

2 Kings 6-7

Vs1-7

Now there are a # of things that can be seen in this and each one of them I believe is of value and worth mentioning for consideration, and perhaps some application depending upon where you're at.

But the scenario begins with one of those great problems that we're always excited about when it comes to the ministry and that is that the facility that the sons of the prophets were meeting in was too small, they were out growing their place of gathering. Apparently Elisha was the president of the Theological university of Israel and even though overall as a nation they were in the midst of spiritual declension the attendance at the bible college was going up, so much so that they couldn't comfortably meet where they were currently stationed. Which obviously speaks well of the nature of the ministry of Elisha, his life was bearing fruit on multiple levels, he had an impact on a national, and local level.

So the students say, "Hey, why don't you let us build a bigger bible college down the way around the Jordan?" Elisha says, "Sounds great." and Then a really cool thing occurs, they actually ask their teacher to go with them and be apart of the project, of which Elisha says, "Ok." So as they begin to cut down trees in order to build a bigger gathering place one of the students has the head of his ax fly off into the muddy depths of the Jordan. And he starts freaking out because it's not his ax, he borrowed the things and needs to be responsible for it. But how many kids that are in college have a nickel to spare? Not too many, and when you take into account that for them it wasn't exactly like he could just run to Home Depot and buy a new ax for the guy it was borrowed from, this becomes a big deal. Elisha says, "Where did you lose it?" The student points out the place, Elisha cuts off a stick or a small tree, throws it in and the ax head floats to the top. He says, "Reach down for yourself and get it." And the cutting edge was returned to this young man's life.

As I said there are a few things about this that are worth mentioning, #1 I love the fact that God is concerned for even what may seem to be the small, or otherwise insignificant things of our lives. I mean a miracle was worked in order to restore the head of an ax to this young guy! Often times we can feel like we're a nuisance to God when we bring to Him little things, but the question is; is there anything that's *big* to God? What part of our lives serves as a difficult issue for God? Is cancer any more incurable for God than the common cold? The bible says, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*" Phil 4:6 Be it something you consider big, or insignificantly small, *in everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. How much better to be peace with the circumstances of your life knowing that you've placed your petitions into the care and control of your loving Father, than being overtaken by anxiety and uncertainty regarding every little thing that comes along. God is concerned for you, desires to take care of you *even* in the small things.

But we also see in this event a picture of both *salvation* and effective *service*. As for salvation it goes something like this. Mankind is a lot like that ax head, at one time yielded to the will of Him who would work with us, accomplish His plans through us, but we slipped off the handle. And now mankind lies helpless in the miry clay and cold dark surroundings of sin unable to in anyway be of service being dead in transgression.

Now the text uses the word “stick” in regards to what Elisha through in, but it could also be translated “tree.” Now when the tree enters the equation (and you know the tree I’m talking about) that tree upon which Jesus Christ was crucified, then the impossible becomes possible, as He through the cross plunged into the waters of death for you and me, redemption and restoration becomes a reality for you and me. And once again we can find ourselves in the hands of the One who would wield us for His plan, His purpose, and His pleasure.

As it relates to service we should notice that this young man of God was only effective in his service as long as he kept the *cutting edge*, as soon as he lost it, he was of zero value in his ability to do what it was that he was commissioned to do. Now he didn’t lose it on the 1st swing, he started out effective and impacting, but somewhere down the line that ax head began to loosen up, and slip off, but he never saw it coming until it was too late. Listen, if we desire to be an effective ministry, we’ve got to stay sharp, keep the cutting edge, not grow dull, begin to loosen up, lest we *slide* off and find ourselves *sunk*. Who is it that we’re ministering to, and how is it that we’re to minister to them? Perhaps at one time things were happening in your life, the wood chips were flying and the trees were falling, things were getting done, you were effective. But now you seem to have handle in your hands, but its non-effective and pretty pointless to swing it because the cutting edge, that element in your life that was getting things done is gone. 2 Things to realize and consider if you find yourself in that place, #1 That element that makes for the cutting edge in your life isn’t yours in the 1st place, its something that’s entrusted to you by another, namely the Lord. #2 If you’ve lost it consider the question of the man of God in our text tonight, “Where did it fall?” “Where did you lose it?” And we notice that when *that* was discovered he was directed back to that place, the place from which it fell. And it was there that he was to pick it up and carry on right where he left off. Jesus said it like this, “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works” Rev 2:5 Remember back when you were on the cutting edge, effective in service, excited about the Lord, what were you doing, what was it that was happening in your life at that time? I would venture to say that you were spending personal devotional time with the Lord in His Word, not out of duty, out of loving devotion, it’s not called “**Duty**tional” it’s “Devotional” you were truly devoted to the Lord from the heart. You were no doubt communing consistently with Him in prayer, and coming to church and finding opportunities for fellowship with regularity. How are things looking on that checklist now? We’re to remember those *times*, get back to that *place*, and repeat those *works*. And again what was the ingredient (for a lack of a better way to say it) that made it possible to regain the cutting edge, that place of effective service? The tree, enter the cross into the *equation*, give place (by faith) to all its *implications*, that they might become a *realization* to you, allow the redemptive work of the cross of Jesus Christ to reestablish in your life the cutting edge and effective service.

Vs8-12

Couple things quickly, #1 You may be recalling these words right about now, “...*there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.*” Luke 12:2-3 There is not a single solitary aspect of our lives that is exempt from the eyes and ears of God. We have a tendency to ascribe human limitations to Him; we think that if no one else can hear, than somehow He doesn't hear, perhaps we'd never vocalize it in those words yet our lives at times certainly reflect that position. But the bible says, “*You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.*” Ps 139:2-4

Or we think that if no one else can see us, than God can't see us either, that's why so many people try to do what they do under the cover of night; they believe that it offers them some sort of incognito/anonymous kind of covering. And perhaps it does with regard to man, but not with God, again the Psalmist said, “*If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall fall on me,' Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*” Ps 139:11-12 There's nothing that we do, or even say but that God is not *aware* of it and unless dealt with will require an *account* for it. He told Elisha what was going on, and Elisha informed the king.

Which brings me to #2 The king was *warned*, therefore he *watched and* was ready, and that was *wise*. The bible tells us not to be ignorant of our enemy's devises, and we're warned with regard to what those devises are, and we would do well, and be wise to watch out lest we enter in to his snare. Jesus said, “*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” Matt 26:41 Peter said, “*Be sober, be vigilant; (That is watchful) because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*” 1 Peter 5:8 The bible warns us of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life in which the enemy will encamp that he might take us captive if not destroy us as we pass by. We're warned in Eph 6 to put on the whole armor of God that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and again in 2nd Cor 10. The warnings are there, and we're wise to watch and be ready for the attack, or if need be as we see here avoid engaging the enemy altogether. I'm not looking for confrontation, there's plenty of it that finds me right where I'm at with out having to go looking for more.

Vs13-17

You know what I found interesting here? The fact that Elisha knew everything this guy was going to do, yet he honestly thought he could spy him out and surround *him* with out Elisha knowing it. It's like, “You were just told he knows every plan you make.” “Than lets make a plan to capture him!” The dots just aren't connecting with him on this one. But we see here another application or 2 for us, did you notice how the enemy came in by night and tried to surround him?

That's what he does in our lives, he tries to get into the parameters of our lives and surround us with overwhelming forces at a time when we're not aware, he tries to catch us "sleeping" and then he moves in, in force.

But Elisha had a grip on something that his servant didn't; now we realize that this was a new recruit (Gehazi was corrupted by greed in the last ch). Now we give him credit for being up early and in so doing he was able to see the enemy at work, but he was overwhelmed, unable to compute, didn't know how to handle the situation. Why? Because he walked by sight, not by faith, he saw the situation, but he couldn't *see* the situation. So often we're prone to a defeatist attitude as we survey a situation that seems way beyond our ability to cope with. But Paul said that the secret to endurance, the secret to not losing hope lies in looking *not* at the things which are seen, but the things which are *not* seen, because the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Elisha understood that, and he knew that regardless of how things looked circumstantially that those who were with us were way more than those who were with the enemy. The bible says, "*The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.*" Ps 34:7 And again, "*He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.*" Ps 91:11 Elisha had a grip on the fact that somehow though we're generally unable to privy to the happenings of the spiritual real, but that that's where the real battle was waged and won. And I don't pretend to be altogether aware of how the spiritual realm is able to inflect itself upon ours, or exactly how our stand for righteousness, and walk of faith places a shield about us, but that's what the bible teaches. Elisha was confident in the keeping power of God over his life.

So he spoke the Word *to* him, stood in the gap in praying *for* him, and his eyes were opened to the things of the Spirit. And therein lies a real key, receiving the Word of God, and being in communion with God through prayer, will cause us to see beyond the immediate circumstance, it keeps our eyes peeled with regards to the things of the Spirit. Oh you may not be watching the angelic hosts about you, but you're more in tune with the things of the Spirit and are able to see things in their proper perspective as opposed to simply walking by sight, and responding or reacting in a panic to the here and now. And when you come across someone who's overwhelmed with what's confronting them, follow Elisha's example, speak the word to them. "*Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go*" Josh 1:9 Stand in the gap, praying for them, and God will open their eyes to the proper perspective.

Vs18-23

I found it interesting that Elisha prayed in the 1st case for eyes to be opened, and directly following that, that eyes would be blind. And in both cases God complied, which tells me that God is not only able to comfort His own, He's able to confound, or confuse those who come against His own. Or to say it simply, God's got your back, now there's a question in my mind as to whether or not this was a literal blindness, or a "blinding" that was cast upon them in regards to who Elisha was and where they were. Meaning as it were that they were swept up if you will into a world of illusion.

And the only reason I wonder is because it would be difficult to lead a band of raiders large enough to encompass a city, some 12 miles if they were “in the dark” literally. Though I wouldn’t say it would be impossible, but be that as it may, I think that there’s something here that we do well to *see*. (And believe me I’m not trying to say that there’s never a justifiable wartime scenario because the bible teaches differently).

But the idea that we gather from this portion of scripture is that the Son of Man didn’t come to destroy lives, but to save lives, that He didn’t come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. You see God was moving in Israel, protecting them, providing safety for them, which should’ve caused them to turn to Him, but at the same time God was demonstrating Himself in a very powerful way to the Syrians. Not only by healing Naaman’s leprosy, but also in making known their secrets openly to Elisha, and in this situation here, and believe me when I say they should’ve been turning to Him as well. God is extending to them mercy, and for us I think the point is that we sometimes get involved in serving the body of Christ (And rightly so, we should be serving the Lord in that capacity) but in so doing we often lose sight of those who aren’t apart of the body that Jesus died for as well. See the picture here, those who were outside of the nation of Israel, had no inheritance with the nation of Israel, were in fact at this point against the nation of Israel were blinded. Walking around as it were in the dark, or at best a world of illusion, but the man of God came to them, told them that they were on the wrong path, but that if they would follow him, he would lead them where they needed to be. And as they heeded his words and followed his lead, their eyes were opened and they found themselves at the banqueting table of the king, he could’ve destroyed them, but instead he opted to save them. Paul said it like this, “*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*” Rom 12:21 But what a picture we have of what so often takes place in the lives of the people of God today. The enemies of God walking around in a world of illusion, thinking they know where they’re going all the while blind. Yet God will bring someone like you in to their lives to tell them that they’re not headed in the right direction, and you begin to lead them in the way, praying for them that their eyes might be open, and finally they find themselves in the presence of the King and feasting at His banqueting table.

Vs 24-31

So after some time the king Syria decides again to come against Samaria.

But not just with his raiders, but the entire army, perhaps 100,000 or more, and they surround the city and wait. This type of campaign could take months, or even a couple of years or more, they would just surround the city, not let anything in or anything out and eventually the resources would dry up, the people would either surrender or starve to death. And we see how desperate the situation got, donkey head stew would cost you 80 shekels of silver, and about a pint dove dropping delicacies would cost you 5, the point is, that people were starving to death and things were getting desperate.

We even read of this situation where at least one woman resorted to cannibalistic infanticide, and she cries out to the king for help as if to say, “Make this woman follow through that we might eat her son today.” And when the king heard that he tore his clothes, (meaning that he was beside himself with a sense of despondency).

And when he tore his clothes we read that there was sackcloth underneath his royal robes. Which speaks of what? Repentance, but don't you know that there's a difference between merely going through the motions to try and get on God's good side, and genuinely repenting from the heart? I'm not sure that it's even possible to repent in private, its as though he didn't want the people to know that he'd humbled himself, he never called *them* to repent with him, but underneath he was trying to show these signs of remorse to God, it was like a façade of repentance. Now I'm not going to say that repentance isn't something that can be done inwardly because that's exactly where it takes place, but it demonstrates itself outwardly, if you've repented, people know it because your life is different, its not something you disguise or cover up. Besides that if he'd truly repented why would he have turned on the man of God like this? It's amazing how when people who don't know the Lord have things go wrong in their lives, instead of assuming the responsibility they always seem to want to lash out at God or one of God's people. Elisha wasn't to blame here, *he was*. Perhaps Elisha had instructed him to wait and let the Lord deliver them, but he was at his wits end, people were dying, and not Elisha was going to.

Vs32-33

Isn't amazing how many people believe in the sovereignty of God, but not the love of God? He's willing to consent to the fact that God is in control, but not to the fact that God loves or cares about them and has their best eternal interests in mind. And this is so often just how we are. “I know God's in control, so why is He letting this happen, why should I wait upon Him, if this is how it turns out?” We forget how that the things the enemy means to destroy He can turn to His glory, and our good, how that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose. So if you find your self in a desperate situation, if its due to sin in your life, than repent and get right with God. If not, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, trust that He'll work it out for your eternal best interest. Either way the solution lies in running towards Him, not giving up, or growing impatient with Him. It's those who wait on the Lord who renew their strength.

Ch7

Vs1-2

Mark it well; Doubt will disqualify you from partaking of the blessings of God. It won't in anyway inhibit God from doing the work, but you'll miss out on the benefits of it. You'll see it, but you won't eat (or partake) of it. Too often we're hindered by our own reasoning, if we can't figure it out, it can't be done. But don't you know that God has options that we've never factored in, that His ways aren't our ways, His thoughts aren't our thoughts, and He's obligated to share His plan with nobody. The secret things belong to God.

The bible says, “*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*” Phil 4:19 We want to figure out how He’s going to do it, but if we can’t figure it out it must be impossible. And as soon as we think we have it figured out we begin to try and direct God as to how to do what He needs to do rather than allowing God to tell us what *we need to do*. We want to speak our mind to God, and that’s good and well, but we need to allow Him to speak His mind to us, because believe me when I say that anything God has to say to me, is infinitely more important than anything I have to say to Him. This guy begins to mock, says, “It can’t be done, even if He were to open the windows of heaven and begin to pour out flour.” He doubts, and is duly disqualified from God’s provision.

Vs3-20

2 primary points and we’re done. I love what these lepers say back in vs 3, “Why are we sitting here until we die?” That’s a good question, we’re just going to sit here and rot away, and we’re not doing ourselves or anyone else any good by just sitting around. They have the attitude of, “We really don’t have anything to lose, but we have everything to gain, let’s just step out and see what happens.” They put feet to their faith, belief will consent to the facts, but faith moves out, takes action. And when they moved out in faith what did they find? That God had gone before them and prepared their way, had they sat around they’d have just died. But because they were willing to lose their lives, they found life. Question, are you just sitting around until you die, or are you putting feet to your faith, stepping out and taking a chance to see just what God might do with your life.

2nd thing you might want to draw attention to or underline is in vs 9, they were stuffed, they were satisfied, their cup was running over and then it hit one of them. “We’re not doing right.” There’s a whole city back there starving to death and we’re gluttoned to the max, we’ve got to get them the message.

Herein lies the point. We’re all feasting on the Word of God with regularity, getting fat, and finding treasures that we simply bury for a future date. But out there is a whole city that’s starving to death, and it’s not right that we should keep the news of what God has done to ourselves. *It’s not right*. We need to give them the good news of what God has done, how they don’t have to die, they can partake of God’s goodness, God’s grace, and be saved. God’s done the work, all we have to do is by faith enter in *to* it and partake *of* it.

Unfortunately there will be those who respond like this officer, God has provided abundantly our every need in Jesus Christ (Forgiveness, salvation, sanctification, every spiritual blessing) but how many people disqualify themselves from partaking of it out of doubt, disbelief. They’ll see it one day, but they won’t partake of it. But God forbid that people should starve unnecessarily because we fail to get them the message.

Prayer Points:

God help us to be those who are willing to take the message of your goodness, grace, forgiveness and abundant provision to the starving in need of You. That we'd be those who step out in faith, availing our lives to be used of You. That we wouldn't be those overcome by evil but those who overcome evil with good. To trust that those who are with us are more than those who are with the enemy, and that we might keep the cutting edge, being effective in our service.