

Pastor Brian Davis  
Big Faith in Bad Moments

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Series: Expectant  
2 Kings 4:8-31, 8:1-6

**BIG IDEA – REAL HOPE COMES FROM TRUSTING GOD’S WORD,  
HIS SPIRIT, AND HIS PEOPLE**

Two Cities Church, thank you so much for inviting me here. My name is Brian, and as you saw in the video, I've known your pastor for a very long time. I knew him when he had hair. How about that? Kyle, wherever you are, that one was for you. Anyway, I'm truly grateful for your pastor and for your staff and for your church. We would not be where we are and who we are apart from the impact and the influence of Two Cities Church.

Quick little story. So, Plaza was replanted. They had about 15 people in the church about four years ago, and the people there wanted to continue to see God do something in their church, in their community, so they called me as the pastor and called 30 people to replant this little church in Uptown Charlotte.

Over the last three and a half years, we've seen God do an incredible work. I think the video was about two years ago. We've baptized 40 more people in the last two years, and our church is growing and thriving. So much of that is because of the impact and the influence of *your* church in *our* church.

So, thank you for your mentorship, but also, thank you for your money. You guys have been generous. You've given us a lot of money. As Brian Regan would say, "both favorites." Mentorship and money are both favorites. I want to show you what your generosity has done for our church. I have a few before and after pics for you guys.

Let's see the first "before" picture. There it is. We made it black and white to make it look older. Now let's do the "after" picture. Look at *that*. How about *that*? That's very

nice. Okay, let's do "before" of the outside of the building. Yes, *that* is before, and *this* is now after. Look at that. As the kids would say, the drip is insane. Amen? One more picture of the people worshipping. Funny story about that.

There's one lady in that picture. She was supposed to come to our Weekender in the summer, and she couldn't make it. I asked why. She said, "I'm going to be out of town." I'm like, "Where are you going?" She goes, "Well, I'm going to France." I was like, "Oh, what are you doing in France?" She goes, "Well, I have a competition." I was like, "Like, the Olympics?" She goes, "Yeah. I'm actually #7 in the world in tae kwon do." I said, "You should join our security team."

So, we are so thankful for what God has done in our church. Again, a big "thank you" to Pastor Kyle, Pastor Dave, Pastor Caleb, your staff, your church, and some of you who have welcomed us to Two Cities. Let's go ahead and pray, and we will dive into 2 Kings, chapter 4. Let's pray.

God, I love this church, and I love what you're doing in this church, and I love the people who call this church home. Now, God, we pray that you would open up our hearts as we open up your Word. Would you speak through me, Lord? Your people need to hear a word. Your people need to be encouraged. Your people need to be challenged, and, God, your Word does all of that. So, we pray that you, Holy Spirit, would be with us and fill me and fill this room. In Christ's name, amen.

All right. You've been in this series on Elijah and Elisha, and we're talking about Elisha today. Pastor Caleb did a great job last week unpacking his call to ministry. Today, I want to call you into something as well. The big idea for the whole sermon or whole time together is this: I'm going to call you to have *big faith in bad moments*. You're going to need that, because you're going to have some bad moments, some bad seasons, some bad days in your life, and the goal is not just to survive.

There are a lot of sermons that would say, "When you're going through a storm, just hold on." There's some truth to that. That's not my sermon. My sermon is "When you're going through a storm, don't just hold on; there's actually a way to thrive in the middle of the bad moment." In the middle of the bad season, there is a way, by the grace of God, that you can thrive in that.

*Big Faith in Bad Moments* would have been a really good title for this sermon. That's not my title. The title is *Flying in the Soup*. Now, what the heck does *that* mean? I'll tell you a story. My neighbor (his name is Drew) flies for American Airlines. He was there at my house. We were talking about different aviation terms, and he gave me this term *flying in the soup*. I said, "What is that?"

He went, "Well, it's flying in the fog. It's flying in the clouds. It's flying in the storm. Most pilots hate to fly in the soup, because it's disorienting, because up is down and down is up. You can't trust your senses. You can't see where you're going. You can't see anything. That's flying in the soup." I said, "That sounds terrible."

In fact, that's actually how Kobe died. His helicopter was flying in the soup, and the pilot got disoriented. He didn't realize he was descending until it was too late, and he hit a mountain. That's flying in the soup. I said, "Drew, how do you fly out of the soup?" He said, "That's the wrong question, Brian. Any self-respecting pilot knows you cannot make it your aim in life to avoid inclement weather."

I said, "Drew, do you realize you're preaching right now?" That was a sermon. You cannot make it your aim in life to avoid inclement weather. You can't just try to fly *out* of the soup; you have to learn how to fly *in* the soup. I said, "How do you do it?" He said, "Well, you can't trust what you feel when you can't see where you're going. What you *can* do is trust what you were given."

You were given a dashboard. You were given a flight path. You were given over 2,000 hours of flight school training. If you just trust what you were given and learn how to read the dashboard, you're going to be okay. As long as you don't freak out and do something drastic, you're going to be okay. The way to crash the plane is to freak out and do something drastic." That's flying in the soup. And the same thing goes for *you*.

When you're going through suffering, when you're going through bad moments, bad seasons, you cannot trust what you feel. Your feelings will lie to you. You may not be able to see where you're going or see what God is doing, but you *can* trust what God has given you. He has given you his Word. He has given you his Spirit. He has given you his people. If you can trust what God has given you and not freak out and do something drastic, you're going to be okay.

We're going to see a woman in 2 Kings 4 who knows how to fly in the soup. Look with me in chapter 4, beginning in verse 8. ***"One day Elisha went to Shunem."*** Elisha is the prophet of God, but also, he represents the *work* of God. He represents the *word* of God. He also represents the *worship* of God.

That was his job: do the work of God (all of the miracles), bring the word of God (he's a prophet; he's going to preach), but also encourage the worship of God. So, when you see Elisha, think *work*, *word*, and *worship*. That's really important. That's what he represents. Keep reading.

***"A prominent woman who lived there persuaded him to eat some food. So whenever he passed by, he stopped there to eat. Then she said to her husband, 'I know that the one who often passes by here is a holy man of God, so let's make a***

***small, walled-in upper room and put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp there for him. Whenever he comes, he can stay there."***

In other words, she made room. She made room for the man of God. She made room for the word of God, for the work of God, for the worship of God. She didn't *have* room. She didn't *have* space. She *made* room. She *made* space. The whole point is...*Can you make room for the word, the work, and the worship of God in your life?* Because if you don't, when trouble comes, when suffering comes, when a storm comes, you don't know where to put it.

This whole story begins and hinges on this. She made room. Here's *our* problem: We don't have room. We're too busy. We don't have space. We don't have margin. That was not her excuse. She didn't have room; she made room. She didn't have space; she made space. Why? Because the word, the work, and the worship of God is worth it. This story begins with a woman saying, "I'm going to make room."

Can you make room in your life for the Son of God? Can you make room in your marriage for the work of God? So many people complain. "I want God to do something." Make room. We teach our church a theology of "first." If you want God to bless something, put him first in it. That's what *lordship* means: Jesus comes first. So, if you want God to do a work in your life, make room.

Some of you want to see God do a work in your friend's life, for them to know Jesus. Make room. Yeah, this whole story begins with a woman saying, "I'm going to make room for the word, the work, and the worship of God." Keep on reading. Elisha is very grateful. Look at verse 11.

***"One day he came there and stopped at the upstairs room to lie down. He ordered his attendant Gehazi, 'Call this Shunammite woman.' So he called her and she stood before him. Then he said to Gehazi, 'Say to her, "Look, you've gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?"'"***

"Is there anything we can do? You've been so kind to us. What can we do to say thank you?" Look at her response. ***"She answered, 'I am living among my own people.'"*** That's Old Testament language for "Nah, I'm good." Isn't it incredible? The closer you are to God, the more content you are in life.

This is a godly woman. We tend to think that peace only comes when we're far from pain. That's not always true. Peace doesn't come from being far from pain; peace comes by being close to God. There is pain in this woman's life. We learn in a couple of verses she's dealing with infertility. Maybe you've been there. Maybe you *are* there.

She had pain in her life, but she also had peace in her life. Why? She was a type of woman who made room for God, and when you make room for the word of God, the work of God, and the worship of God, you experience the peace of God. She made room. She had peace. Keep on reading. Look at what happens in verse 14.

**"So he asked, 'Then what should be done for her?'"** Like, "There's got to be something we can do." Gehazi is like the intern. He's the church-planting resident. He is rough around the edges. He doesn't have a lot of tact. Ministry hasn't softened him enough yet, so watch what your boy Gehazi says. **"Gehazi answered, 'Well, she has no son, and her husband is old.'" All right, Gehazi. A little more tact, please.**

Verse 15: **"'Call her,' Elisha said. So Gehazi called her, and she stood in the doorway. Elisha said, 'At this time next year you will have a son in your arms.' Then she said, 'No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your servant.'" She doesn't believe it. I hope you know that she didn't make room so she could get something from God. She made room because she loved God, and she loved the people of God.**

Look at verse 17. **"The woman conceived and gave birth to a son at the same time the following year, as Elisha had promised her."** You don't make room just so you can get something from God. I'm not saying if you would put God first in your life, he'll bless you and give you exactly what you want. What I *am* saying is if you put God first, he will bless you in ways you didn't even expect.

She wasn't even expecting a son. This is the kindness of God. This is why we say a "theology of first." Put God first in everything. So, she has this promised son, but then tragedy strikes. That's in verse 18. **"The child grew and one day went out to his father and the harvesters. Suddenly he complained to his father, 'My head! My head!' His father told his servant, 'Carry him to his mother.'"**

Then verse 20. This is the first time you're reading this with me, but I've been reading this verse all week, and it is devastating. **"So he picked him up and took him to his mother. The child sat on her lap until noon and then died."** It doesn't make any sense. "God, why would you give me a son if you're just going to take him away?"

Maybe you've been there. Maybe you *are* there, that you've experienced loss. You're flying in the soup, and you can't trust what you feel, because you feel disoriented, and you can't see where you're going. You can't see what God is doing. Remember, I told you if you freak out and do something drastic, that's how you crash the plane.

So, here she is in the middle of her pain, in the middle of her suffering. Her promised child has died. She has experienced loss, and maybe *you've* experienced loss. Physical loss...someone close to you has died. Or maybe you've experienced financial loss...the loss of a job or a massive medical bill or whatever it is.

Maybe you've experienced relational loss. Maybe you have a wayward child who doesn't walk with Jesus and doesn't want anything to do with you, or maybe it's something to do with your spouse relationally, or maybe it's your parents or a friend or a brother or whomever.

To a certain degree, we've all been here. We've all been in the storm. We've all been in the season of loss. We've all been in the bad moment. I told you earlier that when you're flying in the soup, you have to trust what God has given you. He has given you his Word. He has given you his people. He has given you his Spirit.

Take a look at what happens next in verse 21. ***"She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut him in, and left."*** She laid her pain in the middle of the room where he was promised and left him there. The room she created, the room she made, the room where he was promised, is the very same room she laid him in. The whole point is this (it's very symbolic): take your pain, lay it in the middle of the promise, and just leave it there.

I was reminded this past week of an old hymn they would sing in Black churches in the early 1900s. The hymn is called "Leave It There." The chorus goes like this: "Leave it there, leave it there; take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. If you trust and never doubt, he will surely bring you out. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there."

We have to learn how to take our pain, lay it in the middle of God's promises, and then just leave it there. You know, our problem is we tend to try to pick it back up. First Peter 5 says, "Cast your burden on the Lord," and then, implicitly, leave it there. So often, a day or a week goes by, and we're like, "God, can I have that back? Let me pick my burden back up. I want it back, God."

I've been praying all week that when that happens for you, the Spirit of God would say, "No. Leave it there." To leave it there is to delegate this burden to God. To leave it there is to say, "God, this is your problem to solve. It's too heavy for me. It is yours. I'm taking my pain and placing it in the promise of God, and I'm just going to leave it there."

This is when you say, "God, you told me you were Jehovah-Jireh, my provider. I'm leaving this pain in *that* promise. God, you told me you were Jehovah-Shalom, my peace. I'm leaving this pain in *that* promise. God, you told me you were Jehovah-Rapha, my healer. I'm taking my pain and laying it in the middle of the promise. God, it's yours now. I'm just going to leave it there."

She put her son in the place of the promise and left him there. Verse 22: ***"She summoned her husband and said, 'Please send me one of the servants and one of***

***the donkeys, so I can hurry to the man of God and come back again.***" She knew where to go. "Where's Elisha? The one who made the promise is the one who I'm going to go to."

Let me ask you a question. When pain is in your life, where do you go? Some of us go to anger. Some of us go to self-pity. Some of us go to substances. She went to the man of God. What I'm saying to you is when pain arrives at your doorstep, you go directly to the Son of God. You go to the one who made the promises. You go to the one who has the power to raise the dead.

She lost her son, but she did not lose her faith. She goes, "Let me go to the one who made the promise, because he can do something about this." Verse 23: ***"But he said, 'Why go to him today? It's not a New Moon or a Sabbath.' She replied, 'It's all right.'"*** That's also translated "It is well." Verse 24:

***"Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, 'Go fast; don't slow the pace for me unless I tell you.' So she came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to his attendant Gehazi, 'Look, there's the Shunammite woman. Run out to meet her and ask, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your son all right?'" And she answered, 'It's all right.'"***

No, it's not. "It is well." No, it's not, but it *will* be. When you've made room for the Son of God in your life, it can always be well with your soul. There's a guy who goes to our church. He got in trouble with the law, and he's in jail and will probably be there for a long time. Pastor Chad (one of our pastors) and I got to visit him, and he said, "Guys, I don't want to be here, but I need y'all to know I have never felt so close to God in my life."

He said, "Guys, I'm leading Bible studies. I'm praying for guards and praying for inmates. I'm leading people to Christ. So, yeah, pray that I get out, but pray for the souls of these men on my block that God would intervene in their lives." Listen. If he can say "It is well" in a season of his life he does not want to be in, how much more can *you*? *He's* flying in the soup. Maybe *you're* flying in the soup too.

Pain is a problem, but perspective is a choice. You can't always choose to get out of your pain; you can always choose to have a godly perspective *in* your pain. So, here you have this woman whose son has died, and she says, "You know what? It is well." Look with me at verse 27.

***"When she came up to the man of God at the mountain, she clung to his feet. Gehazi came to push her away, but the man of God said, 'Leave her alone—she is***

***in severe anguish...***" Gehazi is like, "Hey, get away from him! Move away." Again, he's young. He's the intern. He has a lot to learn.

It reminds me of a story in the Gospels when little kids come to Jesus and the disciples say, "Get off him!" Remember that? What did Jesus say? "No, let the children come to me, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." This is a different sermon altogether. I'm not going to go down that rabbit trail, but I want to. At some point, we have to talk about the things we do to push people away from Jesus. So, she goes to Elisha and falls at his feet. Look at verse 28.

***"Then she said, 'Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn't I say, 'Do not lie to me?'" So Elisha said to Gehazi, 'Tuck your mantle under your belt, take my staff with you, and go. If you meet anyone, don't stop to greet him, and if a man greets you, don't answer him. Then place my staff on the boy's face.'"***

This is Gehazi's moment. "All right, intern. Write a sermon. We're putting you up on that stage. All right, resident. It is your time to shine." So, Gehazi is pumped. This is his time. He has been waiting in the wings for a while, and now Elisha is giving him a shot at it. This is great.

Elisha is like, "All right, man. Here we go. Basic resurrection miracle. We've been over this in prophet school. Okay? Basic miracle. Lay the staff on the boy's head, and then just...I don't know...abracadabra it. Whatever happens. I don't know. I don't know, but it's basic. Gehazi, you can do this. I've trained you. It is your moment." Verse 30:

***"The boy's mother said to Elisha, 'As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So he got up and followed her. Gehazi went ahead of them and placed the staff on the boy's face, but there was no sound or sign of life, so he went back to meet Elisha and told him, '[It didn't work].'"***

"It didn't work. Why didn't it work? I did everything you told me to do. What happened?" The text doesn't tell you explicitly, but I think it's implicit. I think it didn't work because Gehazi was living in secret sin. I think it didn't work because Gehazi was spiritually unfit and spiritually unprepared.

We see this in the very next chapter, chapter 5. They heal Naaman, and Elisha says, "Hey, Gehazi, just as a reminder, we don't charge for this. We don't take money for this. Okay?" He's like, "Got it." Well, then Elisha rolls out. Gehazi circles back and finds Naaman and goes, "Hey, man. These miracles ain't cheap. You know what I'm saying? Can you throw me a little somethin' somethin'? You know what I'm saying?" And he lies about it. He lies to Elisha. "I didn't do that."

So, there's some secret idolatry of greed. I think that's why it didn't work. But don't let it miss you. This was supposed to be Gehazi's miracle. God is going to use someone else. Don't be a Gehazi. What if God has good works planned for you...? It's Ephesians 2:10. He has good works planned for you, but because you're spiritually unfit and spiritually unprepared and living in secret sin, he's going to use someone else to do it.

The work of God doesn't change. It's going to happen either way. What changes... Who's going to be the one who does it? It's the one who, as 2 Timothy 2 says, would cleanse himself from what is dishonorable, and he'll be an honorable vessel, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. Gehazi was not ready.

This is not a call to perfectionism, by the way; this is a call to repentance. Luke 3:8 says to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Gehazi was probably thinking, "The darkness is where I need to keep this. I don't want people to know. I don't want to deal with this, so I'm going to retreat farther into the darkness."

I would just say nothing good grows in the dark. Remember that cold line from Bane in *The Dark Knight Rises*? You have this scene where they're in the warehouse, and Batman turns the light off. Do you remember this? I want to do the Bane accent. Bane goes, "Oh, you think darkness is your ally. You've merely adopted the dark. I was born in it, molded by it."

The point is the darkness is not your ally. You have an evil intelligent being who hates you who operates best in the darkness. My fear is that many of us will think, "The darkness actually is my ally. No one will know. I'll just keep my sin over here in the dark, keep my idolatry, keep the truth in the darkness." Don't do that. Don't be a Gehazi.

We say it all the time. We stole it from your church. We believe in privacy, not secrecy. Privacy says, "Somebody knows." It's not a complete enigma. But secrecy says, "Nobody knows." I think that's Gehazi. What if God has a work for you to do, but because you're living in secret sin, he is going to use somebody else to do it?

Elisha runs in. He's going to do the miracle. Elisha tags out Gehazi. He does the miracle, and she gets her son back. It's an amazing story, but it's not the full story. It's a scene in the story, because the story continues in chapter 8. This is a couple of years later. This is after she gets her son back.

Chapter 8, beginning in verse 1: ***"Elisha said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, 'Get ready, you and your household, and go live as a resident alien wherever you can. For the LORD has announced a seven-year famine, and it has already come to the land.'"*** In other words, "There's going to be a famine. There's no

food. There's no drink. You should probably go to a different city and make sure you can survive there."

Verse 2: ***"So the woman got ready and did what the man of God said. She and her household lived as resident aliens in the land of the Philistines for seven years."***

So, she goes out and goes to the Philistines. She lives and survives. Seven years go by, and watch what happens when she comes home after the famine.

Verse 3: ***"When the woman returned from the land of the Philistines at the end of seven years, she went to appeal to the king for her house and field."*** You can't make this up. This is governmental, bureaucratic nonsense. The government said, "Well, you abandoned this house, and it was for a couple of years; therefore, your house and your land belong to us now."

She goes, "Who can I talk to about this nonsense?" It says she appealed to the king. She goes right to the top. I love this woman. She is fiery. She says, "I'm going to get my land back." So she goes to the king. I would just say you can always go to the King. She had, almost certainly, a pretty wicked king who will, in the end, hear her request. How much more can you go to a good and righteous king? When suffering happens, when difficulty happens, you can always go to the King of Kings. He'll always hear.

Watch what happens next. She's on her way to the king to get her land back, get her house back, get her life back. Verse 4: ***"The king had been speaking to Gehazi, the attendant of the man of God, saying, 'Tell me all the great things Elisha has done.'"*** In other words, "I have heard of the fame of Elisha. I've heard all of these stories and tales. Are they true? Is he really that incredible? Tell me a really good story."

So, Gehazi is like, "Well, there was one time that we stayed at this woman's house. She made us a room. It was very nice of her. So then Elisha was like, 'Well, we've got to do something,' so we promised her a son. Then the son came, but then the son died. Then he sent me to raise him from the dead, and I couldn't do it, living in sin at the time. But then Elisha came, and he raised this little boy from the dead and gave him back to his mom. It was an amazing time." As he's telling that story...

Verse 5: ***"While he was telling the king how Elisha restored the dead son to life, the woman whose son he had restored to life came to appeal to the king for her house and field."*** At the same time, that was happening. So Gehazi said, "My lord the king, that's her! That's the woman. And look! Next to her, that's her son that Elisha restored to life. That's her. That's her son."

I would say that's not a coincidence. That's a sovereign God doing sovereign stuff. That's a providential God doing providential stuff, and it all began because she made

room. She made room for the word of God, she made room for the work of God, and she made room for the worship of God. She made room, and now she's watching God make a way.

Take a look at how the story ends right there in verse 6. ***"When the king asked the woman, she told him the story. So the king appointed a court official for her, saying, 'Restore all that was hers, along with all the income from the field from the day she left the country until now.'"***

She got her land back. She got her house back. She got her life back. That's a great story, but there is an even greater story. In a couple hundred years from this story, there will be another promised Son, there will be another tragic death, and there will be another powerful resurrection. Yes, our story is so much better than *this* story.

Yes, she got her son back. Her son died. A couple of hours later, she got him back. Her house was stolen. A couple of days later, she got it back. But our story was that on that Friday, Jesus died, but then three days later, we got our Savior back, and that is a much better story. But it begins when you make room. Can you make room for the Son of God in your life? Make room and then watch God make a way. Let's pray.

God, we're so grateful for this story, for its truth, for the ways we resonate with this story, a story of loss, a story of promise, a story of hope, a story of resurrection and restoration, and how it connects to the gospel story.

God, for the men and women in this room who are in the middle of a storm right now, teach them to not trust what they feel but to trust what you have given them. God, you've given them your Word, you've given them your Spirit, you've given them your people, and most importantly, you have given them your Son. So, God, teach us how to fly in the soup, we pray. In Christ's name, amen.