

PRAYING FOR THE EYES OF THE YOUNG

2Kings 6:17 *And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.*

From the beginning of time, there has been a battle for the attention of youth. God wants to open their eyes to spiritual matters, but the enemy is equally determined to overwhelm their eyes with earthly, material things. When the army of Syria came to capture Elisha in the city of Dothan, the young servant of Elisha was overwhelmed with what his eyes saw. “Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about” (2 Kings 6:14). Thank God for the man of God! As long as there is an Elisha to pray for the eyes of the young to be spiritually opened, there is hope. May the God who opened the eyes of clay in the first creation, now open the eyes of the young to the spiritual world in the second creation!

Especially in these last days, the enemy is preparing the final attack or onslaught against the young. We remember how the enemy seduced our first parents to have a closer look at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:59). As previously mentioned, there is a battle for your eyesight – for where your eyes rest and settle, your heart will follow. The next verse states:

Genesis 3:6 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

It is not coincidental that we live in a time of unprecedented visual pollution. Compare what we use our eyes for today and in the past. In the past, our eyes beheld other humans and God’s nature most of the day. Today, our eyes are fixed to computers, TV screens and mobile phones. The Covid-19 pandemic has even increased the number of hours we spend before screens. I am not saying that this is wrong in and of itself; this is the reality we live in. The question to the young is: do you have enough of the Spirit of Jesus and discipline in you to lift

up your eyes off the screens and towards the spiritual world – the world that the Lord Jesus wants you to see? This is precisely what God was training the boy prophet, Jeremiah, to do!

Jeremiah 1:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.

Jeremiah 1:12 Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

God complimented the young Jeremiah for seeing the godly vision. He had 20/20 spiritual visual acuity (sharpness). Young people, there must be a clear distinction between the vision of God and the vision of the world. You must be quick and trained in spiritual visuals. In a world where we are constantly bombarded with special effects and astounding graphics, the boundaries between what is real and unreal, what is spiritual and what is anti-spiritual is easily blurred and confused. Let the youth pray, “Jesus, teach me to see!” One is also reminded of the prophet Isaiah, who as a young man in the Temple, was so shocked at seeing the glory of God that he was sure he was going to die.

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Isaiah 6:5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah was accustomed to the company of his friends and other humans who were sinners. They spoke about sinful things and saw sinful things. Does this sound familiar? The good news is that God is eager to intervene in your everyday – he wants you to see him, to know him! This time he did not send a seraphim with coals from the altar of the Temple, but he put his own body as a sacrifice for you and me on the altar of Golgotha to wash away our sins. Young person, fear not! When you feel powerless to look beyond your immediate company of sins and sinners, the God of Isaiah wants to break through into your visual sphere; he wants you to see him, like he saw Hagar when she was desperate.

Genesis 16:13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

Who will pray for the eyes of the young to be opened today? I know God has given you an Elisha in the USA, Bishop Ayele to pray for you! May the Lord Jesus Christ hear your prayers and open the eyes of the youth of ACIFNA and worldwide, Bishop Ayele! May the

Lord Jesus Christ hear your prayers and open the eyes of the youth in Ethiopia and worldwide Bishop Degu! Jesus said, “And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind” (John 9:39). May the good Lord make us blind to this world and its sins! May he open our eyes to the spiritual world of salvation and blessing in Jesus name! This is precisely what happened to Saul of Tarsus. Jesus had to blind him to this world in order to open his spiritual eyes. Had he never been blinded, he would never ask the question, “Who art thou, Lord?” (Acts 9: 5). Before Jesus closed his earthly eyes, he was filled with hatred for Christians, but the next time the Lord Jesus opened his eyes, he was filled with immense love. Let the youth say now, “Jesus blind us to this world and open our eyes to ask, ‘who art thou, Lord?’”

Numbers 24:3 *And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:*

Balaam claimed that his eyes were opened. However, his eyes were opened only to material greed and rewards, just as Judas’ eyes were fixed, not on Jesus, but money. God in his great mercy opened the eyes of the donkey so he could spare the blind prophet’s life. The tragedy of Balaam was there was no one to pray the Lord open his eyes. A donkey cannot substitute for our vision. Jesus, open the eyes of the young today! Let no donkey substitute for the youth or the adults!

We live in a strange and abnormal age! Research reveals that the youth of today who have grown up attached to screens have some difficulty interpreting human facial expressions. In various tests, it emerged that some have become emotionally illiterate because they struggle to differentiate between frowns, dissatisfaction etc. This was blamed on excessive use of screens where emojis and similar icons have substituted for face-to-face interaction. Screens appear to reduce and harm our ability to interact as God designed in the beginning. It is difficult to practice loving my neighbor through screens. May God give the youth strength and discipline to life up their eyes above and beyond screens to the invisible God! Let us never stop praying for the eyes of the young. We who are mature Christians must pray the prayer of Elisha, the man of God. Had he never prayed, his servant would have missed out on such a powerful spiritual vision. How many spiritual visions have the youth missed out on

today because there was no Elisha to pray for them? God help us to pray for their spiritual eyesight!