

## The Dangers of Disobedience

II Kings 13:14-19

Our text this morning deals with events near the end of Elisha's life. He had received the call of God to carry on as prophet to Israel in the absence of Elijah. There is much that we could consider concerning the life of Elisha and the miracles he performed through the power of God. The widow's oil was multiplied, the noxious pottage was healed, the Shunammite's son was raised from the dead, Naaman was healed of leprosy, the axe head swam, and the Syrians were defeated, surrounded by chariots of fire in the mountain. [2 Kings 6:17 – 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.](#) Surely he had received a double portion and God had used Elisha mightily.

Elisha has lived a long and prosperous life for the Lord and is near death. Just as it was in the beginning of His ministry, Israel remained in turmoil. The lusts of the flesh and rebellion of men had taken its toll on the nation that God had called unto Himself. The Syrians were advancing against them and war was imminent. King Joash comes to Elisha, desiring him to intercede on their behalf. Elisha offers sound wisdom, but Joash lacked obedience. Many today face difficulty and defeat due to a lack of obedience.

In the closing scene of Elisha's life we see many great [principles](#) that were relevant and needful in that day and they remain in our day. I want to preach on the thought: [The Dangers of Disobedience](#).

**I. The Influence of Elisha** (14) – [Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.](#) I want us to understand the circumstances involved here. Israel was under threat of attack from the Syrian army. King Joash was burdened about the imminent battle and sought the counsel and help of Elisha. He was not a godly king, but [did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD](#), following in the ways of his father. The sins of Israel were catching up with them, judgment was on the horizon.

- What we have recorded in this verse was unprecedented in that day. Kings did not humble themselves before anyone. Kings did not wait upon prophets; it was the other way around. But Joash knew the power that Elisha had with God. He knew that he could touch heaven when he prayed and that God would honor Elisha's request. He knew that if he had any chance of overcoming the Syrians, he would need Elisha to intercede.
- This is a great truth that needs to be recognized in our day. Our nation has turned her back on the Lord. We have grown arrogant and defiant. Many feel that they alone are responsible for

the blessings they enjoy. Men of God are no longer sought for help in prayer or respected. Our leaders feel that they are accountable to no one. We need to place our confidence in the Lord alone and cry out for men of God and godly saints to intercede on our behalf. God is our only help and prayer is our only hope!

## **I. The Influence of Elisha (14)**

**II. The Instruction of Elisha (15-17)** – Most of us would've shunned Joash; we would've thought he was only getting what he deserved. Elisha responds with compassion and wisdom. Let's consider his instruction.

**A. It was Particular (15)** – *And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.* Elisha was not vague in what Joash needed to do. In fact, he was very specific. He told him exactly what he needed to do if he was to gain the favor and provision of God.

- We need to heed this lesson in our day. It is very simple and yet we seem to have great trouble submitting to it. If we expect God to move in our midst, heal our land, and save our lost, we have to come to God on His terms. We are in no position to set the terms or limits when serving and responding to the Lord. He expects us to respond according to His Word.
- Are you struggling in life? Does it seem that your prayers are not being answered and you have lost God's presence? Are you living according to His Word? Are you living pleasing to Him? God is very specific. We know what to do and how to do, so let's get busy doing it!

**B. It was Practical (15)** – This doesn't seem to be an unusual or difficult request. In fact, it makes perfect sense. The enemy is advancing; the nation is in danger of being conquered. What better advice than to take up a bow and arrow and prepare to defend what God had given them? The battle wasn't Israel's; it was the Lord's anyway. He wasn't expecting them to deliver themselves, just to be obedient!

- Why is it that we make serving the Lord so difficult? I am not belittling our service to Him or making light of it, but God has not given us a task that is impossible to achieve. We just need to get back to the basics, doing the practical things that brought us victory in the past. We need to set our hearts and minds to do those things that we know to do.
- Lost people aren't going to just show up on Sunday morning; someone needs to invite them. The enemy isn't going to pray that the Lord would manifest Himself in our midst; someone needs to get a burden for the presence and power of God. The world will not get any brighter as

long as our candle is hidden under a bushel; someone needs to live for the Lord. These are not difficult or unusual requests; they are practical and expected!

**C. It was Powerful** (16) – [And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.](#) Do you see the principle here? Joash didn't possess the power he needed within himself. He put his hand upon the bow and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. He needed the power of God if he was to be successful in the fight.

- We place a lot of emphasis on a lot of different things, but we seem to have forgotten that all is vain without the power of God in our lives. We need Him more than the breath we breathe. We will accomplish nothing of value without the power of the Lord. Are you hungry for that power?

**D. It was Promising** (17) – [And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.](#) In that day shooting an arrow into enemy territory was a declaration of war. Elisha revealed that God had promised a victory for Israel. He would deliver them from the hands of the enemy.

- Could I remind us to whom we belong? We are not serving a dead Lord. We are not serving one who is weak and powerless. We are serving the Almighty, risen Savior. He has already conquered sin, death, and hell upon the cross. He has carried captivity captive and set at liberty those bound by sin. There is no need to fear or be dismayed. We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus our Lord. I have read the back of the book and we are victorious in Christ. He is King of kings and Lord of lords!

- You may be struggling in the valley today. You may be sailing in the midst of a terrible storm. By all appearances, it may appear that you will never make it, but we serve One who has the ability to calm the storm or walk on the water, whichever He chooses!

**I. The Influence of Elisha** (14)

**II. The Instruction of Elisha** (15-17)

**III. The Indifference of Joash** (18) – [And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.](#) Here we find how Joash responded to Elisha.

**A. The Principle** – Elisha instructed Joash to take the arrows and [smite upon the ground](#). He was to take each of the arrows and smite the ground with them. He was to hold nothing back. All that was in the quiver was to be offered unto the Lord.

- That is what the Lord expects of us. We are to fully submit our lives to Him. We can leave nothing in the quiver. We must be willing to lay it all on the table, giving the Lord unhindered access and full control.

**B. The Potential** – [And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground.](#) I don't think Joash fully realized the opportunity that had been presented to him or he would have responded differently. He had the potential to experience a complete victory. God is sovereign and isn't limited by our abilities or actions, but I am convinced that many times we miss opportunities because of disobedience. We have the potential to see great things in life and experience God's power, but many times we miss it because we are unwilling to meet the Lord's commands.

- Some of you may be in the midst of the battle today. You may be close to resigning to defeat and giving up. You can't find the strength to press on. You are wondering if it is really worth all the effort. You just need to realize your potential in the Lord. You don't have to settle for limited victory. You don't have to continue in defeat. There is power in the Lord, but you must surrender all to Him.

**C. The Problem** (18b) – [And he smote thrice, and stayed.](#) Elisha had not said smite three arrows. He told him to smite the arrows he had. For some reason Joash smote three times and stayed. He stopped; he decided that three would be enough. He had potential for more, but thought he had all that he needed. (I don't know about you, but I need all of the Lord's power and blessing that I can receive. If there is more than what I currently enjoy, and there is, I am a candidate for that!)

- Why did Joash stay with three? We really don't know. It is possible that he wasn't completely committed to the Lord. He may have felt as if he only needed a little help. People may have been watching and he was worried about what they might think. The truth is we really don't know why.

- There is a great principle here though. God has required that we empty our quivers before Him. He hasn't asked just for those areas that are comfortable or easy; He has asked for all that we possess. We must be willing to give it all to God!

- Many today are living in defeat because there were areas in their lives that were marked "off limits" to God. Some may have started out well, but reached a point in life that they were willing to go no farther. Others may have lived abundantly for the Lord until they realized that others were watching and they no longer fit in with the crowd.

- Can I ask a personal question? What is in your quiver that you are unwilling to bring out and expose before the Lord? What is it that has hindered you from being all that God wants you to be? Could it be pride, bitterness, arrogance, or anger? Maybe it is complacency or apathy. God does not view disobedience in stages. We are either obedient to Him in all or we are disobedient.

#### **I. The Influence of Elisha (14)**

#### **II. The Instruction of Elisha (15-17)**

#### **III. The Indifference of Joash (18)**

**IV. The Interpretation of Elisha (19)** – *And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.* Elisha was angry because Joash had been disobedient and missed his opportunity for complete victory. Elisha was near death. He would not be around to intercede much longer. Elisha revealed that his partial obedience would result in only partial victory.

- I am not angry with you, but I am certain there are those among us that have held out on the Lord. There are areas in your life that you are unwilling to acknowledge or address. You have not been entirely disobedient, but you have not fully surrendered either. Your lack of complete obedience will result in only partial victory. You will miss out on the fullness that God desires for you.
- What is it that is standing between you and complete victory? What are you holding on to that means more than the blessing of God? Why not come and get things settled in your life? Why not come and empty your quiver before the Lord and begin anew in Him?