

Coincidentally Sovereign

2 KINGS 4:8-36; 8:1-6;

1. INTRO

- a. Throughout our lives, things happen which, after the fact, seem like a series of incredible coincidences
- b. Me: Why all the things of my life? The wounds, the strengths, the life experiences, the travel, etc?
- c. You: Surely you have similar questions or, perhaps, in hindsight have an amazing story of how the web of your life all came together
- d. But are these things coincidental or something else? Is life just a series of random events, sometimes making sense, or is there something larger at play?
- e. What about the day to day things that happen? Are they part of this big picture or just white noise?

2. SCRIPTURE - 2 KINGS 4:8-36; 8:1-6;

a. *2 Kings 4:8-10* - A Coincidental Relationship

- i. Gugui's dad built a house along the ocean and they lived there until she was 18 and then the government claimed it all for development
- ii. They lived in Ponce for awhile and then they bought land in Monte Verde to build when able
- iii. Carmen's dad built his home in Monte Verde in the 1970's
- iv. In 90's, Carmen's mom got ill w/ Alzheimer's and they had to find someone to help. They found a woman, Lolin, to help out.
- v. Eventually, her parents passed and the house was neglected. Alan retired from the Coast Guard and moved in about 8 years ago to fix the house up
- vi. Needing help, Alan heard about a man, named Alex, who owned a small farm and could help him on Saturdays for a few hours. Alan hired Alex for a few hours a day

b. *2 Kings 4:11-17* - A Coincidental Prompting

- i. Little did Alan know at the time, but Alex was Lolin's younger brother (the woman who cared for Gugui's mom)
- ii. Alan needed help cleaning the house and people told him about a woman named Nilsa who cleans other homes in the area and he hired her as well.
- iii. Little did Alan know, Nilsa is married to Alex's brother
- iv. For awhile, if Alan needed help, Gugui would call Nilsa and Nilsa would tell Alex.
Eventually, she got Alex's number and Veronica (Alex's wife) would answer
- v. Alex's extended family began taking care of Alan and involving him in their family, leaving him food at his gate, etc.

- vi. When Adriana brought Ronin as a baby, her and Nilsa connected immediately
- c. **2 Kings 4:18-36** - A Coincidental Tragedy
 - i. Then, Hurricane Maria came. Alex's house was destroyed and all Alex could think about was if Alan was okay.
 - ii. Adriana especially felt the urge to go and help Nilsa's family, remembering the connection
 - iii. Gugui sent down lanterns and water filters ahead of their trip in November
 - iv. Alex's family lost everything
 - v. One day, Alex's family ran out of gas for their lanterns and coincidentally, on the same day, Alan showed up w/ lanterns from NJ
 - vi. Adriana, Britt and Carmen came down in November w/ supplies and good intentions and every step of the way God opened up the doors
 - vii. They had no plan but God provided something every day. The trunk was full of supplies, but they didn't know where to begin
 - viii. They connected w/ Veronica and she had all sorts of ideas. Gugui gave water filters to Veronica (Alex's wife) and she distributed them all over the community, helping others in need
 - ix. During this whole time, Veronica was very involved in her church, but Alex not so much. He said he believed in God, but wasn't interested
 - x. Bonnie heard this story and felt urged by God to pray for him
 - xi. Another family from our church heard this story and felt urged by God to send money (\$300) down to Alex's family
 - xii. Alex was amazed by all of this and kept, "Why would these people help me? They don't even know me." A series of coincidences, no?
- d. **2 Kings 8:1-6** - A Coincidental Blessing
 - i. Well coincidentally, He started going to church
 - ii. This church, in Montes Llanos, has its roof damaged, but in its denomination there are 128 churches destroyed and so they are low on the list to receive help
The church became a base of operations in November for the small team for distribution. When Gugui's other daughter, Mariana, told some co-workers about this whole ordeal, one of them talked with her church and they felt urged to send money down to this pastor
 - iii. When we gave him the check, coincidentally he hadn't received a paycheck since January 1 b/c there was no money
 - iv. A few weeks ago, I felt prompted to buy a few cases of Bibles and ship them to Puerto Rico - I thought maybe we could pass them out. We also had the rack card translated and printed out.
 - v. Turns out that people were more excited about the Bible's than they were about food. Many had never had a Bible before. They held the Bible and rack card close.
 - vi. Coincidences in all of this or God's sovereign hand?

3. WHAT DOES THIS TEACH ABOUT GOD:

a. God is in control over all things that seem coincidental in this story and in your life

- i. Her wealth, her lack of a son prior to Elisha, her extra room, her timing coming into the king's presence
- ii. Same thing is true for you from that flat tire to the brain in your head
- iii. Hiding Place - Corrie Ten Boom, after smuggling a Bible into the Concentration Camp, they started to have Bible studies that grew and grew. How did they get away with it? Their dorm was infested with black lice and the guards didn't want to go in for routine inspection

b. He wants to use all of these seemingly coincidental things for his glory and our benefit

- i. God is glorified in this story by sovereignly providing for Elisha, for the Shunamite, the son, etc.
- ii. In all these things, God is the hero, not Elisha. He is the victor.
- iii. But Elisha benefits from God sovereignly prompting the Shunammite woman to set aside some hospitality
- iv. She benefits from God answering Elisha's prayers for a son and then for healing
- v. God is glorified and we benefit
 1. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the cross of Christ

4. WHAT DOES THIS TEACH ABOUT MAN:

a. We are players in a great narrative

- i. This is God's story, but we get to take part. This story isn't about you anymore than the Bible is about the Shunammite woman, but we are still a part of it.

b. As players in a story so much bigger than ourselves, it can be exciting if we just open our eyes and learn to read the cues!

- i. Whatever you have has been given to you by God. It's not a coincidence that you are rich (if you are). God has blessed you so that you can generously make a room in your home for Pastor Bill to come hang out.

5. WHAT SHOULD WE DO:

- a. **We need to learn to sense the Holy Spirit and obey his prompts** (names, meetings, random blessings - e.g. like the drills from my dad given to Alex).
- b. Coincidences aren't coincidences - they are ordained by a sovereign God for his sovereign purposes. **Step into the moment and seize it for the glory of God.**

6. CONCLUSION

- a. The hero in all these stories is God, but he invites us into his grand narrative
- b. He invites us into the big picture by inviting us to follow him
- c. He invites us into daily chances to glorify him and benefit from his goodness w/
 - i. The gifts he has given us
 - ii. The relationships he has given us
 - iii. The random prompts

- d. Questions:
- i. **What are some coincidental relationships, events, thoughts, etc that have happened to you recently?**
 - ii. **Has anything happened to you recently that is random and out of the ordinary?**
 - iii. **How might these things be opportunities for glorifying God and blessing others?**
 - iv. **How might God want to use these 'coincidences' for your own personal growth?**
 - v. **Might God be prompting you to do something that could unfold into a story much bigger than yourself?**
- e. God is sovereign. There are no coincidences. God is sovereign. Everything that happens to you, every relationship, every fleeting thought that randomly pops into your head, could be an invitation to step into something so much bigger than you could possibly imagine.

Discipleship Groups

- Read the passages from 2 Kings and do a more in depth discovery study
- Discuss the following questions:
 - What are some coincidental relationships, events, thoughts, etc that have happened to you recently?
 - Has anything happened to you recently that is random and out of the ordinary?
 - How might these things be opportunities for glorifying God and blessing others?
 - How might God want to use these 'coincidences' for your own personal growth?
 - Discuss with one another.