

Open His Eyes That He May See

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to the chapter we read in 2 Kings, chapter 6. We read there at verse 15.

When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all round the city. And the servant said, Alas, my master, what shall we do?

And he said, Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those with them. Then Elisha prayed and said, O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see, and so on.

The way God works is often quite amazing. And it's a feature that we find running through the Bible of how God will sometimes, to begin with, will have the thunder, will have the power, will have very visible demonstrations of that power.

But then following on from that, will have the quietness, the gentleness. That was true in these two great times of the prophets. There was first Elijah and then Elisha.

[1 : 17] Elijah was a passionate, vehement, fiery kind of character, and one who displayed the most extraordinary zeal for the Lord. And yet, although Elijah did many wonderful things in his time, Elisha, there were more miracles worked in a very quiet way in Elisha's time.

It was like Moses is looked upon as the law. Following on from Moses, we have Joshua, who is salvation. In the New Testament, you look at John the Baptist, who was an Elijah-type character. He came, as it were, with an axe in his hand. He was again a restless, fiery character, preaching a ministry of repentance. But following on from him, we, of course, we have the Lord Jesus Christ, whose ministry was one of grace and truth, not but that John's was as well.

But so often the Lord is working in this way, law and grace, law and grace. And the Lord gave a very powerful demonstration of that to Elijah himself.

Remember that time when Elijah became burnt out, and he thought that his time was over, that he was the only one left, and he sank into this kind of sense almost of despair.

[2 : 44] And as we know, it's interesting that the very man who was never to die asked the Lord to take him away, to take him out of this world, that he would die. But we know that the Lord rested him, gave him rest, gave him food, refreshed him.

But then he took him up to the mountain. And remember, he went into, he was up on Mount Horeb, and he was hiding in a cave there, and God gave an amazing demonstration of power. There was wind that came, which was so powerful that it tore off the rocks.

Then there came this earthquake that shook everything. Then came the fire that was bouncing off the rocks. But it tells us that God was not in these things.

And then afterwards, in the stillness that followed, there came this still, small voice. And that's when Elijah heard God's word.

And God will often work in this way, where he says, it's not by might, and it's not by power, but it's by my spirit, saith the Lord. And so often we look for the demonstrative, we look for the powerful, we look for the show, we look for that which really grabs our attention.

[3 : 59] God keeps showing us through his word that it's often in the quietness, in the stillness, in the calm that he works. It's a lesson I think we always have to learn and keep reminding ourselves and being reminded of.

And this ministry of Elisha was one that demonstrated this calm. It demonstrated there was a calmness about Elisha that was quite unique.

And yet, through Elisha, God kept working. I think there's a lot of lessons there for us. However, as we come to the narrative that is here, we find that it tells us that the king of Syria, in verse 8, once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants and so on.

And it's quite strange that we find that Syria is warring against Israel. Syria was the aggressor, warring against Israel, because the previous chapter, chapter 5, is where Syria's favorite son, Naaman, remember how Naaman had come up to Israel looking for the prophet Elisha in order to be healed of his leprosy.

And remember, we're not going through that, how he was actually healed. And how it had a huge impact upon Naaman and the whole entourage who was there with him. They were all really taken with what had happened.

[5 : 29] And it had a huge impact, must have had, upon the king of Syria. But it just shows us that memories, our memory is fickle, and we are so inclined to forget the good that people do.

The Bible is full of instances of that. And we've also got to be careful ourselves that we don't forget the good that people do. Because it's all too easy. There might be a period years back, you know, you remember what people did.

But then as time goes on, you forget about it. You remember how Joseph had become second in command in Egypt. Were it not for Joseph and being there as God's representative and being filled with God's wisdom, Egypt would have perished.

And you remember how Joseph's whole family came down. They had the best of the land in Egypt. And for quite a long time, the Egyptians gave so much place to the Israelites because of Joseph. But then time went on and they forgot. And it didn't take too long until the Egyptians turned against the Israelites and, of course, put them into that. There was a program almost of infant genocide and of slavery.

[6 : 47] It was a horrendous period. That's a picture of how quickly people forget. And here again we find it with Syria. They were so thankful. Their leading general was so thankful, delivered, cured from this awful illness of leprosy.

But it doesn't take too long till they're back to invading Israel. Memories, how quickly people forget. It's just something we find so often in the Bible.

Let us not forget. Thankfully, the Lord never forgets. Anyway, we find here that they're back, as we say, to these hostilities.

We find the Syrians invading Israel. And there was a problem that was affecting the king of Syria because every time he was going to invade, and it wouldn't be like his full army, but he was taking a large army up.

And what he was going to do was he was setting ambushments. And he was going to capture, there would be these raids upon Israel. They used to do, and they would take away captives.

[7 : 55] They would destroy towns. They would plunder and take away captives and such like. But every time he went up, he was foiled. Because when he would go up and they would be lying in wait, no Israelites could be found.

And he came to the conclusion, and he was saying, there's got to be a spy in the camp. Somebody, somebody is passing on this information. Here we are, we're discussing strategy, what we're going to do.

We've got it all sussed out, all planned. And when we go up, the Israelites know. Somebody is giving away the secret.

And of course, rightly so, the king of Syria is really perplexed about what has happened. But we know from here what has happened is that the Lord was revealing to Elisha what was happening. And Elisha would send word, that's what we read, verse 9, But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel, Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are going down there.

[9 : 00] And so, we find that on several occasions, the prophet warned the king and saved Israel. Do not, and that was the message, beware that you do not pass this place.

And you know, sometimes God in his word is saying the same things to ourselves. Do not pass this place, do not go near. There are things that were told in the word of God that we have to flee from, flee youthful lusts.

We are told to flee temptation. And there are some times that things can become so powerful for us, And so powerful against us, That it is dangerous even to hang about.

Joseph learnt that lesson. Joseph knew that. Joseph was a wise man. And remember when Potiphar's wife, Titus the Juserman, Joseph didn't stay to argue the case with her.

And say, well look, I am going to, can I explain to you why I should not do this? Joseph ran. He actually left his coat, or whatever he was wearing. He just ran.

[10 : 05] Because he knew that if he stopped, And sort of tried to debate the issue, He was quite likely to end up giving in. That is the power, sometimes, of temptation.

And that is why the word sometimes says to you, Look, you have got to flee temptation. And, you know, there is no point in asking the Lord, Lord, deliver me from temptation, When we put ourselves deliberately in the place of temptation.

Because sometimes we do that. We put ourselves into the place of temptation, And then say, Oh Lord, deliver me out of temptation. And the Lord says, Well, if you are really wanting to be delivered out of the place of temptation, Why are you going into it in the first place?

So we have always got to be careful, Because often with temptation, we are playing with fire. Of course, we know that there are times temptation comes upon us, Just out of the blue.

It is nothing that we have done, It is just all of a sudden, Bang, we are into it. But there is a lot to be said for going away from it. And you know, in fact, if we flee, If we run away, If we turn our back, Then we are already gaining victory in the temptation.

[11 : 13] But always we have to remind ourselves that temptation doesn't equal sin. Sometimes we think if we are being tempted to do something, We are sinning. We are not. Temptation and sin are separate.

Jesus was tempted in all points, Just like we are. But yet without sin. He did not sin. So that shows us very clearly there is a distinction between the two.

Anyway, the Lord was showing Elisha, And Elisha was telling the king of Israel. And we find that the king of Syria, He would think that time after time there was this discovery being made, That he would say, Hey, I am getting out of here.

The forces are against me. There are powers against me. I am out of control. Here was a man who was used to being in absolute control. He was a ferocious king. And he was somebody who had led with an iron rule.

And somebody who was used to always having his own way. And you would think to yourself, See when everything keeps going against. When it is almost bizarre the way it is working out.

[12 : 25] Situations. Human logic would say, Right. This is beyond me. I am out of here. And you would say, That is what the king should have done.

But he did not. He was a proud man. But you know, Far too often we can be like that as well. Because we can have warnings. We can have situations where we are shaken.

And we know God is speaking to us. And somehow we react against and reject it. And say, I want to keep going. Keep going in my own way. Anyway, We find that the king is determined to find out.

And tells us in verse 11, The mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled. And he was saying, Look, Will somebody tell me who is passing on the information? And we find in verse 12, One of the servants said, None, My lord, O king.

But Elisha the prophet who is in Israel, Tells the king of Israel, The words that you speak in your bedroom. Now, I don't know who this servant to the king was.

[13 : 26] But it's, Now this is what we would call speculation. But it's not beyond the realms of possibility. That this servant was one of the men who went up with Naaman to Israel.

When they went to visit Elisha. Because this man obviously has come to understand something of who the prophet Elisha is. You remember that Elisha, when the king, when Naaman came up, Elisha didn't even come out to see him.

But he sent a servant and he said, Go, Go on, Go, Just go and wash in the Jordan. You'll be healed. And you remember Naaman was absolutely furious. And he said, Are not the rivers back at home just as good?

I'm going back home. That man didn't even come out. He didn't even have the dignity. Or show me the sort of respect.

And come out. And he said, I thought he would lay hands on me. I thought he would give some demonstration of his power. All he does is he sends a servant. And of course, Naaman who was used to control and power, his pride was so hurt, he was forheading, and he started heading back home.

[14 : 43] And a servant of Naaman said to him, Look, if that prophet of the Lord had asked you to do some great thing in order to be free of your leprosy, would you have done it?

And he kind of said, Yes. Well, he's only asked you a very simple thing, to go and wash seven times. And this servant reasoned with Naaman.

And Naaman, of course, went and did, and he was healed. And then, of course, he was overcome with just how great Elisha was, and how great Elisha's God was, and he wanted to worship and serve the living and true God.

Is it possible? We don't know. It doesn't tell us. It might even possibly have been the very servant who reasoned with Naaman, who is here saying to the king, Look, I know all about this Elisha. This man is truly a man of God. He knows without, he knew Naaman's situation. He knew what to do. He doesn't even need to come out of his room.

[15:48] He knows everything. And so, it could, as I say, we're just speculating. But the thing here is, that Elisha was being made aware of everything that was going on.

And of course, again, the king's reaction is, Well, if it is, we'll go and get him. We've got to get Elisha out of the situation. Of course, that's where we find now, that this army comes up against Dothan, where Elisha is staying.

And we read there that, in verse 14, So sent there horses and chariots, and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

Here is this king, who's doing what so many people have done, down throughout the years. They've tried to fight against God. That's what he's doing. He's decided to fight against God, because he's fighting against God's representative, Elisha.

And he's going to take Elisha out of the equation. And you go through the history of the Bible, and you discover, that all those who do that, to fight against God, is really the most ridiculous thing that a person can do.

[17:02] Oh, you might succeed for a wee while. And many do. Many seem. Sometimes you say to yourself, Why does the Lord allow? The Lord has his own purposes in these things.

But there comes, always, always, always comes, a day of reckoning. Anyway, we find that this great army comes up. And early in the morning, Elisha's servant goes up, gets up, and he goes out, and he looks out.

And he can't believe his eyes. You can almost see him rubbing his eyes. And he's saying, Oh, is this real? Is this a dream? I hope this is a nightmare I'm having. But no, it's reality. The place is surrounded by horses and chariots.

And he knows that when this happens, that either the city is destroyed, or there's a siege. And a siege was an awful thing. There's a siege later on in this very chapter.

And so he goes in to Elisha, and he says, Alas, my master, what shall we do? And to the human eye, that was the end for Elisha, and it would be the end for his servant as well.

[18:06] But you know, the amazing thing is, there is no change in Elisha. His attitude, his demeanor, everything stays just the same. There's this beautiful calmness about him.

It's like the servant came in, would just come in and say, oh, the sun is rising today. And Elisha would say, yeah, I believe that. That's just, there's no, there's no sense of fear, or anxiety, or trepidation, or anything in the prophet.

Didn't bring any change from him. And Elisha knew, that although they had come for him, they weren't going to get him. He knew his work wasn't over.

He knew that he was in the Lord's service, and he knew he'd be in that service, until his time was over. And you know, it's very important for us, to seek from the Lord, that we will have this calmness, because we live in an anxiety-filled world.

There are so many things, that are liable to cause us anxiety, and fears. I read how, this lady said to D.L. Moody, she said, I have found a wonderful promise in the Bible, she said, every time I'm afraid.

[19:22] And it's this, what time I am afraid, I will trust in you. And D.L. Moody said, you know, that's a great promise, but he said, there's an even better one. And the promise is this, behold, God is my salvation.

I will trust in him, and I will not be afraid. See, that's even better. This woman was saying, the times that I am afraid, then, I will trust in the Lord.

But Moody is saying, you trust in the Lord all the time, in the God of your salvation, and you will not be afraid. And that seemed to characterize Elisha's life.

That, if you wanted to write a verse over Elisha's life, that was it. There were loads of things to cause him anxiety, and problems, and fears. But he had this implicit trust in the Lord.

And we sometimes, and we often do, we say, ah, it's a different day. Well, it doesn't really matter. Yes, it was a different day. But the situations there were just as bleak, and horrific in many ways,

even more so than some places, even today.

[20 : 36] But Elisha has this calmness, and he prays, and he says to the servant, do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.

And I'm sure for a moment that that servant thought, my master is losing his mind. He's actually saying that there are more with us than with them.

Can he not look out and see the whole place is surrounded with horses and chariots. And he's saying, there are more with us than with them. But Elisha was seeing spiritually.

God had enabled Elisha to see at a spiritual dimension. In the very same way as God enabled Elisha to see. Remember when Elijah was taken up to heaven. Elisha asked that he would be able to see that.

And he saw it. Now, I believe that there would be other people on the plains, other people round about, who, when Elijah was taken up in the chariot of fire, would not have seen.

[21 : 45] But Elisha saw. Elisha was given the spiritual vision to see the horses and the chariot of fire grab, taking hold of Elijah and taking him up to heaven.

all the other people around and about wouldn't have seen that. But he saw it because his eyes were opened spiritually to a degree that in our normal run of things we don't see.

But you know, my friends, the same as if we could see. And that's what Elisha is saying. Lord, open the young man's eyes.

Elisha didn't pray, Lord, grant him peace. Give him, give him, give him a calmness. Deliver him from the anxiety he's under. No, it was an amazing prayer.

Lord, open his eyes that he'll see. And at that moment, the Lord opened that man's eyes spiritually to see what, humanly speaking, you and I cannot see.

[22 : 49] Nobody is able to see because it's into the spiritual realms. But it's there. It's true. And at that moment, it must have been one of the most amazing moments, the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire.

They were all around Elisha. And that man, young man, was seeing, it doesn't matter who came to get Elisha right now, they haven't a chance.

It's like the very hosts of heaven were surrounding Elisha. The safest man on planet earth at that moment, despite this vast army around, was Elisha.

Because the hosts of heaven were surrounding him. And that is one of the great lessons that we need to learn. If God be for us, who can be against us?

That doesn't mean that difficult, painful, sad things won't happen. It doesn't mean we're never going to die. But it still means that wherever we are, even into death, the hosts of heaven are around us.

[23 : 57] And that there is a divine protection of soul even into the carrying, as we were saying, carrying us home to glory. This divine protection is the most wonderful thing.

And that's what we realize in the New Testament it says, if God be for us, who can be against us?

Now there are loads of forces and powers against us. But none of them can ultimately prevail if God is for us. And if God is for us, we have all the promises of God.

You go through the Bible and we see all these promises, as we said, some of these are conditional promises where we have to do one part and God will fulfill the other. But many of them are unconditional.

Not only do we have the promises, we have the decrees of God working. God is working everything to a predetermined end. Yes, within that framework, sin is doing its worst.

[24 : 57] but God is ultimately going to work everything for good for his people. Sometimes it just looks like utter chaos.

Even in our own world as we look around. But God is still in control. If God is for us, we have his promises, we have his decrees. We even, we have the prayers of God's people.

That's a wonderful thing. This young man had the prayers of Elisha. And you and I have the prayers of so many of God's people.

You know, that's a wonderful thing. You know what God does? He puts burden, puts a burden upon the heart of his people to pray for, to pray for others.

Maybe right now you're going through a difficult time. And God has put your predicament, your sorrow, your difficulty on the heart of somebody else.

[26 : 00] And they start praying for you. They don't know why. But you have come before their mind, before their heart, so powerfully, so strongly, that they've got to pray.

Sometimes you're awakened in the night and for some reason you have to start praying for somebody. You don't know why. But God does that. And he uses his people in this way. And God takes glory to himself through it. And this is why he involves his whole church, the body of Christ, involved in these things. Always respond when that burden is put upon your heart. You make sure you pray. Because God has put that there. And he will answer. When God gives you a burden, it is in order to answer. And so we find that here we have this wonderful, this wonderful moment.

Open his eyes. And while we won't see today, even if we ask the Lord to open our eyes, we're not going to see the hosts of heaven.

[27 : 03] But all we want to see is sufficient of Jesus to know him as our Savior. The Lord could show us the hosts of heaven. But I believe that if we today ask the Lord, Lord, show me in the same way as this young man saw.

We would be doing that out of curiosity or it wouldn't be the right motive. This was a special occasion. And Elisha was giving at a particular time in the history of Israel.

Elisha was asking, he was praying, not for his own, Elisha wasn't praying for anything of his own glory or name or anything, but he just wanted this young servant, Lord, help him to see how things really are.

And sometimes we need our eyes open to see how things really are. Ask the Lord, Lord, open my eyes so that you'll be at the center of my life. So that I will see everything that's happening through you.

So that there will be a God perspective on life. So that things that seem to be chaotic, Lord, may I even see strands of your purpose running through it. It will make a big difference to life because if we take God out of the picture, life becomes really bleak, becomes empty, futile.

[28 : 21] It's like a boat without a rudder or a car without a wheel. But put God at the center and God, remember, is at the center but that he'll be at the center of your life so that you will see and believe.

Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray to bless us and ask us we have come under your word that that word will indeed go deep into our hearts. Grant us grace in all that we do and say and think and watch over as we pray.

Bless us in our homes and families for giving us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're concluding Psalm 2. Psalm 2 from Sing Psalms.

And we're going to sing verses 1-6 the first four stanzas. So in page 2 of the tune of Saldu. Why do the heathen rage?

Why do the peoples plot in vain? Earth's kings combine in enmity. Her rulers join against God's reign. Now that's a picture that's happening over and over.

[29 : 28] It's happening today as well. They take their stand against the Lord and challenge his anointed one. Let us break off their chains from us with their restraints.

Let us be done. See the reaction of God. The one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord on high derides them all. Then he rebukes them in his wrath.

His rage and terror on them fall. The Lord has made it known to them. My chosen king I have installed. On Zion, my own holy hill, he is the one whom I have called.

Psalm 2, 1-6 Why do the heathen rage? Why do the heathen nations rage?

Why do the people fought in vain? As kings combine in enmity Our rulers' choice against all strength They take their stand And challenge against the Lord And challenge his anointed one Let us break off their chains from us With their restraints Let us be done

[31 : 17] The one enthroned in heaven laughs The Lord on high He writes them all Then he rebukes them In Israel His rage and terror On them fall The Lord has made it known to them My chosen king I have been strong On Zion, my own holy hill

He is the one whose I have called Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you Now and forevermore Amen