SBC Allison Menon

14-April-2020 Message 2

ESV 15 Minutes

**Open The Eyes of My Heart**

***2 Kings 6:1-23***

**Topic:** Sight

**Subject:** When we ask God to open our eyes,

**Complement:** We will have the faith to ask and receive the miracles of God in our lives.

**Purpose:** The listeners will open the eyes of their heart to God, increase their faith and have the assurance to look to God in times of need and see His miracles in their life.

**Introduction**

Growing up, I had a very hard time seeing God in my life. I knew when he was there at certain points in my life, but as an afterthought. Most times, many years later when I look back at certain events and think, “Yeah, that must have been God.”

I reached a place in my life where I wanted to see God, and that was my prayer. And I started seeing God in the smallest of things, like waking up in the morning, being able to put food in front of me. Small miraculous blessings that are often looked over for things that should just happen.

I find it necessary, for myself, to always look for God in all things and everything, as it serves as a reminder that he is there for me in all things and everything. But sometimes, when the going gets tough, the tough decide to take matters into their own hands before taking a massive detour that eventually leads back to praying in desperation. Wouldn’t it be great if we had consistent spiritual sight and immeasurable faith, so that we could skip the detour altogether?

How can you have your eyes open to what God is doing in your life?

In today’s passage, we’ll be looking at 2 Kings 6:1-23, which takes us through a series of events that involve Elisha and Syria. We’ve been following 2 Kings and we know that Elisha is a man of God who has his eyes wide open coupled with immeasurable faith. In 2 Kings 3, he digs a ditch and provides water, in 2 Kings 4, he multiplies the last remains of a window’s oil supply, in 2 Kings 5, he cures Naaman of leprosy, and in this passage, it’s no different.

(How can you have your eyes open to what God is doing in your life? First…)

**MP I. Recognize where God is at work.
Ask God to give you spiritual eyes to see what he wants you to see.**

Let’s start with the retrieval of the axe head in v5-6. A miracle of provision. An axe head falls into the water and Elisha throws in a stick where it sinks, which causes the axe head to float. We need to be able to recognize that God was at work through Elisha, it wasn’t the stick that made it float, that’s crazy. I had a similar incident happen to me once while on holiday in Australia. I had a waterproof camera and my sister was using it in the sea, when she dropped it and watched it get pulled away by the tide, and there was nothing she could do but cry all the way back to shore, ridden with guilt, then I started to cry, it was a nice camera. But my dad said that we should pray that it would be returned to us, before we counted our losses. And I prayed, “God, I hope someone picks it up and somehow returns it to us before the end of our trip.” It was the logical thing to pray. But as we all concluded our prayers, I saw the camera float back to the shore, against the tide, as if it swam back to us. We knew it was God because we prayed and because my dad would not let us forget that it was God. But in that moment of happiness, it would have been just as easy to say “wow, such a lucky day!’ or “what a coincidence?” or more locally, “heng ah”

Do we tend to do that often? Write off miracles as pure luck or mere coincidence? Like it just so happened that the tide decided to swoosh the other way and bring the camera back to shore? That day, in that moment, our faith as a family was increased and we knew, without a shadow of a doubt that God was with us on that holiday. We must be able to recognize that God is at work all the time. And just as Elisha instructed the man to pick up the floating axe head, once we recognize that God is at work, we will be able to see when it’s our turn to play our part.

(So how can you have your eyes open to what God is doing in your life? First, pray that God will open your eyes to what he is doing. Second…)

**MP II. Recognize that God has a solution for your problems and battles.
We will accept these solutions only if our eyes are open to him.**

Let’s move to v8-9. Here we see that God has given Elisha knowledge about where the Syrians would be, and he relays this message to the King of Israel, which saves the King of Israel. In v10, we know that it’s not the first time this has happened, as it reads that the King has been saved more than once or twice as a result of Elisha’s counsel.

God has a solution for our problems and battles, solutions that we will only accept if our eyes are open to him and that we are able to recognize that they are from him. It takes a great deal of faith in order for Elisha to accept that the knowledge he was receiving was true, neither did the information come from a person who might have had the knowledge, nor was there concrete evidence.

I like to talk, and I always have something to say about everything, so my biggest fear when I was given the opportunity to mentor youth leaders was that the words that came out of my mouth were my own. My prayer was that the words that came out of my mouth to the youth leaders were God’s words for them, and that I would know what to say, and what not to say. So when we had a youth conference, this was my daily prayer, and I received knowledge that I knew was not my own, because there were of things that I could have had no way of knowing, it was exciting and quite scary and incredibly hard to believe. But I had to keep up my faith and trust in God that he knew what he was doing by putting these words in my mouth. And I received assurance after assurance that the knowledge I got was correct and well received. That was my problem, my battle, and God had the solution all along, but until I set myself aside and I opened the eyes of my heart to him, to allow him to speak through me, I would have never been able to hear him or recognize the thoughts in my head as anything more than my own randomness.

If I were Elisha, and I had an open link with God, I’m quite sure Elisha already knew that the King of Syria was coming for him, as seen in v14. Instead of fearing for his life, he walked out in the morning, with no fear, to face the army that I’m certain he knew was waiting for him. His servant panicked on his behalf and Elisha asked God to open the eyes of the young man so that he could see what Elisha already saw, an invisible army of horses and chariots of fire all around them, one that was greater than the army that had come for him.

(How can you have your eyes open to what God is doing in your life? Pray that you are open to see him, and when your eyes are opened to God, you will be able to see the solutions that God has laid out for you, sometimes right in front of you. So what is the opposite of seeing this?)

**MP III. The opposite of spiritual sight is spiritual blindness.
We either see spiritual reality or walk in spiritual darkness.**

This whole time I’ve been talking about having sight, specifically spiritual sight, and there is always an opposing force in these things. Where there is no sight, there is blindness. Similarly, where there is no spiritual sight, there is spiritual blindness. In v18-19, Elisha asks that the Syrians be struck with blindness, this made them susceptible to any one that would give them direction, which allowed Elisha to lead them to Samaria. In this case, the blindness was provided to Elisha as a means to continue on with what God had intended. But if we fall into spiritual blindness on our own, we put ourselves in a position to be susceptible to suggestion, and we will lose sight of what God has intended for us. When we are blind, we are only able to listen and follow without being able to know for certain whether what we are following is right.

However, with our eyes wide open, we’ll be able to recognise the direction that God is pointing us in. In v22-23, Elisha can clearly see what course of action needs to be taken in order to prevent the Syrians from coming back and also preventing a war that might never end, saving many lives. He tells the King of Israel to treat them to a great feast instead of striking them down. With spiritual sight, we will be able to see the best course of action that God has already laid out for us.

**Conclusion**

When we ask God to open the eyes of our heart to him, we will be able to have the faith to ask and receive the miracles of God in our life (MI).

We need to recognize that God is always at work in our lives, in everything, big and small. That he already has a solution to our battles and problems, if we would just open our eyes to see them. And we must be wary of falling into spiritual blindness, lest we find ourselves on undesirable paths that lead to no good end.

Please commit to wake up every morning and ask that your eyes be open to him, for it is only when we are able to see him that we will be able to call upon him in our times of need, as our first instinct.

# Study Questions (Step 1)

### The Axe Head Recovered

**6**Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See, the place where we dwell under your charge is too small for us. **2**Let us go to the Jordan and each of us get there a log, and let us make a place for us to dwell there.” And he answered, “Go.” **3**Then one of them said, “Be pleased to go with your servants.” And he answered, “I will go.” **4**So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. **5**But as one was felling a log, his axe head fell into the water, and he cried out, “Alas, my master! It was borrowed.” **6**Then the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there and made the iron float. **7**And he said, “Take it up.” So he reached out his hand and took it.

### Horses and Chariots of Fire

**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 there 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. **18**And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, “Please strike this people with blindness.” So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha. **19**And Elisha said to them, “This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.” And he led them to Samaria.

**20**As soon as they entered Samaria, Elisha said, “O Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.” So the Lord opened their eyes and they saw, and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. **21**As soon as the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, “My father, shall I strike them down? Shall I strike them down?” **22**He answered, “You shall not strike them down. Would you strike down those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.” **23**So he prepared for them a great feast, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the Syrians did not come again on raids into the land of Israel.

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Prior to this passage was the healing of Naaman which got Elisha involved with Syria for the first time

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### Though it seems like a collection of strangely mundane events, they underline that in the midst of national trauma and of long periods of uneventful but consistent apostasy in Israel, Yahweh is still at work through his word, delivered by his prophets (ESV Expository Commentary)

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Elisha has succeeded Elijah and it’s during a time when the king and his court are not aligned with God. Despite this, Yahweh has still not abandoned his people. In this passage, the King in question is King Jehoram,

# Sources Used

# Questions & Answers (cf. p. 22 #1)

### Q. Why did the man call out to Elisha when the axe head fell in the water? (v5)

#### It seemed that he thought Elisha could do something about it. We have seen Elisha being able to manipulate the waters of Jordan by the Lord’s power in 2 Kings 2:14 (ESV Study Bible)

### Q. What was the significance of the making the axe head float? (v6)

#### This was an obvious and unique miracle. There was no trickery involved, it was an expression of Elisha’s faith in God (Enduring Word Commentary)

### Q. Why did the man have to pick up the axe head himself?

#### God could have very easily made the axe head appear in the man’s hand, but we see a clear example of God doing what he can do and leaving the man to do what is possible to him. (Enduring Word Commentary)

### Q. Why was the King of Syria warring against Israel? (v8)

#### Relations between Syria and Israel had deteriorated since 2 Kings 5 (ESV Study Bible)

### Q. Knowing who Jehoram is, why would Elisha help him? (v9)

#### The time had not come for judgment on the royal house (ESV Study Bible)

#### I believe this showed Elisha’s understanding and reliance on God’s timing

#### Elisha did not support the corrupt monarchs of Israel, but he knew that it was even worse for Israel to be conquered and subjugated under Syria (Enduring Word Commentary)

### Q. Why would King Jehoram listen to Elisha? (v10)

#### It was not uncommon for kings to seek the counsel of prophetic oracles (ESV Study Bible)

### Q. Why was the King of Syria troubled? (v11)

#### He thought that there was a traitor amongst his people as the King of Israel seemed to know what was going to happen before it happened, when it was actually the prophet Elisha who was revealing these things and not a traitor. (Enduring Word Commentary)

#### I think that Elisha’s previous encounter in 2 Kings 5, with healing Naaman, made it plausible for the King of Syria to believe that it was possible for Elisha to know things that no one else did, as he did know that Elisha had some kind of power from the miraculous healing.

### Q. Who was with Elisha? (v16)

#### Elisha knew that the Lord had sent an army of angels to protect him (ESV Study Bible)

### Q. Why was the young man unable to see what Elisha could see? (v17)

#### His eyes were not open to them until Elisha asked for the Lord to open the young man’s eyes (ESV Study Bible)

### Q. Did the Syrians really go blind? (v18)

#### Might not have been a physical loss of sight, but more of a dazed state, leaving them open to Elisha’s direction as he was able to see clearly (ESV Study Bible)

### Q. Why did Elisha tell Jehoram to not strike down the Syrians, but instead treat them like guests?

#### This practice of answering evil with good successfully changed the policy of free-lance raiders from Syria, so the Syrian raiders came to Israel no more. (Enduring Word Commentary)

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# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Text

# Possible Applications

### Text

# Older Outlines of This Sermon Text or Outlines by Others (Books, Commentaries, etc.)

### Text

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***2 Kings 6:1-23***

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**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# Exegetical Idea (CPT): The result of Elisha asking God to meet his friend’s need for an axe and open his servant’s eyes to his spiritual protection was to receive two miracles from God.

# I. The recovery of the axe head was a miracle of provision (1-13).

## Elisha and his students decided to build a larger place to live at the Jordan River (6:1-5).

## The borrowed axe head is lost in the water (6:6).

## Elisha instructed the pupil to retrieve the axe head so that he could personally participate in the miracle (6:7-13).

# II. Elisha sees his invisible, spiritual protection (14-17).

## Elisha’s faith in God opened his eyes to see the army of angels provided to protect him

## God opened the eyes of the servant so that he too may see the army of protection surrounding them

# III. The blinded Syrians are led to Samaria (18-23).

## God granted blindness the same way he granted sight, in response to Elisha’s prayers

## The King of Israel was instructed not to kill the Syrians, giving way for a peaceful solution that would stop the warring entirely

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will open the eyes of their heart to God, increase their faith and have the assurance to look to God in times of need and see His miracles in their life.

**Sermon Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)—Steps 5-6

# Introduction

### Interest: I learnt to open my eyes to God around me by…

### Need: We need to open our eyes to God

#### There is a need to be able to see the everyday miracles in our life and acknowledging that they are the work of God

#### The more we acknowledge, the more our faith in Him will grow

#### This faith is necessary in order to call upon the name of the Lord in our times of need

### Subject: How can you have your eyes open to what God is doing in your life?

### Background: Elisha’s miracles; Elisha’s faith in God’s provision; Elisha being recognized as a man of God

### Preview: Elisha and Syria

### Text: 2 Kings 6:1-23

We need to recognize that God is at work

# I. We need to recognize that God is at work

## The retrieval of the axe head was a miracle of provision (1-6)

### Do we write of miracles as pure luck or coincidence?

### Story about the camera floating back

## The man had to pick up the axe head himself (v7)

### God shows us the way for us to pick up from Him

(God has a solution for our problems and battles, solutions that we can only see if our eyes are open to him.)

# II. God has a solution for our problems and battles, solutions that we will only accept if our eyes are open to him.

## God sent word to Elisha about the location of the Syrians and he relayed the message as is to the King of Israel (8-9)

### Many a times, it’s very hard to just go with it, because it’s illogical and does not make any sense

### But Elisha had no fear and with absolute faith

## Elisha could see the army of angels that God had sent to protect them (v16-17)

### Elisha knew that God would be there to fight the battle

#### It is absolute trust, which is difficult to come by when we don’t have all the information at hand

### The young man could not see the army until God opened his eyes at Elisha’s request

#### Very often, God has worked out everything for us, but we have trouble letting go and letting God move because we are not able to see what he is doing

The opposite of spiritual sight is spiritual blindness.

# III. The opposite of spiritual sight is spiritual blindness.

## Elisha asked for the Syrians to be made blind (v18)

### This made them susceptible to suggestion, making it possible for Elisha to lead them to Samaria

### This could happen to us if we live in spiritual blindness

## Elisha instructed the King of Israel to feast instead of strike

### His spiritual sight showed him what course of action to take in order to prevent the Syrians from coming back, but also spared a lot of lives that would be lost if a war broke out

### Spiritual sight allows us to see the best course of action in a situation that has already been laid out for us by God

When we ask God to open our eyes to him, we will have the faith to ask and receive the miracles of God in our life.

# Conclusion

### When we ask God to open our eyes to him, we will have the faith to ask and receive the miracles of God in our life (MI)).

### We need to recognize that God is at work in our lives, and that he has a solution for our problems, that we will only be able to accept if we our eyes are open to him. We must also be careful of spiritual blindness.

### Wake up every morning and ask that your eyes be open to him.