

“SEEING WITH EYES OF FAITH”

2 Kings 6: 8-23

A group of boy scouts were on a camping trip. These kids had grown up in the city, they had never been in the country before. It was in the middle of the summer, and the mosquitoes were just *vicious* – biting these boy scouts everywhere. They were swatting them away. Finally, they just crawled in their sleeping bags to avoid getting bit by the mosquitoes -- and they're swatting them away, and its dark. All of the sudden, one of the boy scouts sees some lightning bugs flying around, and he had never seen lightning bugs before. Mistaking them for more mosquitoes, in desperation he throws up his hands and says to his fellow scouts, “Boys, we might as well just give up. Now they're coming at us with flashlights!”

Have you ever felt that way in your life? Maybe you're feeling that way today – when the circumstances and difficulties and tough times seem to be coming at you from all sides and in swarms, so that you are tempted to throw up your hands and say, “we might as well just give up.” If that describes you today, I want to tell you that you can CELEBRATE that no matter what – THERE IS HOPE IN ADVERSITY! Yet, hope comes when you see God at work – when you see with eyes of faith.

And so today, I want to tell you what it means to see things through the eyes of faith. I'll share with you only 3 points, and all 3 come from a fascinating story in the Old Testament. We heard this story a moment ago.

Let me give you the backstory. The People of Israel are in deep trouble. In particular 2 people are in really deep trouble – one is the King of Aram (who leads the nation of Aram) and the other is Elisha, the prophet, from the nation of Israel. Now, the country of Aram is an avowed enemy of the People of Israel – they hate the Israelites. And so the King of Aram is going from place to place and attacking the people of Israel – the Arameans are ambushing the Israelites.

But Elisha, is hearing from God the plans that the King of Aram is making. It's kind of like a spy racket. Every plan that the King of

Aram makes, even if the plan is made in secrecy, God tells the enemy's plan to Elisha, and Elisha tells the king of Israel where the Arameans are going to attack. And so the king of Aram is getting a little upset. And when the king of Aram finds out that God is the one leaking secret information through the prophet Elisha, then the king of Aram goes after Elisha – to capture and kill him. So the king of Aram sends enough troops to surround the city of Dothan where Elisha is living. They come by night. And when the sun comes up, Elisha's servant wakes up, sees the trouble they're in, and he panics (who wouldn't?).

“When the servant of the man of God [that's the servant of Elisha] got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh, my lord, what shall we do?” the servant asked.”

Things weren't looking good. But when things aren't looking good, God wants you to look at things through Eyes of Faith. And that kind of looking at your problem in faith begins when you *PERCEIVE YOUR PROBLEM*.

Now a lot of times when we're facing a tough problem, when we've got to climb a mountain in front of us, when we need a breakthrough in business, or a healing in marriage, or a change in our circumstances, we very often improperly perceive our problem. What we do is we often think, “Boy if I could just think this problem through, or apply a little more elbow grease, or spend longer hours on it, or reach down inside of myself and put everything I've got into this, then I could solve this problem. That is improperly perceiving the problem.

It's like the farmer who was raising chickens. But he wasn't pleased with the small eggs that his chickens were laying. So one day he carried a strange box into the barnyard. He set it down in front of the chickens, and pulled out an ostrich egg. Then he said to his chickens, “Take a look at this, and try harder!”

And that's what you do with your problems sometimes, isn't it? Many of you face problems like this: “If I can just take a look at that problem, if I can analyze it, evaluate it, meditate on it, and then if I just *try a little harder* I could solve that problem. And you do

sometimes. That business-like strategy is one we often use in church. A big problem comes up, and because we don't spend much time in God's Word, we resort to the only way of dealing with the problem that we know: We try harder, just like we do at work. But God invites us: "*Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.*" *Psalms 50:15*

Did you notice the difference between the reaction of Elisha's servant, and Elisha in our story? The servant sees they are surrounded and he panics. Elisha is calm and at peace because his immediate response is to lay this bad situation in God's hands. Elisha's first response is not to try harder, but to trust God.

To have God work for good – even in the toughest situation you face in your life, you must perceive your problem – admit your need for Him and only Him. Jesus says in John, chapt. 15: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing." Look at that last phrase. "Apart from Me you can do nothing." Jesus doesn't say "Apart from Me you'll do pretty good," or "With Me you'll do a little better." He says, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." "Apart from Me you can do nothing."

You must first realize that your own reasoning and resources are insufficient to solve your problem the way that God wants your problem solved. But a lot of times we start relying on our *own* intellect, on our experience, on our own power, or money, instead of relying on God.

Some of you are doing that right now. You cooked up plan A and tried it. But Plan A didn't work. So you tried plan B, but that didn't work either. So you developed plan C, and that didn't work. Some of you, you're down to plan Z. And if you're ever going to see what GOD wants to do in your life, you must give up on your own plans. If you come to God first and say, "God, I can't do this on my own. You do it." Then God will show you His power. He'll do a miracle that's bigger than what you ever imagined. So properly perceive your problem.

Second, to see with eyes of faith means not only that you perceive your problem, it means that you **BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISE**. Let's continue on with the story of Elisha and his servant. They were in Dothan, surrounded by the Aramean army. The servant

sees all the enemy soldiers and he's scared to death. Elisha looks at him, and here's what he says, verse 16: "'Don't be afraid,'" the prophet answered. 'Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' And Elisha prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes so 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."

The servant is afraid, and Elisha prayed, "God open the eyes of the servant to see the *real* facts of the matter. Suddenly the servant sees the hills around Dothan filled with the all powerful, almighty, omnipotent, fiery, everlasting, **army** of the King of the Universe, Jesus Christ Himself. And at that moment he starts to see the promise from God.

And here is the promise you need to believe: ***The Invisible Resources of Jesus Christ are Always Greater than the Visible Reality of Your Circumstances!*** To quote Elisha, "Those who are with us, are greater than those who are with them." This you need to believe with all your heart, and you will see with eyes of faith.

This is the way Paul put it when God guided him to write 2 Corinthians chapt.4, vs.18, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Now, what is unseen? What are the invisible resources of Jesus Christ? I'll tell you: The protection of His angels around you. The power of His Spirit within you. The unlimited supply of His resources for you. You may not always be able to see those things, but all of them are there. And they are always *greater*, **ALWAYS** greater than the visible reality of your circumstances.

Some of you, right now, you're judging your circumstances on the basis of what you can see, instead of what you can't see. And it's when you start judging your circumstances on the basis of what you can't see – the invisible reality of Jesus Christ – that He has **ALL** power, and **ALL** the resources, that is when you'll start seeing with eyes of faith -- start to have hope in the toughest times of adversity.

All of us are in a challenging time right now. There is a medical crisis with a deadly infection spreading at an alarming rate, civil unrest,

self-centered and careless behavior, an economic crisis, political rancor, anxiety, increased poverty, and a rise in violent crime. Wow! Can we handle this on our own? By our own intelligence? No. We can't. We haven't been successful as a society so far, have we?

God is teaching us that we need Him. Our resources are inadequate. But God's resources are not inadequate! God wants to take tough situations and just turn them inside-out and completely around for good!! God can handle it! He is always greater than what we can see of our circumstances!

Jesus says, (Matthew 6) "Don't worry about what you'll eat, or drink or wear. Look at the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. See how God takes care of them, and trust that He'll take care of you even more."

And Jesus wraps up that section with these words: Jesus said, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." God's saying, "Focus on ME." -- Focus on Him.

When you focus on the visible reality, then you will see your problem *as an obstacle*. But if you put your focus on the invisible resources of Jesus Christ – His angels around you, His power within you, His resources for you -- if you will put your focus there, you will no longer see your problems as obstacles, you will see them for what they *really* are – ***opportunities*** for GOD TO WORK IN YOUR LIFE! And you will be filled with hope. And you will CELEBRATE hope, even in the toughest times.

Remember the story of David and Goliath? Many people said Goliath was too big to defeat. David took his sling and said Goliath was too big to miss.

When you have the attitude that expects GOD is going to work, then you'll find yourself saying: "*I'm excited, I'm joyful, I'm thankful for this problem because it means that I'm going to see GOD work in a powerful way*" – when you have that attitude, then no barrier is too high, no ditch is too deep, no challenge is too great for God to work.

The visible reality of our circumstances will NEVER be as great as the INVISIBLE REOURCES OF JESUS CHRIST.

Jesus Christ did not die on the cross and rise again so that you *doubt* His goodness and His love for you. He died on the cross and

rose again so that you BELIEVE His love, BELIEVE His forgiveness, BELIEVE His power, BELIEVE that He IS FOR YOU!! Jesus died and rose again not just so that you know what God DID, but so that you know what GOD DOES for you His people.

When people come to faith, come to a personal relationship with God, and when you get into God's Word everyday and *grow* in your relationship with Him, then your attitude will change. You will believe God's promise.

Perceive your Problem – that you can do nothing without God. Believe God's Promise – that in His grace He supplies all that is needed. And 3rd – with God blessing you, Trust God to *ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE* in your life.

Let's see what happened in Elisha's life. (Verse 18): "As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord," Notice, Elisha didn't just give up. Instead he LOOKED UP -- he prayed to the Lord. He prayed, "'Strike these people with blindness.' So [God] struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked. Elisha told them, 'This is not the road and this is not the city [you are looking for]. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for.' And he led them [from Dothan] to Samaria." That was the capital city, the fortress of the *Israelites!* Elisha led the Arameans who were trying to attack Israel, right into the capital city of Israel so that the Arameans were surrounded. "After they entered the city, Elisha said, 'Lord, open the eyes of these men so they can see.' Then the Lord opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria."

Do you see what happened? God made a way for Elisha and his servant. In the end, the one to be conquered, ended up being the conqueror. This is the way God intends it to be for followers of Jesus Christ, because this is the way it is for Jesus Himself. Just think about Jesus – when He was on the cross, He looked like the one who was conquered. Conquered by the religious leaders, conquered by the Romans, conquered by sin, conquered by death, conquered by the powers of hell itself. But remember, the invisible resources of Jesus Christ are ALWAYS greater than the visible reality. And 3 days later he ROSE from the dead, He DEFEATED SATAN – the evil one, He

ASCENDED into heaven where He reigns in power and might and authority from His throne. And from His throne He comes to you, His people, through His Word in the Bible, to fill you with His supernatural resources. He sends out His angels to guard you. He gives you the POWER of His Holy Spirit into your heart so that you can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens you. He offers you everything you need in this life and in the life to come.

Jesus put it this way in John 14: *“Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”*

I want to say to every person who is here today -- every person – if you’re ever going to see with eyes of faith, first of all, you need Jesus Christ as your Savior – you need a personal relationship with Him. And Jesus Christ stands ready to be that kind of Savior for you today. All He asks is that you perceive your problem -- that you are unable to make yourself right with God by what you’ve done. And then believe God’s promise – that the resources of His love and forgiveness are always higher than the depth of your sin. The resources of His strength are always higher than the depth of your weakness.

And I want to say to everyone who names Jesus Christ as their Savior from this day forward -- **DON’T YOU GIVE UP, GOD WILL MAKE A WAY!** Don’t you give up on that loved one you’ve been praying for -- **GOD will make a way!!** Don’t you give up on because of some personal pain, emotional woundedness you may have – **GOD will make a way!** Don’t you give up because of some setback you’ve suffered – **GOD will make a way!!** Don’t you give up because of some loss you’ve endured in your life -- **GOD WILL MAKE A WAY !! HE WORKS IN WAYS WE CANNOT SEE.**

Through Believing in Jesus, may you See With Eyes of Faith.