**BUILDING A NEW CENTER**

2 Kings 6:1-7

Key Verse 1, 2

“The company of the prophets said to Elisha, “Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to meet.””

**Introduction**

In the previous passage, we learned that Gehazi lost his blessing from the Lord God due to his greed, materialism, unfaithfulness and hypocrisy. But this passage shows that there are faithful prophets who devoted themselves sacrificially with Elisha. God never ignores those who are faithful to Him and His ministry. Always it seems to us that there are two kinds of believers. One group is like Gehazi or Lot. They are looking for what appears to be practical. But the other group is like Elisha who refused to receive any gift from Naaman. Prophets in this passage chose to join in his humble lifestyle and sacrificially served the Lord and desired to enlarge God’s tent wide enough for all to meet. May the Lord help us to live a life by faith, not by sight.

1. Read verses 1-3. What did the company of the prophets say to Elisha? (1) What does this tell us about Elisha’s ministry? What plan did they propose to him? (2a) What can we learn from his approval and willingness to go together? (2b-3)

1-1, Read verses 1-3.

The company of the prophets said to Elisha, “Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. 2 Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to meet.”

And he said, “Go.”

3 Then one of them said, “Won’t you please come with your servants?”

“I will,” Elisha replied.

1-2, What did the company of the prophets say to Elisha? (1)

***The company of the prophets said to Elisha, “Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us.***

1-3, What does this tell us about Elisha’s ministry?

* Elisha’s ministry and the school of the prophets were growing. As in the ministry of our Lord and the disciples that followed him, the purpose of the ministry and miracles of both Elijah and Elisha was to confirm the message of God.
* Though the miracles demonstrated God’s love for His people, the primary purpose was to demonstrate the futility of Baal and any way of life that departed from the Lord.
* God had warned them of this in Deuteronomy with the promises of blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience. These were men who were hungry to know the Lord and be used to Him.
* The prophet school was located at Gilgal, for there Elisha probably resided as the prophets flocked to him for the advantage of his instructions and prayers.

1-4, What plan did they propose to him? (2a)

***2 Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to meet.”***

* With growth, we always experience growing pains. Growing pain in a teenager's bones is a good and well known medical sign for his growth. No pain no gain!
* Elisha’s ministry needed more space and resources to continue the growth of reaching, teaching, and building people in the Lord.
* Growth is always exciting in God’s ministry. It can be a sign of a spiritually healthy church. However the strength and value of church never lies in bigger facilities or increased membership in number.
* What really counts is the authentic message being proclaimed and growing disciples who are reliable and faithful to serve the Lord God only.
* The company of the prophets said to Elisha, “Let us go to Jordan, where each of us may get a pole and build a place for us to meet.”
* They were not looking for a fancy building, but an essential building or place to meet all together.
* They were humble and willing. Each of them wanted to participate in hard manual work together.

1-5, What can we learn from his approval and willingness to go together? (2b-3)

***And he said, “Go.”***

***3 Then one of them said, “Won’t you please come with your servants?”***

***“I will,” Elisha replied.***

* First we see their wisdom and humility. Though they were prophets, they realized their need for the support and wisdom of their teacher.
* Elisha was willing to be with them and would like to support them. Elisha did not initiate or lead this work of constructing a building or a new center.
* But it could not happen without his approval and blessing. It was an opportunity for on the job training and an opportunity to get to know each of the prophets in their work field as they were together.
* Not only did Elisha show interest and concern for the project as a whole, but he demonstrated his individual and personal involvement even in the smallest of matters in their need and work.
* It would help him to minister more effectively for them. Recently from the daily bread in 2 Corinthians, apostle Paul knew the believers in Corinth and helped them very personally because he spent around 2 years with them.
* Pastors and teachers alike need personal experience and opportunities to get to know their flock and also to let their flock know them.

1. Read verses 4-5. What happened as one of the prophets was cutting down a tree? (4-5a) Why was this a serious matter to him? (5b)

2-1, Read verses 4-5.

And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. 5 As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. “Oh no, my lord!” he cried out. “It was borrowed!”

2-2, What happened as one of the prophets was cutting down a tree? (4-5a)

***And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. 5 As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water.***

* As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron head of an ax fell into the water. This was a significant loss. Iron was certainly present at this time in Israel, but it was not common enough to be bought as a cheap tool like Harbor Freight.

2-3, Why was this a serious matter to him? (5b)

***“Oh no, my lord!” he cried out. “It was borrowed!”***

* The man who lost the ax head was at a loss due to the fact that he lost something valuable that belonged to someone else.
* This incident seemed to be a small matter, but the Almighty God never ignores such a seemingly small matter for those who trust and love Him.
* God is interested and cares about even our small and trivial things like our gentle shepherd. Elisha must have had the same heart after God’s heart.
* Peter encouraged us in 1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your cares on Him, because he cares for you”. That is why we submit ourselves under God’s provision.
* God cares! It is in the present continuous tense. God always cares about us and serves us with his unchanging faithfulness and love. Praise Him!
* Why worry continually? It is because we do not trust Him. Worry is a self contradiction and self exalting against God. He is more concerned about our welfare than we could possibly do and be responsible for ourselves.

1. Read verses 6-7. What did Elisha do to help the prophet who lost the iron ax head? (6) What did he say to it? (7a) What can we learn from the Lord God, Elisha, and the man who participated in the miracle?

3-1, Read verses 6-7.

The man of God asked, “Where did it fall?” When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. 7 “Lift it out,” he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.

3-2, What did Elisha do to help the prophet who lost the iron ax head? (6)

***The man of God asked, “Where did it fall?” When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float.***

* First Elisha shows his compassion and willing desire to help him out. Then he cut off a stick, and threw it in the spot after he asked where it fell. And he made the iron float. This was an obvious and unique miracle.
* There was no trickery in the way that Elisha put the stick in the water, it was simply an expression of his faith that God honored.
* God can do all things, he can make iron swim. By God’s power, Elisha did it by the use of a stick. He cut down a stick by faith.

3-3, What did he say to it? (7a)

***7 “Lift it out,” he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.***

3-4, What can we learn from the Lord God, Elisha, and the man who participated in the miracle?

* God could have arranged a way for the ax head to appear right in the man's hand without any effort on his part.
* But this miracle shows that God did the part only He preferred to do. Then He left to man the part that he could do.
* Elisha then told the man to lift it up from the water. In this way Elisha and the man participate in the miracle by faith.

**Conclusion**

Troubles, hardships, and problems are all designed and intended by God to help us see our limitations so that we may be humble and rely on God and His greatness. 1 Peter 5:5-7 reads, “you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” May the Lord help each of us to be humble and rely on the Lord God who intimately knows and cares about us, even in a small and trivial matter. We do not rely on our strength but humble ourselves by casting all our anxiety on Him in prayer daily so that we may see His care as our Good shepherd! Amen.

**One word: Lift it out!**