



Summer Study Discussion Guide #2

Sermon Title: Principles for God's Messengers

Biblical Reference: 2 Kings 8:7-15

Date Preached: Sunday, June 19th, 2022 @ 11am

Summer Study Date: Wednesday, June 22nd, 2022

Sermon Summary

In this passage (2 Kings 8:7-15), we see the Lord moving Elisha from Samaria to the Syrian city of Damascus. The Syrians were enemies of Israel and continue to be to this day. Even though his location was different, Elisha stayed true to his calling as a messenger of the Lord.

The sermon explored the difficult situation Elisha was placed in and observed how he remained a faithful messenger of the Lord. The comparison was made between Elisha's position as a prophet of the Lord with our duty to be the messengers of the Lord in our day. We heard about four principles in the passage that Elisha operated by. These principles helped him remain true to the Lord and accomplish his mission. If we apply these principles in our day, we too will be faithful messengers of God.

Our goal tonight is to help each other understand these principles and apply them to our lives.

Quick Review

Looking back at your notes from this week's sermon, was there anything you heard for the first time or anything that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

Were you able to apply something you learned from the sermon this week?

My Story

Can you think of a time in your life the Lord shielded you from the problems those around you were experiencing?

7 And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

8 And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

2 Kings 8:7-8

In verses 7-8, we see that when the king was sick, and he went to the prophet Elisha. He was the only person the king knew that could get him in touch with the Lord and answer his concerns.

Can you think of a time when you realized that you were the only representative of the Lord in the group and if you did not do your job peoples eternity depended on it?

Elisha was looked at as different from the rest of the people in Damascus; he was known as the representative of God. Can you tell us about the time in your life where you went from being one of the crowd to being looked at as the representative of God?

Digging Deeper

1. Learn When to Move On:

Ask a volunteer to read:

2 Kings 8:7- And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

In verse seven we see that the Lord moved Elisha to Damascus. The King of Israel and the people of Israel resisted his ministry and never repented of their idolatry; they never fully accepted Elisha's message and embraced the Lord. Because of this the Lord moved His messenger away from them.

The Lord also did this with Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-9) when he stopped the rain, he also stopped preaching. The Lord hid him by the brook of Cherith and then sent him to Zarephath. Jesus did this as well (Mark 6:4-6). He also instructed His disciples in Matthew 7:6 not to cast their pearls before swine. This teaches us that there is a time to move on.

The Lord may have us move on from people we are trying to help or reach with the gospel. He may also have us move on from relationships that have become harmful.

Discussion Questions:

- In your life how does the Lord show you that it is time to move on?
- Can you think of a time when you failed to move on and did more harm than good?
- In verse seven when Elisha moved on immediately, he found that people were seeking him out and were receptive to his ministry. Can you give us an example of an opportunity that was wasted because someone failed to move on?
- Elisha loved his people and moving on must have been painful for him. What fears hinder you or others from moving on?

2. Do Not Pick Sides

Ask a volunteer to read:

2 Kings 8:9- So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

In this verse Benhadad calls himself Elisha's son but he was far from that; he was an enemy. He had tried to imprison and harm Elsha. He tried to kill and enslave the Jewish people. He was continually the enemy of God and Elisha.

Yet Elisha ministers to this man, as he would any other man, and does not choose sides. He freely gave advice to Jehoram the king of Israel and Benhadad.

Discussion Questions:

- How was he able to minister to kings on both sides of the conflict without compromising his integrity?
- How do you respond when you are put in a similar situation?
- What would need to change in your life to be free to minister to both parties?
- What harm comes because of people picking sides?
- How can picking sides harm our ability to be an effective minister?

3. Do Not Choke

Ask a volunteer to read: 2 Kings 8:8-10

8 And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

9 So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.

Elisha was faced with the pressure of gifts, the threat of danger in Damascus, and confronted by the head of state. However, he was not intimidated and delivered God's message in its entirety. He did not choke; he delivered the message even though His life was at risk, his freedom was at risk, and his finances were at risk. Yet we as Christians many times fail to deliver God's message.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the excuses that you are tempted to use to not deliver the message?
- Some of the people God may have us give his message to are co-workers, classmates, family friends, strangers, and enemies. Which one of these is the most difficult for you? Why is that group the most difficult for you?
- What do you believe gave Elisha the courage to deliver the message?

4. Show Them What They Cannot See

Ask a volunteer to read: 2 Kings 8:10-13

10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.

2Ki 8:11 And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.

2Ki 8:12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

2Ki 8:13 And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

When Hazael hears Elisha say Benhadad, his master was going to die by an act of violence it shocked him that Elisha knew what he was planning and tried to conceal his emotions. Elisha then began to weep.

When Hazael asked him why he was weeping he told him he was weeping because he could see the evil Hazael was going to do in the years to come to. Hazael was taken aback and offended by this. Hazael was planning the murder of his master, yet he was offended by Elisha's pronouncement of what he would do in the future.

Discussion Questions:

- How is Hazael an example of how we have a tendency to see ourselves?
- Can you share a time when God used a messenger to warn you about what was coming if you did not change your direction? Did you listen? If you did, what might have happened if they had not given you God's message?
- We are not prophets like Elisha with special revelation from God. So how can we warn people of things in their future that they cannot see?

Taking It Home

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they can do because of hearing the message:

1. What point in this message was most impactful for you?
2. How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?
3. How will you put into practice what you've learned today?