2 Kings 6 - Fr. Reweis Salidis

- And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell.” So he answered, “Go.” Then one said, “Please consent to go with your servants.” And he answered, “I will go.” So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, “Alas, master! For it was borrowed.” So the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. Therefore he said, “Pick it up for yourself.” So he reached out his hand and took it.
  - Story Explanation
    - Elisha is the head of the prophets at that time and he used to go from city to city to check on the prophets and the school of the prophets
    - The numbers were increasing – so there is a sort of revival in the school of the prophets
    - So they asked him to bless them with his presence
    - They were cutting the trees to get wood to build the new place
    - Iron so it’s very heavy – and the river is deep.
    - It was borrowed so he needed to give it back
    - Elisha takes a fragile, light, small stick into the water and the iron started floating.
  - Compassionate Fatherhood of Elisha
    - The sons of the prophets resorted to him in everything big and small.
      - The sons of the prophets check with Elisha even on the small details. Because he’s a father for them. This is the life of discipleship
      - We see it in the service – the servants ask Abouna before doing anything. Abouna asks the bishop before doing anything. Etc.
      - It’s different from how the world views it “taking permission” – it’s taking permission and a blessing.
    - Bearing the righteousness of God in us, instead of sinking into the depths, we come to be like a light cloud that soars up to heaven.
      - Iron – sins which are heavy and make us sink
      - Stick – the Cross that saved us and removed our sins
      - Water – baptism that removes our sins and makes us float
    - Elisha represents the cloud of witnesses that surrounds us (Hebrews 12)
      - St Mary is likened to a light cloud “Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud and comes into Egypt” (Isaiah 19:1)
    - This miracle reveals the helplessness of human strength to save – there is a need for the power of God for salvation in the water of baptism through the Cross
    - The miracle shows God’s care and provision for those who trust in Him – even in the seemingly insignificant events of everyday life

    - Sometimes I try to handle the small things for myself and leave the big things for God. But we need to trust God with the small things. And we cannot trust God with the big things unless we trust Him with the small things.
    - Ride car in the morning, going to work, going to pick up kids from school – sometimes we take it for granted. Just turn the car on and put our feet on the gas.
- Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, “My camp will be in such and such a place.” And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, “Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.” Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, “Will you not show me which 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.”
    - Elisha knew the plans the king of Syria was making
    - Elisha was peaceful, but the king of Syria was so disturbed
        - The pure soul can see the hidden things, but when the evil desires prevail over the soul, the insight is darkened and cannot see the divine things
        - “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” – those who are pure in heart (like Elisha) will see God and what pertains to God
        - For example, HH Pope Kyrillos VI – God revealed to him many things that no one else could see
        - After a long period of fasting like Lent, and many liturgies, by the end of the fast, we find ourselves not caring very much for what we will eat. The desires start to leave us. The soul starts to flourish and become more active. By the time of Holy Week, we desire to stay in the Church and we don’t want the week to end.
- So he said, “Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him.” And it was told him, saying, “Surely he is in Dothan.” Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then 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.
    - Dothan is in the midst of Israel near Samaria (capital of the Northern Kingdom). They sent all the horses and chariots to capture one man… Elisha. They came by night to capture Elisha. Elisha used to live in the mountain sometimes
    - He was surrounded by heavenly hosts. Some scholars say that Elisha could not see the hosts, but just had faith. And he prayed on behalf of Gehazi, his servant, to see
    - We often fear the enemy and his hosts because **we walk by sight and not by faith**.
        - “The Angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.” (Psalm 34:7)

    - The king of Aram relied on human wisdom and made plans – Elisha, enjoying a heavenly wisdom, was surrounded and protected by a limitless heavenly hosts who don't sleep, that the Lord commanded to protect him from evil
    - When we face difficulties that seem insurmountable, we need to remember that spiritual resources are there even if we can't see them.
        - I can't see the angels. I can't see heavenly hosts. But I have faith that I am surrounded by a cloud of witnesses that protect me and my family
        - We need to look with he eye of faith and let God show us His resources. If we don't see God working in our life, the problem is not His power… it's our spiritual eyesight.
        - Elisha's servant was no longer afraid when he saw God's mighty heavenly army. Faith reveals that God is doing more for His people than we can ever realize by sight
- So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. Now Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria. So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria! Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?" But he answered, "You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.
    - They say the blindness is not a complete blindness, but rather a blurriness… lack of discernment.
    - He took them and led them to the king of Israel (their main goal isn't Elisha but the king of Israel who they are warring with)
    - Now they are captured… surrounded by Israel.
    - Elisha rebukes the king for suggesting killing them – instead, he made a feast for them and sent them away to their master. And they never came back to Israel.
        - Elisha gives a good testimony to God
        - Love your enemy – even though it's the Old Testament, a time of power
        - "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you." (Proverbs 25:21-22)
        - Elisha heaped coals of fire on their heads
        - Act of love removed animosity between Aram and Israel – several years of peace between them (until the Aramites forgot)
- And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver. Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" And he said, "If the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?" And she answered, "This

woman said to me, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’ So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.” Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body. Then he said, “God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!” But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And the king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, “Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master’s feet behind him?” And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then the king said, “Surely this calamity is from the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?”

- Story
  - King of Israel is sad for his people
  - The people of Israel were so dry and hungry (physically, yes… but spiritually even more). Any mother would die before causing any injury to her son… but they just boiled their children and ate.
  - Tearing the clothes of the king or prophet means sadness, misery, hopelessness
  - The king blames Elisha “God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!”
  - God reveals all to Elisha who says “Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master’s feet behind him?”
    - Son of Ahab (murderer)
  - Famine
    - Deuteronomy 28 talked about the famines that Israel would experience when they rejected God’s leadership
    - It seems the siege was the worst in Israel’s history
    - Having rejected the word of God, the food of the Spirit, they came to be in extreme famine
  - Why did the king blame Elisha?
    - Elisha must have told the king to trust in God for deliverance
      - He thought Elisha gave him bad advice
      - Sometimes I may be fasting, or praying a lot (especially in Lent) and something bad might happen… and we might say “well what’s the point of fasting?”
    - For years the kings of Israel and the prophets had been in conflict. The prophets usually predicted doom because of the kings’ evil
    - The king may have remembered when Elijah helped bring an end to the famine. Perhaps the king thought that Elisha, a man of God, could do whatever miracle he wanted, so was angry that he had not come to Israel’s rescue
    - “What more would I expect from the Lord and his prophet Elisha?”
      - This is the way of many under strong temptation

- Instead the king should have said “Lord, increase my faith” like the apostles said (Luke 17)

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