

ELISHA AT DOTHAN

TEXT: II KINGS 6:8-17

Introduction:

1. Elijah was one of Israel's greatest prophets. But eventually the time came for him to finish his ministry, and God chose Elisha to succeed him (cf. I Kings 19:19-21).
2. Elisha had been well trained by the prophet Elijah, and he was with Elijah right up to the end,
3. And right before he was taken up to heaven, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee."
4. "And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (II Kings 2:9; cf. verses 10-15).
5. Though Elijah was a much more dramatic and exciting prophet, Elisha performed twice as many miracles – because of the promised "double portion."
6. Elisha knew the Spirit of God was upon Elijah and Elisha knew he needed that same power in his life if he was going to succeed this great prophet. And so he asked for a double portion of his spirit (II Kings 2:9), i.e. the Holy Spirit.
7. In our story this morning, Israel was at war with Syria, their neighbor to the north.
8. Elisha the prophet was able to assist the king of Israel by passing on information regarding the location of the Syrian army (II Kings 6:8-12).
9. God revealed this information to Elisha, and Elisha was able to save Israel, not once, not twice, but a number of times (II Kings 6:10).
10. The king of Syria thought there was a traitor in his army, but soon found out what was happening (6:11, 12).

I. ELISHA WAS IN TOUCH WITH GOD

1. Elijah had the power of God upon him, and Elisha realized he needed it too.
2. You may recall that when Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, Elijah did not say that it is an impossible thing; he said it was a hard thing (II Kings 2:10).
3. Why was this such "a hard thing"? (2:10).
4. First of all – it is only because God can do it. If man could do it, it wouldn't be so hard. Man can send a rocket ship to the moon, and send a submarine to the bottom of the ocean. Man can invent computers, and split the atom, and do all sorts of amazing things.

5. But no man could grant Elisha's request – only God could do that.
6. Elijah recognized this. That's why he attached a condition that would be entirely dependent upon the will of God – “Nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee...” (2:10, cf. 2:12).
7. Let me add this: it is a hard thing because most Christians are not in the place of blessing where God can put a double portion on them.
8. For example: if a vessel is filled up with dirt, you cannot fill it up with water. And yet some Christians are so filled with the things of this world that it is virtually impossible for them to be filled with the Spirit of God.
9. Some Christians are full of pride – or greed and materialism – or lust – or resentment – or envy – or bitterness, or some other bad attitude, and then they wonder why God is not blessing them.
10. Beloved, it is a hard thing but it is not impossible. Changes must be made. Certain conditions must be met. Turn off the garbage on TV (most of it is garbage). Start reading your Bible more. Be faithful in church, and fervent in prayer, etc.
11. Elisha was in touch with God. That is how he was able to help his king and his army and his country (II Kings 6:8-12).
12. Many Christians are not in touch with God today because they have let themselves become too distracted with the things of this world (cf. II Tim. 2:1-4).
13. Note that word “entangleth” (II Tim. 2:4). Too many Christians are all “tangled” up with worldly foolishness.
14. Not only was it a hard thing, but it was a powerful thing. The Bible says, “And Elisha saw it” (2:12, cf. 2:10).
15. This may not seem real to you, but it certainly was real to Elijah and Elisha.
16. Recently a large Baptist church in Virginia hosted a big pastors' conference. At this conference, the pastor of the church said, “Something is wrong in ministry.”
17. Citing surveys from research groups such as Barna, LifeWay and Acts 29, Jonathan Falwell said that 1,500 pastors walk away from ministry every month because of moral failure, burnout, conflict, discouragement or depression.
18. He was also shocked to find that 80 percent of seminary and Bible school graduates will leave the ministry within their first five years. (Let us pray Carl is part of the 20% who stay with it.)
19. I firmly believe that these pastors need a touch from God.

20. There is nothing unusual about getting depressed. The way things are going here in America, it's no wonder we're not all depressed!
21. Elijah was one of the greatest prophets in the Bible and he got depressed (cf. I Kings 19:1-4).
22. How did he snap out of it?
23. He received a touch from God (I Kings 19:5-12).
24. You cannot hear that "still small voice" if you are always sitting in front of the television or computer or listening to talk radio or music, etc.
25. Going back to II Kings 2, the Bible says, "And Elisha saw it" (2:12, cf. 2:10).
26. There is a principle I learned a long time ago – some things cannot be taught, they are caught. Some people are not really part of the program because they just don't see it.
27. A preacher can teach about prayer, about fellowship with God, about the power of the Holy Spirit, about the joy of the Lord, about the importance of missions, and so on but unless his listeners are in the place of blessing, it will go right over their heads. They will not grasp it.
28. You have to catch it. And you have to want it. Elisha wanted it. Notice his persistence (2:1, 2, 4, 6).
29. The Bible says, "Elisha saw it..." (II Kings 2:10-12). "And he cried..." (2:12). Great joy must have flooded his soul when he realized his prayer was being answered.

II. ELISHA WAS DISLIKED BY THE ENEMIES OF GOD

1. When the king of Syria told his soldiers to go and fetch Elisha, he was not interested in having a Bible study with him (II Kings 6:13-15).
2. No. They were to go and bring him in "dead or alive."
3. The king of Syria would not have sent a huge army after Elisha unless he meant to do him harm (6:14, 15).
4. If we want the power of God on us like Elisha had, we should expect some people to oppose us (cf. Hebrews 11:36-38).
5. Luke 1:17 says that John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elijah."
6. That same "double portion" that was upon Elijah and Elisha was in John the Baptist.

7. In fact, even before John was born, the angel told John's father Zacharias, "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15).
8. And just as Elisha had problems with the king of Syria, John the Baptist had problems with Herod Antipas.
9. Herod was living in sin with Herodias, who was married at the time to Philip, Herod's brother. And so John the Baptist confronted Herod, and said to him, "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matt. 14:4).
10. Herod had John arrested and put in prison. Matthew 14:3 says, "For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife."
11. Then at Herod's birthday party, Herodias' daughter asked for his head on a charger (Matthew 14:1-10).
12. Matthew 14:8 says, "And she, being before instructed of her mother (Herodias), said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger."
13. It was Herodias who had John the Baptist put in prison, and it was Herodias who had him executed.
14. If a Christian takes a stand against sin he will make enemies. It has always been that way, and it will always be that way.
15. But today there are preachers with no backbone. Instead of a backbone, they have jelly. And they want to get along with everybody.
16. They are like that soldier in the Civil War. He wore the blue pants of the Union Army, and the gray coat of the Confederate Army.
17. He thought he'd be safe that way, but he wound up getting shot at by both sides!

III. ELISHA WAS GUIDED & PROTECTED BY GOD (6:15-17).

1. Elisha was in touch with God, but his servant wasn't (6:15-17).
2. I like Elisha's answer: "Fear not" (6:16).
3. Our Lord said, "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:31).
4. Elisha said, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (6:16).
5. Romans 8:31 says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"
6. Romans 8:37 says, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

7. Second Kings 6:17 says, “And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”
8. Oh, that God may open our eyes (II Kings 6:17).
9. It was Elisha himself who cried out. “Where is the LORD God of Elijah?” (II Kings 2:14).
10. He is still here.
11. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).
12. Someone has wisely said, “If the outlook looks bad, try the uplook.”
13. There is an unseen world that we cannot see apart from a touch from God. We need eyes to see. That was the prayer of Elisha, and that ought to be our prayer too (6:17).
14. Hamlet said to his dear friend Horatio, “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”
15. We can read and study and learn and so on, but we need God to open our eyes.
16. In 1741, when George Frideric Handel was composing his famous oratorio, *Handel’s Messiah*, an assistant noticed that when he got to the Hallelujah chorus, his eyes were filled with tears and he said, “I did think I saw heaven open, and saw the very face of God.”
17. Was that real? Listen to *Handel’s Messiah* and judge for yourself.

CONCLUSION:

1. In II Kings 2:11 we read that a chariot of fire and horses of fire came down to carry Elijah the prophet up into heaven.
2. Those chariots of fire and horses took Elijah to heaven, and then they came back.
3. And here in II Kings 6:17 we see “the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”
4. Those horses and chariots of fire have not disappeared. They are still here.
5. The God of Elijah, the God of Elisha, the God of John the Baptist, the God of the apostle Paul – is still on the throne.
6. He is our God!
7. Oh, that God may open our eyes (II Kings 6:17).

