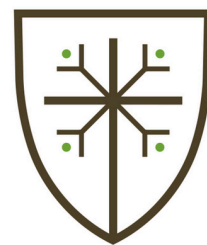




ELISHA

Renewal in the Spirit

SERMON NOTES



May 26, 2024

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"The Source and The Self"

PREACHER

Rev. Josh Keller

TEXTS

2 Kings 2:15-25

Titus 3:1-8

Matthew 5:13-16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do individual Christians and the Church as a body participate in the renewal of the world and our culture without "losing our saltiness?"
2. What are some ways in which we try to fix problems in society or in our own lives without going to the source?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Josh asked us the question, "What does spiritual renewal look like in us, and in the world?" And we find the answer in the story of Elisha's work in the city of Jericho.

Bad Source

Jericho is a pleasant city. It's glittering and attractive, but something is wrong. The stream that provides life-giving water to the city is producing miscarriages, bringing death. Renewal had to happen at the source of the stream itself. And just like Jericho, our own spiritual renewal must happen at the source, at our heart. When our hearts worship the wrong thing, it's like a poisoned stream. Everything that flows out of it is also contaminated. The problems "out there" in the world are first and foremost because of the problem within ourselves.

New Bowl

Elisha is going to throw salt into the river in order to heal it. But first, he asks for a new bowl to hold the salt. Jericho is next to the Dead Sea, so called because of the extremely high levels of salt that keep anything from flowing into or out of the sea, causing it to be stagnant and thus, dead. But what Elisha brings is a different kind of salt, one that produces life instead of death. This is not just cleaning the water itself, it is giving it a renewed life source, new salt from a new bowl. In the same way, God does not just redeem us to make us clean. But his very presence has descended upon us and dwells with us. The Spirit puts us in a new bowl, gives us a new heart. He is making us new at the source of our life. A spiritually renewed heart looks different. It finds God and his ways beautiful, and obedience to God not a chore but a joyful response to what God has given us in Christ.

Salt

In the ancient world, salt had two functions. The first was, like it is for us today, to accentuate flavors in foods. And the second was to preserve fresh meats. If you belong to God, you are the salt of the earth, sent into the world to bring out the life and beauty, ready to do every good work. You are to participate in, support, and accentuate all that which is good. But salt also must remain different from those things around it or it is no longer serving its purpose. We must become comfortable with being increasingly different than society. Salt has to be cast out into the river of the world and society in order to participate fully in its renewal