

The Shunamite Woman #3

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Bible Text: 2 Kings 4:32-37
Preached on: Sunday, July 7, 2002

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Congregation, this afternoon we will read again for the third time in the story that we have read a while ago and our text is found in the verses 32 through 37. So we now take the final part of this narrative starting at verse 32.

And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.¹

Congregation, we today read the final part of that story of about which we have listened and heard the Word of God already two times, the story in which we are told about the death of the son of the Shunamite and tonight we will also hear about his resurrection.

You remember that this woman, this God fearing woman, this great woman as she is called, not only great according as far as material possessions is concerned, but great also as far as her faith is concerned that this woman was given a child though she was barren for many years, but that she also has lost that child again and that she then went to the prophet Elisha who is called in this story the man of God because in her estimation Elisha was the only one who was able to help her in her set plight. When she came to Elisha he immediately sensed what kind of situation she was in and he sent his servant Gehazi to meet her and to ask her whether all was well.

But she was not satisfied with meeting Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. She wanted to be with Elisha himself. And when Elisha sent Gehazi to Shunem to put the staff of the man of God upon the dead body of the son of the Shunamite she was not

¹ 2 Kings 4:32-37.

satisfied with that either. She continued to be with Elisha and she urged him that he himself would also come with her and finally Elisha conceded to her request.

And then Elisha comes in the house and now we pick up the story, the part of the story that is before us today. Elisha comes to the house. He climbs the stairs that lead to his private room and after he has opened the door he looks into the room and there he with his own eyes sees what he has heard and what he has by now understood as being the situation. And immediately one glance is sufficient to tell him that the situation is really a desperate one. With his own eyes he can notice that death has entered into the house and that death has done its destructive work and Elisha feels the heaviness of that moment.

After having entered into the room, he shuts the door behind him. For everybody else has to stay out. Elisha wants to be there alone, alone with the dead boy and alone with the living God. Then the prophet kneels down and he begins to pray to his God. Can we tell what he does pray for? Well, it does not say, but we cannot be very much mistaken when we believe that he prays now to know God's will, to understand what the Lord means by all these events. And, furthermore, I believe that he also prayed that the Lord would perform a miracle, a miracle similar to the miracle that the Lord once performed by means of Elisha's predecessor Elijah when he raised the dead son of the widow in Zarephath. That miracle the Lord did perform and Elisha believes that the Lord is able to do such a thing also now.

And then the man of God does a strange thing. Strange, though not unprecedented. For after having prayed to God he climbs upon the bed and he lays himself down upon the dead body of the child. He does exactly what Elijah did with the dead body of the son of the widow in Zarephath. Elijah, of course, has heard his teacher relate that story.

But one may ask: Is it not an offensive thing and even a repulsive thing especially to a Jew to touch the dead body of someone? That touch only renders a man ceremonially unclean and if only a touch of a dead body will surrender him unclean ceremonially, what will be the result of one's stretching out himself upon the dead body? To do so will mean that Elisha will be cut off according to the law. He will be cut off from all public contact and from all public worship. Why does he do so? Does he not feel a natural aversion to do such a thing? And it is not moreover socially improper to do it?

Well, whatever objections could be made, in spite of all the objections the prophet does it and by so doing he imitates the example of his teacher Elijah. And he knows that Elijah did it and he understands also why Elijah did it. For in stretching one's self out upon the dead body of this child he so, as it were, identifies with the child. And Elisha not only remembered that Elijah did a similar thing, Elisha also remembers that at the time that his master was taken away from him in a whirlwind he stood at the brink of the River Jordan and that he there cried:

"Where is the LORD God of Elijah?"²

² 2 Kings 2:14.

Well, in a sense, he cries that here again.

“Where is the LORD God of Elijah?”³

“Where is the Lord who by means of my master raised that other dead child? Can he not do the same thing today? Is he with me now?”

Do you see what was Elijah’s pleading ground? The miracle done by God in the past, the miracle by which God had revealed his might in the past. And Elisha knows that he is the rightful successor of Elijah. So he now seeks again the confirmation of his call. Let the Lord God of Elijah do what he has done already there in Zarephath. Let him do it again. Let him do it here in Shunem.

And as Elisha with his own body lays down upon the child’s body and the flesh of the child waxes warm. I do not know really what it means. It is only that the warmth of Elisha’s body enters into the child’s body? Or is it because of the intensity of the prayers or Elisha? Or is the Lord already beginning to restore life to that boy? We are not sure. We simply have to believe what it says here. The boy’s flesh waxed warm.

But then after a while Elisha does an even stranger thing. For he rises from the bed and he walks to and fro in the room. And apparently he does not say in that upper room in his own private room, but he goes downstairs to walk around in the house below as well. Why does he do that? I believe there is only one valid interpretation of it. By going downstairs and by walking around in the house he undoubtedly has met with other people. For he stays with the mother and the father of the boy. They were not, as you remember, permitted to enter into the room because Elisha shut the door behind him. He wanted to be alone. But the hearts of the mother and the father of the child were filled with great anxiety. You can really understand that, of course. And when they see Elisha, when they see him return from the room, they look at him with eyes that are full of desire to know whether something has happened upstairs. But Elijah can only shake his hands. And he can only tell them that so far nothing happened, nothing has changed. And by so saying even without words, simply by shaking his heads, he strips away all their carnal confidence. For up till now they may have had some trust and confidence in the prophet. But they must know that Elisha himself, though he is the man of God, is not able to do anything. He is not able to bring about a change in the boy’s situation. Therefore, their only hope must rest in Elisha’s God.

And then Elisha goes up again. For the second time he stretches himself upon the body of the boy. And this time something remarkable happens. Suddenly there is a short inhalation followed by a sharp exhalation in the form of a sneeze and that is repeated and repeated again, seven times in total. And after that, the boy is brought to full consciousness. He opens his eyes and there is a look of recognition. By a miracle he has been brought back into life. And then Elisha does not wait any moment any longer. He calls Gehazi and he tells him to call the mother of the boy and then the mother comes up hastily and enters into the room. Elisha says to her:

³ Ibid.

“Take up thy son.”⁴

And you can imagine that she then rushes in further into the room and readily grasps at the boy into her arms. Yet though we may have expected her to do so, the text tells us something different. She does not immediately walk up to her son to embrace him. Why not? Does she not believe what Elisha says? Of course she believes it. She is convinced that her son is alive. But intuitively she understands not that the first thing to do now must be an act of gratitude. And therefore she prostrates herself before the prophet, the same thing she did when she came to Mount Carmel to Elisha with her griefs. And now she does it with gratitude. And only after that she takes up her son.

Did she say anything? The Word of God is silent. What did she feel at that moment? Again, the Word of God is silent. But one can imagine that she felt great gratitude in her heart, an indescribable joy. And she looked in his eyes again. Look eyes no longer closed. And what must have gone through her heart when she heard her sweetheart whisper אַמֵּם (ame), the Hebrew for momma. What great things the Lord had done for her and for her household.

Congregation, after having opened the text before the remaining time we will seek to understand what God intends to say and to teach us in this portion of his revelation, what he wanted to teach the woman, what he wanted to teach the people of Israel and what he wanted to tell us. And then in the first place I read in this part of the story a powerful vindication of God’s claims. What was the main burden of God’s message through his servants, the prophets in those days to the people of Israel? What were the prophets, the Lord’s servants to tell the people of Israel again and again? They were to assert the Lord’s rights over his people. They were to tell the people that the Lord alone is God and that he alone is the true God and that he alone is the rightful object of true worship.

You know, you remember these were the days of Baal worship. And Baal worship was very prevalent in those days. And in those days the Lord demanded from his servants that he again and again told the people of God to reveal to people of Israel that he is the exclusive God. He alone has the exclusive right to be worshipped for he is the only one who created life and he is the only one who takes life and he is the only one who restores life.

“Am I God, to kill and to make alive.”⁵

That is the message that came to the people of Israel by this miracle. And by doing so, while speaking through his servants, the Lord at the same time told it the falling of idol worship. For what are idols? They are called gods, but they are no gods. And for that matter, they can do nothing. But you remember in spite of all that the Lord had been doing by means of Elijah and by means of Elisha and by means of the sons of the

⁴ 2 Kings 4:36.

⁵ 2 Kings 5:7.

prophets, Baal worship was still ripe in those days. Many still worshipped dead idols. And then this miracle happens in Shunem.

First there was that other miracle that the child, this woman in Shunem, who was known to be a God fearing woman, a true worshipper of Jehovah, well that childless woman became pregnant and the Lord performed a miracle and he gave her a son. And, of course, that had been a matter of talk between the people in Shunem and in other villages as well. And the question was raised. What does that matter? Why does that happen and what does this mean? Is the God of that woman indeed the true God of Israel?

Now again there is a miracle. That must be so because by now they all have heard that the boy the promised boy is a dead boy. And now they see him. They see him walk in the streets. He is alive. He is healthy again. Who did it? Again, the only answer must be the God of that Shunamite did it. The God of the man of God Elisha did it. What a great testimony this miracle must have been of the livingness of the Lord. That miracle buttressed the faith of the boy's mother. But at the same time that miracle was a strong reminder to the people of Israel that God alone is the living God.

Many people in Shunem, of course, knew about this boy, that he was a boy given as a result of God's promise and as a result of God's miracle working in the life of his mother. But, no doubt, there have been skeptics and the skeptics have said, "Well, of course, it is a great thing for that woman, but, you know, it happens more often that after a while a barren woman yet has a child. That doesn't mean that there is a direct intervention from God." And so they were not convinced by that first miracle. But what happens now when the boy is for the second time the object of a miracle of the Lord? Now the promised boy is also the resurrected boy. And when they see him and they hear him he must have been a monumental testimony of the livingness of God. God through him loudly spoke to the generation of these days.

"I am God and I am the only one. Thou shalt worship me and me alone and thou shalt have no other gods before me."

That is what God said through this miracle. Now, agreed, we live in different days. But as far as true worship of the Lord is concerned over against idol worship, I don't think that there is so much difference between then and now. Then the true fear of the Lord was rare. But without being pessimistic, I think we must say that the true fear of the Lord today is as rare as it was in those days. And idol worship, though it is in different forms, is as ripe as it was then.

What then should we look for? Should we look for no miracles performed by the Lord? Should we ask the Lord that he once again will demonstrate that he is God in such a spectacular manner? Shall we long for signs and wonders, ask the Lord to raise dead people again as a token of his mighty power? Do we think that such miracles would really turn people's hearts toward the Lord?

What did the Lord Jesus tell in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man?

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."⁶

And, congregation, we do have Moses and we do have the prophets and we do have in addition to Moses and the prophets the complete New Testament. We do have the 66 inspired books written by God's Holy Spirit. And we do know from these books about the wondrous things the Lord has done. We know about all the demonstrations of his power and of his grace and all these words that God has spoken and that he has pleading, please to put into writing. They should be sufficient for us. Do we believe? Do we really believe what God has told us? Do we really believe what the Bible describes as being the tokens of God's power and the result of his gracious and powerful work? Do we really believe? Have we turned from other gods already and from false confidences and do we rely only and fully upon the Lord? No, I don't think the Lord has to repeat such miracles as he did in the raising of the dead boy in our text. God does not have to raise dead infants again. We have the record of it in the Word.

And God has proven over and over again that he is the true God and, therefore, he lays claims upon our life and upon our {?} and these claims are justified, fully justified.

In the second place what we find in our text in this portion of the story is a demonstration of some vital principles of Christian life. And in the first place there is the principle of the power of persevering prayer. In his epistle James encourages the readers of that letter to be much in prayer. And he does so by using the example of Elijah. Elijah prayed the prayer that it would not rain and it did not rain. And he prayed the prayer that God would send rain and the Lord did send rain. And then James proves by this illustration that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, that the Lord can answer to that type of prayers works miracles. Now James uses the illustration and the example of Elijah. Our text gives us ample reason to also make that persevering prayer of Elisha an illustration of the truth that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Try to relive the situation. There is the dead child upon the bed of Elijah. It is evident that the child is dead. And it is evident that nothing but the power of God will ever be able to alter that situation. But what will bring down God's power upon the dead boy? There is but one answer. That what will bring down God's power upon the dead boy is prayer. And so Elijah prayed not once, but again and again. It was persevering prayer. It was prayer without ceasing. When the prayer was not answered immediately at the first motions, Elisha did not stop in disappointment, but he prayed on. And he prayed again and he refused to let the Lord go before the petition was answered. That is the duty the Lord has laid upon his children and that the Lord prescribes that duty to persevere in prayer, to pray and not to faint, to pray without ceasing. When the Lord prescribes that duty he at the same time gives many encouragements to his people. That is the promise.

For instance, in Psalm 50.

⁶ Luke 16:31.

“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”⁷

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”⁸

Or the other promises also spoken by the Lord Jesus.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”⁹

And, moreover, there are not only the words of encouragements, the promises, but there are also the examples of those people that did pray and that by prayer prevailed with God. The example of Elisha, the example of Elijah, the example of many other people. And those people were of like passion as we are and they were moved by God.

Therefore, congregation, how often do we dishonor God because we fail to pray? And how often do we impoverish ourselves by the neglected of prayer? And if we do not all together neglect prayer, we do not pray without ceasing, perseveringly with importunity. Are we not often slack and negligent? Why is it that there are so many ills in our own life or in the life of the Church or in the life of the world? Are not many of these ills caused by our prayerlessness or by deficient prayer?

Let me quote, again, from James' epistle.

“...yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”¹⁰

And if someone {?} but we do ask, James says, “Yes, I know you ask. Ye ask and ye receive not because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

Oh, let us then learn from this example of Elisha what is true, persevering prayer. And let us seek the grace of the spirit of supplication to seek the Lord's face and to bring our needs and petitions before him in true sincerity with importunity. Let that example of Elisha stir us up to be much in prayer.

Another principle of true spiritual life is the reward of persevering faith. What I once also in the past that the first two sermons on this story we have witnessed how this woman in Shunem acted in faith. So as we find it recorded in the Bible tells us that we can come to no other conclusion than that the woman who was mentioned here in this story was one of the women mentioned in Hebrews 11:35. There we read about women that by faith have received their dead raised to life again.

⁷ Psalm 50:15.

⁸ Matthew 7:7.

⁹ John 14:13.

¹⁰ James 4:2.

Now this woman did not think that when her son died the Lord made a mistake. She did not complain about the Lord's doings. Right from the moment that the boy died, when she was sitting on her lap, she was convinced that somehow the Lord took that boy because he was planning to show his power in raising him again. She believed in the resurrection. How do we know that? Well, I told you a few weeks ago that she proved to believe in the resurrection by the fact that she put the dead body of her son not upon that boy's own bed, but upon the bed of the man of God. And, again, she proved her faith by going to the prophet to present her case before him. And, again, she proved her faith by insisting that Elijah himself would go with her to Shunem. It was all by faith that she acted, faith that God was powerful and that God was even willing to raise her son to life again. To that expectancy she clung with all her might.

And on what did her faith rest? For faith needs a resting place. Faith needs some foundation upon which it can rest. What was the foundation of this woman's faith? There is only one foundation ground, one resting place where faith can rest upon and that is the promises of the Lord. Somehow this woman must have had such a word from God applied to her soul by the workings of the Holy Spirit. She must have been made able to take hold of the promises of the Lord and, therefore, she did not let the Lord go and allowed herself to believe that God would let her son remain in the grip of death.

Oh, yes, her faith has been tried. There have been disappointments. But she persevered. She did not despair. And she still rested her case in the hands of the God whom she professes to be the living God.

Without faith, the Bible tells us, it is impossible for man to please God. When faith is absent, the Lord can do no miracle. That is a strong statement, but that is a biblical statement. If you would turn to Mark six verses five and six we will see that there were told that the Lord Jesus could do no mighty works in his home town, in Nazareth. But he marveled because of their unbelief. And how is that with us? How much faith do we exercise? Or must I say how much unbelief still remains within? Without faith, I repeat God's own word, without faith it is impossible to please God. Prayerlessness impoverishes us as we saw a moment ago. But unbelief impoverishes us as well.

One of the principles of true Christian life is that faith feeds upon God's promises. And by feeding upon God's own promises, faith is nourished. Faith is strengthened. And therefore we should turn to the promises in the Word of God to find nourishment. But the opposite is also true. What does unbelief do? Unbelief leaves the promises unclaimed, whether it is out right unbelief or whether it is unbelief covered up by some religious shape. But unbelief always leaves the promises untouched and unclaimed. It doesn't study them. It does not meditate upon them. It does not use them as pleading grounds when we approach the Lord. And, therefore, again, I say, I could question: Why is church life often so poor and in a state of declension? Is it because unbelief holds the reigns?

May I have a word with you that have been taught to pray, that have been given the spirit of grace and supplication? You know what it is in your own life, what it is to exercise faith. There have been times in the life of all God's children that they could exercise faith. When the Spirit teaches us to do so, there are times in our life that we will be able to lay hold on the promises of the Lord and use these promises as pleading grounds when we approach the Lord in our prayer.

In the life of God's children there are times that they strongly trust in the Lord. Is that not so? Now how do you find yourself now right at this moment? Where is faith? Maybe someone is sick, someone answers... my faith. I don't know where it is. It seems to be swallowed up by my unbelief. Is it for that reason that you feel a leanness upon your soul? How much do the promises of God's Word mean to us? Let us be stirred up by the example of that Shunamite who persevered in faith in the most critical and crucial circumstances in her life. Her dear little boy dead upon the bed of the prophet.

When she so preserved in prayer she by doing so obtained what she longed for, what she looked for, what she hoped for, what she expected from the Lord.

And the other principle of the true Christian life is that we see here a pattern for effective service in the work of the Lord.

What I want to do now is look again at the miracle. And then read this story as an analogy. What do I mean? This. We find in this story the principles with respect to the work in God's kingdom in bringing dead sinners to spiritual life. You will remember the words of Paul in Ephesians two. Paul there says that we are all dead in trespasses and sins. Ours is spiritual death and that spiritual death holds us in its grip and that spiritual death will never be willing to let us go free.

Now how does God raise people that are spiritually dead? How is that miracle performed that spiritually dead people receive life, spiritual life?

Well, in performing that work which is God's work and solely God's work, yet in performing that work the Lord is pleased to use human instrumentality as he did in the case of this boy. The resurrection of that dead boy was, of course, God's work. It was not Elisha's work. It was God's work alone. Yet Elisha was instrumental in the resurrection of the boy. And as the activities of Elijah we find also an illustration of how God performs that quickening work in the soul of man.

What did Elisha do? In the first place he made an honest assessment of the real situation. It says in verse 32 that the dead boy lay down upon the bed. There was no question about whether the boy was alive or not. He was really dead. Elisha was convinced of that. And he knew that from that perspective the whole situation was a desperate one.

Dear congregation, I think that is where we must begin. The situation, the real situation of any sinner is a desperate one. For he is spiritually dead. And that is where all the true work of God begins with an honest assessment of how bad the situation is. And that is

where all true preaching always has to start. The people with whom we are dealing in the proclamation of the gospel are natively dead, without any exception. And those that are still strangers to grace are still in that desperate condition. Man by nature has no vital union with God. And you may say that is a humbling thing to hear and to hear it again and it may be a humbling thing indeed, but by nature there is a total absence of any means by which that deplorable situation can be improved. And that should concern all of us. Do we admit it? Do we admit that it is so with us personally and that it is so with our children as well?

I hope we do not start from any assumption that there still is some good left in us and that we are still able to somehow amend our ways and contribute to our own salvation and to our children's salvation. We must learn to subscribe to this doctrine of our deep and irreparable fall.

Have we done so? And I know if God teaches us to do so it is with pain and heaviness in our hearts. But when we come to that place where we with David must acknowledge before the Lord what is our true condition, then we say:

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."¹¹

There we must start because God always begins there. And in the second place speaking about what Elisha has done being an instrument in God's hands in raising the dead boy, we find in our text that he cried earnestly to God for God's intervention. He knew for sure that the boy was dead. But he knew something else as well. He knew that God is alive and that a living God is able to impart life even to a dead boy. And because he {?} God alive and all powerful, he began to cry unto God and he kept on crying to God till it pleased the Lord to answer his servant's request.

If he truly understands how the situation is, we, too, will begin to cry to God. If we have seen our own plight, that it is desperate, we can be quiet no longer. We must cry for our need is so great. And what we will be doing when we see others in their real condition, when it dawns upon us that they are dead, what we will be doing on their behalf is also cry for them, especially for those that are dear to us.

You know, the measure of our conviction that men are dead will be in direct proportion to the earnestness of our crying to God that he will give them life.

Take, for instance, our children, dead spiritually. They are not sick. They do not have a few bones out of joint. Their problem is not that they have a few moral defects. But they are dead. And we must drop that idea that somehow right influences can bring them to life again. We must drop that idea. If we really understand what the situation is, what can we do but cry to God, cry on their behalf, cry that the Lord be pleased to give our request that our children may be brought to spiritual life. Pray to God for he is the only one who will be able to bring salvation.

¹¹ Psalm 51:4.

But there is a third thing that Elisha did and that also tells us something of the principles of the true work, the true Christian work in this world. Elisha in his self denying way identified with that boy. He stretched himself out over the dead child. If he had some natural aversion to coming into close physical contact with the dead body, he overcame that aversion and in self denying love he put his mouth upon the boy's mouth and his hands upon the boy's hands and his eyes upon the boy's eyes. And in that way he sought, as it were, to impart his own life into the dead boy.

Well, congregation, is that not a striking illustration of how genuine concern for souls of others will act? That is, I agree, there is something revolting in sinners that are still dead in their sins. Some of them have been relatively well perfumed. But when what we call common grace begins to erode, some elements become visible that are utterly obnoxious to true and sincere believers. The cursing and the swearing and the lose talking and so many more things. We inwardly feel abhorred by it, do we not?

How then shall we approach dead sinners? It can be done only in a way of self denying love.

Paul tells the Thessalonians that he was not satisfied when he imparted unto them the gospel of God, but what he also wanted to impart to them was his own soul. Now why did he want to do that? Because he tells them because they are become dear unto him. He had learned to love them in spite of the fact that by birth and by upbringing I bring in all these Thessalonians with idol worship and God forgetting people. And yet the apostle has learned to love them. And in the work of bringing dead men to life, it is not sufficient to lay the staff upon their dead bodies and then leave it all in the hands of a sovereign God. Neither does it work in the spiritual raising of dead sinners and yet I fear this is done too frequently. Elisha, however, stretched himself out upon the dead body. In an act of self denying identification, his warm flesh was immediately connected with the cold flesh of the child.

Oh, yes, God alone can impart life. But we also know that God imparts life very rarely unless some living child of God, be he a preacher or a layman, has stretched himself out upon that sinner.

What about a self denying love, congregation? Is it present? Or is it absent?

Finally, Elisha patiently and earnestly waited upon God. After having stretched out himself upon the boy he walked and he went down and then he went up again and again he stretched himself out and there was a sneeze and another sneeze, seven in total. And the eyes of the boy opened. Life was returned. And having waited patiently, Elisha received the reward of his patience. That is what must be done. Persevere and wait patiently until God gives life.

Will he do so? Will he always do so? And what if he does not? What if the person with whom we have earnest dealings and {?}wrestle at God's throne continues in his stubbornness and remains unconverted? Yes, that may be very painful. But we can at

last go to our graves with a conscience void of offense. But often—and that is what the Word of God gives us as an encouragement—often the Lord is willing to grant the request of those that travail in birth and that know the agony of spiritual exercise.

Look once again at Elisha. Where did he obtain the liberty to wrestle with God, the liberty to so pray without ceasing and even with importunity? Well, remember that Elijah was not a stranger at the throne of grace. He was familiar in his communion with God. It is significant that after he has entered into the room he shut the door behind him. He is now in that room that has more often been a witness to Elisha's urgent pleadings with God. There in that room he has had experience of having communion with God and in the ordinary course of life Elisha was familiar with approaching God upon his throne and pouring out his heart before him. And when he has gained a confidence in the ordinary circumstances, he now also in the extraordinary circumstances may retire from that same place and there he prays and in praying he prevails with God.

But if you listen to the voice of our flesh that says take it easy. And when we {?} do your own thing mentality we should not be surprised when our prayers remain unanswered.

Congregation, one more word and we have done. We have seen that God is able to raise the dead, to raise the spiritually dead as well. One question. Has that happened to your life already? Has the Lord's gracious power raised you from your spiritual grave? Have you ever heard the quickening voice of the Savior? Did the Savior pass by and saw you polluted in your blood? And did he summon you with the powerful word live? Have you experienced that life giving power entered into your dead limbs and that you were able to rise upon your feet as the Savior with that one word by which he summoned Lazarus to come out of his grace call to effectually to life, spiritual life? If not, then you are still in your miserable condition, lost and ready to perish.

Are you planning to go on in that way? You have heard the summons to turn to the Lord and to do it with haste. Time is short. You and I cannot continue to waste any more of our precious life time. While he offers peace and pardon, let us hearken to his voice. But if he will still refuse to turn unto him and fail to seek salvation in the blood of the Savior, we must know one thing for sure. There will be a day that our lives will come to an end and that we will go to our graves and after that, there will be another day when we will be raised from the grave, but at that day we will not be able to hear what the true believers will hear for to them the King will say:

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.”¹²

But to those who have squandered the opportunities to be saved, that have refused to pay attention to the offer of grace that was made unto them repeatedly to those that did never hear, that have never listened to the wise command the Lord will say:

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”¹³

¹² Matthew 25:34.

¹³ Matthew 25:41.

Then seek to have dealings with the God of Elisha, the God who is able and even willing to raise dead sinners, the God who is able to deliver both soul and body from destruction. Be wise and heed his wise command. Amen.