now just drive through the parking lot and I will put a sticker, heart sticker on your windshield.

Five principles. I want you to get these. If you are listening to me this morning, I want you to get these.

4. Our Christian insistence is going to bring satanic resistance.

- It is a fact. It is a fact that when you and I decide that we are going to do what is right in our church and in your life, your insistence on being what God wants you to be is going to naturally bring about some kind of resistance to stop that. All across this country, I cannot speak for the world, I probably should not even speak for the country, but all across this city, God's people have been stopped, dead in their tracks. Pastors today are scrambling around wondering how they are going to get all the money they need to pay for all their pet projects instead of worrying about where their people are. I care nothing about the finances. They will always take care of themselves. I am here this morning because as your pastor and as a leader in this church, it is my job to navigate our church through this tough time. But I am not going to do it by fear. I am not going to do it. I will respect it all. I will do what is right, but I am going to use what God has allowed us to have to hold us together as a church. You guys out there that are meeting in your groups of ten today, thank you. Thank you for stepping up. Thank you for not allowing fear to stop you. Thank you for not putting your own self above what others need when God has given us the platform to be able to do what we are doing today. I want to tell you, first thing, you decide to do what is right, you are going to get it. Got this little thing out there where you get a prayer for the day. You call in and they will give you the verse of the day and the prayer for the day. This is really big. The secular world, you are having trouble with depression or this or that. You can call in and get a good word, not

from the Bible, just a good word. Well, hug your dog. What is your favorite color? We will just go out in the yard and thank God for the sunshine and look at the leaves and watch the squirrels and all those nice things. I am just telling you. They ought to change it and say if they wanted the truth. This is the day the Lord hath made. Let us be glad and rejoice. So you get that, and what they really ought to say is this is the day the Lord hath made and you are going to get it in the neck. That is reality. You are going to get it. Somebody asked Mal Sabaka one time if he was enjoying his salvation or enduring his salvation. You know what he said? He says, "I am enjoying my enduring." Are you enjoying your enduring today? Or you got your tail between your legs someplace feeling sorry for yourself because you cannot go here or you cannot do this or you cannot go here. We are paratroopers. We are supposed to be surrounded. But we have been out of the fight so long when something like this comes along, we fall apart through fear instead of holding the line through principles. Respect it, man. But do not fear it. Your Christian insistence will bring a satanic resistance.

5. Unbelief is the element that produces fear and that blinds us from the reality of the situation.
- I am going to say that again. Unbelief is the element that produces fear that blinds us from the reality of the true situation. You see a leader understands the price that has to be paid because you as a leader understand the price that was paid for you to be a leader. It is just that simple. You know all through the Bible and over seventy times God tells his favorite expression is fear not, fear not, fear not. Greater is in you that is in the world. Fear not. Perfect love casteth out fear. Fear not. An uncontrolled fear is disastrous. It distorts our view. I remember reading a story one time that a woman in the middle of the night heard somebody break into her house and she was afraid. It was dark, and she reached into the drawer and grabbed her gun, and as the door opened in her bedroom she turned and she fired five times and killed him and turned her lights on. She had shot her husband because of the fact that he had come home from work in the middle of the night. You know what fear did? It distorted her viewpoint. Fear will do that. Fear will exaggerate everything in your world. It really will. That is why the Bible says perfect love casteth out fear. Because fear will distort our view. It is one of those things that you know this is why he says in verse 17, "Lord, I pray open his eyes that he may see." In my prayer for my church this morning, my prayer for the country, for the state, but I am not worried about them. My prayer for you would be, "God open up their eyes that they can see what is really going on here and how that He is in control." It does not mean you do not respect it. It does not mean you do not follow the rules. It certainly does not mean I am going to have buses parked outside and we are going to load everybody up from the church and go picket the Capitol someplace. It means that you and I understand that we are in a situation because of God's design, and we are supposed to be different than everybody else in it. A leader sees what God is doing. An ordinary man sees what he wants to see because fear drives him. You are going to find this is the young man. This is Elisha. Elisha the man of God sees God's hand in it, the young kid. He just sees what he wants to see. One is driven by faith, the other is driven by fear. One is driven by the principles and getting into the mind of God. The other one is in his own mind.