

2 Kings 6: 8-17 NKJV

8 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." **9** 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." **10** 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.

11 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?" **12** 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." **13** 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." **14** So he sent their horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

15 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?" **16** He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." **17** 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.

So my question to you this morning is:

What do you see?

When I read Scripture like this I wonder about how I would respond to these situations, I wonder how you would respond to these situations, are we like Elisha who stays calm because he knows his God and helps someone to see why he is calm in the mist of trouble or are we more like the servant who has seen many things God has done, but still panics and feels inadequate and hopeless.

When God first created the Garden of Eden, Heaven and earth existed within the same realm. Mankind dwelt with God in the garden, and the garden itself was a form of paradise. It was God's intention that Heaven and earth continue to coexist like this, however, the fall of man-made that impossible.

Since then, this world has been searching for something and does not know it. it's looking for a savior, and I can't help notice that a lot of the successful movies have been about someone from another planet or place that comes in and saves the world from destruction. In the movies, it gives them hope and faith in something bigger than who they think they are. Even though it's just in the movies. We as the audience come away with the same feelings, but What a lot of the movie goers don't know, is not only do we have someone who is stronger than superman, wonder woman and aqua man all rolled into one, someone who has already established a Justice league. someone who can wash away their sins, restore them, cast out demons raise the dead, and give you eternal life. **His name is Jesus.**

And by the power of the Holy Spirit we to are supernatural. You see so many people already believe in something but they just don't know or understand what it is yet.

We can be like Elisha and tell people about Jesus so the Holy Spirit can open their eyes and they can see what they have been missing and searching for. Or we can complain about our circumstances and get offended by the way the world acts.

this world is where we pull heaven down or pull hell up. Standing on the earth, when we choose sin, folly, rebellion, bitterness, strife, lies, pride and the like we are literally pulling hell up into our life, because in eternity the only place those things will be is in hell. By looking up to heaven in prayer, the Holy Spirit helps us choose holiness, wisdom, obedience, forgiveness, love, truth, humility and the like and, in so doing, are pulling heaven down into our life. Prayer is where we look up and pull heaven down rather than looking down to pull hell up.

The longest recorded prayer of Jesus Christ occupies the entire chapter of John 17. There, Jesus begins to pray by looking up. Prayer is how we look up to the Kingdom of God. Prayer is how we invited the hope, help, and healing of the Kingdom to come down to the earth. While we remain on the earth, we need to look up to heaven as Jesus did, then we have to Ask the Holy Spirit to open our heart to Kingdom ways.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isiah, David, Caleb, Daniel and the disciples. When God touched them, they did not just see what was in front of them, they learned how to see what was all around them, and what was around them was God's heart and it is too big for them not to share.

Can I tell you a testimony this morning?

One of my first encounters with this kind of seeing, the kingdom, came when I was in Tulare California helping a pastor start a food bank and outreach ministry in a very bad part of town. Across the street was a gang house and there was gunfire every night. But one day the Pastor and I went to the warehouses to pick up bread to hand out in this town. We loaded up an old 1970's Ford truck with lots of bread and proceeded to go to low income areas and hand out the bread to people. All was going well until he hit this last motel. This motel was single story U shaped housing with the drive way in the middle one way in one way out. As we entered this area on each side of the road was a large man with a pit bull barking excessively, at that moment the pastor leaned over and said calmly, you need to watch yourself. I wish I could tell you that I was calm and peaceful but the truth was my heart was trying to leave my body. As we got out of the truck gang members came out of all the doors and were staring at us. Then one man started walking towards me. I knew by the Spirit that this was the leader of this group and I felt him looking right through me. I knew without a doubt that this person could kill me and not think twice about it. He stared in my eyes for what seemed to be an eternity and then something happened. His eyes cleared and I felt the Love of God on this man. A man who I know had the ability to be very bad, but all I could see now was God. As soon as that switch happened he flipped his head up and said can I have some bread, I said take what you need, heck take what you don't need. He smiled at me and took some bread, then the rest of them came to the truck got bread with a changed atmosphere. No longer was I afraid but bold and full of Love, no longer were these men what the world sees but now I see them with the love God had for them and I could talk with boldness about the King of Kings and the Lord of lords, my Jesus.

It took me a while to process this opening of my eyes, how could I look past what I knew and see love for this man, how could I stop being fearful and anxious and have boldness and peace. What happened to me? Later on The Holy Spirit gave me understanding and a verse. In order to go deeper in God, we must allow him to open the eyes of our hearts to see him as he truly is. So often we settle in our relationship with him for that which can only be seen with our physical eyes. We settle for community apart from unity in the Spirit, God's word apart from revelation from the Spirit, and look to "open" or "closed" doors as our guide rather than making space to ask for the Holy Spirit's leadership. It's time for us as the body of Christ to truly live in the fullness of relationship afforded to us by his sacrifice. It's for this reason, in Ephesians 1:16-21, Paul told the Church in Ephesus,

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.

We need the “eyes of our hearts” to be enlightened today. We need the Holy Spirit to come and do a mighty work that we might no longer live only for that which is seen, but by faith pursue the unseen. Hebrews 11:1 says, “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” God longs for us to pursue the deeper things of him in faith. He longs for us to grow in our relationship with the Holy Spirit and learn to live life with his presence, leadership, voice, and love as the foundation for everything we do.

To live only by the things, we can physically see is to live only for that which is temporal and fleeting. Psalm 101:3 says, “*I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.*” God has worthwhile work in store for us. He has a plan to bring heaven to earth through our lives every day. But in order to make an impact on eternity we must be able to see and know the heart of God. We must become increasingly aware of how God feels and what he wants to do moment-by-moment.

Growing in our relationship with the Holy Spirit is the foundation of seeking the deeper things of God. Learning to live by and with him is the only way to advance his kingdom. Take time in guided prayer today to ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your heart. Ask him to guide you into a deeper and more connected relationship with him. And choose today to pursue a life marked by deep connection with your heavenly Father and powerful works of his Spirit.

When Jesus went to the Fishing boat to pick his team to change the world, you know he was not building to the values and systems of this world. When he downsized Gideon’s army from thousands to 100’s you know the military strategies were not of this world. We see throughout the bible what seems to be building backwards, stripping and subtracting more than adding and multiplying. He builds different than people do. This Kingdom principle is get rid of to get ready for.

I can’t help notice a correlation between this kingdom principle of building and what we have been going through for the last 15 years. There is no doubt in my mind that God has been building us at Central according to his plan and ways.

You are here at Central Church whether online or right in front of me for his plan and purpose, you are here with gifting that he has given you to help us move in the direction God is leading this Church. You are here to help your church, neighborhood and city see more than this World and be a living example of hope. You are here because God is not done with you yet!