

## Learning to Pray with Elisha: Vision and Prayer

2 Kings 6:8-23 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 30 January 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,  
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.  
– CG Mission Statement*

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**Icebreaker:** Do you have a favorite wonder of nature that you've visited or deeply want to visit?

**Worship:** [Psalm 89:1-18](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?*)

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**Sermon Summary for [2 Kings 6:8-23](#)** (*Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

To frame this sermon series on prayer, we have been watching and learning from people as they pray throughout the Bible. Here, we see Elisha the prophet at his prayers, in an intense space of need. Elisha lives in a very dark time in the history of God's people. But he has bold faith that endures through it all. The prophet is a man whom God uses to work great things – all of it grounded in prayer. In this passage, Elisha asks God for spiritual vision – something each of us needs if the world is to change.

**Our Need for Spiritual Vision** // Sight is distinct from our other senses (rather than, say, it being an extension of our hearing or touch). So if we can't see, it's not something we can have someone readily describe to us. The same is true with spiritual vision. It's not something others can talk us through. Spiritual blindness is when we lack the capacity to see ultimate realities – the world behind and beyond the moment, to process and live out of the perspective and clarity that such God-given vision provides. Moving from darkness into light, from blindness to sight, is a fundamental perspective of the Christian experience. To believe in Jesus is to begin to truly see ([John 9:25](#)). As our eyes are spiritually opened, we see Jesus as God among us ([John 8:12; 9:5](#)), but we also begin to see God's creation (people, things, experiences) as they truly and ultimately are. Meaning: we not only need the grace and mercy found in Christ and the cross; we need Jesus to turn our blindness into sight. This is a deep need for all of us. And getting spiritual sight is not a one-time fix; we need our vision sharpened and focused repeatedly by God.

**Prayer is Key to Our Spiritual Seeing** // This story of Elisha hinges on his prayers. He prays that evil would be thwarted and blinded (v18) as well as for vision and hope for those pursuing the life of God's Kingdom (v17). Our Father loves to respond to our coming to Him earnestly in prayer. He is relational, willing and wanting to respond to our cries. This is especially true for our cries to see things as God does – for spiritual vision. To activate this kind of prayer life in our lives, God will often allow us to be in tight, afflicted situations. Yes, we seek to get out of these – and we *should* cry to God for help and deliverance in them – but we also seek to be present there, to what God may want to accomplish there through our prayers.

**Prayers for Spiritual Vision Change the World** // Elisha has a bigger view than the other people in this story. He sees God's vision of grace for the whole world flowing through His people. Elisha wants his enemies to see that they are being welcomed peacefully in God's name – which is just what Jesus does for us. Prayers for God's vision are what change the world as God shapes us into more gracious, loving, merciful people. We can learn to pray like this. Such prayers mold us into people rich in mercy – the way God is to us in Christ. As Henri Nouwen wrote, *“For Jesus, there are no countries to be conquered, no ideologies to be imposed, no people to be dominated. There are only children, women and men to be loved.”*

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**Discussion Questions** (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

### **Our Need for Spiritual Vision**

- What did the servant (in the 2 Kings reading) lack in terms of spiritual vision that Elisha had?
  - What was in the way of the servant's spiritual vision?
  - How do you identify with the servant?
- What did the King of Israel lack in terms of spiritual vision that Elisha had?
  - Like the servant and the king, we too are impacted by our circumstances and culture. What ideas from our time and culture significantly impact our spiritual vision?

### **Prayer is Key to Our Spiritual Seeing**

- Good news! God does not want us to remain blind or stuck. This is true for all of us, friend and foe. What happened to the Syrian troops after they had their eyes opened and ate and drank with their enemy?
  - Elisha prayers opened the spiritual eyes of his servant, of the King of Israel, and of foreign enemy soldiers. Who in your life are you praying for? In what ways do you hope their spiritual eyes might be open?
- In what ways would you pray for yourself right now that your spiritual eyes might be opened?

### **Prayers for Spiritual Vision Change the World**

- How has your perspective of the world / people / yourself changed since you became a Christian? How has it continued to change as you've grown in your faith?
  - Why isn't this shift in our vision a one-time fix? Why is it an ongoing process?
- Do you believe your prayers can change the world? Why or why not?
  - Do you believe God can use your prayers to change you? Why or why not?
  - Do you believe God can use your prayers to change the world? Why or why not?

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## **Prayer**

For use in your personal prayer times, or family or group prayer – the Weekly Prayer Guide is linked [HERE](#).

### **Engage & Experience: Prayer & Gratitude**

Last week, using scripture as the guide, you were encouraged to write some prayers addressing and gazing at God in a variety of ways. For more about this, read [Pray With Your Eyes Open, Chapter 2: A Servant's Gaze](#).

Although unbelievers are blind to the wonder of God, believers are given precious glimpses into the glory of God and His work. This week, continue to gaze at God and His wondrous qualities in scripture. Through prayer, ask Him to open your eyes and to refresh your appreciation for who He is and what He is doing in the world. For more about this, read [Pray With Your Eyes Open, Chapter 3: Fascination With God's Character](#).

If your group wishes to work through the book [Pray With Your Eyes Open](#) by Richard Pratt, along with the discussion guide, you can find the link to purchase [HERE](#). Take your time in practicing the exercises in this book, the book can be used as a resource the entire year of our prayer focus.