

2 Kings 3:9-17

“So the king of Israel set out with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. After a roundabout march of seven days, the army had no more water for themselves or for the animals with them. “What!” exclaimed the king of Israel! “Has the Lord called us three kings together only to hand us over to Moab?” But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord through him?” An officer of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.” Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the Lord is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What do we have to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother.” “No,” the king of Israel answered, “because it was the Lord who called us three kings together to hand us over to Moab.” Elisha said, “As surely as the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you. But now bring me a harpist.” While the harpist was playing, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha and he said, “This is what the Lord says: Make this valley full of ditches. For this is what the Lord says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink.”

Last week we talked about burning our plows, overcoming obstacles, and stepping out on faith. We talked about cutting off any avenue of retreat; so we have nothing keeping us, or holding us back. I've met many people who have burned their plows and set forth to live for God, but then didn't know what to do next. They just sat around and waited to hear God's booming voice. Most of us have at one time or another decided to make a resolution to change how we live and nothing ever came of those resolutions. We made our decision and then ... nothing! Nothing happens because we become stuck; we don't know what to do next. There are really only two major reasons why we get stuck after we burn our plows;

1. Our vision isn't big enough
2. We don't start small enough

Both of these points are essential in realizing dreams or visions. This morning I pray we can all become motivated to dream bigger dreams and at the same time take realistic steps in reaching these dreams.

More often than not we all settle for dreams or visions that are far smaller than those God has for us. God wants each of us to experience so much more than we ever could imagine, but in order to have and accomplish

God size visions, we need to change. We will never achieve God size visions simply by forming committees, and meeting monthly to just talk about what it is we would like to accomplish. Laying out a plan is smart, but if that's all that is done then that all that will get done.

I heard a story a while back about a young man who approached the foreman of a logging crew and asked for a job. "That depends," replied the foreman. "Let's see you fell this tree." The young man stepped forward and skillfully felled a great tree. Impressed, the foreman exclaimed, "Start Monday!" Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday rolled by, and Thursday afternoon the foreman approached the young man and said, "You can pick up your paycheck on the way out today." Startled, he replied, "I thought you paid on Friday." "Normally we do," answered the foreman, "but we're letting you go today because you've fallen behind. Our daily felling charts show that you've dropped from first place on Monday to last on Wednesday." "But I'm a hard worker," the young man objected. "I arrive first, leave last, and even have worked through my coffee breaks!"

The foreman, sensing the boy's integrity, thought for a minute and then asked, "Have you been sharpening your ax?" The young man replied, "I've been working too hard to take the time to do that."ⁱ

We can have all the dreams or visions we want but if we are not willing to take care of and do the small things we have nothing more than a daydream. In Scripture, faith isn't just about believing and certainly not about just thinking. Faith is about action. Faith isn't a state of mind; it's a course of action. Faith is work!

Last week we talked about overcoming obstacles; if we were to take a close look at Elisha we would discover that he saw every obstacle as an opportunity to prove how great God is regardless of the situation. Elisha did not just believe; he did something about it. Elisha's way of handling situations shows us that divine results or miracles are the results of steps of faith filled preparation.

Let's look at this morning passage 2 Kings 3. We find that the king of Moab has attacked king Joram. King Joram frightened calls King Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom for help.

The three kings combined forces are more than a match against king Joram. But something happened along the way, and obstacle appeared. The obstacle was in their pursuit of King Joram they ran out of water for their armies and their animals. About to face their biggest foe and they feared dying of thirst. Like we read throughout Scripture once in the middle of something the parties involved now seek divine help.

Fearing for their lives the kings seek for a prophet. A servant mentions Elijah's replacement Elisha. The kings locate and him but Elisha is anything but impressed. He listens to the kings and hears about their perceived problem. That's when Elisha does something weird, he says "*bring me a harpist.*" I guess he required some mood music. The kings see nothing but destruction and here Elisha wants to hear some music.

While listening to his music Elisha receives a word from God. Elisha says water will flow. He lets the kings know that God will answer their prayer for water. Elisha says "*This is what the Lord says: Make this valley full of ditches.*" What does digging ditches have to do with water for the people and animals?

See the problem most have with God answering prayers is that they, or we want God to everything and all we have to do is close our eyes and ask. The kings wanted a miracle, but were they willing to work for one? We want miracles but like the kings are we willing to work for them?

God is telling the kings just as He is telling us today; show me your faith and I will show you my faithfulness. Do your part, do what is asked of you, and I will be faithful to My word. God said and is saying “If you’ll dig the ditches, I’ll send the rain.” We all want something more, that is, until we have to start digging ditches.

Do you have enough faith in God to go out and dig a ditch even if you can’t see any rain or wind? That would be like building a large boat when it had never rained. That would be like putting blood on your doorposts. That would be like lifting up a wooden staff and watching the sea open up for you to cross.

Lifting up a wooden staff, Moses did that and the Hebrews went across on dry ground. This same miracle happened when crossing the Jordan. Except this time more was required. We read in Joshua 3, “*Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. This*

is how you will know that the living God is among you ... as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth — set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap ... as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing.”

Notice this time more was required, those carrying the Ark of the Covenant had to walk out into the water. No one was told to raise a staff. This time some had to walk out into the water. That was their ditch, and they dug it. Elisha has told the kings that they and their people had to not just dig a ditch but they had to fill the valley with ditches.

Think about this for a moment, they were told to fill the valley with ditches and as a result they would have the water they needed. They had to dig ditches and rain was not in the forecast and neither was there any wind. All would be calm for a night of ditch digging and the result would be water for all.

What ditches is God asking you to dig in preparation for Him to preform yet another miracle. We can't expect God to trust us with a God size vision if we can't be trusted to dig a few ditches. Do you believe God is going to send then rain? Do you? Then preparations are needed, dirt needs to be moved. Have you burned your plows? If so it's time for us, all of us to pick up a shovel and start digging.

Worship committee needs members ... Evangelism needs workers ... Children/Youth need volunteers ... Seniors need leader/leaders ... Bread ministry needs workers ... Sound System needs volunteers. We are in need of a lot around here, the question is do we have those willing to pick up a shovel and start digging? Ditch digger needed are you one?

ⁱ K. Hughes, Liberating Ministry From The Success Syndrome, Tyndale, Accessed from Illustrations from ChristianGlobe, ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc. Feb. 2014