

Third Presbyterian Church
Bible Study
2 Kings
I want my cutting edge back

2 Kings 6:1-7 (NIV)

¹ The company of the prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us.

² Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to live." And he said, "Go." ³ Then one of them said, "Won't you please come with your servants?" "I will," Elisha replied.

⁴ And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. ⁵ As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. "Oh, my lord," he cried out, "it was borrowed!" ⁶ The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. ⁷ "Lift it out," he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.

Questions

1. When have you felt the sinking feeling that comes with losing or damaging someone else's property?
2. Do you believe salvation is something that can be lost once it is received? Why or Why not? (for reference read John 10:28-29 and Romans 6:1-4)
3. Everyone will at some point find themselves feeling disconnected from God. The great patriarchs of the bible did at some point, but the difference is they chose not to stay there.
 - A. Describe the circumstance/feeling/actions when you have felt this aloofness regarding your relationship with God?
 - B. How does knowing that the greats written about in scripture went through periods of what we will call a "spiritual valley" help you?
 - C. What did you do to move out of this spiritual valley?
 - D. What do you feel as your obligation when you see another Christian in a season of a spiritual valley?
 - E. How does knowing we need one another to help us especially in times of a spiritual valley give a different perspective on the value of Christian relationships. (Use Proverbs 27:17 for reference)
 - F. Why do we often try to cover up the fact that we are in a spiritual valley?
 - G. Since we know this behavior is not fruitful what is your plan for coming out of your next spiritual valley?
4. This story of the lost ax head is also a story of Stewardship. The ax head was borrowed and its care was the responsibility of the user, hence the exclamation "oh my Lord it was borrowed." The same is true for our physical bodies. Our bodies belong to God.
 - A. So can a person be on a spiritual "mountain top" while their physical bodies are in a "self-induced" valley? Why or why not. (use I Corinthians 6: 19-20 as reference)
5. Matthew 5:45 (NIV) that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
 - A. This verse tells us that storms will come regardless of your spiritual status. How then are you different in the storm now versus same storms when you were not saved?
 - B. How do you encourage a believer vs. unbeliever in the storms of life?

6. Share your main takeaways from the Lesson/Sermon for this week.

The Lost Ax Head Miraculously Recovered and a Syrian Military Force Miraculously Blinded: God's Power to Help and to Defend His People,

Introduction— Circumstances, Opportunities of, to Grow— Growth, Mature, How to Achieve— Maturity, How to Achieve— God, Power of, to Conquer— Conquest, Source, God: every circumstance in life is a test. Whether good or bad, the circumstance gives us a unique opportunity to grow stronger in character and fruitfulness of life. Good circumstances give us—among other benefits—the opportunity to joy and rejoice in the Lord, giving thanks to God for the privilege of life. For every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights, the LORD Himself.

In contrast, bad circumstances give us the unique opportunity to be a good testimony to others, especially unbelievers. It is during these times that we learn to conquer, rise above, and be victorious over whatever bad or evil thing has happened to us or is confronting us. In dealing with the bad circumstances of life, we must remember one truth: the power to permanently conquer is found in God Himself. The LORD alone has the power to infuse within us the strength to overcome any circumstance, no matter how devastating or evil. The LORD will even deliver us from the bondage of death itself, immediately transferring us into His presence to live with Him eternally in the new heavens and earth that is to come.

God's power to help and defend His people through all the troubling circumstances of life is the practical subject of this Scripture. Two astounding miracles are performed by Elisha, miracles that demonstrate God's amazing power. This is: *The Lost Ax Head Miraculously Recovered and a Syrian Military Force Miraculously Blinded: God's Power to Help and to Defend His People, 6:1-23.*

1. (6:1-7) Laborer, Example of, Students— Students, Duty— Ministers, Duty— Diligence, Example of, Students— Prophets, School of, Needs Met— Ax Head, Miracle of— Miracles, Example of— Elisha, Miracles of: a borrowed ax head was lost in the Jordan River, but Elisha miraculously made it float to the surface. Why would God perform such a miracle? To demonstrate His power to help the faithful, diligent worker.

Apparently, the school of prophets at Jericho had outgrown its facilities, so the prophets requested permission of Elisha to build additional space at the Jordan River (2 Kings 6:1-3; 2 Kings 2:1-25). After granting their request, Elisha was asked to join the prophets at the construction site. Note that the prophets did not hire contractors to do the work, but they themselves constructed the buildings. This is a clear picture of diligent labor and of hard, industrious workers (2 Kings 6:4). As the students were chopping down trees for beams, an immediate problem arose. One student was swinging an ax when the ax head flew off the handle and into the Jordan River (2 Kings 6:5). Deeply concerned about the loss, the student cried out to Elisha that the ax was borrowed. The student was apparently poor and had no way to replace the ax head, for iron was very expensive in that day.

Simply asking where the ax head had fallen into the river, Elisha set out to demonstrate God's power to help the faithful, diligent worker (2 Kings 6:6-7). He then cut a stick from a nearby bush, threw it into the water, and watched it quickly rise again to the surface, showing (symbolizing) what he wanted the ax head to do. Miraculously, the ax head floated to the top of the river just as the stick had done, and Elisha instructed the student to grab the ax head and lift it out.

Thought 1. Whatever we, as believers, do, we are to do it well and do it diligently. Whenever we undertake a task, we are to be faithful and complete the work.

In our jobs and employment, we are to be committed. We are to be hardworking, conscientious, and steadfast, doing the very best work we can. It is a privilege to have a job and to have the health to perform the job—a privilege for which we should be thankful, a privilege that demands our very best. Yet think of all of the lazy, apathetic workers and all the sloppy work that goes on around us—all the people

who think that society and others owe them a livelihood. Then think what a different society this would be if everyone were hardworking and did his or her very best, if every worker was diligent and steadfast at his or her employment.

But it is not only our jobs and employment that concern God: it is every task we undertake in life. No matter what we put our hands to—whether employment or volunteer work or an activity that we freely undertake for our own benefit—God cares about how we approach the tasks. Never are we to be slothful, slacking and doing tasks halfheartedly. On the contrary, we are to be attentive and take an active interest in whatever task we undertake: we are to be industrious and persistent, pressing on until the work of our hands has been completed. And once the task has been finished, God will give us a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. Listen to what God says about being diligent and hardworking:

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephes. 4:28).

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17).

"And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23).

"Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thes. 3:12).

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:13-14).