

# FAITH AMIDST FEAR

## 2 KING 6:1-7

### ADEOYE, EMMANUEL (EVANG.)

And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, *"See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell."*

So he answered, *"Go."* Then one said, *"Please consent to go with your servants. And he answered, "I will go."* So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, *"Alas, **MASTER! FOR IT WAS BORROWED.**"* So the man of God said, *"Where did it fall?"* And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. Therefore, he said, *"Pick it up for yourself."* So he reached out his hand and took it.

Elisha wasn't only a traveling preacher and a miracle-working prophet, but he was also the overseer of several schools of the prophets where young men called to ministry were trained and encouraged. We know there were schools in Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho (2:1-5) and also in Samuel's hometown of Ramah (1 Sam. 19:22-24), but there may have been others.

Both Elijah and Elisha were concerned that the next generation know the Lord and understand His Word, and this is the church's commission today (2 Tim. 2:2). This account picks up the story from 4:44. God had blessed the school at Jericho, and it was necessary to enlarge their quarters. The students studied together when the prophet visited them, for they met with him and sat before him to hear him teach (v. 1).

They also ate together (4:38-44), but they lived in their own family dwellings (4:1-7). It's a good sign when God is raising up a new generation of servants and when the veteran ministers of God take time to teach them. But new growth brings new obligations, and the facilities at Jordan had to be enlarged.

In Elisha's day's, the students did the work. Not only that, but the leader of the school went with them and encouraged the work. Elisha had a shepherd's heart and was willing to go with his flock and share their burdens. The Jewish people didn't have hard-ware stores stocked with tools such as we have today. Iron tools

were precious and scarce, which explains why the student had to borrow an ax so he could help prepare the timber.

In fact, Moses gave a special law relating to damage that might result when an ax-head flew off the handle (***Deut 19:4-5***), so it must have happened frequently. If the law of borrowed animals also applied to borrowed tools (***Ex 22:14-15***), then that poor student would have to reimburse the lender for the lost ax-head, and that would probably upset the budget for weeks to come.

Without the axe head, the student couldn't work and that would add to somebody else's burdens. All in all, the sunken axe head caused a great deal of trouble. The student was quick enough to see where it fell and honest enough to report the accident to Elisha. The Jordan isn't the cleanest river in the Holy Land (***5:12***) and it would be very difficult for anybody to see the ax-head lying at the bottom. The prophet didn't "*fish out*" the axe head with a pole. He threw a stick into the water at the place where the ax-head sank, and the Lord raised the iron ax-head so that it floated on the surface of the river and could be picked up. It was a quiet miracle from a powerful God through a compassionate servant.

There are some spiritual applications that we can learn from this incident, and perhaps the first is that *whatever we have has been "borrowed."* Paul asked, "*And what do you have that you did not receive?*" (***1 Cor 4:7***, NKJV), and John the Baptist said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven" (***John 3:27***, NKJV). Whatever gifts, abilities, possessions, and opportunities we have are from God, and we will have to give an account of them when we see the Lord. This student lost his valuable tool *while he was serving the Lord*. Faithful service is important, but it can also be threatening, for we might lose something valuable even as we do our work.

Moses lost his patience and meekness while providing water for the people (***Num 20:1-13***), and David lost his self-control while being kind to his neighbor (***1 Sam 25:13***). God's servants must walk carefully before the Lord and take inventory of their "tools" lest they lose something they desperately need. The good news is that *the Lord can recover what we have lost and put us back to work*. If we lose our "cutting edge," He can restore us and make us efficient in His service. The important thing is to know that you have lost it, and when and where you have lost it, and honestly confess it to Him. Then get back to work again!

While we're on the subject of axes, ***Eccl 10:10*** offers some good counsel: "If the axe is dull and he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success" (NASB). The modern equivalent is, "Don't work harder-work smarter." Wisdom tells a worker to sharpen the tool before the work begins. But our text from Kings reminds us further to make sure that the sharp ax-head is firmly set into the handle. Don't work without a cutting edge and don't lose your cutting edge.

## **LESSONS**

- 1. ANY PROJECT YOU EMBARK ON; DON'T LOOK BACK**
- 2. BE A MOTIVATOR WITH COURAGE AND NOT A FEARFUL INDIVIDUAL**
- 3. TAKE AWAY FEAR AND ALLOW FAITH IN ACTION - 2 TIM 1:7**
- 4. BE FOCUSED; WITH A SENSE OF DIRECTION – GEN. 26.**