

ESF, Lord's day service message
8/7/2016

The Eyes of Faith 2 Kings 6:8-18

Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place." ⁹The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." ¹⁰So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places. ¹¹This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

¹²"None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

¹³"Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan."

¹⁴Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

¹⁵When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked.

¹⁶"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

¹⁷And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

¹⁸As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike this army with blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.

From time to time, we may face enormous challenges, obstacles or enemies in our lives. If we see them only with our physical eyes and try to overcome them with our own abilities, we may be overwhelmed by their power. Even before fighting against them, we may give up the fight.

But today's word teaches us how we can overcome all fears and win over battles in our lives. It is to see everything with the eyes of faith.

There are two different types of eyes. One pair is physical. Another is spiritual. Physical eyes can see what is visible. But they can't see what exist, but is invisible.

Spiritual eyes see what our physical eyes can't see. Spiritual eyes are the eyes of faith. The eyes of faith can see God who is invisible, but who is living in us and working for us.

Helen Keller said, *"I have walked with people whose eyes are full of light but who see nothing. They see nothing in the woods or sky, nothing in sports, nothing on the street. Their souls voyage through this enchanted world is a barren waste. The truest vision, however, is the vision of faith. The world says, Seeing is believing; the Gospel says, Believing is seeing."*

The eyes of faith enable us to see God's powerful presence among us. They see that God is with us and fighting for us. Then how can we have the eyes of faith?

Gain a supernatural insight by God's favor

There was a time when the nation of Aram tried to attack Israel frequently. But whenever the Aramean king was planning to attack Israel, the Israel king knew exactly what the Aramean king was planning. And the Israel king prepared his army in advance to defeat the Aram's attack.

The Israeli king did not send spies to Aram to collect secrets. He had no technical device to detect the secret plans of the enemy. Then how could he know the enemy's plans so well? The secret came from Elisha.

Elisha did not spy on Aram. Without spying on Aram, or hearing from somebody of Aram, Elisha was nevertheless able to know the secret plans of the Aramean king. He knew the plans through insight. Elisha's insight in knowing the secret plans of the Aramean king was a supernatural insight. It did not come from his own insight but came from God's inspiring spirit.

We may have our own insights that may help us to overcome difficulties. But there are times when we may face very difficult battles that are impossible for us to overcome with our own insight. At such a time, we need a supernatural insight.

How can we gain a supernatural insight? We can learn from Elisha. He was called "the man of God." He could not have gained such a supernatural insight through his own effort or through any man's help. Such a supernatural insight came from God's favor. He was living a life that everyone recognized as only a man of God could live. Elisha devoted his life to loving God and following His will. And God's favor was upon his life.

When we love God with all our heart and focus our lives on following His will, He gives us a supernatural insight. With God's supernatural insight we can prepare ourselves well for our battles and win over our battles.

Through Joseph's life, we also can learn how to gain supernatural insight with God's favor.

When Joseph was sold by his own brothers and living as a slave in Egypt, his life was put in a hopeless situation. There was no way for him to contact his father in his homeland and get rescued. One day, his situation became worse when his master's wife falsely accused him and put him in a prison. Then did he live a miserable life and die in the prison?

No! Some years later he was called by the Egyptian king to interpret the king's dream. There was no wisdom, no knowledge, no insight among all people in Egypt that could solve the mysterious secret of the king's dream.

But Joseph had supernatural insight to see the mystery. He interpreted the mystery of the king's dream. And the king promoted him to prime minister of the nation. His life was turned around from a hopeless life in prison into a life of freedom. From nobody to the prime minister in the most powerful nation in the world at that time.

Then how could he gain such a supernatural insight? He gained the insight neither from his own study and effort nor from any man's teaching. He gained the insight through God's favor. The word in Genesis 39: 20-21 explains how God granted Joseph His favor: *"While Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; He showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden."*

How could Joseph receive God's favor? He always feared God. He feared God in every situation. When his brothers sold him to slave traders, he feared God. When his master's wife tried to seduce him, he feared God. When he was in prison and forgotten by all people, he feared God. When he became a prime minister, he feared God. Psalm 34:7: *"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them."*

When God gives us His favor, we can receive supernatural insight to solve difficult issues in our lives. Paul encourages us to fight against all battles in our lives with confidence in God's favor, "*If God be for us, who can be against us*" (Romans 8:31)?

You may be living in a very difficult situation right now. Life in God's favor does not mean that there is no difficulty. Life in God's favor means you have the ability to overcoming such difficulties with the eyes of faith.

In all circumstances fear God, and be faithful to honor Him and serve His people. And God will grant you His favor. Through His favor you will gain a supernatural insight to win over every battle in your life.

Engage the spiritual enemy with prayer

When the Aramean king realized that all his plans of attacking Israel were being leaked to the king of Israel, he thought that someone among his officers might be spying for the king of Israel. But after investigating his men to find the spy, he found that the leak was carried out not by any of his men but through the prophet of Israel, Elisha.

So, the king sent his special army unit to the place where Elisha stayed to capture him. They went by night and completely surrounded the place where Elisha was staying. The king's attack was now focused on one man Elisha.

Such an attack may happen to every person who devotes his or her life to serving the Lord and His people. The Devil does not leave anybody alone who wants to serve the Lord diligently and faithfully.

When you are serving God faithfully and God is using you to bless others, the Devil will put you on the list of his Most Wanted. He

will have your poster at his headquarters office. He will send out his best soldiers to destroy you. Because like the Aramean king tried to do to Elisha, the Devil has to stop you from serving your king, the Lord. The Devil has to stop you from interrupting and frustrating his wicked plans of destroying God's people.

So, while you serve the Lord faithfully, expect the Devil's attacks. Always prepare yourself to fight against the Devil.

In the Lord's prayer, Jesus teaches us the truth that while we pray, we have to always ask God to help us from falling into the Devil's temptation: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one* (Matthew 6:13). Never think that you are free from the Devil's attack. Never let your mind idle without being alert against the Devil's temptation. 1 Peter 5:8 says, *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

If we are determined to fight against the Devil, God opens our spiritual eyes and enables us to see His powerful presence. And with God's presence we can crush any of the Devil's forces at any time.

This is what we see in Elisha's life. When the servant of Elisha got up and went out early the next morning, he saw the strong Aramean army surrounding the place ready to attack. He was terrified.

But Elisha told the servant, "*Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.*" Elisha was seeing another army that was surrounding the place to protect him. Elisha was seeing the army of God that was stronger than the Aramean army. Elisha was seeing the army of God that his servant could not see. And he remained calm. He encouraged his servant not to be afraid.

How could Elisha have such eyes to see the invisible army of God? The answer is prayer. He fought the battles in his life with nothing but prayer.

Behind every war that tries to destroy us, God's people, and the church there is the Devil. The best weapon to fight against the Devil is nothing but prayer. So Paul encourages us with this word: *Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* (Ephesians 6:11-12).

Wherever there is spiritual victory, there are prayer warriors. Elisha prayed to the Lord to open the eyes of the servant so that he would also see the Lord's army.

When people around you are caught by fear, you can help them with a calm and bold spirit if you are seeing the invisible army of God like Elisha did. You can help them by praying to the Lord that their spiritual eyes will be opened to see God's powerful presence.

Two missionaries in Malaysia walked to a distant village for some money which had been sent to a bank for them. When they were returning to their station, night overtook them. They prayed and committed themselves to God. Then they lay down to sleep on a lonely hillside. Some weeks later a man came to the mission hospital for treatment. He looked intently at the missionary doctor. "I have seen you before," he said. "No, I don't think we have ever met," the doctor replied. "But we have met before," insisted the man. "You were sleeping one night on a hillside. Several of us saw you withdraw some money from the bank. We followed you, intending to rob you when it was dark. But we could not get near you

because of all the soldiers that were surrounding you. “Soldiers!” exclaimed the missionary. “There were no soldiers with us!” The bandit said, “But there were soldiers with you. I saw them and so did my companions of them, with guns drawn. We ran away.”

Do you want to see God’s invisible army fighting battles for your sake? Do you want to win all the battles in your life with the help of the strongest army in the world, God’s invisible army? Then be a prayer warrior. Fight every battle in your life through prayer.

When you feel all alone in your struggle, ask the Lord to open your spiritual eyes so that you can see the chariots of fire!