

SERMON: WHEN THINGS GO AWRY

2nd Kings 6: 1-7

(1) And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. (2) Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. (3) And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. (4) So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. (5) But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. (6) And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. (7) Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

Introduction

There are many wonderful stories associated with the life of the prophet, Elisha. The story of the lost axe head is one of the most beautiful. It is so simple, yet so profound. While a seminary student was cutting down a tree to build a bigger dwelling place, the axe head flew off the handle and fell into deep water. God worked a miracle through Elisha to retrieve it. Elisha used a simple small limb from a tree to work the miracle. This miracle occurred not as a response to a major tragedy, but rather at a time of growth and expansion. God not only delivers us from tragedies, but also helps us perform on a daily basis.

This story is beautiful for many reasons, but one that stands out vividly is the fact that we see different generations communicating and working together. The old preacher, Elisha, and the young preachers were united in a meritorious project. There was mutual respect and submission. The young student preachers asked for permission to build a separate dormitory, because with the increased number of students, Elisha's house was just too small. They did not break off on their own. There was respect for authority. Elisha, on the other hand, accepted a good idea from his students. (No leader, no matter how gifted, has all of the good ideas.) The young preachers asked Elisha to accompany them to their new location. They knew they needed all of his wisdom and insight. They wanted to be in his presence 24/7. Just for the record, let me say this emphatically: the associated ministers of Antioch-Lithonia and I have a great loving, cooperative, respectful relationship! To God Be The Glory! It is great, whether in a family, a work environment, or in a church, when the various generations work together for mutual benefit.

Now let's review this story and extract some of the other great truths embedded in it.

Exposition

1. Even In Meritorious Missions Mishaps And Mistakes Can Occur.

(The Axe Head Flew Off The Handle And Landed At The Bottom Of The Muddy Jordan.)

2. Things Can Always Be A Lot Worse Than They Are.

(Someone Could Have Been Injured.)
(Be Grateful.)

3. All That We Have Is Borrowed From God.

(An Expensive Tool Was Borrowed.)
("Everything I Have Is On Loan From God" – Spurgeon)

4. The Most Valuable Things Are The Most Easily Lost.

(The Axe Head, Not The Handle Was Lost.)
(The Work Came To A Stop When The Axe Head Was Lost.)
(Satan Wants To Stop Your Good Works.)

5. With God's Help The Lost Can Be Recovered.

(Sometimes God Uses Unique Methods To Retrieve The Lost.)
(The Axe Head Floated And Came To The Student.)
(Iron Imitated The Stick/Branch.)
(We Must Get The World To Imitate Us.)

Closing Thoughts

Some theologians think the stick is a type of the old rugged cross. The young student immediately appealed to his master, Elisha. When we are in need, we should also appeal to our Master, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We should always hide in the shadow of the old rugged cross. Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

Related Scriptures

Exodus 22:14-15

Deuteronomy 19:4-6

End Note

The phrase, "The iron did swim," is very interesting. It did not just mean the iron floated. The axe head did more than float like a cork; it moved toward the student and came to the bank of the Jordan. All the seminary student had to do was bend down and pick it up. Amazing!

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