

Elijah and Elisha 09 ~ Keswick Conference 1970

by Harold Wildish

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being yielded to the Spirit of God and not just going through the motions of serving God, as illustrated by the story of Gehazi.

Duration: 53:07

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:8-12

Topics: "Keswick"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Elisha and his servant in the book of 2 Kings. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being a faithful servant of God and carrying on the work of the mantle. He highlights the contrast between Elisha, who became a powerful servant of God, and his servant, who did not reach the same level of spiritual growth. The speaker also provides background information on the division of the kingdom of Israel and the reign of various kings. The sermon concludes with the speaker mentioning that he had originally planned for 12 chapters in his study, but due to time constraints, he will only cover 10 chapters.

Transcript

Now, just before we read the scriptures from the second book of Kings, I want to say this, that I had hoped very much that we would have twelve chapters in these studies, but we are running now at eight, and unless we telescope to this morning and to this evening, we are only going to have ten instead of twelve. I was exercised about this, and asked the Lord what I should do, and seemed to get the direction that it would be wise perhaps to telescope two little chapters this morning and two little chapters this evening. They seem to fit in together.

Now, just before we read and move into our Bible study, will you check over the chapters that we've had this far? May I say that it is in weeks like this of ministry that my little books that have been published in America have been born. That is, in each one of those little books there is a week of ministry. It's condensed somewhat, but at Canadian Keswick and here, and at Moody's Bible Church over WMBI, these three little books were really born.

And if ever this series came into print, I don't know that it ever will, but it would probably have twelve chapters, and they would run something like this. Chapter One, Man of God. Chapter Two, Take the

Mantle.

Chapter Three, Dig the Ditches. Chapter Four, Pour the Oil. Chapter Five, Watch Your Days.

Chapter Six, Shut the Door. Chapter Seven, Protect Your Food. Chapter Eight, Last Night, Forge the Links.

The most precious link was that little girl, you know, that I fell in love with, the little maid. What a girl she was, wasn't she? Now, this morning, nine and ten, I want to forge two chapters from the Word of God under these titles, Take the Warning and Open His Eyes. And you will see that both these chapters have relationship to the servant of Elisha.

Elijah's servant was Elisha, and the mantle fell. But Elisha had a servant, perhaps more than one servant, and there's a good deal in Scripture about them. I wonder if the mantle fell and they took it to carry on the good work.

We shall see. Now, will you turn to the second book of Kings, chapter four, and we are going to start reading at verse eight. Two Kings, four, verse eight.

And it was so when Elisha, the man of God, had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes. But he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. Chapter five, verse nine.

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Now listen, I'm wrong, and you're right. Did I say chapter four? Yes, you're wrong and I'm right.

I'm on the wrong track. Will you turn back to chapter four, verse eight, please. I was reading from the wrong chapter.

Thank you. Thank you for that little murmur that just made me realize I was on the wrong track. Two Kings, four, verse eight.

And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman, and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was that as often as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Now I perceive that this is a holy man of God which passes by us continually.

Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, and let us set for him there a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. And it shall be when he cometh to us that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day that he came thither and turned into the chamber and lay there.

And he said to Gehazi, his servant, Call this Shunemite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. Just our little word of prayer.

Loving Father, wilt thou lead us into thy truth to give us what we need this morning? May we be conscious that the Holy Spirit is directing our thinking, constraining and restraining. And wilt thou grant that we may learn lessons that will be full of solemn warning and yet rich encouragement to each one of our hearts. For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen. Now, here in verse 12, there comes creeping into this story a new name. For the first time, we read of Gehazi.

Gehazi. Now, his name means Valley of Visions. All the possibilities of that life.

Valley of Visions. To be called to be a servant of the man of God who had taken the mantle of Elijah, and to serve him and live with him, listen to him, watch him, and learn of him day by day. Now, someone, I believe it was an American preacher, very naughtily said, he was a hazy guy.

Well, of course, that's rather smart. He was a hazy guy. Somehow he never got out of the valley to see the vision on the hilltops.

There's no record that this man ever became a rich, useful, strong, beautiful servant of God like his master. And I think the Spirit of God has given to us these wonderful records for our learning. Perhaps for our warning.

Now, we are living, as you know, in the days of the kings here. And most of you know the record, how David was chosen to be king and anointed in the place of Saul. And then, after David's wonderful life, Solomon, his very choice son, came to the throne, and Israel was at its most glorious peak.

And then, when Solomon died, there was a division, a terrible division. Jeroboam and Rehoboam parted, and the northern and southern kingdoms were brought into being. And as kings came and kings died, it's a sad fact, only six of the kings in the northern kingdom were good.

And, without exception, all of the kings in the southern kingdom were bad. And this poor, divided nation is deteriorating. And it's during these days that these great men, prophets, were raised up.

I suppose the first was Samuel, Hannah's little boy. And Samuel means, ask to God. And for long, long years, he was prophet and judge in Israel.

Then come the days of Elijah and Elisha, and I don't know if I've mentioned it, the word Elijah simply means, God is Jehovah. Elijah. God is Jehovah.

But his servant, Elisha, who was raised up to carry on his work, his name means, God is Savior. Elisha. Now, how Gehazi was called, or came into the service of Elisha, there's no record.

You know, he could have been such a man of God. He could have been God's man for that hour, to carry on the work of his master, and his master's master, in those dreadful days of national life. It was a time of distress in Israel.

Things were deteriorating. If ever there was a need for a man of God, it is when the old man Elisha died at a ripe old age. But somehow Gehazi missed the opportunity.

And his name begins to creep into the record right here. Now look at verse 12. And he said to Gehazi, his servant, I'm going to try and make this easy, Think of this man's position, Gehazi's position, a servant of Elisha.

To live 24 hours a day with this amazing, wonderful, miracle-working prophet of God. To see him from the early morning until the late evening, to minister to him and be called his servant. And if you challenged him, he would say, Yes, that's my job.

And you know, some people have very privileged jobs in life. I was talking with a precious little West Indian girl some time ago, and she said to me, Mr. Wildish, will you pray that I might get a new job? And I said,

What's wrong? Don't you like your work? No, she said, I don't mind my work, but she said, I'm working in a factory with some other girls, and she said, none of them love the Lord. And she said, their conversation and their acts and the way they behave, and she said, their attitude toward me is so difficult, and she said, I would just love to have another job and work with Christians.

And she was longing, hungering for Christian privilege. I looked into her face and I said, Well, I'll be praying with you that the Lord's will might be done, but I'm not quite sure whether the Lord wants to take you out of that job. She said, Why? Well, I said, look, if you had a great big barn-like hall, and there was one little electric light dangling on a cord, the only light in all that dark building, and the little electric light said, I feel so lonely, and oh, I would love to get out of this cold, big, dark place.

Down there, there's another hall, and they've got 60 electric lights blazing there, and I'd like to go and join them and be 61. And I said, you know, you're a very privileged little girl to think that the Lord has taken you as a Christian and put you in a dark place all alone to shine like that. And there's how the tears were trickling down her cheeks.

And she said, Oh, Mr. Wallis, don't pray that I might be moved. And her mind was changed, and she saw the privilege of being one light in a dark place, and I encouraged her to seek the grace and strength of the Lord to shine in that dark place for Him. Which I think she's doing.

But you know, Gehazi, I lived all day long with Elijah. He was his servant. And it's just possible that this dear man was doing a job, but he was never called to this job.

His master had been called. He was out on the farm, hard at work with the oxen plowing, when all of a sudden he felt the mantle falling on his shoulder, and he heard the call to come and follow. And he just burned his boats, laid everything at his master's feet, and went out to serve his master.

But somehow Gehazi doesn't seem to have had this call. I don't know how many dollars a week he got for his job, but it was a job. He was serving his master.

No doubt about that. But there seems to be the lack of a real call to service. Now, isn't it lovely when you can be called to serve, and you can lay something at his feet? I love to see a young person, rarely, if they're Christians, striving to gain some position.

I may be wrong, but I encourage them to go on in their job, and to go on toward their profession, or their normal calling in life, until they feel the constraint of the Lord upon their life, and they know they'll be disobedient if they don't leave it and go out into whole-time service to be a missionary or a minister of Christ. You know, I'm rather frightened of some of these youngsters today who've made up their mind to go into the ministry and serve God from the age of 15, and they go through all the schools, and somehow they've never been able to lay anything at the Lord's feet. Because, on the mission field especially, I'm meeting men, men who were successful in business, men who were successful in their daily calling, and yet somehow their hands began to get so full of holy service that they said, Lord, I can't do both, and the thrusting hand of the Lord thrust them out.

When that thrusting hand is behind you, you know that you are called of God. No doubt about it. To lay something at His feet and say, Lord, I could have made a success as a nurse, or I could have made a success as a banker, or I could have made a success as a farmer, or I could have made great money as a builder, but Lord, somehow your calling was on my life, and here it is.

That's the sort of men that God really thrusts out to do something, women too, into the battle fronts. But somehow Gehazi doesn't seem to have had this. Now look at verse 14, just a verse or two down.

And he, that's his master, said, What is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered verily, She hath no child, and her husband is old. Now against this second mention of his name, I put the word his possibilities, not his position as a servant, but his possibilities. Here is his master lying on the bed.

He's tired with the journey. He's come to the prophet's chamber, and he says, you know, this precious woman on the farm has done so much for us. Call her, and she's standing in the door.

Would you like to be spoken to the king? Is there some honor the country could give you for all your kindness to me and my service for the Lord? And she said, no, I just want to stay at home. She was a lovely, contented soul. I just want to be with my husband and my family and right here in the farm.

And I can see the man of God turning to Gehazi, and he looks into his face, and he said, What shall be done for the woman? All the possibilities. Here is a man who is actually being asked a question. In other words, his master is asking him for advice in the situation.

What shall be done? And if only this man was yielded to the Spirit of God and devoted to the service of God, what possibilities there were that Gehazi could have been to Elisha what Elisha had been to Elijah. Sadly enough, it seems it was not to be. He seemed to be a good mixer.

He seemed to have personality. He seemed to have gifts. He had evidently moved round the farm, and he knew all about her and her old husband and her need of a son.

She hadn't got a son, whether she had daughters or not, we don't know. And, I look at this young Gehazi, and I must tell you, a sort of feeling in my heart, covets Gehazi for the Lord and for God's service. But, sadly, he missed it.

That's why we've called the chapter title Take the Warning. Now, look down at verses 25 in this same chapter. So she went and came to Mount Carmel, and it came to pass when the man of God saw her he said to Gehazi, his servant, Behold yonder is the Shunammite.

Run now, I pray thee, and meet her, and say to her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, Shalom, peace. It's well, peace. Just that one word of greeting that those people use, and still use in Jerusalem today as Jew meets Jew.

Shalom, peace. It is well. And I put against this his perplexities.

No, I'm sorry, his privileges. Now, you're getting these Ps, aren't you? His position, his possibilities, his privileges. He was actually with this man of God.

He was actually there to hear all the conversation. He was actually asked questions. He was actually in a place of privilege where he could have been the channel of blessing.

I don't know what you think about it, but I've got the feeling that familiarity breeds content. And there is a possible that this man Gehazi was so constantly with Elisha that he had grown largely used to certain things. And here is his master saying to him, now I want you to act.

I want you to run. I want you to serve. I want you to say.

And in a routine sort of way, he was going through the motions. Somehow, the spirit that was on Elijah, the spirit that had been seen in double portion on Elisha, is lacking in this man in spite of his privileges. Now look at verse 27.

And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by his feet. And Gehazi came and thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone.

Something rough and rude about this man. He came and took this clinging woman away from the feet of his master, or her master. And he had to be rebuked for this.

Her soul is vexed within her. The Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. And she said, Did I not desire a son of my Lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me? And as I look at those verses, 27, I can see Gehazi's perplexities.

He thought he was doing a good job, but he was unsympathetic, and he was rough. And I may be right. I believe that this woman, this farmer's wife, found out Gehazi even before Elisha found him out.

Her womanly intuition knew that this man wasn't really to be trusted. That there wasn't reality in his soul. There were all the motions of doing and saying.

Somehow he wasn't real. We must always take the warning. One of the saddest things I know in the religious world today is those who can go all through the motions to say the right word.

Yet, somehow, there isn't the spirit of their master there. And in this unsympathetic, rather rough man, who seems to be prayerless, and seems to be powerless, and seems to be formal. Oh, what a contrast to the two masters, Elijah and Elisha.

Now turn a page to chapter 5, verse 20, and we notice his name cropping up in the story again. Verse 20, where we left off last night. And Gehazi, the servant of God? No, never, never called that.

And Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God? Gehazi never himself called a man of God. Said, behold, my master hath spared Naaman. Spared him.

Isn't this revealing? I would have spoiled him. I would have milked him. I would have got as much as I could out of him in a situation of the cleansing of Naaman.

He not receiving at his hands that which he brought, but, but, as the Lord liveth. Oh, Gehazi, rub it off your lips, boy. You're going from emotions, you're saying, as the Lord liveth.

But you could never say before whom I stand. You've got the motions and you believe it all. And believe me, there are folks today throughout America and they can say, oh yes, I stand on the fundamentals.

Christ died for our sins and was buried. He was buried and on the third day He rose again and He lived. Do they really know a living Christ? Can they say Christ lives in me and the life that I now live? Can they say before whom I stand, walking in His presence, enjoying His power? Poor Gehazi.

And against verse 20 I'm putting His passion. His passion. I'd like to get some of that money, gold, silver, raiment, to think that Naaman's going away and not leaving it behind and it's my hands who would like to get on it.

I'd like to spoil him, not spare him, as my master did. Do you know, this begins to reveal something, a terrible danger of courageousness. You know, there's nothing wrong in wanting a good wage.

There's nothing wrong in making good and big money. But there's something wrong when courageousness, I must get. I don't care who gets it, but I must get.

I don't care who I trample on underfoot as long as I get it. And I must get it. Courageousness is something in the New Testament about which there is a tremendous amount of scripture.

It's one of the most spoiling sins revealed in the New Testament and it can grip the heart and spoil the life. You see, is it wrong to covet? Not if you covet the best gifts. And you say, I covet to be rich.

Well, if you have a desire and the ability to make riches, there's nothing wrong with that as long as riches don't capture your heart and you live for riches. And riches always minister to self and you want more and more, far more than you need. That's the danger.

You can see it all over loved America today. The spirit of courageousness. And it can creep amongst God's children too.

Yes, there in verse 20 it's revealed his passion. He says, I would like to spoil him, not spare him. Now look at verse 21 and it moves on, and Gehazi followed after Naaman and you know how he chased him down, stopped his chariot, told a lie about certain people who had just arrived and his master would have to entertain them and they could do with a little silver and gold and things.

And Naaman dishes it out. Take two talents of silver in two bags and two changes of garment. And so Gehazi takes it.

Verse 24, he came to the tower and took them from the hand of the men and bestowed them in the house and he let the men go and they departed. But he, he went in and stood before his master, the man who could never say before whom I stand. He could say the Lord liveth, but he could never say before whom I stand.

Now stands before his earthly master and he looks into his face and says, Would you like a cup of tea? It's about time for tea. Or something like that. You see, he's serving that master.

This man of God looks into his face and he says, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? Where are you coming from? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. Oh, how one lie leads to another. Isn't it sad when an untruth is told, nearly always you have to tell another one to cover it up? And how dishonest and unreal we can be in the presence of a worldly Syrian nearman who's just got converted.

Ah, but even in the presence of a man of God the lies are coming out. He said unto him, Went not my heart with thee? Verse 26. When the man turned again in his chariot, Is it time to receive money? Olive yards, garments, vineyards, sheep, oxen, men, servants, and maidservants.

You know, I think I might in saying this, that this man stands there in all his poverty spiritually, and turning over in his mind is, What will those shekels of gold and silver and all those big bags of gain that I've got in the house buy? I'm set for life. I'm going to retire early. I'll leave my job and I'll be able to settle down on a nice little vineyard, and I'll have my sheep and my oxen and my menservants, and I'm set up for life.

His master knew all that he was thinking as he stood there. Looking into his face he said, If you think you're going to enjoy that farm and you think you're going to enjoy those cattle, those menservants, and that way of life, you are mistaken. Verse 27.

From his poverty now to number seven, his punishment, the leprosy. The dread disease, therefore, that Nerman had shall cleave unto thee and thy seed forever, and he went out from his presence a leper of snow. That is, the mark of leprosy coming out, that peculiar whiteness coming out on the skin that revealed that blood disease that was striking.

Understand it, explain it. No, you can't explain the supernatural because the moment you try to explain a miracle or the supernatural, it's no longer supernatural. This is just facing the fact of letting God be God and letting God deal with His servants and people in the ways that He has a right to in sovereign power.

And poor Gehazi stumbles out, perhaps to his bags of gold and silver, but a leper, instead of being a servant of the living God, instead of saying, before whom I stand. Well, you see, what does this teach us? We are mostly Christians here this morning, and most of us have known and loved the Lord all our lives. What can it teach us? Only this, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall.

You see, is there a solemn warning here to me as a Christian? I'm coasting along in the evening of life. I look back on all the precious years of my Christian life. I think I've known Jesus as my Savior ever since I was a boy or a girl.

But says Paul writing to us, he said, you know, in 1 Corinthians 9 verse 24, he said, I'm afraid of something. He said, I've preached to others. I've got a record of being a missionary.

I've been out and seen thousands converted, but he said, there's sometimes a little bit of dread creeps over my heart. And he said, after preaching to others, that I myself could become disqualified. The word cast away is used in your authorized version.

It doesn't mean with a man it lost forever. It just means that his life is blunted. There's no sharp edge.

The master's hand can no longer use him. It just means that he's laid aside and the Lord has to look for another instrument to use because he can no longer use that instrument that's grown dirty. This is where the solemn warning comes to me.

It comes right to my heart. Could I become in the evening of my life a washed up old servant of God, little more used to the Lord or to the Lord's people, just playing about in the sunshine, just wasting my time instead of still being an instrument in the Lord's hand right to the end of the journey? Thank God, Paul could say, the time of my departure is at hand. I'm ready to be offered, and the word is I'm ready to be poured out as a drink offering.

The life that I've given to the Lord will now be poured out, even in death. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course.

I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up a crown of righteousness. Not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing. And perhaps one of the greatest dangers of old age, and I know it is that we could be laid aside and little more used to the Master.

Dear Chairman, quoted George Muller, the German who was so amazingly used to reveal to the church what faith, simple faith means, and George Muller actually said he prayed, Oh God save me from ever becoming a wicked old man. You say Muller said that? Yes, because he knew the possibilities. Because he knew his own natural heart.

Because he knew the subtle, cruel temptations of Satan. And he knew that nothing but the moment by moment keeping power of a risen Lord before whom I stand can keep a Christian fruit bearing to old age for the glory of the Lord. Oh, you say this is rather a hopeless message.

No, it isn't. No, it may be a solemn warning, and there it is. Take the warning.

But now, just for a moment or two, we move into the next panel. Turn a page and have a look at it in chapter 6, verse 13. And under the heading, open his eyes.

Open his eyes. Here is Elijah's servant again in the picture. And he said, Go and spy, this is the king of Syriac, go and spy where Elisha is that I may send and fetch him.

And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent the king of Syria thither horses and chariots and a great host, and they came by night and compassed the city about. Oh, it's a lovely picture.

Look, Dothan, a little town in the hills. And Elisha's gone to bed, and is sleeping. Somewhere near him is his servant.

Now, don't ask me if his servant was Gehazi. I don't know. I'm a bit puzzled about this.

You may be able to tell me whether Gehazi has gone out with his leprosy and he's no longer the servant of Elisha, or whether this man is still his servant and this is the man, or whether he's got a young man, a new young servant to pour water on his hands, to get his cup of tea in the morning, to do all the hundred jobs that a servant would do for his master. Who is this young servant? Anyhow, he was a young man who, verse 15, and when the servant of the man of God was risen early, I think he got up early to go for his jog, you know, or to make a cup of tea for his master or something, early in the morning, behold, the host compassed the city, both with horses and chariots, and his servant comes in to his master and cries, Alas, my master, how shall we do? We're finished. They're all round us, chariots and horses, closing in on us.

We'll be captured and finished. The king of Syria's after you, sir. And the calm words of a man of God, Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

The balance of power, the balance of power, I don't care how depressed you are, I don't care how defeated you are, I don't care how tried you are, I don't care how difficult the battle is, it may seem to be all going against you. Those words stand. Fear not, they that are with us are more than they that are with them.

Do you believe it? You do? Great! So glad you believe it. We're on the winning side. You know, Satan knows that his days are over.

Satan's all out today to try and produce his anti-Christ to steal from Christ his sovereign rights. Perhaps alive in the world today is the man that Satan's going to incarnate and draft for world power as the age ends. But you know Satan's doomed.

He was beaten at Calvary, completely beaten at Calvary. The man, Christ Jesus, disannulled his power and time is running out and it's going to be not too far away before God will say to just one mighty angel, take a chain, catch him, and put him into the abyss for a thousand years. Why he's loosed at the end of a thousand years has puzzled me from boyhood.

I never could understand how, when God got hold of Satan and chained him, he should loose him until I realized that God is working a far bigger purpose out than you and I dream, that the battle of eternity is centered in time, in our little world, in God's universe, and this is the last test for a human race. God has tested them in innocency, he's tested them under conscience and law and right through under grace, and then a wonderful millennial kingdom of a thousand years, when the world sees what it dreams about but has never had. And then Satan's loosed to see if the human heart has completely changed, but it hasn't.

He quickly finds those to follow him in a final rebellion, and then he's taken and cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are. Satan's doomed, beaten. And we Christians are on the victory side, and the resources on our side are far greater than on the enemy's side, and this young servant of God, or Gehazi, I'm not going to say, I don't know, needed the opening of the eyes to see that the balance of power is in our favor.

It's not against us. Well, what happens? Look. Fear not! Fear not! For they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

Verse 16, And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha, right around. We won't go into the details of the story or even the finals of the story.

All I can say is this, we need our eyes opened to the balance of power. Between those enemy and ourselves, the chariots of the Lord, the Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.

That little verse that comes twice in Psalm 46, I love it. Have you ever preached a sermon on it? It comes in verse 7 and 11 of Psalm 46. The Lord of hosts is with us.

With me? Yes. The God of Jacob. Not the God of Israel.

The God of poor little worm, twisting, sneak, cheat, Jacob. The God of Harold Wildish with all his frailty and pain. He's with us.

He's with us. Why should I be afraid if he's with me and all the way around me? You say you don't know the circumstances, the battles, the trials. Are you quite sure? Never a saint of God, in the school of God, without their battles and trials.

And they come from strange angles. Sometimes they come through the circumstances. Sometimes they come financially.

Sometimes they come through physical weakness. Sometimes they come through your nearest and dearest and loved ones. And you feel your pathetic weakness.

And all these things drive us to our knees. And as we come to our knees, we say, Lord, I know I'm at the end of my resources and the enemy's resources are so great around me, but the Lord of hosts is with us.

Between me and the enemy forces is divine strength.

And my eyes are open to this fact. God had to teach some of his greatest, greatest saints this lesson. Oh, could I picture in closing as I send you out into the sunshine just one or two of the pictures.

Look, Joshua. Big sword in his hand. His name, Savior.

The same name really as Jesus. Jehovah Savior. And Joshua stands there with Moses behind and the Red Sea and Jordan behind and this lovely soldier 40, 50, 60 years of age stands there.

Two million people behind him and he's going in to possess the land of Canaan. And in that wonderful picture in Joshua 5, verses 13 and 14, he sees a man coming with a drawn sword and Joshua looks at him. Is this the king of Jericho? Is this one of the Canaanite kings? Is this one for us or against us? And so he challenges him.

Ask thou for us or for our adversaries? He stands there ready. The answer comes back, No! No! Joshua, that's not the question. It's not whether I'm for you or the Canaanites.

The question is, who's with me? Take off your shoes from off your feet. He's taking his shoes from off his feet just like Moses did at the burning bush. And he stands to wait a commission as a soldier.

And the commission comes. If you're with me, I lead you to victory. March round Jericho every day for seven days under the boiling sun, one of the hottest places in the world.

And on the seventh day, march around, yes, seven times, until you're so exhausted that it would be almost impossible to ask any soldier to lift his sword because you're so tired trampling round the city seven times. And when the people are up there laughing at you and say, look at these silly people walking round our city, you just blow the ram's horns and shout. The Lord of Hosts is with you.

Walls fall down. Jericho's dead. God's just the same today.

Do you believe that? Then whisper it, the Lord of Hosts is with me. Put your name in. The God of Mary, or the God of John, or the God of Harold, is with us.

It's all the difference if our eyes are open. You see, give us another, just one more, then out you go. I think I ought to turn you to it, 2 Samuel chapter 5. And in 2 Samuel chapter 5, dear little David has to learn this lesson.

In verses, let's see now. 18. The Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

David inquired of the Lord and said, Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said, Go up. I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thy hand. And he went up, the next verse tells us, and smote them.

But you know, these Philistines have a queer way of coming back again. Have you found that out, Kristen? You had a battle, and you won a victory, and you said, Oh, what a victory I had ten years ago. In that realm of my life where there was such a battleground and I had such a victory, and the Lord, the Lord just was the victor.

He helped me financially. He gave me back my health. He restored a friendship.

He answered my prayers for a lost loved one. Oh, Lord, it was a battle at the time but you were with me and I won a victory. Now, after some years, those old Philistines have come back again.

Look. Look at verse 22. And the Philistines came up yet again.

Have you had this experience? The older you get, the more you get this. You thought you had beaten them forever, but you hadn't. God's allowing you another battleground.

The Philistines came up yet again and spread themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. And David said, well, the last time the Lord said, go right at them and smash them and I'll do it again. No, he didn't.

No, he didn't. God is a God of variety. He doesn't always lead you the same way.

Those Philistines have got their heads screwed on pretty tightly. Did you know this? Did you know that? Philistines are no fools. And they said, he beat us last time by a frontal attack and we'll put a concrete wall up and if he hits, he'll hit his head off.

So when he goes to the Lord, as he rightly did, and he said, Lord, what shall I do? The Lord said unto him in verse 23, Thou shalt not go up. Last time I told you to go up. This time I say, don't go up.

What shall I do, Lord? Well, set your compass behind them, that is, get on their flanks, on the sides of the valley, and as they come creeping up in all their strength, you lie in ambush away up there in the rocks and the caves and amongst the trees and they'll come up moving up the valley. Verse 24, And let it be, and let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees. In the Portuguese version of the Bible that I used to handle and read in Brazil when I was a young missionary, it read like this, and let it be when you hear the sound of marching troops in the tops of the mulberry trees.

And that's it. When you hear the Lord of hosts moving to battle, then you can move. You can smash.

You'll win the victory. And if the Lord of hosts is with us, we can't fail. We can't lose.

Even though the battle is stiff, we shall be the victors. And I'm sending you out into that sunshine with the words, the Lord of hosts is with us. Open her eyes.

Open his eyes. The enemy seems so strong. I'm surrounded.

I'm enclosed. There's no hope. Open his eyes.

There are more for us than against us. And if you stand as Elisha did in the presence of the living God, the Lord living, before whom I stand, servant of God, your eyes can be opened to the fact that there are divine resources between you and the enemy that can make you more than conquerors through Him who loves you. Shall we bow in prayer? Loving Lord, these two little panel pictures have come to us from thy word today.

Take the warning as we've looked at Gehazi. Open his eyes as we've looked at the servant. It may be a young and new servant or it may have been Gehazi.

Lord, thou knowest how we need these warnings and we need these encouragements that mingle in thy word to our hearts. Many of us are going back tomorrow to battles, new battles, new battlegrounds. We won't be looking into each other's faces.

We shall be back in the old settings at home with loved ones in business. The world thronging around us. Oh, we pray thee that we might be known as servants of God, servants of the Lord Jesus.

That we may be able to ever say in the face of the world the Lord liveth and add before whom I stand and know the resources of the risen Christ that surround us and indwell us to make us conquerors. Dismiss us with divine blessing. Bless through the day and all the happenings of the day.

Bring us back again for our evening Bible hour with expectation for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, the comforting ministry of the abiding, indwelling Holy Spirit. Abide with us all, now and ever. Amen.

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