

1 Seeing & Sowing

2 Kings 6

2 2 Kings 6:8-10

- *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." 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." 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.*

3 The raids

- The nation of Syria (Aram-Damascus) and Israel shared an antagonistic relationship.
- A state of "cold war" existed between the two nations in which, while actual war was never declared, the Syrians made frequent raids into the border cities of Israel, plundering and taking Israelites captive as slaves.

4 Elisha's revelations

- Amid this backdrop of terror, God through Elisha has been giving victory to the Israelites.
- Through visions given by God, Elisha is able to warn the king of Israel about the Syrian's plans and the Israelites are able to foil their enemies.

5 2 Kings 6:11-14

- *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?" 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." 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." So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city.*

6 To catch a spy

- Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, is angry and frustrated that his plans have been consistently thwarted. He summons all of his servants together to determine where the leak is.
- His servants assure him that it is in fact Elisha who is warning the King of Israel.
- Ben-Hadad sends a small military force to Dothan, where Elisha is staying, to capture him and bring him back.

7 1) Recognize the underlying issue

- Although the Syrian army showed up seemingly overnight, there was in reality a long reoccurring pattern of events that eventually brought them to this place.
- When we experience deep failures or setbacks in our relationship with God and with others, we need to understand that the core issue often runs far deeper than we can see.

8 1) Recognize the underlying issue

- Even though the symptoms of this problem appeared overnight, in reality it was prompted by a long series of events.
- In this case, Elisha is suffering "for righteousness' sake." However, the same truths that we find in this passage can be applied to a host of other difficult situations, even those of our own doing.

9 2 Kings 6:15-17

- *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?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 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.

10 **Surrounded**

- Early the next morning, Elisha's servant wakes up to find the Syrian army surrounding the city of Dothan.
- Dothan was city or settlement located adjacent to a mountain.
 - It was also at Dothan that Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, thrown down a well, and sold into slavery.

11 12 

13 **Eyes wide open**

- Elisha's servant (Gehazi?) is terrified, but Elisha tells him that he has nothing to fear.
- Elisha then prays for his servant to have his eyes opened.
- God opens the eyes of Elisha's servant to see what only Elisha could see – they are surrounded by an angelic army that is greater than that of their enemies.

14 **2 Kings 6:18-19**

- *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. And Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." And he led them to Samaria.*

15 **Blindness**

- If the servant has his eyes opened, the Syrians have them shut – at least, in a way.
- The kind of blindness discussed here is not actual physical blindness – rather, it is the lack of the ability to see things as they truly are.
- Compare to the blindness of Elisha's servant, as well as that of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

16 **2) See things as they really are**

- Throughout this story, nearly all of the characters suffer from some form of blindness, except for Elisha.
 - Ben-Hadad, blind to the true power of God
 - Elisha's servant, blind to God's provision
 - The Syrians, blinded to Elisha's true identity and location

17 **2) See things as they really are**

- *The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11)*

18 **2) See things as they really are**

- *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.*

19 **2) See things as they really are**

- *So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.* (Romans 1:18-23)

20 **2) See things as they really are**

- By default, man sees the world not as God made it, but as our own sin nature distorts it.
- When we are faced with difficult times, it is easy to let our experiences determine the way we view ourselves, God, and others.
 - What we think God is like based on our experience with other authority figures
 - What we or others do or do not deserve

21 **2) See things as they really are**

- Ultimately, Scripture should be the lens through which we view life.
 - We cannot use our own lens because it has become warped by our experiences
 - We cannot use society's lens because it has become warped by relativistic morality
 - Each time we watch a movie, listen to a conversation, we are opening ourselves up to a worldview.

22 **2 Kings 6:20-21**

- *As soon as they entered Samaria, Elisha said, "O LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." So the LORD opened their eyes and they saw, and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. As soon as the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I strike them down? Shall I strike them down?"*

23 **Can I kill them, please?**

- Elisha leads the men to the King of Israel in his capitol of Samaria before they are able to realize what is happening.
- When their eyes are finally opened (so that they can see things as they really are) they are already captives of the king of Israel.
- The king of Israel (Joram)'s first question is: can I kill them?

24 **2 Kings 6:22-23**

- *He answered, "You shall not strike them down. Would you strike down those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." So he prepared for them a great feast, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the Syrians did not come again on raids into the land of Israel.*

25 **Elisha's compassion**

- Instead, Elisha commands that they be treated with the same dignity that Joram would usually have accorded to prisoners of war.
- The Syrians are disarmed, fed, and sent home. After this, the Syrians cease their border raids into Israel.

26 **Elisha's compassion**

- Elisha's compassion was significant, and uncharacteristic for this day and age.
- It probably averted an all-out war with the Syrians, and in all likelihood had a lot to do with the bands of raiders ceasing their raids.

27 **3) Sow in love**

- Whether you are being persecuted for righteousness (like Elisha), or suffering because of decisions you've made, it is important to understand the laws of sowing and reaping.

28 **3) Sow in love**

- *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.*
(Galatians 6:7)
- Consequences always grow out of that which is sown.
- By sowing in love, Elisha is actually averting future Syrian raids and avoiding – at least or the moment – all-out war with Syria.