
Sermon Notes

September 13, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

The Way Forward: When You're Feeling All Alone

2 Kings 6:8-18

⁸ Once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, "At such and such a place shall be my camp." 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." ¹⁰ And the king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God told him. Thus he used to warn him, so that he saved himself there more than once or twice.

¹¹ And the mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled because of this thing, and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?" ¹² And one of his 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." ¹³ And he said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send and seize him." It was told him, "Behold, he is in Dothan."

¹⁴ So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city. 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 around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" ¹⁶ He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

¹⁷ Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. ¹⁸ And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "Please strike this people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha.

Characters and Setting

- ❖ Elisha
 - *God is my salvation*
 - succeeded Elijah and ministered in northern Israel for 50-60 years during the 9th century BC
 - performed miracles, taught students, and acted in the political arena
- ❖ Elisha's servant
 - new in his "position"
 - young, probably inexperienced, possibly an adolescent
 - has a limited faith which is easily shaken
- ❖ The king of Syria
 - at war with Israel
 - God miraculously and mysteriously uses Elisha to thwart the king's battle plans
 - "Enough is enough!" The king seeks to capture and destroy Elisha

Seeing the Unseen

- ❖ Elisha's servant is "undone" by what he sees with his eyes
 - panic time

- there is no apparent way out
- ❖ Elisha's ministry to his servant
 - v. 16, "*Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.*"
 - the importance of seeing things from God's point of view with spiritual insight and with faith
 - Elisha doesn't just calm his servant, he **PRAYS** for him
 - v. 17, "*O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.*"
 - the majority of Elisha's miracles are preceded by prayer
 - God responds by opening the eyes of the young man

So What?

- ❖ This narrative does not suggest that seeing spiritual realities with physical eyes is the normal, everyday experience of God's people.
 - Hebrews 11:1, *faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
 - 2 Timothy 1:12, John 20:29, 1 Peter 1:8
 - are you protected and sustained by this kind of faith?
 - do you walk by faith and not by sight? (*cf.* 2 Cor 5:7)
 - pray for this kind of faith! (James 1:5-6)

- ❖ Spiritual beings are real
 - holy angels, actively engaged in our preservation
 - evil angels, eagerly seeking our destruction
 - we are in more danger from the activities of evil spirits than from all other causes
 - these evil spirits know exactly how we are wired, and they are experts in tripping us up (James 1:14)
 - but God is greater! (1 John 4:4)
 - pray to God for His might and His protection
 - put on His armor (Eph 6:10-18)
 - use His weapons of warfare (2 Cor 10:4, Rom 16:20)
- ❖ When you feel lost and alone, pray and stay the course
 - the example of Elisha's mentor, Elijah (James 5:16)
 - pray for one another

Personal Application

1. When are you most vulnerable to feeling lost and alone?
2. What encouragement does this narrative give you about how you should move forward in times when you feel disconnected from others? from God?
3. Thinking back over the past 2-3 weeks, what sorts of circumstances have caused you to push "the panic button"?
4. How does knowing about the invisible resources with which God surrounds you give you "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow"?

