

## True Strength in Turbulent Times: “Nemesis”

Growth Group Discussion

2 Kings 13.14-25

**Opening Questions** (get everyone involved in discussion):

- Begin with prayer. Take at least 30 seconds to be silent, clearing your minds of distractions and preparing to hear from God’s word.
- Did you have any kind of “nemesis” when you were growing up? Examples: a bully, a sports rival, a sibling, etc.
- During the period when today’s story took place, Israel’s constant nemesis had been the nation of Aram. On a serious note, would you say that you have encountered any kind of nemesis in recent years? Perhaps a kind of circumstance or challenge?
- Pastor Josh said on Sunday that for most of us—as was the case for ancient Israel—our nemesis is our own tendency to “manufacture idols”. To what degree do you identify with that statement?

### 1. Read 2 Kings 13:10-19, then discuss the following.

- Just prior to this story, verses 10-13 give a summary of Joash’s reign. Read those verses, and in your own words, how would you rate his leadership?
- In v. 14, which looks back at an instance during Joash’s life, he is clearly upset. Why do you think he is so upset?
- What do you remember about the phrase, “the chariots and horsemen of Israel,” when it is used to describe a person?
  - In what way does this insight shed light on King Joash’s emotions here, especially in the face of Aram’s continued oppression?
- Application:
  - With respect to your own long-standing “nemesis” (mentioned above), is there something or someone to whom you have looked to help you stave it off? How has that worked for you?
  - When those things are taken away for some reason, how are we presented with a new opportunity?
- In what way is Elisha seeking to re-assure King Joash, in vv. 15-17?
- What is the nature of the further test, described in vv. 18-19? Why do you think that Joash failed the test?
- **Application:** Pastor Josh said that with respect to our great nemesis (our propensity for idolatry), we have the key to breaking its power in the gospel of Jesus.
  - In what way did Jesus stand in the gap for us in a greater way than Elisha did for Israel?
  - How can the good news of Jesus break the power of idolatry in your heart?
  - Practically, how can we go about applying this power when we are facing the nemesis of sin?
  - Have you experienced this change happening in some way you would be willing to share?

2. **READ 2 Kings 13:20-25 and discuss the following.**

- In what way is v. 20 a monumental statement?
- In what way would the events of v. 21 serve to encourage Joash with respect to the continued oppression of Aram?
- What insight do you gain into God's character from v. 23?
- What do you think is the function of v. 25, relative to the section we studied earlier (the acted-out prophecy)?
- **Application:** The strange "resurrection" story in this passage is like a signpost in the "Big Story" of the Bible. In relation to what we now know that Jesus accomplished in his own death and resurrection, how can this story provide encouragement to you?
  - To what degree is the fear of death your great nemesis? Does the gospel provide you with any practical comfort in this regard?
  - As we conclude our series in 1-2 Kings, what are some major themes or takeaways that you will carry with you from this series? Do you feel there are particular ways that God is prompting you to respond?

**PRAYER:**

- Your group members, if they've been open, have probably shared about some real, persistent challenges during this time. Pray for the power of the gospel to become effective in the midst of these challenges.
- Take time to share about and pray for any other needs that exist in your group.