

**STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF ELISHA**

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## **1. CALLED AND EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE**

**(Scripture: 1 Kings 19: 15-21; 2 Kings 2: 9-13)**

Elisha, Elijah's successor, had assisted him for nine years before God entrusted him with the full responsibility of the task He had committed to him. In many ways these two men are much alike: both wrought similar miracles, lived in a time of apostasy and were channels of blessing to very needy people, but there are marked differences in their ministries. Elijah was a stern, lonely, rugged prophet of fire, whereas Elisha was a gentle, winsome prophet of vision. We are told very little of Elijah's background and preparation for the great ministry to which God called him – but Elisha is introduced in a very different way. The story of his call in 1 Kings 19:15-21 contains a special message for those servants of God whom He calls to special service. Notice the following points – some of which we considered in our lessons on Elijah (in Lesson 12):

### **1. ELISHA WAS AN UNLIKELY PERSON FOR GOD TO CALL TO SPECIAL SERVICE.**

Verses 15-16 tell us who he was and what he was doing when God's call came to him – verse 19. Elijah's successor was a ploughman. An unlikely successor? Look up: Moses (Exodus 3:1); Gideon (Judges 6:11); David (Psalm 78:70); Amos (Amos 7:14) – and compare 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. The truth that God's call comes unexpectedly and to unlikely people is illustrated throughout the Bible and in the experience of God's people in every generation.

### **2. ELISHA'S CALL WAS CLEAR, DEFINITE AND UNMISTAKABLE.**

God is the director of all His work. He chooses and commissions men and women for His service, and He does this definitely and clearly – look up Matthew 9:38, and compare Acts 13:1-4 where these men whom God wanted for missionary service were called by name so there could be no mistake about His plan and purpose for them. Often, however, the call comes indirectly, as in the case of Elisha who received his commission through Elijah.

### **3. ELISHA RECEIVED HIS CALL WHILE HE WAS FAITHFULLY WORKING AT THE PLOUGH.**

Was he unsettled in his work and longing to get into “full-time service”? We do not know; but we do know he was faithfully doing his present job when he was called. This should be the attitude of all who are looking to the Lord to guide them into fuller service for Him. **If you are praying to Him to lead you into some ministry or missionary service, or pastoral work.....: Are you doing your present job as unto Him? Are you punctual, conscientious, respectful and co-operative? You are in God's school, so make the most of this training time.**

### **4. ELISHA DID NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER GOD'S SERVICE UNTIL HE HAD CALLED HIM.**

Only when he was absolutely sure of God's call did he leave his plough and his family and follow Elijah in obedience to the Lord. What constitutes the call of God to special service?

1. The NEED is not the Call. The need for servants of the Lord is very great, but the need alone does not constitute the call.
2. The OPPORTUNITY is not the Call. There is plenty of opportunity for serving the Lord, but this alone does not constitute the call.

3. The ABILITY is not the Call. We may be qualified spiritually, mentally and physically, but this does not constitute the call.

4. The INVITATION is not necessarily the Call. Some Elijah may approach us, but we must be sure that in his invitation it is God's voice speaking to us.

5. The DESIRE is not the Call. We may have a burning desire to serve the Lord, but let us beware lest we move before He has commanded us.

The call of God is that deep, inward conviction, accompanied by peace in the heart and confirmed by the Word of God, that He would have us do a certain work in a certain place.

#### **5. ELISHA WAS CALLED TO A MOST DIFFICULT JOB OF WORK.**

God's call always is to a difficult task. Compare verses 16 and 17. Could it have been easy for Elisha to slay those who escaped from the sword of Jehu? Could it have been easy to be Elijah's assistant for nine years? Link up Luke 9:61 with this incident, and see how appropriate it is. Once we respond to God's call, we become involved in a spiritual warfare and are special targets for the Devil. Look up Ephesians 6:12. We therefore need two special qualifications: stability and 'stickability'.

#### **6. ELISHA NOT ONLY RECEIVED GOD'S CALL TO SERVICE BUT ALSO HIS SPECIAL EQUIPMENT FOR SERVICE.**

Elijah's mantle, cast upon Elisha, was the symbol of a holy anointing from the Lord. See verse 19, and compare verse 16. When God calls to His service He always equips – look up Gideon (Judges 6:11-14); Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:3-10); the Lord Jesus (Matthew 3:16); the disciples (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:4. Compare Acts 13:1-4), and notice the promise made to each one of us. Acts 1:8. "All God's commands are God's enablings", and in 2 Kings 2:9-13 we see how conscious Elisha was of his need for spiritual enduement in order to accomplish God's purpose through his ministry.

#### **7. ELISHA RESPONDED TO GOD'S CALL WITH A WHOLEHEARTED SURRENDER.**

God's call to him was confirmed by the placing of Elijah's mantle upon him, and verses 20-21 tell us how Elisha responded. How should we respond to the call of God?

1. With a Holy Urgency. Compare the first nine words of verse 20 with Acts 8:29-30.

2. With a Holy Determination. Compare verses 20-21 with Luke 9:61 - but do not confuse Elisha with the man to whom our Lord spoke. Elisha went home to say goodbye; he was quite prepared to leave his loved-ones, his home and his all to do the Lord's will. **Every servant of the Lord must likewise be willing and ready for anything** – see verse 21, where we read of his public farewell and the complete renunciation of the old life, even to the burning of some of his ploughs. This was symbolic of his wholehearted surrender to the Lord.

3. With a Holy Devotion. Read the great words at the end of verse 21 – and compare Luke 5:10-11.

Closing Thought: Isaiah 28:16.

## 2. THE CURSING OF THE YOUNG MEN

(Scripture: 2 Kings 2: 11 and 23-25)

The verses in 2 Kings 2:23-25 are certainly very hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16), but it is reasonable to expect difficulties when we read God's Word. Can the mind of finite man expect fully to understand records which are the product of the Infinite Mind? Would the Bible be a divine revelation if poor finite minds could fathom it? To admit that there are problems in the Bible in no way lessens its value, and we must remember that facts are never altered or discounted by failure on our part to understand them. As we study this portion of scripture let us see what lessons God has to teach us.

### 1. CONSIDER WHO THESE "YOUTHS" WERE.

Our King James' Version says that those who mocked Elisha were "little children", which would suggest children of up to 10 years old, whilst the New International Version calls them "youths", which would suggest boys of, say, up to 20 years old. How old were they?

1. In Genesis 44:20, Benjamin is described as "a young son born to him in his old age" – but Benjamin was at least twenty at that time.

2. In 1 Samuel 16:11, David is called "the youngest" of Jesse's "sons", and the Hebrew words for "youngest" and "children" are the two words translated "youths" in 2 Kings 2:23. How old was David at this time? In 1 Samuel 16:18 we are told he was "a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man....." which suggests he must have been twenty or thirty years of age.

3. In 1 Kings 3:7, Solomon says of himself, "*I am only a little child*" - again the same two Hebrew words – but Solomon was twenty years old!

It would, therefore, appear that the "youths" who mocked Elisha were between sixteen and thirty years of age; they were of a responsible age and old enough to know what they were doing. This attack on God's prophet, then, was made by responsible men!

They could also be students in the school of prophets. Out of jealousy or envy, mocked Elisha.

### 2. NOTICE WHERE THESE OFFENDERS LIVED.

They lived in Bethel, where there was a golden calf erected by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28-33) – a stronghold of idolatry and a centre of apostasy. They were representatives of a wicked movement that blasphemed the name of God, and their attack on Elisha was not, therefore, a sudden whim but the expression of a determined attitude.

### 3. NOW OBSERVE EXACTLY WHAT THESE OFFENDERS DID.

They mocked Elisha, saying, "*Go on up, you bald head; go on up, you bald head!*" (Verse 23). Elisha was God's prophet, and whereas these young men were representatives of their false gods, so Elisha was the representative of the True God - so the attack against Elisha was an attack against God, just as when Saul persecuted the early Christians; he was really persecuting the Lord Jesus (Acts 9:4). But what is the significance of the mocking words? Elisha had just passed through Bethel on his way to Jericho with Elijah, who was then translated, and now he was returning to Bethel alone. Knowing Elisha to be God's newly-appointed prophet, the young men met him with

the words, ***“Go on up you bald head!”*** In the East, ***“you bald head”*** was an expression of abuse – a grave insult. Why did they say, ***“Go on up.....!”***? Was it because they knew Elijah had just gone up, and in effect they were now saying to his successor, ***“You go up too, where you belong!”***? If so, surely, they were speaking against Elisha in the same way that some ungodly people today speak against the Lord’s servants.

#### 4. NOW CONSIDER ELISHA’S ACTION.

Read verse 24. Was he wrong? Did he act hastily? The proof that it was not wrong is the fact that God endorsed what he did by sending swift and terrible judgment upon these enemies of His name. This judgment came at the beginning of Elisha’s ministry – compare Acts 5:1-11, which came at the beginning of the apostolic ministry.

#### 5. SEE HOW GOD’S JUDGMENT FELL UPON THESE MOCKERS.

We are not told, in verse 24, that forty-two were killed, though probably some were and many would carry a scar to the end of their days. But was not this judgment very severe? Look up 2 Chronicles 36:16.

#### 6. IN CONCLUSION, NOTICE SOME LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS INCIDENT.

1. We must guard against having a distorted, one-sided view of God – look up Mark 16:16; Romans 6:23; 11:22.
2. God cannot be defied with impunity, whether by old or young. Look up Proverbs 29:1; Galatians 6:7-8. **“Instead of apologising for this record as though we were ashamed of it, it is far better to accept it fully as one of the warnings of scripture that God will not be defied with impunity, and that the judgments in this life whereby He indicated that fact in Old Testament times are a warning to us in our day, when temporal judgments are rarer but eternal judgment remains.”**
3. It is very dangerous to persecute God’s people especially His servants. Look up Psalm 105:15; Zechariah 2:8.
4. Parents must suffer if they neglect or poison their children. These “children” had been trained in idolatry; now they and their parents were suffering in consequence.
5. Difficult as this subject is, let us remember that the Judge of all the earth always does that which is right. Look up Genesis 18:25.

This is indeed a solemn incident, but before we leave it let us go down on our knees in God’s presence and read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10. How fearful will be the judgment that will fall upon our unbelieving world when the Lord of Glory comes again!

Closing Thought: 2 Peter 3: 9-10.

**Note: On the other hand, these “children” could also be wrongly translated; it could mean “students” who were studying at the School of Prophets of which Elijah was the principal.**

### 3. OIL: OR HOW TO BECOME SPIRIT-FILLED

(Scripture: 2 Kings 4: 1-7)

God's plan and provision for every one of His children is that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit. Look up Ephesians 5:18. This should be the normal experience of every child of God. Compare Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 6:3; 9:17; 11:23-24; 13:9; 13:52. The incident recorded in 2 Kings 4:1-7 is both history and parable. It concerns a poor widow whose husband had been a servant of the Lord; she was now destitute and her children were in danger. In her extremity she appealed to Elisha, and miraculously her little reserve of oil was multiplied and made sufficient for all her needs. This, then, is a story about empty vessels that were filled with oil – and oil in the Bible is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. This incident shows us therefore, how empty hearts may become Spirit-filled. How may we become Spirit-filled?

#### 1. WE MUST ADMIT OUR GREAT NEED

How great was the need of this poor woman! She possessed nothing except for one little pot of oil. Then her creditors came and demanded payment and threatened to take away her sons to become slaves. So, pocketing her pride, she admitted her emptiness and poverty to Elisha – and that was her first step into blessing! Every believer is in debt in a three-fold sense, and we can only discharge that debt when we are filled with the Holy Spirit:-

1. We owe obedience to God (Luke 17:10).
2. We owe love to our brethren (1 John 3:16).
3. We owe the Gospel to the lost (Romans 1:14).

There is only one way to meet our liability, and that is by the infilling and the enabling of the Holy Spirit. In our own strength we can never obey God, love our fellow-Christians and discharge our obligation to lost souls around us. We can only do it as we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Do we admit our need?

#### 2. WE MUST RECOGNISE WHAT WE HAVE

When this widow confessed her need, Elisha said, ***"Tell me, what do you have in your house?"***, ***and she replied, "...nothing...except a little oil"*** (verse 2). If you are a Christian you can say the same, for the Holy Spirit is resident within you, as He is resident within every child of God. The moment you believed, He entered your heart. Look up John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19. This is not a matter of feeling but of resting upon what the Lord says. We must therefore recognise what we have: we possess the "oil" – Note the last eight words of Romans 5:5, and compare John 7:37-39; Romans 8: 9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:8. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

#### 3. WE MUST PROVIDE VESSELS THAT ARE EMPTY

Verse 3 tells us this. **The Holy Spirit cannot fill our fullness; He waits to fill our emptiness.** In other words, before He can fill us we must make room for Him. Maybe we are full already – full of self, of our own ability, or full of sin. The Holy Spirit can only fill empty, clean vessels. How can the loving Spirit fill an unloving heart? How can the gracious Spirit fill a proud heart? How can the tender Spirit fill a selfish heart? How can the truthful Spirit fill a deceitful heart? How can

the Holy Spirit fill an unholy heart? Are we willing to act on 2 Corinthians 7:1? If we will make a full confession to the Lord we will experience 1 John 1:7 and 9.

#### **4. WE MUST EMPLOY THE SHUT DOOR**

Verse 4 tells us that the woman shut the door on the outside world and got alone with the Lord. Here is the secret of a Spirit-filled, Spirit-anointed and Spirit-empowered life. The enduement of power always comes as the result of the shut door. Look up Luke 3:21, and notice that Jesus was praying at the time of His anointing with the Holy Spirit. Compare also Acts 2:1-4; 4:31; 9:11 and 17. These verses show us that the infilling of the Holy Spirit comes in answer to prayer and in the place of prayer.

#### **5. WE MUST BE ABSOLUTELY OBEDIENT**

Verse 5 tells us that the woman obeyed Elisha's instructions implicitly. Compare the significant statement in Acts 5:32. God can only fill to the measure of our obedience. Are we consciously disobeying the Lord? Look up Psalm 139:23-24, and compare John 2:5. It is only as we fully open up the channel of obedience that God can give the Holy Spirit's fullness.

#### **6. WE MUST TAKE THE STEP OF FAITH**

We may admit our need, recognise what we have, provide empty vessels, employ the shut door and be absolutely obedient, but only then are we ready to take the next step – the appropriation of faith. We must take God at His word and trust Him to do what He wants and waits to do for us. See Ephesians 5:18. According to 1 John 5: 14-15, God will hear and answer our prayer if it is in accordance with His will. Is it His will for us to be filled? Yes, in Ephesians 5:18 He commands it! Therefore, we may pray in faith, "Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit" – and know that our prayer will be answered!

#### **7. WE MUST USE WHAT GOD GIVES**

Verse 7 tells us that the woman did exactly that. The Holy Spirit's fullness is not for our selfish enjoyment, but for daily living and effective, God-glorifying service. Happy is the child of God who knows what it is to come daily before the Lord and to plead for and appropriate His fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit's grace and power!

Closing Thought: Luke 11: 13.

#### 4. A PEN-PICTURE OF A MAN OF GOD

(Scripture: 2 Kings 4: 8-17)

The story of the *“well-to-do woman”* of Shunem is one of the most touching episodes in scripture. We first read of her in 2 Kings 4:8, where we learn that as Elisha went about his Master’s business he visited her home, and she at once recognised that he was *“a holy man of God”* (2 Kings 4:9) – not just *“a man of God”*, but *“a holy man of God”*. Do these words describe us? They should if we are Christians, for God requires and has made it possible that we should live holy lives. Look up 1 Thessalonians 4:7.

There are three distinctive characteristics of a man or a woman whom God calls “holy”. A holy man is:

- (1) One who believes in God
- (2) One who belongs to God
- (3) One who behaves like God.

Do we believe and trust in Him, live and act as those who belong to Him, and behave like Him? In 2 Kings 4: 9 we are told several things that will be true of us if we are living holy lives.

##### 1. A HOLY MAN NEVER NEEDS TO WORRY ABOUT THE PROVISION OF HIS DAILY NEEDS.

Many of the Lord’s people are very anxious about the matter of their provision, but if we are seeking to live a holy life we need not be anxious, for just as God used the woman of Shunem to feed Elisha, He will use someone to feed and to provide for us. He fed and cared for Elijah at Zarephath and at Cherith (1 Kings 17: 2-16); and similarly, He will do for every one of His children in time of need. Look up Psalm 34:10; Matthew 6:31-34; Philippians 4:19, and then see what Psalm 37:25 says.

##### 2. A HOLY MAN IS ALWAYS VERY QUICKLY NOTICED

As Elisha passed by, this woman soon recognised the characteristics of a holy man in him; she sensed that there was something different about him. Perhaps he gave thanks before a meal and his conversation was different; he was polite, considerate and helpful, until perhaps she asked herself, *“What has he got that I haven’t?”* Do our loved-ones *“perceive”* that we are *“a holy man of God”*, or is ours an empty kind of profession? Look up 2 Timothy 3:5.

##### 3. A HOLY MAN SOON BECOMES THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION

When the woman recognised that Elisha was a holy man she told her husband of him; and other people heard about him as well. We are all the subject of someone’s conversation, but what do they say about us? Do they say:

- i. “If that’s his religion, I don’t want it.....”?
- ii. “He calls himself a Christian, but he’s not honest.....”?
- iii. “She’s a church-goer, but she’s thoroughly selfish.....”?
- iv. “They say they are Christians, but I can’t tell the difference.....”?



v. “They are just wonderful! You can tell they are real Christians.....”?

Romans 14:7 tells us that “none of us lives to himself alone”; we are constantly under the scrutiny of other people. Do they see Christ in us?

#### **4. A HOLY MAN GETS HIS BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY AND IS NEEDED MOST IN THE EVERYDAY SPHERES OF LIFE**

Elisha was exercising a mighty ministry, not in the pulpit but in the home. He was not preaching; he was living a holy life each moment of the day, and that most of all is what is needed. If a few thousand more Christians really lived holy lives in their business, school, factory or home, revival would soon come to our land. Compare Ezekiel 36:23 with John 20:25. The great need today is for Christians to be like the One whose name they bear; for Christian doctors, bankers, workers in industry, housewives...simply to live the Christian life!

#### **5. A HOLY MAN WILL ALWAYS SEE RESULTS FROM HIS CONSISTENT HOLY LIVING.**

Elisha did! He was invited to stay in the home at Shunem, and he was used to bring wonderful blessing into the life of this childless woman as the result of his presence and prophecy in the name of the Lord. What fruit resulted! See 2 Kings 4: 11-17. Older Christians are often very concerned because they do not know of many, or any, who have come to Christ as the result of their labours, but if we are faithful in serving the Lord, and especially in consistent and Christ-like living, we need have no fear about the results. Therefore, Galatians 6:9! In “that day” (2 Timothy 1:12) many who have seen few results from their service will get a great surprise as they hear their Lord say - Matthew 25:21!

I’d rather **see** a sermon than **hear** one any day.

I’d rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.

The eye’s a better pupil and more willing than the ear;  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example’s always clear.  
The best of preachers are the ones who demonstrate their creeds,  
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.

One good man teaches many; and many men believe what they behold;  
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told.  
Who stands with men of honour learns to hold his honour dear,  
For right living speaks a language which to everyone is clear;  
Though an able speaker charms me with eloquence, I say,  
I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

If we are faithful in our believing, our belonging and our behaving, our lives also will be fruitful to the glory of God. See what 1 Corinthians 15:58 says.

Closing Thought: 1 Peter 1:14-16.

## 5. A PROPHET'S FURNITURE

(Scripture: 2 Kings 4: 8-10; Luke 10: 38-42)

This study is based upon 2 Kings 4:10, which might well be entitled, “**The well-furnished Christian life.**” Some lives are badly and sparsely furnished, just as some houses are, but God’s plan is that we should be “*furnished throughout*”. Look up 2 Timothy 3:17. There are four essential pieces of furniture that we all need – a bed, a table, a stool and a candlestick. These were all necessary for the prophet’s comfort, and unless we possess what these articles typify, we cannot possibly be well-furnished, successful workers for the Lord.

### 1. THE FIRST ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A BED, THE SYMBOL OF REST.

In Matthew 11:28-29, we read of two kinds of rest: a rest that is a gift and a rest that is a discovery. What kind of rest do we all need?

i. Rest from the heavy burden of sin. The only place where we can get this is at the cross of Calvary. Look up Colossians 1:20. Do you possess this rest? Or is your heart like the tossing sea (Isaiah 57:20)?

ii. Rest from a condemning conscience. This rest comes when all is well in our relationship with God and with men. Look up Acts 24:16. How great to know that as the Lord looks at us He is well pleased! Look up 1 John 3:22.

iii. Rest amid the unrest of the world. On every hand men’s hearts are filled with fear, anxiety and doubt, but the child of God may have rest and release from these. Look up and compare Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:6-7. As you hear of all the terrible things happening in the world you may experience rest in the midst of the storm. Look up Mark 6:50.

iv. Rest from the subtle strivings of self. The self-life within us is our deadly enemy, but we may have complete deliverance. Look up Romans 7:24-25. This deliverance comes by the reckoning and the rest of faith. Look up Romans 6:11.

v. Rest from the responsibility of service. There is a difference between working for God and letting Him work through us. To work for Him involves fatigue and strain, but to let Him work through us means joy and fruitfulness. The servant of God experiences rest when he realises that God Himself is the worker and that his responsibility in the matter is only to respond by quiet trust and obedience to His ability!

### 2. THE SECOND ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A TABLE, THE SYMBOL OF COMMUNION.

Daniel 11:32 in the King James’ Version beautifully expresses God’s will for each one of us. One of the first pictures we get in the book of Genesis is that of perfect, unspoiled fellowship – Genesis 3:8; but that fellowship was broken by sin, and only in a few cases was it restored and enjoyed. We are told about one such case in Genesis 5:24 and Hebrews 11:5. This holy, happy fellowship with the Lord is His plan for every one of His children, and it is an essential element in a well-furnished life. If a boy says of his father, “*I don’t have much to do with him if I can help it!*” surely that boy is out of fellowship with his father. Is it like that with us and our heavenly Father? Are we so busy or preoccupied that we spend little time with Him? What our Lord wants most of all of each

one of us is not our service but ourselves. Thus in Revelation 3:20 the picture is of the Saviour and the sinner eating together in holy, happy fellowship and intimate communion.

### **3. THE THIRD ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A STOOL, THE SYMBOL OF INSTRUCTION.**

We can never become the men and women God would have us be unless we know what it is regularly to sit at His feet and receive His instruction. Look up Deuteronomy 33:3 and Luke 10:39. One of the most significant names given to our Lord's followers is that of "disciples". **What is a disciple? A disciple is a disciplined Christian; one who has come to the Lord Jesus, has found rest, has 'taken His yoke upon him' and his passion in life is to learn of Him and do His will** (Matthew 11:28-30). All this involves stern discipline. Some Christians are not disciplined; they are not really "disciples", for they are careless, self-willed and untaught. Others are well-furnished; they are disciplined and controlled, and they are all the happier for it. Children are much happier when they are kindly disciplined. Do we really know what it is to sit at Jesus' feet and learn of Him (Luke 10:39); to meditate upon His Word (Psalm 1:2); to study His Word (2 Timothy 2:15); to obey His Word (2 Corinthians 10:5) and to submit to His control (Romans 6:13)?

### **4. THE FOURTH ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A CANDLESTICK, THE SYMBOL OF TESTIMONY.**

A candlestick speaks of a life that shines forth. The Lord Jesus made two very important related statements:

- (1) ***"I am the light of the world"*** (John 8:12); and...
- (2) ***"You are the light of the world"*** (Matthew 5:14).

The Lord wants to shine through us, and Matthew 5:14-16 tells us that He wants us to shine in the home, the business and the world. Our whole duty, so far as testimony is concerned, is just to let the Lord Jesus Himself shine out through us in our actions and in our words. When, because of our surrender to Him, He is able to do this He makes us as lights shining in dark places. Look up Philippians 2:14-16.

In conclusion, notice that these four essentials for a well-furnished life all have to do with our relationship with the Lord Himself.

- i. REST is found IN Christ.
- ii. COMMUNION is enjoyed WITH Christ.
- iii. INSTRUCTION is received FROM Christ.
- iv. TESTIMONY is given FOR Christ.

Notice also that not only are these the four essentials of a well-furnished life, but their order is significant: rest must come first, followed by communion, instruction and testimony!

Closing Thought: 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

## 6. THE RAISING OF THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON

(Scripture: 2 Kings 4: 18-37)

This study will be of particular interest to parents and to all who have the responsibility of children. It is based upon the incident recorded in 2 Kings 4:18-37, and the key words around which the whole story revolves are in verse 26: *“Is your child alright?”* The child has the central place in the story. Compare Matthew 18:2. Notice:-

### 1. THE CONDITION OF THE CHILD.

What is the spiritual condition of every boy and girl? It is important that we should be clear about this, and the answer is emphatically stated in verses 20 and 32. In verse 31, Gehazi speaks as though the child might just be sleeping, but the scriptures declare that the child was dead – and that is the spiritual condition of every boy and girl who is not a Christian. This does not mean that our children are necessarily morally bad; it means that they are spiritually dead. Look up and compare Romans 5:12 with 1 John 5:11-12. We are all born in sin (Psalm 51:5), and we are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) until we receive new life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:36). In Matthew 18:1-11, our Lord, in speaking of children (verse 5), whom He describes as *“little ones”* (verse 6), goes on to say that they are *“lost”* (verse 11). How would you feel if you knew your child was lost or dead in a physical sense? Notice how this mother of Shunem felt:

### 2. THE CONCERN OF THE MOTHER.

Quite naturally, when this tragedy fell upon her, this mother was moved to action. See verses 19-24. This raises the question: **What should be our first concern for our children? Should it be for their physical welfare, their education, their career...or should our first concern be for their spiritual welfare?** This mother knew her child was dead, and she was filled with a deep concern that he should be raised to life. That, surely, should be our attitude towards our boys and girls. It is here that the Sunday School teacher has a special ministry, because many parents do not have any concern for the spiritual welfare of their children. What a glorious opportunity this gives to the teachers to become spiritual foster parents of such children by leading the little ones to the Lord Jesus who can give them life and salvation and who waits to be their Friend! This is the greatest work in the world. It is great to win an adult to the Saviour, but far greater to win a child. Think of the potentialities of one child. That boy may prove to be a Billy Graham; that girl may become an Amy Carmichael; that rather clumsy lad may be a Moody or a Carey! Have you a real concern for the salvation of the boys and girls in your care?

### 3. THE FAILURE OF THE SERVANT

Gehazi was sent by Elisha to lay the prophet's staff upon the child, but when he did this nothing happened! See verses 29-31. **What is the lesson here? It is a warning against becoming formal and professional in our service for God.** It is easy to serve Him without having first prayed about the matter. Are we out of touch with Him when we go to speak for Him? It would seem that Gehazi went to work without praying or making any special preparation. It is a great temptation for Sunday School teachers to go to their classes quite unprepared for the important task of teaching the Word of Truth to the children. It would seem that Gehazi had no prayer, no preparation, no persistence and no faith, and therefore nothing happened. Look up 2 Timothy 3:5. His service was a formal matter; but see how different was Elisha's approach to the whole problem!

#### 4. THE TRIUMPH OF THE PROPHET.

1. He began on his knees. Compare verses 32-33 with Matthew 6:6. **The man of God must be alone with God before he can communicate the life of God. Before we can minister life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins we must be in touch with God ourselves.** How glorious if we can say what Hannah said in 1 Samuel 1:27! Are you praying regularly for the salvation of your children or for someone else's children?

2. There was personal contact. Notice in verse 34 what intimate contact there was of eye, mouth and hands. This suggests that if we are going to win the children to Christ we must:

(i) be able to see things from the child's standpoint;

(ii) be able to speak in the child's language;

(iii) be able to enter into the child's interests. Each of these is essential if we would establish real contact with those we are seeking to win for the Lord.

3. There was intense desire and effort. In verse 34, we are told that the prophet ***"stretched himself out upon him"***. It is true that ***"with strong great wrestlings souls are won"***, and this applies to work among children just as much as it does to work among adults. It is always hard work, demanding the sacrifice of time and energy. It often proves disappointing, but it is gloriously worthwhile work and brings great reward to the worker.

4. There was patience and perseverance. See verse 35. The miracle did not happen all at once. Elisha had to hold on to God and to work on in faith. Maybe we fail because we get impatient and give up just when we should be pressing on believingly and trusting God to give the victory.

In conclusion, notice the three signs of life which we are to look for as we bring the Gospel to the boys and girls in our care:-

1. In verse 34 there is the sign of warmth, and if there is warmth there must be life.

2. In verse 35 there is the sign of sneezing, and this surely indicates more life still.

3. In verse 35 there is the sign of vision, for we are told that the child ***"opened his eyes"***.

Closing Thought: Proverbs 22:6.

## 7. PHILIPPIANS 4:19 ILLUSTRATED

(Scripture: 2 Kings 4: 38-44)

In Gilgal there was a School of Prophets - theological college, of which the Principal was Elisha, described in verse 42 as *“the man of God”*, and there were one hundred students, described in verse 38 as *“the sons (students) of the prophets”*. They were all in danger of starving, for verse 38 tells us *“there was a dearth in the land.”* Then, quite unexpectedly, a wonderful thing happened. A man arrived on the scene with a gift of food for Elisha, but at the Lord’s bidding he gave instructions for it to be given to the students, and when all were fed there was still some over. Here is an O.T. anticipation of our Lord’s miracles of the feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:15-21) and of the 4000 (Matthew 15:32-38), and it is a glorious illustration of Philippians 4:19 - of the way in which God provides for the needs of His people. How does He meet their needs?

### 1. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WORD.

Notice the words, *“For this is what the LORD says”*, and *“according to the word of the Lord”* (verses 43-44). Frequently in the Bible God promises to provide for His children, and not one promise has ever failed or will ever fail. David testified to God’s promise of provision when he said – Psalms 23:1; 34:10; 37:25; Isaiah gave the same assurance to every believer – Isaiah 33:16; our Lord said the same thing in Matthew 6:25-34; and Paul added his testimony – Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 9:8. These are all God’s promises to us, assuring us that He always provides for His children according to His word.

### 2. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

Elisha and the School of Prophets students prayed to God in their extremity, and because Elisha had prayed he was able to say, *“For this is what the LORD says.....”* (verse 43); so let us notice that although God promises to supply our needs He waits for us to pray that He will do so. Why is this? One reason is to keep us dependent upon Him. Prayer does not make Him more willing to give, but it provides the channel through which He can give. If we find our supplies running short it is so that we may feel our need of Him and be cast upon Him. God always gives to us in answer to prayer - either our own or that of someone else. This is very much illustrated in the lives of Elijah and Elisha.

### 3. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME

Often He allows us to come to the end of our resources before He sends His special provision. This is wonderfully illustrated in the experience of George Muller and the daily provision that He made for his hundreds of orphans in Bristol – all in answer to prayer. This provision always came just at the right moment – as it did for Elisha and his students!

### 4. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN A SUITABLE WAY.

The students needed food, so the Lord sent food. George Muller needed food, fuel and clothing for his children, so the Lord supplied these necessities. What are you needing? Look up Luke 11:11-12, and trust Him, for He will never fail.

### 5. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER

*“A man came from Baal Shalishah.....”*. We are told nothing about him, which reminds us that God does not always provide for us in the way we expect. We are tempted to say, “So-and-so could help”; but the help comes from ‘Baal Shalishah’! Elijah was fed by ravens (1 Kings 17:4), and sustained by a widow (1 Kings 17:9), which reminds us that God’s resources never run dry. He is never at a loss to know how to supply our need, which is often quite different from what we expect.

## 6. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE USUALLY THROUGH A HUMAN CHANNEL

The need of the college or School of Prophets was supplied through the man from Baal Shalishah. God’s gifts of food and other necessities do not drop from the skies, and if we are in need He sends them through a human channel, through one of His stewards who feels burdened to supply our need in the name of the Lord. The same is true with regard to spiritual gifts. These are usually dispensed through the preaching of the Word or through the living, consecrated testimony of one of God’s children. The Lord Jesus fed five thousand, but He did it through the disciples; on the Day of Pentecost the Lord saved three thousand souls through the preaching of Peter and others; and Paul’s needs were constantly met through the sacrificial giving of the Christians in the early Church. Do we feel the responsibility placed upon us to be ready to be channels through whom God can give to meet the needs of others?

## 7. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE ON AN ADEQUATE SCALE

He always gives abundantly: verse 43 says, *“They will eat and have some left over”*; and verse 44 says, *“They ate and had some left over.”* There was plenty left over! It was a miracle, and He will, if necessary, work a miracle for you.

## 8. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE FOR AN UNSELFISH PURPOSE

The *“man from Baal Shalishah”* gave food to Elisha, but Elisha shared it with his students. All God’s giving to us should issue in our sharing with others. Notice the words in verse 42 – *“Give it to the people.....”*, and compare them with Matthew 14:16 and 1 John 3:17. We are to share with others the gifts that God bestows upon us. This is especially true in relation to spiritual gifts. For instance: He has saved us – but are we seeking the salvation of others? He comforts us in our sorrows. Why? Look up 2 Corinthians 1:4. He lifts our burden, but He says – Galatians 6:2. God is no man’s debtor, and as we give to others so He goes on giving to us. Compare Proverbs 11:24 with Luke 6:38. The more we give, the more He gives; and the more He gives, the more He would have us give. What a great giver He is!

Closing Thought: Psalm 23:1.

## 8. THE CLEANSING OF NAAMAN

(Scripture: 2 Kings 5: 1-15)

Of all the incidents connected with Elisha's ministry the story of the cleansing of Naaman is probably the best known. In 15 verses we read of his discovery that he was a leper, then a ray of hope, and finally his miraculous healing. The story appeals to us because it finds a parallel in our own experience. As we read of Naaman, we put ourselves in the picture. Instead of Naaman, it is our name; in place of leprosy, it is sin; and instead of the River Jordan, we stand in awe at *"the place which is called Calvary"* (Luke 23:33), and from where *"the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). The story divides naturally into five chapters.

### 1. NAAMAN WAS A GREAT MAN

Some people live and die without achieving anything of importance, whereas others rise to fame and make a name for themselves. Such was Naaman (verse 1). Wherever he went he was acclaimed. He was *"a commander.....a great man.....highly regarded....."* By him the Lord had accomplished much, and he was *"a valiant soldier"*. A great man indeed – courageous, popular, dependable! But:

### 2. NAAMAN HAD A SERIOUS DISEASE

The last five words in verse 1 tell us that beneath his splendid uniform was the loathsome disease of leprosy. Do you know anyone like that? Success? Yes, but beneath it tragedy and pain; dark secrets of sin and sorrow. *"A great man.....but he had leprosy"*. Is that your story? Only God and you know the leprosy, the sin, in your heart; it is hidden from others, but God sees it (1 Samuel 16:7). This is a picture of tens of thousands of our fellow-men; decent, moral, kind, but they have sinful hearts. They are unbelievers and are therefore spiritually diseased, and they never go to worship God. What chance have they of entering into the kingdom of God?

### 3. NAAMAN HAD A GENTLE MAID IN HIS HOUSEHOLD

Verses 2 — 4 tell us that this little girl had been captured and brought away from her home and loved-ones. In that home she had learned to trust in the living God, and now she was not only a believer but a witnessing believer. When she discovered her master was a leper she was filled with compassion for him, and she felt she must witness to God's power, ability and willingness to cure Commander Naaman. The Naamans had entertained an angel unawares. Look up Isaiah 11:6. The wonderful thing is that Naaman was not too proud to listen to the testimony of the little girl! In verse 5 we are told that the King of Syria arranged for Naaman to go to the land of Israel to get the cure he so much needed. If only sin-sick souls would just try the Great Physician! Naaman did this, but notice that:

### 4. NAAMAN MADE THREE GRAVE MISTAKES.

He was wise in listening to the little girl, but foolish in not following her advice. What were his mistakes?

i. First, he thought he could BUY the cure. Verse 5 says that he took with him a very great deal of money. One talent of silver required two bags to be carried, see v 23, and in addition to this he took "six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of clothing"! What a gift! But all the money in the world cannot cure a man of spiritual leprosy.....of sin.....see 1 Peter 1:18-19. Many people think they



can earn their salvation, but God's Word clearly states that salvation is a gift that has to be received by faith, and we can do nothing to earn it. Look up Romans 3:20; Titus 3:5.

2. Second, he went to the **WRONG PLACE** to be cured. He went to the king instead of to Elisha (verse 6). Many today are knocking at the wrong door for salvation: for example, at the door of confession to a priest (1 Timothy 2:5); at the door of Spiritism or some other false cult; at the door of respectability or of church affiliation. There is only one door – John 10:9; there is only one place where the leprosy of sin can be dealt with, and that is at the feet of Jesus, at Calvary. Luke 7:37-38, 48-50.

3. Third, he wanted to be cured **IN HIS OWN WAY**, and not in God's way. God's way is outlined in verse 10, and verses 11-12 tell us of Naaman's reaction when he learned of God's method of cleansing. Many people want their way and not God's, and how different their way is from God's. Look up Isaiah 55:8-9! But look at verse 13. God's way is simple and effective: for example, we are saved by turning (Isaiah 45:22); by calling (Romans 10:13); by coming (Matthew 11:28); by welcoming (Revelation 3:20); by entering (John 10:9); by touching (Matthew 14:36); by receiving (John 1:12). If you have never done so, will you try it? Look at verse 13 again!

## 5. NAAMAN WAS CURED BY A GLORIOUS MIRACLE

Notice several things that need emphasising in verse 14:

1. There was A **GREAT HUMBLING**. We read that Naaman "**went down**". His pride had to go – and in front of all his officers and servants this mighty man had to go down, down, down..... Whenever men and women are determined to be saved they will do anything rather than miss the blessing.

2. There was **PERFECT OBEDIENCE**. In verse 10 the prophet said "**seven times**", and thus "**seven times**" Naaman dipped himself beneath the water. Can you hear the watchers counting, "One.....two.....three....." as he goes down? After dipping six times Naaman was still a leper, and only when he perfected his obedience by dipping the seventh time did the miracle take place. When anyone takes God at His word He always performs the miracle for them. Look up Romans 10:9-10.

3. There was A **COMPLETE CURE**. The last part of verse 14 tells us this – and compare 2 Corinthians 5:17.

There is still one very beautiful thing to notice in this story which is more wonderful and more to be desired than physical healing, even than being cleansed from our sin. Look at verse 15. Naaman was now absolutely convinced that there was a God in Heaven, and from now on he was determined to make this God his God, to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him and to make Him known to others! Closing Thought: Isaiah 1:18 and Luke 5:31.

## 9. THE RECOVERY OF THE LOST AXE-HEAD

(Scripture: 2 Kings 6: 1-7)

The story of the raising of the lost axe-head, recorded in 2 Kings 6:1-7, is the story of a miracle of recovery and restoration. Thank God, He is still able to perform such miracles in human lives! In this incident, Elisha typifies the Lord Jesus (verse 6); the company of the prophets typify Christian workers (verse 1); and the axe-head speaks to us of the power, the anointing and the enabling of the Holy Ghost, without which all service must be ineffective (verses 5-6). Here, then, is a message for all who have known the power of God in their service but who have now become ineffective and are out of touch, backsliders – see 2 Timothy 3:5. There are three main sections in this story.

### 1. A PATTERN TO BE APPROVED

In verses 1-4 we have a pattern of wholehearted service; a picture of what Christian service and servants should be. Notice the following characteristics:

- i. They were *“a company of the prophets”* (verse 1), and the disciples of Elisha. The first qualification for all Christian service is relationship with the Master.
- ii. They met with Elisha (verse 1). Here is the idea of fellowship and communion, which is essential for effective service. Compare John 15:4.
- iii. They were burdened about the need for service (verse 2). They recognised the need and were anxious to get on with the work.
- iv. They were commissioned men (verse 2). The prophet said to them, *“Go ...”* Compare Matthew 28:19.
- v. They realised their dependence upon their Master (verse 3). They were unprepared to undertake the task without him. Compare John 15:5.
- vi. They all took a share (verse 2). Every man joined in the task.
- vii. They were energetic, keen workers (verse 4). They were equipped with the right tools for felling trees and the work of building.

Here, then, is a pattern to be approved. How great it would be if all the Lord’s workers had these seven-fold characteristics! But in the story, we notice there is:

### 2. A PERIL TO BE AVOIDED

Verse 5 tells us that one worker lost his axe-head, the sharp cutting edge of all his service, without which all effort was useless. He did not lose the handle; from a distance it might have appeared as though his equipment was complete, but it was not complete. Look up Zechariah 4:6. How foolish it would have been for him to have gone on working! He was working well, but gradually the axe-head slipped down the handle of the axe – and into the water! It was a gradual process, as all backsliding is, and he lost his power and effectiveness. Notice:

- i. He lost his power while he was working - see 1 Kings 20:40.
- ii. Perhaps he was working too energetically - see 1 Corinthians 2:4.
- iii. He was conscious of his loss - compare Judges 16:20.

iv. He was deeply distressed about his loss - see Job 23:3.

Have you lost the axe-head? You used to know His power resting upon you, but now is your cry: ***“Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?”*** If so, this story assures you that you may be **restored, reinstated and re-equipped** for the service of God. What must you do?

### 3. A PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED

Verses 5-7 tell us about this, and if God can make a piece of iron swim then surely He can restore one of His own children who has wandered from Him? No one has gone too far for God to raise him. How can lost power, lost effectiveness and a lost experience of God be regained?

i. We must immediately stop working. The man did that. It would have been foolish to try to work without the axe-head! Jesus said, ***“Stay.....until.....”*** (Luke 24:49).

ii. We must make a full and a frank confession to our Master. Immediately he was conscious of his loss the man cried out, ***“Oh, my lord!...”*** (Verse 5). If we have failed we must make a full confession of our failure to the Lord Himself; then we may have the assurance of His forgiveness and cleansing. See 1 John 1:9.

iii. We must show our Master the place where we lost our effectiveness and our experience of His presence and power. The first question Elisha asked was, ***“Where did it fall?”*** He did not scold the young man; he asked him frankly to tell him what had happened. Where did you fail the Lord and lose the conscious realisation of His presence and power in your life? Was it when you gave up your private devotions or your attendance at the house of God, when you had a misunderstanding with someone, when you made that unholy alliance, when you committed that secret sin or entered into that dishonest transaction.....? ***“Where did it fall?”*** You will never recover your axe-head until you tell your Lord just where you lost it.

iv. Then, we shall see the miracle performed! Verse 6 tells us that Elisha performed the miracle by the use of a ***“stick”***; and the way back to God is by way of the Cross (1 Peter 2:24). His blood can cleanse us and make us whole. Trust Him, for 1 John 1:7 is our ground of assurance.

v. Finally, we must put out our hand and take it. Here is the step of faith. Verse 7 tells us about it, and all the way through our Christian life it is necessary for us to appropriate by faith the provision that the Lord has made for our salvation and our victory through Christ. To act in faith in this way was a humbling experience for the son of the prophet, for probably others were watching as he bent down very low, put out his hand and took back that which he had lost.

What a glorious thing it is when having failed the Lord we are prepared to take these steps back into fullness of blessing! May God give us grace to do this.

Closing Thought: Hosea 14:1-7.

## 10. A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS

(Scripture: 2 Kings 7: 1-15)

This study is based upon the story of the four lepers who made an amazing discovery and then felt compelled to share it with as many people as possible. In this incident we find solemn teaching concerning the desperate need of the spiritually famished multitudes around us and of our responsibility to tell them of the wonderful provision that God has made for their salvation. See the setting of the story in 2 Kings 7:1-11.

Samaria was besieged by the Syrian army, and inside the city terrible things were happening. See 2 Kings 6:24-31. The people were facing starvation, disease and death. Outside the city were four lepers, also starving. If they remained outside they would die; if they went to the Syrian camp they would probably be killed. What should they do? They decided to go to the Syrian camp. As they drew near they were amazed to find ***“not a man was there”*** (verse 5) — but they found plenty of food, clothes, silver and gold...so they satisfied their hunger to the full (verse 8)! Then, they remembered the thousands who were dying inside the city while they had so much. Now read verses 9-11.

This story is a great challenge to those of us who have discovered Christ as the Bread of Life and who are surrounded by millions of famished, dying souls who are in danger of the second death (Revelation 20:12-15). Let us look at the words of the four lepers recorded in verse 9, and notice:-

### 1. THE PRIVILEGE WE ENJOY

***“This is a day of good news!”*** said the lepers, and every Christian can say the same. Every day for 2000 years has been a day of good news, today included. Look up Luke 2:10-11; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Galatians 4:4; 1 Timothy 1:15. We are living in the Day of Grace, when sinners may be sure of a welcome if they will come to the Saviour (John 6:37); when He waits to be admitted into the hearts of men and women (Revelation 3:20); when ***“whoever wishes may come”*** (Revelation 22:17). In the mercy of God, we have heard the good news and are rejoicing in Christ — and what a privilege it is when we remember that so many of the people we meet are starving, perishing (John 3:16)! They are inside the city, without God and without hope in the world, while we are saved and bound for the Heavenly City — this is the privilege we enjoy.

### 2. THE SIN WE COMMIT

***“We’re not doing right.....”*** said the lepers, ***“we are keeping it to ourselves.....”***; and this is true of multitudes of Christians who are committing the sin of silence, indeed, the crime of silence! How guilty the church has been down the years! It is 2000 years since Jesus came to Bethlehem and later died on Calvary, yet there are still many millions of souls who have never heard of His love. Thousands of Christians go to church each Sunday and sing of God’s great salvation, but during the week they ***“keep it to themselves”***. This, O Christian, is the sin we commit. By our silence we sin against the Lord who depends upon us to proclaim the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19); we sin against the souls for whom Christ died and who need Him so desperately (1 John 2:2), and we condemn ourselves for our sinful selfishness and expose ourselves to a dreadful danger, of which the four lepers remind us.

### 3. THE DANGER WE FACE

*“We’re not doing right.....”* said the lepers. *“If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us.”* What is the result of our failure to evangelise? When we *“keep it to ourselves”* it means fearful loss for the souls around us, for if we do not go to them they will certainly die – spiritually (Romans 6:23). Also, if we *“keep it to ourselves”* it means fearful loss and punishment for ourselves. Please read the solemn words in Ezekiel 33:7-9. David had this in mind when he prayed – Psalm 51:14-15, and referred to the guilt that rests upon the soul who keeps silent when he should speak out. This danger was also referred to by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. The sin of silence will result in inevitable *“loss”* at the Judgment Seat of Christ. How we have failed in the matter of personal evangelism! What can we do about it?

#### 4. THE ACTION WE MUST TAKE

This is indicated in the last part of verse 9 and verses 10-11.

1. There must be DETERMINED action. Listen to the four men: *“Let’s go at once.....”* If one Christian won ten souls for Christ this year, and those ten each won ten in the next year, these hundred then winning ten each in the third year, and so on, the result would be that in the tenth year ten thousand million souls would have been saved, and before the completion of the tenth year the full population of the world would be gathered in!
2. There must be UNITED action. *“Let’s go.....”* said the lepers. They would do this thing together. It is wonderful what one dedicated man can do, but how much more can a whole church of dedicated witnesses do for the salvation of souls! Look up Mark 2:1-5 (particularly noticing verse 3).
3. There must be SACRIFICIAL action. Notice the word in verse 9 is *“go”*, not *“wait”*! — look up Matthew 28:19. Such “going” involves sacrifice. If, for example, the developing world is to hear, then fellows and girls must be prepared to leave the comforts of home, their good jobs, and go..... Who is prepared for this?
4. There must be VOCAL action. Notice the word *“report”* in verse 9. This is something we can all do. Why do we find it so hard to tell of all that our dearest Friend has done for us? Will you obey Mark 5:19 today?
5. There must be URGENT action. The lepers said, *“If we wait.....some punishment will result.”* The time is short.....the lost are dying.....the Lord is coming.....the opportunity is going – look up John 9:4.

See what happens when Christians are willing to *“go and tell”*. In verses 9-12 we are told that the four lepers told the city gatekeepers, who in turn shouted the news and it was reported in the palace. See how quickly the news spread! Closing Thought: Acts 5:40-42.