

## Shooting For Complete Victory

- *II Kings 13:14-19*

- **Let me ask you a question this morning, “Do you want God’s best for your life?”**
  - I dare say that as I ask that question, most if not all of you would quickly raise your hand & say, “Count me in, I want God’s best.”
  - But hang on! If we truly want God’s best for our lives, according to scripture it requires some obedience and faithfulness on our part as well. I am a firm believer that we often times measure the extent of the victory that we have in our lives. Let me explain.
- **In this passage of scripture, you are going to see really 2 messages, but you will see how both have a similar rooted problem.**
  1. Don’t allow your relationship with God to just be an outward show.
    - There’s a lot of folks today that are just putting on a show.
    - There care nothing about living for God, they are just out to impress others.
      - If we are going to live for God, then let’s do it.
      - If we are going to outwardly be associated with Him, we better make sure we have inwardly committed to Him.
  2. In exercising our faith in God, follow His will completely & with determination. In other words, when following God, don’t make plans for compromise or settle short of complete victory.
    - a. When we as the people of God come across situations and circumstances, if we’re smart, we go to God.
      - i. Which is the best thing to do & is exactly what James encourages us to do.
      - ii. James 4:2 – “ye have not, because ye ask not.”
    - b. But many times we sell ourselves short. What about when we do ask God and He shows us the way? Are we following His instructions fully? Are we doing what is necessary to be able to receive God’s full blessing?
- **In our scripture this morning, we read of a King who stopped well short in his faith & in his action & it had devastating results not only in his life, but in the lives of those in Israel.**
  - Joash was the king of Israel during this time, but Israel has been beaten on by the Syrians & their constant attacks. And Israel's military might is down very low. All they have right now is fifty horsemen and ten chariots and 10,000 soldiers and it is not looking very promising for Israel.
    - Now, Joash was one of those people was just sort of lukewarm about the things of God.
      - He was more concerned with what others thought than what God thought.
      - He didn’t mind a little religion, he just didn’t want it to make a change his life.
  - So, Joash comes down to Elisha. Elisha has been the prophet of Israel for many years now, and he's on up in age. And he's about to die, and his hands are weak and trembling. Joash is so heart-broken at the condition of Israel that he comes to see Elisha, who had often been the one to petition for him in the past, so perhaps he thought that the old man of God might be able to help deliver them again.
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
  - After Joash went to Elisha and told him his concern for the nation of Israel, this is when Elisha gave him the instruction to shoot an arrow towards Syria (representing victory over it) and to strike the ground (probably by shooting the arrows at the ground) with the other arrows in his hand.
    - Joash, not having a heart for the Lord, obeyed the instruction but did it half-heartedly. He got the first one right, shooting the arrow out of East window but when it came to trusting

God for continued and complete victory, his unbelief and lack of commitment to God took over.

- He shot 3 of the arrows and struck the ground, but stopped there. He did not strike the ground with the rest of the arrows that he had in his hand. He did not go all the way. He stopped because he did not have conviction in his heart for God, nor did he truly believe that God could or would deliver Israel from Syria completely.
  - This was a strange request I know, and the truth is many of us might have only struck 1 arrow in the ground if that. But this was a lesson that Joash should have been aware of, it was a lesson of faith.
  - Instead of striking the ground with deliberateness or confidence, we get the feeling he did it sort of rolling his eyes (if you will) will appeasing the prophet.
  - How many times have we done the exact same thing?
    - How many times have we prayed a prayer never expecting God to hear it, much less answer it?
    - How many times have we come to church for the sake of others & rolling our eyes that God could ever speak to us?
  - Joash was a man who knew enough about religion that he should have understood that he couldn't ride on the coattails of Elisha's faith not having a faith in God of his own. He was just fearful of his situation and was looking for any way out that would not require a change in his lifestyle.

➤ **Now let's connect this story to our lives. Much like the King, I am afraid that we settle for less than God's best when it comes to things in our own lives. God has not given us an arrow for victory, but we have victory through the blood of the Spotless Lamb this morning, AMEN?**

➤ **What are some areas in our life were we seem to settle for less than complete victory?**

### **1. In Our Battle With Sin**

- Many times when people get saved or re-commit their lives to God, they will immediately pull out their arrows & strike a few of them on the ground & determine to gain the victory over them.
  - Cursing
  - Drunkenness
  - Inappropriate Relationships
- Now this is a good thing, this is certainly needed in their lives, but instead of just shooting 3 times, they should have shot 5 or 6 or even more times b/c there are other sins that continue to linger that we have thought are not worth focusing on.
  - Attitude
  - Sinful Thoughts
  - Unforgiving Spirit
  - Pride
- "But Preacher, don't we all have little sins that we struggle with?" If we do, it's b/c we haven't trusted in God for complete victory.
- "But these lies, gossip, & bad attitude, those are just my besetting sins."
  - I like the way C.H. Spurgeon responded to besetting sins, "If I walk across town tonight & a dozen men come up & knock me down & rob me, I have been 'beset' by them. But when I stay at home & ask them to come into my house, and fellowship with them, and let them rob me, I cannot talk about being beset b/c I have invited them there."

- Sin will ruin you if you get to the point where you just accept sin & decide you can't overcome it.
- There must be a clean sweep of every sin in your life. Don't just focus on 2 or 3 big sins, (do we really just think God's best can only come in this fashion?) lets allow God to give us the victory over all of them by trusting in Him & being obedient unto Him.
- I will remind you that Christ came not to save us in our sins but to save us from our sins.

## 2. In Our Relationship With God

### a. We settle in our Christian knowledge.

- i. Yes, if you are born again, you have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb & you have been justified through his death, burial & resurrection, and at that very moment of your confession ... You are saved!
- ii. But though your sins have been forgiven & you are now a child of God, then God desires to start the process of sanctification in our lives, but few are interested in this participating in this class.
  1. We need to grow in the fruits of the spirit.
  2. We need to strengthen & grow in our walk with the Lord.
  3. We need to study & discover the promises that God has for us.
  4. We ought to strive to walk closer to our Lord & Savior each & every day.
- iii. But many are just satisfied with dodging hell & we fall short of God's best.

### b. We settle in our faith.

- i. Why don't Christians have greater faith? The obvious & only answer is, they never grow their faith.
    1. Matthew 17:20, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."
  - ii. While it is true that mustard seed faith can save you, do we intend to be content with that kind of faith?
    1. This was the very thing that got Joash into trouble. He had faith enough to shoot the arrow out of the window, but not enough faith to trust in God for victory down the road.
      - a. You may love Christ today, but why not love Him more.
      - b. You may have a little joy in your life right now, but why settle? Why not seek out more?
      - c. God has given each of us grace, but are you satisfied or do you long for more?
      - d. God has given you victory in some areas of your life, but why not continue to trust in Him for complete victory?
    2. As a child of God, we should be constantly striving to strengthen our faith & our relationship with God.
      - a. We pray every once in a while, but I wonder how faithfully we pray.
      - b. We come to church at least once a week, but there's a difference between coming to church & worshipping God.
      - c. I am glad that many of you have led at least a few people to the Lord, but are we content with just a few?
- What I am saying is this, I truly believe according to the Bible God has much in store for our lives, but we are settling for less than God's best.
  - When we struck the ground 3 times, what we should have been doing is striking with every arrow we have, trusting God to give us complete victory.

➤ **But what are the reasons that so many are lacking in their faith and why do we settle for less than God's best?**

**1. We try to hold the arrows in our own strength.**

- “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.” (v.16)
- Elisha is a symbol of whom here? He's a symbol of God. And so here's the king, and the prophet says, "Take your bow. Take your arrows." He takes them. Then he says, "Put your hands on them." And he puts them there. And then the prophet of God lays his hands upon the king's hands.
- The lesson here is this ... Because of the weakness of our flesh, we need to have our frail hands overlaid by God's omnipotent hand. When our hand is upon the weapon, His hand must be over ours.
  - Here's what we think ... “Well I just have to be strong if I am going to get victory in my life.” No you don't, you just have to be dependent on God & not yourself.
  - When it comes to our relationship with God & spiritual victories, our personal strength is a liability while our weakness is an asset.
    - II Corinthians 12:9-10 – “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”
  - God doesn't need our strength. What He needs is our obedience.
- Some people have the wrong idea & will foolishly proclaim. “This is my life, I can live however I want!”
  - Sir, ma'am, if that is you today, let me remind you of something. You have the freedom to make your own choices, but victory will only be found in your life when you give complete control over to the One who holds your victories.
    - II Chronicles 20:15 – “And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.”
  - Joash took his bow & his arrows, and the he placed his hands on the bow ... but victory came when the prophet of God placed his hands on the hands of Joash.

**2. We refuse to face the enemy. (v.17)**

- Apparently, where Joash was, the windows were closed up & perhaps even covered up b/c of fear of the enemy.
  - How many of us leave defeated Christian lives b/c we allow Satan to continue to bring fear into our lives?
    - Fear over past sins.
    - Fear over disappointment.
    - Fear over failures.
  - Sometimes we refuse to come to Christ b/c of this same fear.
    - Doubting that you can live for God.
    - Doubting that you can trust in Him.
    - Doubting that Jesus blood can forgive & cover your sins.
  - And so many in our world today stay behind these closed windows with the shades pulled in fear of the enemy.

- II Timothy 1:7 – “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”
- Elisha told Joash to open the window towards the East to shoot the arrow of victory.
  - The East was the direction of the enemy. If there was going to be victory, then he would have to open the window & face the enemy.
    - What windows of your life are closed today? You will never have victory until you allow the Lord’s light to shine into that place in your life.

### 3. We become content.

- Joash followed the command & shot towards the east to claim his victory. He even went out & struck a few arrows in the ground for good measure. And perhaps in his eyes, he became satisfied with that display of faith ... but it wasn’t enough, and God help us to never become content in our faith & in our walk with Him.

### 4. We live unbelieving.

- In earlier times, when the people were about to commence a war, the way that they would commence that war would be to take a spear and hurl it into enemy territory.
  - It made no difference whether the enemy was there or not. It really wasn't for the enemy to see.
  - It was a way of declaring war, and it was an attitude of faith. It was making a stand & declaring, “We have had enough & we are claiming victory over this enemy!”
- Joash failed to believe that shooting arrows would defeat the Syrians.
- If we are not careful, right here is where many of us mess up.
  - “How is praying going to help my situation.”
  - “Wait on the Lord, I don’t have time to wait on the Lord.”
  - “God can’t possibly change this in my life.” And so we fail to trust in Him.
- Did God not promise to protect you from the enemy?
  - Romans 8:38-39
- Did He not promise to make a way of escape for you during temptation?
  - I Corinthians 10:13
- Did Christ not promise to completely forgive you & never bring it up again?
  - Psalm 103:12
- Then why are we living our lives unbelieving? Place your faith in the One who has already claimed the victory for you & I.

### ➤ **Sadly, because Joash settled for less than complete victory ...**

1. He paid for his choice personally.
  - After 3 victories, Syria came to power again.
  - Because he failed to trust in God for daily grace, his life was drastically impacted.
2. All of Israel paid for this choice.
  - Because of one man’s choice, all of Israel suffered greatly.
  - I will remind you that b/c of our choices, not just us, but many others close to us will also feel the consequences of our choices.

### ➤ **A little religion is a dangerous thing ... so if you are going to drink, drink deep!**

### ➤ **If you are going to trust in the Lord, the give it your all.**

### ➤ **If you are going to follow Him, then don’t sell yourself short & accept anything less than complete victory!**