

August 29, 2004
A. M. Service
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Seeing The Unseen”
2 Kings 6:8-23 (NLT)

8 When the king of A-ram was at war with Israel, he would confer with his officers and say, "We will mobilize our forces at such and such a place."

9 But immediately Elisha, the man of God, would warn the king of Israel, "Do not go near that place, for the Arameans (Air-a-me-ans) are planning to mobilize their troops there." 10 So the king of Israel would send word to the place indicated by the man of God, warning the people there to be on their guard. This happened several times.

11 The king of A-ram became very upset over this. He called in his officers and demanded, "Which of you is the traitor? Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?"

12 "It's not us, my lord," one of the officers replied. "Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom!"

13 The king commanded, "Go and find out where Elisha is, and we will send troops to seize him."

And the report came back: "Elisha is at Dothan." 14 So one night the king of A-ram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city. 15 When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere.

"Ah, my lord, what will we do now?" he cried out to Elisha.

16 "Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" 17 Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!" The LORD opened his servant's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

18 As the Aramean (Air-a-me-ans) army advanced toward them, Elisha prayed, "O LORD, please make them blind." And the LORD did as Elisha asked. 19 Then Elisha went out and told them, "You have come the wrong way! This isn't the right city! Follow me, and I will take you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria. 20 As soon as they had entered Samaria, Elisha prayed, "O LORD, now open their eyes and let them see." And the LORD did, and they discovered that they were in Samaria.

21 When the king of Israel saw them, he shouted to Elisha, "My father, should I kill them?"

22 "Of course not!" Elisha told him. "Do we kill prisoners of war? Give them food and drink and send them home again to their master."

23 So the king made a great feast for them and then sent them home to their king. After that, the Aramean (Air-a-me-ans) raiders stayed away from the land of Israel.

Encouragers of Faith (v9)

1 Cor 15:33(NIV) Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." The opposite would also be true. Good company encourages good character. It is important whom we hang out with and are influenced by. The king of Israel was wise to hang out with Elisha (v9). Every time his enemy planned to attack him, Elisha, the man of God would warn the king. This kept the people of Israel on their toes and saved them many times from destruction. There is a benefit to be with godly people. There is a benefit to being involved with the church. Many times they help protect, encourage, warn and keep you from destruction. There are a few close friends that have encouraged me to have and to continue in my faith...I thank God for them.

Enemies of Faith (v13-15)

There are many forces that want to attack you. There are spiritual forces, the devil wants to destroy us there are humans that hate us, there is this fallen world we live in and as if that is not bad enough you have to even beware of self or your own ungodly motives. You can be attacked physically, emotionally and spiritually. There are threatening *circumstances, worldliness, sin, and trouble*. And we are not exempt from these things because we are good and godly people. Sometimes it is because of that that we can have trouble. Elisha was a man of God. He helped to protect the king of Israel and its people. And it was because he was doing the right thing that the king of Aram hated him and sent his troops; a great army with many chariots and horses to seize him (v 13-14). Elisha was hated because he was doing the right thing.

In v15 When Elisha's servant got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. He cried out to Elisha, "Oh, what will we do now?" Notice he says "what will we do now? Even though he is afraid it is arrogant pride that says, "what will we do?" We think we can control all our situations. We don't look to God not first (usually only after we are in trouble then we may call out to Him). We make our own decision without consulting God to know His will and pay for it later. But what does Elisha depend on? His faith in God!

Eyes of Faith (v16-20)

Look at what he says and does (v16-17a) "Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Then Elisha prayed.... He believed in God and what he knew of God and so he prayed as a sign of that faith. Elisha was not afraid but by faith believed that God was more powerful than anything or anyone and God and all his angels were on his side and at his side. So Elisha prayed.

He prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!" If you are going through a difficult time, a time of attack by forces spiritual or human, my Pray for you is that the Lord would open your eyes and let you see. See what? To see that if your faith is in God then you don't need to be afraid, "For there are more on our side than on theirs!"

The LORD opened his servant's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire, that is, the angels of God. Elisha's servant lacked the faith that Elisha had so Elisha prays that the Lord will allow the servant to see the spiritual world, which Elisha already knew was there. Angels to numerous to count were and are ever guarding those who love God and are serving God. The miracle was not that there was a great host of angels there to guard these men of God; the miracle was that he could see them. The miracle was not that there were angels (angels are always present) the miracle was that the servant could see them.

Then look what happens next (v18). As the Aramean army advanced toward them, Elisha prayed, "O LORD, please make them blind." And the LORD did as Elisha asked.

This was not real blindness, the actual loss of sight, but a state of illusion by which people see things other than what they are. For (v19) Elisha went out and told them, "You have come the wrong way! This isn't the right city! Follow me, and I will take you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria. So they had eyesight, they could follow Elisha, but they couldn't see the truth right in front of them (they didn't recognize Elisha). The servant could see what normally could not be seen (the spiritual world) and his enemies could not see what normally could be seen (in the physical world). When we don't trust God and refuse to serve God and be dependent on God we are blind and confused. We depend on ourselves and our resources and end up going in the wrong direction. Even in a dangerous direction for (v20) As soon as they had entered Samaria, Elisha prayed, "O LORD, now open their eyes and let them see." And the LORD did, and they discovered that they were in Samaria (Samaria was enemy territory for these troops of Aram).

Heb 13:5-6 (NIV)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

So we say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me?"

Luke 12:4-5 (NLT) Jesus said: "Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill the body; they cannot do any more to you. But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill people and then throw them into hell.

Don't be afraid to believe and serve God. For no matter what comes your way God says "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (v16) "Don't be afraid! For there are more on our side than on theirs!" – "All My Angels" - though angels are not all-powerful

or all-knowing, they are superior in power and intelligence to humans and are at God's side ready to do all He commands. Fear God (i.e.) give reverence, faith and obey God. He is able to do the impossible, even blind our enemies.

And how shall we treat our enemies?

Expression of Faith (v21 -23)

When the king of Israel saw his enemies being marched into Samaria, he shouted to Elisha, "...Should I kill them?"

22 "Of course not!" Elisha told him. "Do we kill prisoners of war? Give them food and drink and send them home again to their master."

23 So the king made a great feast for them and then sent them home to their king. After that, the Aramean raiders stayed away from the land of Israel.

Paul wrote in Rom 12:19 -21 (NLT)

Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written,
"I will take vengeance;
I will repay those who deserve it,"
says the Lord.

Instead, do what the Scriptures say:

"If your enemies are hungry, feed them.
If they are thirsty, give them something to drink,
and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you."

Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Last week we looked at the victory God gave through Elijah to triumph over the false god of Baal (Bay-uhl). He did it so that God's people might fully turn back to God and that others might be won to God. Elisha replaced Elijah. The victories God gives through Elisha must be understood as God's continual triumph over false gods that His people might be fully turned to him and that others would be won to Him (in this case the Arameans (Air-a-me-ans). Jesus would finish this work of salvation to turn hearts fully back to God that others might be won to Him. You see, all this history although political and military is also salvation history. God wants us to be fully turned to Him that by our example and faith others might be won to God.

May others see our faith and be encouraged in their faith. May we be aware of the enemies of our faith but not be afraid because we live with the eyes of faith ("live by faith not by sight") "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" and may realize that all that matters is faith being expressed through love, even love of our enemies that they may be won to Jesus by our love that comes from our faith.