

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

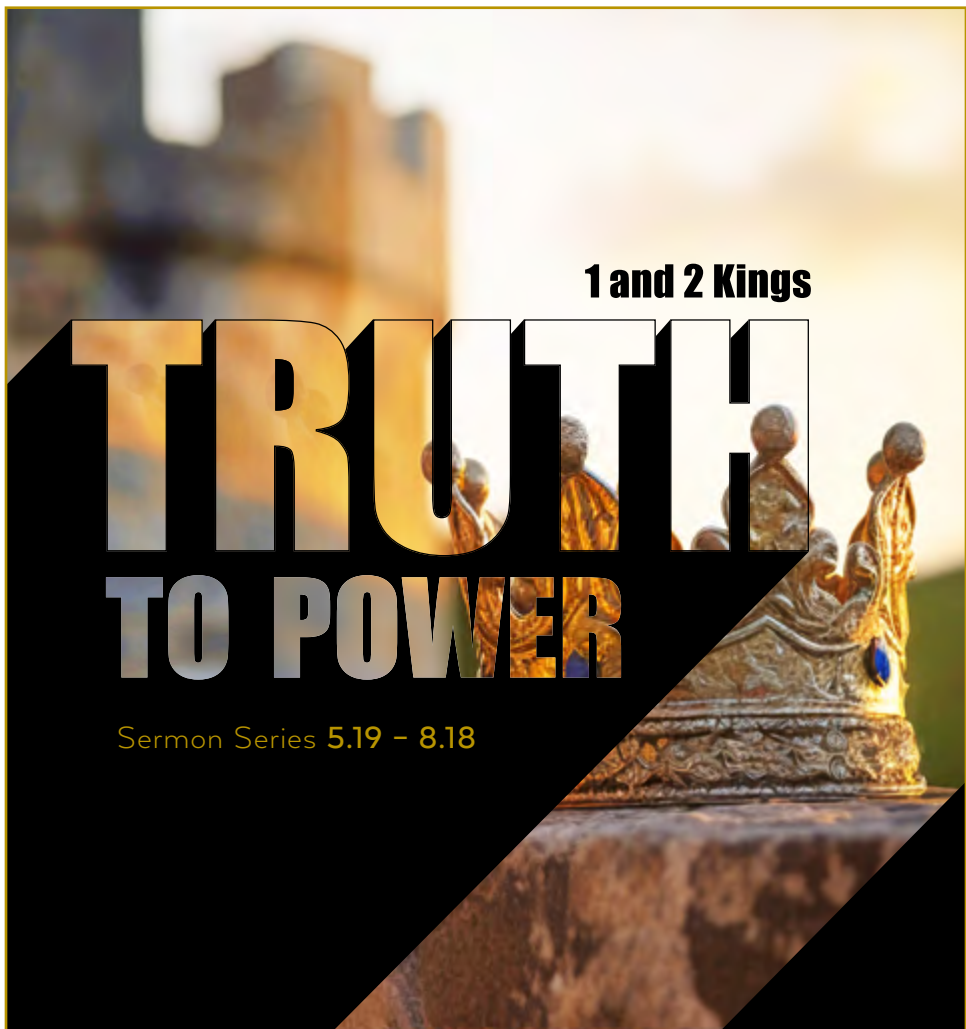
DEVO

JULY 22 - 26, 2024

1 and 2 Kings

TRUTH TO POWER

Sermon Series 5.19 - 8.18





MONDAY

Read **2 Kings 13:14-19; 1 Kings 19:15-21; Matthew 4:18-22**

This week we continue in the summer series, “Truth to Power,” through the books of 1 and 2 Kings, continuing to look at the life of Elisha to uncover a humble, totally sold-out-for-God prophet. In 1 Kings 19 we read that God told the prophet Elijah to find Elisha and anoint him as the prophet to be his successor. (This has many similarities to Jesus calling His disciples, who left everything to follow Him as per Matthew 4.) Elisha was so taken by Elijah’s visit and God’s calling that he ceased his farm work, burned his plowing yoke, slaughtered his oxen, and followed Elijah immediately.

Two interesting points about Elisha’s character: (1) He cooked his oxen and shared it with the people. (2) He wanted to say goodbye to his parents before following Elijah. Elisha had tremendous faith to leave everything and follow Elijah. Elijah became Elisha’s mentor and teacher. While Elisha learned from Elijah, he became a prophet with his own ways and perspectives, working within society for God’s purposes with a heart for the poor.

I’ve always been amazed by the calling of Jesus’ disciples and their response to leave their jobs and lives to follow Him and learn from the Messiah. This is seen in vividly relatable reality in the TV series today, “The Chosen”—not only in the disciples leaving the lives they had, but also in the community and life experiences that the disciples then share with Jesus. In this case, Elisha leaves his life

to follow God’s calling and be mentored by Elijah. Though their names are very similar, remember that Elijah and Elisha are biologically unrelated, different prophets.

Elisha had great confidence, conviction, and trust in God for the calling on his life for more—more of what God would lead him to do for His Kingdom in the Northern Territory of Israel. Elisha’s time as a prophet of God after his mentorship with Elijah spanned the reign of four kings. Elisha is also noted to have performed the second most miracles in the Bible, second only to Jesus, the Son of God Himself!

QUESTIONS

Have you ever considered the calling of Jesus’ disciples and the calling of Elisha to leave your life as you know it and follow God’s calling for your life? If you would consider such a calling, how confident could you be that God would guide you and provide for your life?

PRAYER

For *Ethnos Asia*

Ethnos Asia’s vision is to serve churches in the restricted-access countries of South and Southeast Asia. Christians in these countries are seriously restricted by governmental policies and persecuted by anti-Christian radicals. Pray that the Ethnos Asia leaders will have God’s wisdom in ministering to Christian leaders under these precarious conditions.



TUESDAY

Read **2 Kings 13:10-19; 2 Kings 2:11-12**

Elisha the prophet lived during a time when many people worshiped Baal (a Canaanite false god). Following God as a true prophet and preaching God's word could invite great opposition. Elisha's prophetic work was very strategic as he worked to gain trust of the people, leaders, and kings of his day.

During the 9th century B.C., the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been split off from Judah for many decades. As a prophet whose purpose and mission were to spread God's word and advise the people and rulers of God's ways, Elisha's ministry lasted through the reigns of four different kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel: Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash (Joash).

This passage has some unique, perhaps confusing characteristics: the four aforementioned kings all have names beginning with the letter "J"; also, King Jehoash's name is used interchangeably as Joash; there were brothers-in-law with the same first names and overlapping reigns, Kings Jehoram of Israel and Judah; during this period there was a King Joash of Judah and King Jehoash (Joash) of Israel, whose reigns also overlapped. These features can make the verses hard to navigate and the related storyline challenging to follow.

King Jehoash (Joash) of Israel did not turn from his wicked ways, and he did evil in the sight of the LORD (2 Kings 13:11). He reigned

as king for sixteen years while Elisha served as prophet. According to 2 Kings 13:14, King Jehoash came to visit Elisha on Elisha's deathbed with deeply sorrowful emotions. It is interesting that this king who was not walking in God's ways exhibited such emotion at the impending death of Elisha. He even restated what Elisha said upon Elijah's death: "*My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel,*" referencing Elijah's ascension into heaven.

Elisha's prophetic work profoundly impacted King Jehoash's life, although the king's generally wicked ways did not always reflect such influence. Elisha was faithfully obedient in strategically and tactfully advising kings, other leaders, and the people throughout his life, never compromising his godliness. He expected God to use him in ways that may not be obvious or tangibly seen, always putting God first.

QUESTIONS

Do you have people in your own life whom you deeply care about, maybe family members, who are not outwardly following Jesus? How does this recount of Elisha's prophetic witness to King Jehoash encourage you?

PRAYER

For Ethnos Asia

Laos is a Communist-controlled country that severely persecutes Christians. Ethnos Asia recently concluded a leadership training program with twenty-three Bru tribal Christian leaders. The goal was not only to train leaders for ministry, but also to train them to become trainers of others. Pray that the leaders will be successfully producing trainers.



Read **2 Kings 6:8-23; 2 Kings 2:9; 2 Kings 4:1-7**

Yesterday we learned about King Jehoash (Joash) of Israel coming to Elisha the prophet's deathbed with great sorrow, even though the king was not following God's ways. Why would a king sob over a dying prophet of God? Could King Jehoash have felt spiritual value from Elisha even though he seemingly ignored much of Elisha's teachings? This tells us that Elisha was very well respected by even those who didn't faithfully follow God.

Elisha's character must have resonated with King Jehoash of Israel; the king respected the prophet and sought his spiritual guidance. Elisha's many miracles would have been something that should have brought him attention as a man of tremendous faith and seemingly unexplainable power from an unbeliever's perspective.

The biblical record shares many of Elisha's tremendous, godly gifts:

- Faith: Elisha left his life of farming and his parents to follow Elijah and do what God asked him to do. In 2 Kings 2:9 he asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elisha went on to live a life expecting God to work miracles through him.
- Elisha's presence and uncompromising convictions didn't alienate King Jehoash; rather, this brought Elisha respect and sought-after wisdom from the king.

- Courage: Elisha lived out his convictions, knowing God was protecting him and in control.
- Love for people no matter who they were: Elisha's ministry is marked by his willingness to help anyone in any circumstance, sharing God's love.
- Dedication: Elisha left his life when called and didn't look back; his life story of leaving his farming life is commended by Jesus in Luke 9:59-62.
- Loyalty: Elisha was very connected with his mentor, Elijah, ministering and fellowshiping with him until Elijah's death. Elijah and Elisha were definitely different in character: Elijah was considered to be much more of an outspoken loner who challenged leadership, whereas Elisha operated more as an open confidant to the disenfranchised, sharing faith through his actions and teachings.

Such traits demonstrated in the life of Elisha the prophet are core to our Christian faith. It's no wonder that even King Jehoash, generally wicked in his actions and policies, would be drawn towards someone like Elisha whose life demonstrated such character.

QUESTIONS

Are there people in your life whom you wish you could speak God's truth into more effectively? What can you learn from Elisha's strengths that you could apply to your own life?

PRAYER

For Ethnos Asia

A month ago in Laos, six believers were arrested by the authorities and are still being detained. Pray that they hold fast to the Lord and His promises. Pray for protection over their families and the Christian community. Pray for courage and boldness to proclaim the Word in the midst of persecution.



Read **2 Kings 13:14-19; Psalm 7:12-13**

Elisha's instructions to King Jehoash concerning his bow and arrows incorporates biblical symbolism, the arrows prophetically representing God's judgment and wrath upon sinful nations described in Psalm 7:12-13: *"If [God] does not relent, He will sharpen His sword; He will bend and string His bow. He has prepared His deadly weapons; He makes ready his flaming arrows."* King Jehoash was going to war with Syria. This physical parable provided by Elisha through the king indicated God's assurance of Israel's victory over Syria. The king shooting his arrow out the window, with Elisha's hand on the king's, pictured victory provided by God's sovereign providence.

The prophet then provided an opportunity for a final blessing of assurance to the king; Elisha asked Jehoash to strike the remaining arrows to the ground. The king struck arrows to the ground only three times, disappointing and upsetting Elisha. Elisha chastised Jehoash for the king's limited faith. Israel would have only three victories in Syria, though they could have fully destroyed Syria if the king had struck the ground five or six times.

Recall that Israel's King Jehoash had ignored much of Elisha's teaching and prophetic warnings throughout his reign, yet the king came to this 90-year-old prophet's deathbed distraught and seeking last bits of spiritual wisdom and guidance due to the prophet's godliness, wisdom

and trustworthiness. On his deathbed Elisha tried to impart some urgency to the king, appealing to him to walk in devotion to God as Elisha modeled throughout his prophetic ministry. Remember that Elisha trails only Jesus in biblically recorded miracles. His life, character and witness to God's way would have been extremely compelling despite living in a world much like ours today, a world filled with evil and idolatry.

King Jehoash and Elisha are contrasting biblical figures: Elisha left everything to follow God's calling while submitting to Elijah's mentorship; King Jehoash, conversely, did not follow Elisha's teaching faithfully, while acknowledging him as a prophet whose death would grieve the king greatly. Could it be that King Jehoash is much like many in our world today, acknowledging that God and Jesus exist while refusing to follow God's ways consistently?

QUESTIONS

How do you respond to God's calling in your life? When/how do you hear from God nudging you in your life (through prayer/meditation, fellowship with others, worship, Bible study, sermons/preaching, other)?

PRAYER

For Ethnos Asia

In Pakistan, Muslim extremists are making false accusations against Christians, claiming they are committing blasphemy against Islam. These false accusers have been stirring up mob violence against the believers. Pray for God's protection over them, and that they might have love and wisdom in dealing with their false accusers.



Read **2 Kings 13:14-19; 1 Peter 5:6-7**

Elisha's deathbed visit from Israel's King Jehoash was unheard of, especially for a king who did not follow God and was known to do evil in His sight. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary states that the significance of Elisha's metaphors of the arrows—described in yesterday's devotion—was a response to King Jehoash's visit and concern. The king fearfully considered a future with the prophet Elisha no longer on the scene, perhaps pondering, "Where will wisdom and deliverance come from?"

Elisha wanted the king to rely upon the Lord God as the One from whom he should prayerfully, continually seek guidance rather than from a mere man like Elisha. The prophet wanted Jehoash to rely upon almighty, all-knowing Yahweh for wisdom and deliverance.

Elisha's emphasis with Jehoash is a theme featured throughout the New Testament. For example, 1 Peter 5:7, 8 appeals: "*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*" King Jehoash would have done well to follow the counsel of 1 Peter 5:7, 8.

Today the miracles depicted throughout the Bible seem to be far less regular and prominent. Perhaps this is due to our distraction with temporal things and our relative physical prosperity. During

Jehoash's reign, the Bible shares that the prophet parted the Jordan River, purified a spring in Jericho, raised a Shunammite son from death, and healed Naaman of leprosy. Even after the prophet's death, the mere touching of his bones brought someone back to life. God performed these and other miracles through His faithful prophet, Elisha.

Elisha's persistent and faithful teaching, the miracles God performed through him, and Elisha's character left a mark on the king that drew him to Elisha's deathbed to seek counsel one last time. Elisha's mentorship under Elijah likely shaped how Elisha ministered to others, likely playing a role in the king's visit. You and I have the privilege and opportunity to be like Elisha, to influence leaders (whether they are godly or not) and care for the less fortunate. There is much to admire and emulate here!

QUESTIONS

Do you feel you have relationships in your life in which you are portraying Christ to those who may not have a personal relationship with Jesus? Do you trust in God and believe that Jesus will continually show up in your life? Looking back at your relationship with Jesus, how have you seen God at work in your life? How are you hoping God will continue to work in your life?

PRAYER

For Ethnos Asia

Two weeks ago, a youth camp was held in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam for Christian youth from regional churches. About 250 youth attended. Pray for the Spirit's outpouring over these young people leading to transformation in their lives; pray that the fire will spread to their local churches and surrounding regions.



Sources

Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, Editors, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1962).

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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