



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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May 9, 2010
6th Sunday after Easter
[2 Kings 6:15-17](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [2 Kings 6:15-17](#)
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 65](#)
Second Lesson: [Revelation 3:14-20](#)
Gospel Lesson: [John 14:23-29](#)

Live With Your Eyes Open

See who is with you
Live in confident trust

When we were growing up, our mothers taught us a lot of stuff, right? All kinds of important, valuable information about life and various things. One of the things I remember my mom teaching me is when we would walk out together to get the mail, she always made me stop and look both ways before I crossed the street. I don't know if your mom taught you that, but it was pretty important to take a look. We were out in the middle of the country and cars came over the hill pretty quick. I might have been big as a little kid, but I wasn't going to be big enough for them to see me, so it was important to look both ways.

Of course mothers that truly carry out the commands that God has given really teach us to see more than just oncoming traffic, right? Mothers that carry out the role that God has given to mothers and fathers would teach their children to see God's love, God's promises and God's presence all around them in their daily life, to see with the eyes of faith the things that the physical eyes can't see.

That's exactly what we see in this reading from [2 Kings](#) this morning...someone scared, someone worried, and someone asking God to open their eyes so they can see the protection of God that was very real and was there but that could only be seen with the eyes of faith. Seeing with the eyes of faith, we want to live with those eyes wide open all the days of our lives because then we'll see who is with us and then we'll be able to live in confidence. That's a pretty good thing.

I don't know how familiar you are with the Elisha. He was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom 800 years or so before Jesus was born. He ministered among people who had kings that were always ungodly. They led people away from the worship of the true God. If you want to read some interesting events, read [2 Kings 6 and 7](#) sometime later this afternoon and see how the Lord used Elisha to do some amazing things.

What led up to the events of what I just read to you in those three short paragraphs was the king of Aram was sending border-raiding parties across the party to raid the towns of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He had been trying to lay traps for the Israelites' king and the Israelites' army. But every time he would lay in wait someplace where he thought they would come, Elisha would go and tell the king, "Don't go to this town," or "Don't go to that town because the king of Aram is waiting for you." So finally the king

of Aram brings together all of his generals and all of his advisers and says, "Which of you is the traitor? Who of you are telling the king of Israel every one of my plans, because it's just like he is right here listening to us and he avoids every place we go." One of the generals said, "It's not one of us. It's Elisha, the man of God. He goes to the king and tells him exactly what you were doing as though he was standing next to you every time you would tell the army to go here or go there. Elisha tells them right where to go because the Lord had told him to tell the king this so that it would spare the Israelites' army."

So then the king says, "Here's what we need to do. Where is this Elisha? Let's go capture him and kill him." He was in Dothan, which was halfway between the king's two main residences in the capital city of Samaria and Jesrael, another town up the road a little way. That's where he lived, halfway in between there. So the king of Aram comes and surrounds the city. Elisha and his servant get up the next morning and the servant looks out and sees some threatening armies. So he says, "My Lord, what are we going to do?" Notice Elisha's response. The confidence, the calmness, the peace that comes from living with your eyes of faith focused on the truth that God will take care of you and God will protect you. If God chooses to deliver you, so be it. If he chooses not to deliver you, he'll take you to be with himself. The kind of confidence one can live in when one lives with the eyes of faith focused on the promises of God. But here instead of chiding or lecturing his servant, he just offers a beautiful prayer. "Lord, open his eyes so he can see." What the eyes of faith of Elisha were focused upon, God's promise of protection, God's promise to be with him, were revealed as he saw these chariots of fire surrounding them so that truly what Elisha said was true, "Those who are with us are more than those who oppose us." What an amazing thing that must have been to see.

What happened next was just as interesting. The prophet of God, Elisha, then prayed that God would strike blind all the soldiers of Aram. So he had opened the servant's eyes and now he closes the enemies eyes. He has the enemy come right up to him there in the city and he says to them, "No, this isn't the city you are looking for, but I'll take you to the city you are looking for." Then he leads them down the road to Samaria, the capital city of the kingdom of Israel. He leads them inside the fortified city. Then he says, "Lord, open their eyes." They open their eyes and look around. They are in the middle of the enemy stronghold surrounded by the army of Israel. Oops!

Then the king says, "Elisha, shall I put them to death?" Elisha says, "No, you shouldn't put to death those that the Lord has brought to you like this." So then what he told them to do and what they did is have a feast and a banquet that night. Then they sent them on their way the next day. Like I said, get into 2 Kings and read Chapters 6 and 7. There are some amazing stories.

The life of confidence that we can have as Christians if we live with our eyes of faith focused on God is just incredible. God's promises are amazing. God's love for us is unbelievable. He loved us not because we did something for him, not because we work hard for him, not because we loved him first, but Scripture says, "While we were still his enemies, Jesus died for us, the righteous for the unrighteous," to bring us to God. He

loves us because he is love. So we know his promises to us are going to be solid and true because he keeps his word.

So when you live focused on that, you will have all kinds of strength from God. The Spirit, like we heard in the Gospel, being poured into our hearts to strengthen us as we study the Word and as we receive the Sacraments and as we reflect on our Baptism. The Lord strengthens us and sustains us when we keep our eyes focused on God.

But have you ever noticed how hard it is to focus on two things at once? If I can't take my eyes off my beautiful wife while I'm preaching here, if I sit and look the whole time there, I can't see Joyce sleeping right in front of me. You can't see two things at once, right? The eyes of faith are going to be focused, or your physical eyes are going to distract you so that you don't focus on those promises.

Let me give you an example. Sometimes our physical eyes are focused on a mirror; how this affects me and who I am and what I'm doing, right? That focus on ourselves and how things affect us takes our eyes off the promises of God. We just sang a hymn that had 10 whole verses in it, right? Ten verses of a hymn...how many of you thought to yourself, "Is this ever going to end? Where are we going to quit? Are we going to sing all 10 verses? Is God really worth 10 verses of my singing?" Of course he is. You and I know that but as we are singing it, we think this is going to keep us from something. Maybe dinner is going to burn in the oven, but we get so self centered that instead of enjoying these beautiful words that are written that teach us about our God, we sit and whine about what we are missing out on.

Why are we whining about praising God? It's because we are looking at ourselves and how this affects me. If I look at my God, 10 verses isn't going to be enough. But you and I at times get to looking at ourselves. We get pretty self-absorbed and think that the sun revolves around us and the moon and the stars and all the other planets too.

Here's how Satan works. Let's just assume for a minute that you are sitting there right now thinking, "Ten verses...I love that hymn. I would have loved to sing 10 more." Satan is going to be there whispering in your ear, "Boy, you should thank God that you're not like those other sinners." Either he leads us to be self-absorbed that way, or he leads us to be self-absorbed with sinful pride that we aren't like those fools that just don't like to praise God like I like to praise God. Pretty soon we are standing right next to the Pharisee in the temple then, aren't we?

Satan doesn't give up working to separate us from God or from his promises or trying to take our eyes off of God and his promises and put them on something else. When we are looking at the something else, we aren't going to have that confidence that God will be with us and take care of us. We'll be looking at how WE have to fix things, and we just aren't that bright. We can't fix all the problems that come up in a sinful world. If we could, God would never have to send Jesus to live and die in our place.

But because we know and we rejoice in this truth that Jesus lived and died in our place, we realize that we just have to say, "Lord, I am a sinner. This is who I am. Forgive me and help me with your Spirit to focus on those promises." Then as we receive his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins, as we reflect on how he, in his love and mercy, washed away our sins through the water and the promises even before we could do anything at all to bring ourselves closer to him, we are amazed at the love that our God has for us. We are thrilled to the tip of our toes that God loves a wretched sinner like myself who is so self-absorbed so often and that he took away my sins and he worked faith in us to believe this. He sent the Spirit to us.

Now he brings us together to worship him. He brings us together to encourage one another and strengthen one another and remind each other how important it is to live with our eyes wide open, the eyes of our faith focused on a loving and a merciful God.