

Through the Bible - 2 Kings

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon on 2 Kings explores the themes of diligence, servanthood, and the pursuit of God's anointing through the example of Elisha's life and ministry.

Duration: 57:11

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:22-23, Romans 1:14, Romans 13:8, 2 Timothy 1:6, Revelation 2:20

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of fulfilling our debt of love towards one another, as stated in Romans 13:8. He highlights the idea that we owe it to others to share the gospel and the love of God with them. The speaker encourages believers to seek God and stir up the gifts of the Holy Spirit within them, including the gift of prophecy, in order to fulfill this debt. He also discusses the significance of using music in worship that lifts the spirit and directs people towards God, rather than focusing on admiration for the musician. The sermon concludes with a reminder that the Holy Spirit is all we need to do the Lord's work, and we should not underestimate its power.

Transcript

Let's turn to 2nd Kings, the 2nd book of Kings and chapter 1. This is the rest of the story of the two nations of Israel and Judah. Israel is the northern kingdom with ten tribes. Judah is the southern kingdom with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

And in the 2nd book of Kings, we see about the different kings who ruled these two nations. Some of them were good, very few. Most of them were bad.

In Israel, almost everybody was bad. In Judah, the southern kingdom, some were good. And we see the captivity of the northern kingdom.

It took place around 730 years before Christ when the Assyrian nation came and captured the northern kingdom of Israel. And the northern kingdom of Israel's capital was Samaria. And they put their own people there and they mingled with the Jews.

And that's how the Samaritans were born, with whom the Jews did not have any dealings in Jesus' time. And the southern kingdom, about 130 years later, was captured by the king of Babylon, which became the next world power after Assyria. That means the southern kingdom did not learn any lessons from the

failure of the northern kingdom.

Like we have often said, a wise man learns from the mistakes of others. A foolish man does it himself and sometimes still does not learn. I think there are three types of people.

Normally people make mistakes and learn themselves. That's a normal man. A foolish man is below that.

He doesn't even learn from his own mistakes. A wise man is the best of the lot. He doesn't have to make the mistakes.

He learns from the mistakes of others. And God's word has been given to us so that we can become wise. And one form of wisdom is to learn from the mistakes of others.

Not only in scripture, but when you see around us servants of God, churches that have failed, learn some lessons from that so that we don't have to repeat it ourselves. That's the great advantage of studying scripture, all the way from Adam. You can learn how Adam and Eve failed.

You can learn how Cain failed. You can learn even the failures of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Joshua and David. Learn from their lessons and hear of the kings who were leaders.

What were their good points? What were their weak points? Now in chapter 1 we read, this is almost the end of Elijah's ministry. He has already selected Elisha. We read that in 1 Kings that when Elisha went, he saw Elisha ploughing with his oxen.

And he put his mantle on Elisha and said, come you're going to follow me. There's one interesting thing we see in the way God calls these prophets. Well they were all hardworking people.

David was looking after sheep, fighting the lions and bears and God picked him up. Moses was looking after sheep and God picked him up. Amos was a herdsman, God picked him up.

Elisha was ploughing in the field, God picked him up. Peter, James, John and Andrew were fishing, God picked them up. You never find, Matthew for example was sitting at the table keeping accounts, God picked him up.

You never find God calling a lazy man who was sitting around doing nothing. You never find that anywhere in the Old Testament or the New Testament. God always picks out hardworking people who are already working hard in their particular field.

And it's very interesting that all these cases are mentioned. You never read about Elijah going to Elisha's house when he's fast asleep, calling him there. Because we think he was a lazy man.

He called him when he was at work. Jesus never went to Peter's house and called him in the evening. He called him when he was at work.

And all these examples are to show us that God wants to see us faithful in our secular job. Being faithful in whatever task God has given us in our secular occupation. Before He can call us to serve Him.

And if you are not faithful in the earthly things, how can you be faithful in the heavenly things? That's what Jesus said. We have to be faithful in whatever we do. If you are at home, be a faithful son or daughter at home.

Work hard. God never calls lazy people to His service. So the first part of 2 Kings deals with the ministry of Elisha.

And I thought I just mentioned that to see the situation in which God called him. And the other thing we see about all these people, as soon as God called them, they just dropped everything and went. Whether it was Peter and James at their fishing boat or Elisha who was ploughing.

He just dropped everything and said, OK, God's called me, I go. I don't wait. God calls those who respond to His call immediately and promptly.

Who don't have to wait to discuss it with any Tom, Dick or Harry. Because God has called them. They may seek to confirm their calling with godly people.

But they respond to the call of God wholeheartedly and quickly. It's only such people that God can use to serve Him. Because His service requires instant obedience, total commitment, hard work, diligence.

Diligent application to whatever God has called them to do. That's why He tests us to see whether we are faithful in ordinary jobs given to us. If you are asked to clean a room, for example, and you are careless in the way you clean it.

Or you sweep the dust under the carpet or leave it slipshod. I doubt whether God will ever call you to serve Him. Because if that's the way you clean a room, how in the world are you going to serve God Almighty who wants to clean up the church? He's not going to be able to use you.

It's faithfulness in the little things that God looks for. That's what we see in Elisha's case. And here we read towards the end of Elisha's ministry.

The king was disturbed with him and he sent Ahab, but died. And Ahaziah was the next king and he was angry with Elisha. And he sent some army to go and capture Elisha.

And Elisha said to the captain of that army, If I'm a man of God, chapter 1 verse 12, let fire come down and consume you and your 50 soldiers. And immediately fire came down and consumed them. Verse 13, so they sent the captain of a third 50.

The first 50 were in verse 10, then verse 12, verse 13. And the third group of 50 came and he said, please don't kill me like the verse 2. And so his life was spared. This is the incident which John and James mentioned to Jesus when they came to the same place in Samaria.

And said, this is the place where Elijah called down fire. If these Samaritans don't receive us, let's call down fire and consume them. And Jesus rebuked them and said, you don't know what spirit you're of.

There we see the contrast between the new covenant spirit of Christ and how it was in the old covenant. I just mentioned that in passing. But we come now to the end of Elijah's ministry in 2nd Kings chapter 2. And there we see something else about Elisha, his persistence.

You see, Elijah tested him. When Elijah was going to go up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha went with him from Gilgal.

And listen, Elijah says to Elisha, you stay here in Gilgal because I've got to go to Bethel. And Elisha said, nothing doing, I'm coming with you. Then he goes to Bethel.

And Elijah says to Elisha, verse 4, you stay here, I'm going to Jericho. And Elisha said, nothing doing, I'm going to come with you. And then we read that they went to Jericho, verse 6, and Elijah told him a third time, you stay here in Jericho, I'm going to Jordan.

He said, no, I'm coming with you. At each of those points, Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, he said, I'm not leaving you. And finally they come to Jordan.

And Elisha strikes the waters. And they walk across. The same miracle that happened in the Red Sea and happened when Joshua entered Jordan.

Jordan is split again. They walk across. And they two crossed over to the other side.

And then Elijah asked him in verse 9. He asked him, why have you been following me all this time? What do you want? What do you want, my brother, sister? Let me ask you that question. Supposing you are the assistant to somebody who is the director of a Christian organization. And you're just waiting for him to retire or waiting for him to leave.

What is your desire? You want to be the next director? You'll get a raise in salary and all types of things? Elisha says, I couldn't care less for directorship or anything like that. That's not what I'm looking for. I want a double portion of your spirit.

See what he wanted? He didn't want any title. He didn't want any honor. He wanted a double portion of the anointing that rested upon Elijah.

And that's why he was following. He persisted. He said, I'm not going to leave you.

And we find that when we seek God for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, he tests us in the same way. He brings us to Gilgal. A certain experience.

Are you happy with that? Some people say, yes, Lord. It's enough for me. Some people say no.

Okay, God gives them another experience. Bethel. Maybe you see some visions.

Which you can testify to in the meeting and get some honor. Lord says, are you happy with that? Yes, Lord. Just keep giving me visions.

I can testify and get some honor in the meeting. They get stuck there. There are others who say, no.

I got to go on. Jericho. See some mighty manifestation of power.

Are you happy with that? Miracle. Yes, Lord. That's enough.

But there are others who go beyond. Say, Lord, you know, the spirit that rested upon you, Lord Jesus, upon me. That transforms my character into the likeness of Christ.

I'm not satisfied with these things. I'm not satisfied with visions. I'm not satisfied with speaking in tongues.

I'm not satisfied with ministry. I'm not satisfied with bringing people to the Lord. I'm not satisfied with even seeing miracles done.

Or even establishing churches. I'm not satisfied with any of these things. I'm not satisfied with writing books.

I'm not satisfied with anything. I want to be like Jesus. In my character.

In my life. And I will never be satisfied until that spirit saturates every fiber of my being. Every cell in my body.

That the likeness of Christ can come forth in me. Do you have that longing? If you have that longing, God will not disappoint you. But he tests us along the way to see whether we get satisfied with something less than his best.

And I want to say to you, many, many Christians. I have seen that. Many Christians to whom I have preached for many years.

My great grief and the sorrow in my heart is that many of them have settled for something much less than God's best. 25%, 50%, 75%. And they miss God's best.

Don't be like that. Be like Elisha, who presses on to God's very best in his generation. It was a double portion of the anointing.

And he got it. He got it because he persisted. And we read that he did double the number of miracles that Elisha did.

Elisha raised one boy from the dead. Elisha raised two. One in his lifetime and one after he died.

Amazing. He got a double portion of that spirit that rested upon Elisha, his master. But it came through persistence.

Persistence, persistence, persistence. And you are not going to get it any other way. You know, you go to some, sometimes preacher nowadays, you go to him and say, I want the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

He says, Oh, that's an easy thing. Just come here. Let me lay my hands on your head.

And come on, just mumble something. You're okay. Go.

What counterfeits go on today. But do you know what Elisha said? You want a double portion of the spirit? That's not an easy thing. He says to him, Verse 10 of chapter 2, You have asked for a very hard thing.

But you'll get it. If you see me. Elijah going up to heaven is a picture of Jesus Christ going up to heaven.

And the Lord says, If you see me, You will get it. Verse 10. It's a hard thing that you've asked for.

But if you look at me, And don't look to men. If you see me, You will receive that double portion. That's the word of the Lord to you today.

Who is the baptizer? It's no man, it's no preacher, it's no pastor. Jesus is even today the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said, I can only baptize you in water.

If you want the baptism in the Holy Spirit, go to him. I can't give it to you. You come to me, And I will not say it is an easy thing.

I can pray for you. But, Jesus is the baptizer. And the Lord says to you directly, You are mine.

Come to me. If you see me, You will receive it. But if you don't see me, I'm sorry, You will not receive it.

Please take that as a word from the Lord. And then, It says that while they were talking, The chariot of fire came, And Elijah went up. And Elisha, Took the mantle.

And there was an immediate proof, That he had the double portion in the anointing, Because he came back to the river Jordan, Struck the waters, And walked right across. And people knew, The spirit of Elijah, Verse 15, Now rests upon Elisha. It will become manifest.

We don't have to shout or scream or tell anybody. Our life, And our ministry, Will make it manifest, Even to the people who criticize us. The anointing of God, Rests upon this man.

Be a young man like that, Elisha. Like Elisha was. And then you see how, There were different miracles he did.

I don't have time, To go into all of those miracles. There was, There was a time where a city, The water was very bad. And he says, Bring a new vessel full of salt.

Pour it in, he says in verse 20. And he threw the water into the spring of water in the war. He says, Thus said the Lord, These waters are healed.

And they were healed. And, I want you to notice something here about, Elisha in chapter 3. 2nd Kings 3. There was a time when, Jehoram the son of Ahab, And Jehoshaphat, Joined up together. And, They, Went out, Together to fight an enemy.

And, He asked him, Is there a, Is there a prophet here? Jehoshaphat said, Verse 10, 11. Here in Israel, Jehoshaphat was from the southern kingdom. He said, Here in Israel, Do you have a prophet of the Lord? Verse 11.

And one of the kings, Of Israel's servants said, Yes. Because you know, They knew that Elijah had gone. He said, Another prophet.

Because Jehoshaphat was from the southern kingdom. And Elijah and Elisha were in the northern kingdom. So Jehoshaphat comes up for this battle.

Is there a prophet that we can, Inquire the word of the Lord from him. And see how they describe Elisha. That's what I want you to notice.

Elisha, The son of Shaphat. Verse 11 is here. And what is his title? He used to pour water, On the hands of Elijah.

That was his job. After Elijah finished his food, Elisha would come and pour water for him to wash his hands. And that man did that job, So faithfully, That he became the next prophet.

See, God tests our faithfulness in little things. Why do they give him a title like, The man who used to pour water for Elijah to wash his hands? Because it was so evident. This man served Elijah so faithfully.

Like Paul served Timothy so faithfully, That he became the next apostle. And there is something in there. You know, Like Joshua served Moses so faithfully, That he became the next leader.

And there we see, Elisha's title. He was not known as a great preacher or a prophet in the beginning. He started out with very lowly ministry.

Sometimes young people, They want to be known as great right from day one. And they are not willing to do lowly tasks, Like, Washing people's feet. Jesus did it till the end of his life.

All I want to say to you is, My brothers and sisters, Always be willing, To do the lowly jobs. Jesus has taught us, That we wash people's feet till the end of our life. It's not that we wash people's feet for a few years, And then we become senior.

And then we don't do that. Maybe in the Old Testament is like that, But in the New Covenant is even better, That we can wash people's feet till the end of our life. Isn't that better? It certainly is.

Because that's what Jesus did. Be willing to do the lowly tasks. The Son of Man, Jesus said, has come, Not to be served by others, But to serve.

Be a servant, Till the end of your life. That's what I want to tell you from Elisha's example, And from Jesus' example. Be a servant.

Do you want to be a servant of the Lord? Be a servant of other people. Always think of yourself, As a servant of other people. Don't delight.

And people may serve you, Because you are serving God, They may be very kind to you, But don't ever look upon them, As your servants, They are your brothers. And be willing to serve them one day. Jesus was willing to wash the disciples' feet.

A lot of preachers in this country, Have stopped becoming servants. They have become big lords. And that's why the anointing has gone from their life.

And I want to encourage all of you, Till the end of your life, Brother or sister, Always be a servant. Be a servant of the younger brothers. Be a servant of the people you minister to in your church.

Always take the lowly place, The place of pouring water, For people to wash their hands. And the anointing of God will always be upon you. Never follow the example of these corrupt leaders, Who want to sit in thrones, And rule over God's people.

That is not the example Jesus has set for us. That's what I wanted to point out to you in that passage. And we read here, When Elisha came, I want to show you another thing that will encourage you.

It's encouraged me. Elisha said to the king of Israel. The king of Israel was the son of Ahab.

And Elisha said, What do I got to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father. Verse 13. And Elisha said, Well, I'll tell you something, If it were not for this Jehoshaphat, Who is a bit of a godly king, I would not even look at you.

And then, This is what I want you to see. Verse 15. Bring me somebody who can play a harp, Or a guitar.

Someone who can play a musical instrument, Elisha says. And it came about that when that musician played, The hand of the Lord came upon Elisha. Now that's one verse in the Old Testament.

And he began to prophesy. And he made a very powerful prophecy, As to how to get victory. And that's one place in the Old Testament that teaches me, The value of godly music.

I can think of many, many, many times in my life, In the last 25 years at least, When the time of worship and praise, And the time of music, Has been the time when the hand of the Lord has come upon me, And given me a word, Which I did not have when I came into the meeting. There is something in anointed music, Which has a tremendous power, To bring the spirit of prophecy, Even upon a man like Elisha. So don't think that just because a man is a prophet, He can just get up anytime and speak forth God's word.

No. He needs help, sometimes from the musicians. And that's why those who have the gift of leading the church in music, Must be anointed.

Not just good musicians, But they must be anointed. They must have a clear conscience. David appointed singers, musicians, And they had to be anointed.

Some of those musicians wrote scripture, Esaf. He wrote songs. So, God needs anointed musicians, To work with and cooperate and encourage and support, Anointed prophets.

That's how the church is built. So those of you, you may not be called to be a prophet, Maybe you are called to be a musician. But be an anointed one.

That's what I want to say. I don't think Elisha would have been inspired by a worldly minstrel, Who was trying to copy the worldly rhythms. No.

I think there was something heavenly about this music. You know, today there is music which is worldly and heavenly. And you can sense it.

When it is lifting our spirit in worship to God. Or whether it is just making you admire the musician. I want to say to all of you who are musicians, You are a wonderful anointed musician.

If you can lead people not to admire you or the way you play an instrument, But lead them to worship God. And bring the spirit of prophecy into a meeting. Chapter 4. Here we read another story of Elisha's life.

A widow was there. See, when Elisha was prophesying in the northern kingdom, Joel was prophesying in the southern kingdom. Same time.

You read that in the book of Joel. And Joel was talking about the great day when the Holy Spirit will be outpoured. It was Joel's prophecy that Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost.

And Joel was prophesying in the southern kingdom of Judah, When Elisha was prophesying in the northern kingdom. They were contemporaries. I don't know if they had much contact with each other.

There is no mention of it here in scripture. But here we read of a picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In Elisha's life.

We saw that in the anointing. The double portion that Elisha received of the Holy Spirit. And Joel prophesying about that.

You read that in Joel chapter 2. We will come to it later. And here a woman whose husband was a preacher. Husband has died.

And he was in debt. It's a sad thing when husbands die and leave their wives in debt. That's one thing we can learn from here to be careful.

And it says the creditor came to take her two children as slaves. And Elisha said, what do you have in your house? And she says, nothing. Except a jar of oil.

What do you have in your hand? The Lord asked Moses. Nothing except a stick. That's enough.

And with that stick he led Israel up to the borders of the promised land. And the Lord asked through Elisha, what do you have in your house? Nothing. Except a jar of oil.

What do you mean nothing? That's the answer to all your problems. Sometimes we have something which we despise. We say, oh that's nothing.

I can't do anything with that. That's the very thing the Lord will use. That limited little thing which you despise.

That little bit of flour and oil. That's the thing that can keep you going. And here this bit of oil, this jar of oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we say, oh Lord brother, we don't have money. And we have a lot of opposition. And we don't have much knowledge.

And I'm not so clever. And I'm not so gifted. And I don't have contacts.

And I don't have contacts in America, especially to get me money. How to do the Lord's work here in India? What have you got then? I've only got the Holy Spirit. What to do? This is exactly this woman's answer.

What do you mean you've only got the Holy Spirit? You think all these other things you listed are better than the Holy Spirit? That is the answer. And he said, go and borrow vessels from all your neighbors. Verse 3. Large vessels.

Empty vessels. Not just a few. Plenty.

Go into your room. Shut the door. Keep pouring.

And it will get filled up. Don't show these miracles to other people. Do it in secret.

Just like Jesus said, go shut the door. Pray. Go shut the door and fast.

Go shut the door and give your gift. Don't let anybody see these things. This is not for public demonstration.

A man of God must have a private life alone before God where he has secret dealings with God. And then he stands up in public. So shutting the door is a very, very important principle in the life of any true servant of God.

Shut the door and experience this ministry of the Holy Spirit meeting all your needs. And then open the door and give it up. And your debt can be cleared.

We also have a debt to the world. The Bible says in Romans 13, verse 8, Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. We have a debt of love.

We have a debt. Paul says, I am a debtor. Romans 1, verse 14, To Greeks and barbarians, to everybody, to give them the gospel.

I am in debt because God has given me the gospel to give to people. And it has not been given to everybody yet. I am in debt.

How to fulfill it? You say, I don't have money. I don't have gift. Forget it.

Have you got the Holy Spirit? Stir up the gift of God that is in you, Paul told Timothy. And seek God. Pursue earnestly after spiritual gifts.

Seek God for supernatural gifts. Seek for the gift of prophecy. Stir up that gift.

In secret, shut the door and seek God. And you can come out and clear your debt. That's the message of this passage.

And then she says, bring me another vessel, verse 6. There was no more vessels. Every vessel was filled. And I am sure all those neighbors got a blessing too.

Because those vessels didn't go back empty. And her debt was cleared. Now, in 2 Kings 4, verse 8. We read of another woman.

And it says she was a prominent woman. A rich woman. A wealthy woman.

An influential woman. And that is placed there to teach us that God does not choose only poor people. We should not get the idea.

God chooses the poor and the illiterate. And those who don't know much what to do. I am not like that.

Yeah, God chose an illiterate Peter. But he chose a highly educated Paul as well. He chose a Peter who didn't study the scriptures much.

And he chose a Paul who knew the scriptures thoroughly. Who had gone to Gemaliel Seminary and studied. He chose both.

So, God chooses the poor and He chooses the rich. We read in Luke chapter 8, verse 3. That it was certain rich women who supported Jesus in His ministry. That's the only place in the script in the gospels which tells us how Jesus got money to live.

To support His 12 disciples. Rich women supported Him with money. And He took that money and took care of His disciples.

So, here is another wealthy woman. A very prominent woman who decides to support Elisha. And she was a godly woman.

Because when she saw this man passing by. And sometimes coming there to eat food. She said to her husband, I perceive that this is a holy man of God.

I mean, she saw Elisha as a holy man of God without even listening to a sermon. He just came to the dining table. And the way he just conducted himself at the dining table.

Showed that he was a godly man. What an example for us. That the way you sit and talk to people.

The way you sit and eat your food. The way you conduct yourself in ordinary things. People can see you are a holy man of God.

And she said, let's make a little extra room in our house, verse 10. And keep a bed and a table and a chair and a little light. So that he can stay there when he comes.

Elisha never asked for it. She thought of that. She had money to build an extra room.

And she built it. And then, you know, this man said, what can we do for this woman? She's been so good to us. And then Gehazi said, you know, she's got no children.

And Elisha said, okay, that's one way I can bless her. Call her. And said, next year at this time, you're going to have a son.

And she got a son. You never lose out by honoring a true servant of God. God will always repay you.

Much more than you do. Again and again, we'll see that lesson. But that child grew up and one day, it became sick.

And we read here, in verse 20, it died. And the mother said, well, what to do? She didn't just bury the child. She said, let me go and contact this man of God.

And so, she went to the man of God. And this is the verse I want you to notice here. In 2 Kings 4. And she went and came to the man of God.

Verse 25 in Carmel. And Gehazi and Elisha saw her from a distance and told Gehazi, hey, there's that woman. Go and ask her.

And ask her, verse 26, is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with your child? See, Elisha was concerned. And I want you to listen to her answer. In verse 26.

Here is a woman whose only child has just died. And she's coming to meet the man of God. And the question is, is it well with your child? What is her answer? The answer of faith.

It is well. The child was dead. It is well.

And then she told her. And Elisha went, prayed for that child and raised him up from the dead. It's amazing what that mother's faith did for that child.

I think if that mother didn't have faith, she would have buried that child. Amazing things what the Lord can do when he finds someone with faith. In verse 38 to 44, we read of another instance where there was some poisonous vine that got mixed up in the food.

And Elisha healed it so that nobody is sick. And once there were a number of people needed to have a meal. This is the first instance of multiplying the food in the Old Testament before Jesus did it in the New Testament.

There were only 20 loaves of barley, verse 42 of chapter 4. And said, how can I give this for a hundred people? And Elisha said, give it and there'll be plenty left over. And the food was multiplied. Chapter 5, we come to the story of Naaman.

And it's very interesting to see that the person whom God used to lead Naaman to healing was a little girl, a little Israeli girl. She was a servant girl in the house of this Syrian general. But she gave a little witness to Naaman's wife that there is a prophet in Israel who can do miracles.

You know how powerful that was, even Jesus quoted the healing of Naaman. But it all started with a little girl. Sometimes God can use a servant in a house to bless the master.

A few words spoken. In chapter 4, we saw a rich, prominent woman. In chapter 5, we see a poor slave girl.

God used both of them. It doesn't matter who you are. You can be poor, you can be a slave.

God can use you to lead other people. Maybe you can't give the gospel yourself. You can lead that person to somebody who can give him the gospel.

You can direct that person to a prophet. And you have your reward as well. Don't think it's only that prophet who gets his reward.

I believe that this little girl would get her reward. For Naaman was not only healed, he was possibly converted as well. So we see here how Naaman comes to Elisha.

He first of all goes to the king. The king doesn't know what to do. He sends him to Elisha.

I want you to see how Elisha treats this mighty general. I really love this passage. It shows me what a true man of God is like.

A true man of God does not care whether a man is a big man or a small man. I think Elisha would have shown more honor to a poor person. When that poor widow came, he spoke to her and told her and advised her.

But when the great general came who is used to people bowing down before him, Elisha did not even go outside his little hut. He lived in a little hut and Naaman is standing outside. And Elisha does not even go to meet him.

Imagine meeting the general of the world's greatest country if he comes to your house. He couldn't care less. He lived before God.

Who is this general? Oh, I wish India had prophets like this. What a different type of Christianity we would have here. People who didn't care for the face of man but who lived before God's face.

But he wants to help him. Yeah, Elisha is a man who will help rich and poor alike. But he has to humble the pride of this man.

Because Naaman is used to everybody coming out and greeting him. And Elisha says, I've got to teach this proud fellow a lesson. And he sends his servant, Gehazi.

Go and tell him, verse 10, chapter 5 verse 10, Go and wash seven times in the river Jordan. And the river Jordan was a pretty dirty muddy river. And your flesh will be clean like a little child's.

And Naaman was furious, verse 11. I thought he will surely come out and lay his hand on me and strike the leprosy and heal me. Why should I go to this filthy river Jordan? There are other rivers in Damascus.

Verse 12, Ubanah performed better than this. And he was so angry. He said, let's pack up and go home.

You know, sometimes true prophets have a ministry of irritating other people. This ministry of irritation. Don't try it if you're not a prophet.

But some prophets have that ministry because that's the only way you can bring out the filth and the wickedness that is in a man's heart. Jesus had it. He really had it.

Paul had it. And some of the great prophets like Elisha had it. As I said, don't try to imitate it because it will backfire on you.

But Elisha, he wanted to irritate this man. This proud man and particularly proud people. Jesus had a great delight in irritating proud people.

To bring them down to the dust. To show them that in God's eyes they are nothing. God doesn't care for their position and honor.

So this man was really irritated. And one of his servants, Naaman's servants had more sense than him and said, He's asked you to do such a simple thing. Why not try it? Jordan is right here.

And he had to go down seven times. Can you imagine this great general taking off his clothes? All his leprosy visible all over. Humbling himself.

In simple obedience. When to stop? What is the message for us? When do you stop humbling yourself? God will give you. It may not be seven times.

For you it may be seventy times seven. Go down. Go down.

Some circumstance. Somebody humbles you. God says humble yourself.

Some other situation. God says humble yourself. Go down.

Go down. Hide yourself. Go put your head right under the water.

Go down. Go down. Until.

What? Until you become like a little child. That's when you can stop. Jesus said because it's little children that enter the kingdom of heaven.

That's what we see here. Finally his flesh became like that of a little child. And he was clean.

And when you become like a little child. You're also clean. Not till then.

We are too big. We are not like little children. We don't have the innocence.

Have you seen the eyes of a little baby? So innocent. That's the place God wants to bring us. It's a place of nothingness.

A baby doesn't lie down in a cradle and think what a great fellow I am. He doesn't think anything. When you come to that place.

Where you realize your nothingness. That's the time you'll be clean. Until then whether it's seven times or seven hundred times.

You got to keep going down. That's all. Keep going down till you become like a little child.

Simple message. And then he comes back. And says this is wonderful.

This is amazing miracle. And he comes with a lot of money. And.

Comes back to. Elisha with all that money. And.

And clothes and all types of things. And Elisha says as the Lord lives. Verse 16.

I will take nothing. The Bible says we must receive no money from unbelievers. No unbeliever has the right to support me a servant of God.

Thank you very much. I'm glad to bless you. To solve your problem.

But I don't need your money. I don't serve for money. It's only God's people.

Who have the right and the privilege to support God's servants. Elisha would receive from godly people like that rich woman. And from poor people as well.

But not from Naaman. All his wealth. He had much more than all those women could give.

Elisha said no thank you. This is where so many servants of God have missed out on God's will for their life. But what Elisha said no to.

Gazi his servant. He said what a fool. My master is.

We didn't even ask him. We didn't even send out any prayer letters. And this money came.

And he still says no. The question is where did it come from? And so Gazi ran after Naaman. Verse 21.

Exactly like a lot of preachers today. Run after rich people. Whether in India or western countries or anywhere.

And that man saw somebody running after him. And he said is everything well? Yeah he said all is well. But just now two people came.

We have a bible school there. And two young men came from there. Yeah.

That's right. You know there was a bible school those days. They were called the sons of the prophets.

Those bible students. And he said please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes. And Naaman believed it.

You know once you got this covetousness in your heart. You can write false reports. When there is nobody you can say two people came.

Two people are there. And when twenty are there you can say fifty. It's very easy.

Once you got this covetousness in your heart. It blinds your eyes. And he gives a false report there.

Exactly like it is happening today. So many people came for our meeting. So many people were healed.

So many people raised their hands. We are having great revival here. In fact if you read all the reports going from India to America.

India is just covered with revival. All over the place. We who live here know nothing is happening.

But the poor people in America think it's revival all over this country. From north to south and east to west. Anyway there are many gayazis today.

All is well. Yeah yeah. They are so relevant to our situation.

The bible is so up to date. And Naaman. He is simple man.

Like all these simple people in the west. They are good people. They say sure you want only two talents.

Listen you take more than that. You take as many as you like. And gayazi said ok brother if you insist that I take it I will take it.

And he takes it. And he takes it home. And he quietly hides it inside the house.

And then comes with a very innocent face. And stands before Elisha. What do you think Elisha doesn't know he is a man of God.

He said gayazi. Where did you go? He gave him a chance to confess his sin. He said I didn't go anywhere.

I was just around the corner here. Just busy doing something. Elisha says I know everything.

I saw exactly. God showed me in a vision. What you were doing.

I saw you going there. I saw the man turning around. I saw what you collected.

Is this a time to receive money. From these heathen people. To receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards.

To buy property. In the name of Jesus. Is this a time for that.

What a word to today's preachers. Ok. What's going to happen.

You were my servant like I was Elisha's servant. I got a double portion of the anointing. And you would have got a double portion of my anointing.

You would have got four times what Elisha got. But instead of that. You are going to get leprosy.

Because you went after Naaman. You pursued after Naaman. Like I pursued after Elisha.

I got what Elisha had. And you will get what Naaman had. And not only you.

Your children. Also will get that leprosy. And that's what happened today.

To many preachers. And their children. As they have pursued.
Telling lies. Giving false reports. Trying to impress rich people.
And going after people for their money. He who has a year to hear. Let him hear.
And not forget. We see another miracle that Elisha did. Here in chapter 6. When these.
It says here. These Bible school students came to Elisha. And said.
We were doing a little construction. In our area. And in our construction.
We were expanding our hostel a bit. And this axe. The axe head fell into the river.
And Elisha goes there. And throws a stick. And the iron begins to float.
The principle of resurrection again. Now I want to show you something here. About true prophecy.
It says. The king of Aram. In verse 8. Was warring against Israel.
And he counseled with his servants. Saying. This is where I will place my camp.
But Elisha. Sitting in his house. God showed him.
What was happening way there. In that other country. The enemy is going to come to such and such a place.
And he told Israel. Be careful. The king of Israel.
Go there. The enemy is going to come there. Don't go near there.
Lest your army be defeated. So the king of Israel. Sent to the place.
About which. Thus he was warned. And guarded himself.
More than once. And that king of Aram. Said.
How in the world is. The king of Israel. Knowing where I am moving.
Is somebody here a spy? And somebody told him. No. You don't need spies.
They have got a prophet there. Verse 12. And what you speak here.
Hundreds of miles away. That prophet can hear in his room. Because God tells him.
See this is true prophecy in the church. What did Elisha do? He warned Israel. The enemy is going to come here next week.
Prepare yourself for that. What is true prophecy in the church? Sunday by Sunday. If a prophet gets up and speaks in the meeting.
He is warning people about where the enemy is going to come in the future days. And if you have prophetic ministry in a church regularly. It's the most blessed church in the world.

Because the people there are being warned about where the enemy is going to come. Isn't it wonderful to have a man like Elisha in a country like Israel? Isn't it wonderful to be a prophet in your church? Who to whom God supernaturally reveals. The word to be spoken for this Sunday morning.

Which is going to prepare the people for the problems they are going to face next month. Or two months from now. Or next week.

This is why it says. Covet to prophesy. A wonderful example of prophecy.

In chapter 7 we read the story of a time of famine. And we read of four lepers. Because the famine was there.

Because the Syrian, the Arameans. Army of the Arameans were surrounding the city of Israel. One of the cities of Israel.

And Samaria actually. And because of that there was no food inside. It was so bad that women were eating their own children.

Such a terrible famine. But outside the lepers. You know the lepers were not allowed inside the city.

They were outside. And they said well. We are starving in any case.

Inside the city there is no food. If we go to the camp of the Arameans. They may kill us Maxim.

Anyway we are going to die. Let's go there. And the Lord had defeated the Arameans.

And driven them away. By making them sound the hear of. Hearing the sound of horses.

And these lepers went. And got plenty of food there. And then they said these words.

They said in verse 9. We are not doing right. Chapter 7 verse 9. This day is the day of the gospel. Good news.

But we are keeping silent. We must go and tell others. A wonderful challenge for evangelism.

We have received food. We are lepers. But God has blessed us.

We are healthy. There are people out there in Samaria. Who haven't heard it.

Let us go and tell them. And they go and tell them. And the whole city of Samaria is saved.

Now in chapter 9. We read of the death of Jezebel. The wife of Ahab. She is a very interesting personality.

A person who fought against the true prophets of God. And it's interesting to study her. I don't have time to detail to study her.

But just to mention this. That in Revelation chapter 2. The Lord speaks to the elder of Thyatira. Saying you have.

And it could be translated from the Greek like this. You have your wife. Jezebel.

Who leads my servants astray. An elder in a church. Who is being manipulated by a strong wife.

From behind the scenes. I have seen some elders in churches like that. Some pastors.

Who are manipulated from behind the scenes by their wives. Jezebel. Strong women.

Who want to control the church. They can't be the elders. So they control some man.

Just like Jezebel controlled Ahab. And in many many churches. Today.

There are these Jezebels. And if you are a prophet of God like Elijah. You will have to confront these Jezebels.

And put them in their proper place. Otherwise your church will be destroyed by those Jezebels. You read in chapter 9. How Jezebel is slain.

Thrown down. From the top and smashed to bits. No Jezebel must be allowed to have power in a church.

That's the lesson we learned. From Revelation and chapter 2. By the time you come to chapter 17. You read about Israel's captivity.

The Assyrians came and captured Israel. And took them away. And gave them a counterfeit fear of the Lord.

It says in chapter 17 verse 33. A very interesting phrase. They feared the Lord.

And served their own gods. This is what's happening in Christendom today. They show a certain respect for God.

For the true God. But actually they live for money. For their job.

For their position. For their position in the church. They fear the Lord.

They come on Sunday morning. You think they really fear the Lord. But they serve their own gods.

This was the condition of people. In those days when Israel went into captivity. To the world's super power.

Assyria. As I said about 730 years before Christ. In 2nd Kings chapter 18 and verse 4. You read about the time of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah was a good king. His father was Ahaz. Who was a very wicked king.

In fact Ahaz was so wicked. We read that he sacrificed. Chapter 16 verse 3. He sacrificed one of his own children.

Hezekiah's brother was sacrificed. He was such a wicked king. But Hezekiah grew up different from his father.

Praise God for people who are willing to be different from their fathers. Because they want to fear God. Not do the stupid foolish things their fathers did.

And Hezekiah. It says here. He found that people were worshipping.

Verse 4. 18-4. The bronze serpent. You remember the bronze serpent.

In Numbers chapter 21. We didn't look at that too much. Because we didn't have time.

In the wilderness when people were bitten by snakes. Moses lifted up a bronze serpent. With Jesus quoted to Nicodemus.

Saying like the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness. So Jesus said I will be lifted up on Calvary. It's a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross.

To heal our sins. And that bronze serpent did such a miracle. Healing all those snake bitten people.

That up until that time. People were worshipping this bronze serpent. And Hezekiah was the one who finally burnt it down.

What do we learn from that? Even David. A man after God's own heart. Did not have light.

To destroy this bronze serpent. Because it says until that day. That means even in David's day.

They were worshipping this bronze serpent. This was not like an idol. They say oh this is a sign of God.

Do you think there is a difference between an idol of Mary. And an idol of some other religion. I don't think so.

Just because this bronze serpent was from God. Does not mean it becomes more spiritual. You are not supposed to worship bronze serpents.

But David did not have light on it. God gave that light to a lesser king. Sometimes a person who is not such a great man as you are.

Gets more light. On some passages of scripture. Than you do.

It is good for us to be humble. In 2nd Kings chapter 19. We read of.

The king of Assyria. After capturing Israel. Now comes against Judah.

To capture Judah as well. And Hezekiah prays. Oh Lord.

Chapter 19 verse 14. Please help us. And that night.

One angel. Verse 35. 1935.

Came and destroyed 185,000 people. Of the camp of Assyria. Do you know when Jesus was in Gethsemane.

He told Peter. Do you know that I can call 72,000 angels to help me. If 72,000 angels came to help Jesus that night.

How many people would have been killed. 72,000 into 185,000. If you want to know the answer.

One angel killed 185,000 people. It requires only one. Then Hezekiah faced another problem.

He was sick. Mortally ill. And the Lord said.

Set your house in order. You are going to die. And not live.

When God tells us. It is time to die. Are you willing to die.

I am willing to die. When God says. Not before God says it.

But when God says. It is time to go. I don't want to hang on.

Lord I want to live in this rotten old world. Some more years. No.

To depart in Christ. To be with Christ is far better. But Hezekiah said.

Oh Lord please. You know how I walked with you. Verse 3. And he wept bitterly.

Please give me some more life on this earth. And okay. The Lord says.

Verse 6. I will add 15 years to your life. And do you know what happened in those 15 years. He got a son.

Called Manasseh. And Manasseh turned out to be the worst king. That Israel ever had.

Chapter 21. Verse 1. He was 12 years old when he became king. That means he was born in those extra 15 years.

That Hezekiah had. After 3 years. After that time Hezekiah had a son.

And he reigned for 55 years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord. Verse 2. He made his sons.

Verse 3. He offered his sons in the fire. He practiced witchcraft. Verse 6. And he worshipped idols.

And he seduced. Verse 9. Israel. Judah.

To do more evil. Than even all the other nations around him. How did it all come? Because Hezekiah wanted to live a little longer.

When God says it's time to go. It's time to go. Please learn that lesson.

In chapter 24. We find that Assyria is gone. Babylon has come up to be the new power.

Super power. And Babylon comes against Judah. And destroys Jerusalem.

How does. Manasseh by the way was one of the. A tradition says.

That Isaiah prophesied in the days of Manasseh. And Isaiah went inside a hollow log. And hid himself.

Because he was preaching those strong prophecies. And Manasseh got people to saw that log into two. And sawed Isaiah into two.

You read about that in Hebrews 11. Of people were sawn asunder. How does the book of Kings begin? With Elijah being taken up to heaven.

How does the second book of Kings end? With the people of God being taken to Babylon. What a tragedy. Go to heaven or go to Babylon.

This is the story of second book of Kings. Let's learn the lessons we need to. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father. Thank you for the warnings. Thank you for the examples once again.

Of godly prophets and ungodly kings. Help us to humble ourselves before you. Keep our face in the dust.

And hear what you have to say to us through your wonderful book. In Jesus name. Amen.

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