Open Our Eyes

Jason Smith | Spiritual Warfare Part 2

2 Kings 6:15–17

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

Introduction

- Have you ever awakened to a problem that seemed bigger in the morning than it did the night before? Before your feet touched the floor, your mind was already racing: bills, family problems, a difficult conversation, an uncertain future.
- That is where we meet Elisha's servant. He steps outside and discovers an army surrounding the city. Everywhere he looks, he sees horses, chariots, soldiers, and no obvious way of escape.
- His question is honest: "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" Maybe you have prayed that same question this week: "Lord, how am I going to get through this?"
- Elisha answers, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then he prays, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see."
- God opens the servant's eyes, and he sees the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. The danger was real, but it was not the whole picture.

Spiritual warfare often involves choosing between fear shaped by visible circumstances and faith grounded in God's unseen presence.

1. Fear grows when the problem fills our vision

- The Syrian king sent this army to capture Elisha because God had been revealing the king's plans to the prophet. Elisha encountered opposition while faithfully serving God.

- Obedience does not exempt us from difficulty. We can be following God and still face an intimidating situation. Trouble is not automatic evidence that we have missed God's will.
- The servant was not imagining the soldiers. His fear had a real cause. Elisha helped him see more of reality instead of pretending the threat did not exist.
- Fear narrows our attention until we can count every obstacle but struggle to remember any promise. We keep rehearsing what might happen, and our imagination begins treating possibilities as certainties.

Illustration The coin in front of your eye

- Hold up a coin, or ask the congregation to imagine one. At arm's length, you can see the coin and much of the room around it.
- Bring that same coin close to one eye while closing the other. Something small now blocks much of your view. The room has not disappeared; your view has narrowed.
- A problem can become so close to our attention that it obscures everything else. The answer begins with allowing God's truth to widen our perspective.
- Preaching emphasis: "What fills your vision will influence your response."
- We can acknowledge fear without surrendering every decision to it. "Lord, this is real, and I am frightened. Help me remember who you are."

2 God is present before we recognize his presence

- Elisha says, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." He sees the earthly threat, but he also knows that God has resources the servant cannot yet see.
- Notice his prayer: He asks God to open the servant's eyes. He does not ask God to send an army. The heavenly protection is already present.
- The servant's perception changes. God's faithfulness was never waiting for the servant to notice it.
- There is another detail worth noticing: Elisha remained calm before the servant could see what he saw. His confidence did not depend on everyone around him agreeing. Sometimes a household needs one person who will pray before joining the panic. You do not have to know every answer to become that steady presence for someone else.
- Think about a parent sitting beside a child at night. The child may be asleep and completely unaware of that watchful presence. Yet the parent's care continues. In a far greater way, our Father's attention does not disappear when we are exhausted,

distracted, or unable to put our prayers into words. His care is grounded in his character.

- Ask the congregation: “Where have you mistaken silence for absence?” Give them a moment to consider that question. Perhaps God has been sustaining them through strength for one more day, a person who keeps checking on them, or grace to keep obeying. Those gifts deserve our attention too.

Illustration Walking into a dark room

- Imagine entering a familiar room after dark. You cannot make out the furniture clearly. You hesitate because you are unsure where to step.
- Then someone turns on the light. The couch, chairs, and doorway become visible. The light reveals what was already there.
- In this passage, God enables the servant to perceive a reality that was already present. His inability to see it had never meant it was absent.
- Application: We sometimes say, “I cannot feel God working,” and quietly assume he has stopped. Our feelings matter, but they cannot measure the full extent of God’s activity.
- Preaching emphasis: “God’s presence does not begin when my awareness catches up.”
- This is not a promise that believers will never suffer. Scripture shows faithful people enduring hardship. God protects according to his wisdom, and his presence sustains us through suffering as well as delivering us from it.
- You may still face the appointment or difficult conversation tomorrow. You can face it knowing that God has not abandoned you.

3. Ask God to help you see clearly

- Elisha prays, **“O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.”** His response to the servant’s panic is prayer.
- We need that kind of prayer. We may never see fiery chariots, but we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand and trust what Scripture reveals about God.
- Ephesians 6 teaches that spiritual conflict is real. Angels and demonic powers are real, but Scripture directs our confidence toward the Lord and his strength.
- People are not our ultimate enemy. Spiritual awareness should make us more prayerful, truthful, and loving. It should not make us suspicious of every person or convinced that every inconvenience is a demonic attack.

Illustration A child during turbulence (SHOW PIC)

- Picture a child on an airplane when turbulence begins. The cabin shakes. The child grips the armrest and looks around for reassurance.
- A parent takes the child's hand and speaks calmly: "I am right here with you." The shaking may continue, but the child has a trusted presence nearby.
- Our Father knows far more than any earthly parent. His care remains steady when we feel unsettled. We can turn toward him while the circumstances are still uncomfortable.
- Application: Instead of letting fear supply every interpretation, ask, **"Father, what have you already told me in your Word? What does faithfulness look like right now?"**
- Open your Bible. Pray honestly. Invite another believer to pray with you. God often strengthens us through ordinary expressions of his care.
- We also need to consider what we repeatedly place before our eyes. If we begin and end every day rehearsing frightening possibilities, we should not be surprised when fear dominates our thoughts.

Staying informed has value, but so does deliberately making room for Scripture, worship, quiet reflection, and conversations that strengthen our trust in God.

- Try this simple prayer practice this week. Write the concern at the top of a page. Underneath it, write what you know about God from Scripture: he is faithful, he hears his people, and he gives wisdom. Then write one action you can take today. You may not receive a complete explanation, but you can seek guidance for the next step.
- Elisha prayed for his servant instead of becoming irritated with his fear. That gives us an example for ministry. Before telling someone to be stronger, stop and pray with them. Our calm presence and patient encouragement can help them hear God's truth when their own thoughts feel overwhelming.
- This morning we should pray: "Lord, open my eyes to your presence while I am still in the storm."

4. Faith takes the next step with God

- The purpose of this message is more than knowing that an unseen realm exists. God's truth should shape the way we respond to the situation in front of us.
- When fear urges retaliation, faith can choose restraint. When fear suggests compromise, faith can choose integrity. When fear tells us to isolate ourselves, faith can ask for help.

Illustration: Crossing a sturdy bridge (SHOW PIC)

- Imagine two people crossing the same well-built bridge. One walks confidently. The other moves carefully, gripping the railing with trembling hands.
- Both depend on the strength of the bridge. The trembling person is not supported less simply because they feel afraid.
- Application: Our confidence rests in Jesus Christ. We can turn toward him with trembling faith and still take a faithful step. We do not need to manufacture a fearless feeling before obeying him.
- At the cross, Jesus' enemies appeared victorious. His followers saw suffering, death, and a sealed tomb. The resurrection revealed that death had not defeated him.
- The risen Jesus is our foundation. His victory gives us hope even when we cannot explain everything happening around us.
- Remember that the strength of faith is found in the One we trust. You may come today with questions, tears, and a trembling voice.

Bring them to Jesus. The invitation is to place your real life in his hands, then keep walking with him. He is worthy of your trust even while you are learning to trust him more.

- This week, name one place where fear feels overwhelming. Read 2 Kings 6:15–17 again. Pray, "**Lord, open my eyes to your presence and protection."** Then choose one practical act of trust.
- Make the call. Tell the truth. Ask someone to pray. Release the retaliation. Take the next step God has made clear.

Closing

- Some of you came to church asking the servant's question: "What shall we do?" You have examined the situation from every angle and still cannot see a way forward.
- Bring that fear to the Lord today. You do not have to pretend your anxiety has vanished. Begin honestly: "Father, I cannot see the whole picture, but I am turning toward you."
- If you need prayer, come. Let someone stand beside you. Receiving help can be an expression of faith in the God who cares for us through his people.
- Our prayer this morning is simple: "Lord, open our eyes. Help us recognize your presence and follow you into this week."