

NEXT VISION

LESSON 5: FAITH

2 Kings 6:19-22

REVIEW

1. **Assignment:** Everyone in this room should have five new friends. At the very least, you should have met five new people. (Have a few people share their experiences) I told you in week one that this class would help you think differently. It is not uncommon for us to find a group of people we enjoy and begin to feel safe there. If we are not careful, we will no longer see the needs of others because we will look past them. It was important to me that you began to pay attention to other people again.
2. Blindfolds have the power to **shroud our vision**, causing confusion and immobilization.
3. **Blindfold #1: Tradition**
 - a. This blindfold shackles our creativity.
4. **Blindfold #2: FEAR**
 - a. This blindfold steals our focus.
5. **Blindfold #3: Indecision**
 - a. This blindfold chips away at our confidence.
6. **Blindfold #4: Fatigue**
 - a. This blindfold drains our strength.
7. **Blindfold #5: Opposition**
 - a. This blindfold hinders our progress.

Today our topic is 'Faith.' In this lesson we will highlight the fact Jesus came to give sight to the blind - a vision that sees beyond the surface. With divine insight, you'll be able to live each day with a sense of purpose and clarity, allowing you to navigate life confidently. Grab your Bible and turn with me to **2 Kings 6:19-22**. (Read Scripture)

ALL THE WAY HOME

My granddaughter Addie played in a miracle league softball game last year. Watching all the children with disabilities play ball was amazing. To help the kids connect with the ball, many parents would tell them when to swing the bat. When one little girl hit the ball, I watched in amazement as her mother ran backwards as fast as she could to tell her where to run. While watching, I realized the runner was blind and was running by sound rather than sight. Watching that was amazing. She made it all the way home after rounding the bases. Wouldn't it be great if Christians relied on the Holy Spirit rather than sight for direction? When we follow the Holy Spirit, He will never lead us astray, but all the way home. - Richard Wimpey

BLIND FAITH

In our previous lesson we focused on **2 Kings 6:18**. Elisha asked the Lord to strike the Syrian warriors with blindness, and his prayer was answered. It is noteworthy that Elisha's prayers differed for the Syrians and Gehazi. Instead of praying for their eyes to be opened, he asked that their eyes be closed.

I don't know if I like that strategy. I would have prayed for their eyes to be opened, but not for noble reasons. I would have done it because I'm hyper competitive. I'd be like, *"You really think you're gonna waltz over here with your big army and take me into custody? Not today, Devil. Check this out!"* And then I'd pray for their eyes to be opened!

Wouldn't you just love to see the panic in their faces when they caught a glimpse of God's warrior angels? And then I would taunt them. "Uh huh, that's right, I play for that team! What ya got to say now?"

But Elisha was Godlier than I am. He prayed for their blindness out of genuine concern for them. As **verse 22** reveals, his intention was not to destroy the Syrians, but to deliver the Israelites. Blinding them was actually an act of mercy that likely saved their lives.

The Syrians are now at the mercy of the man they were sent to arrest. Elisha speaks up and tells them, ***"You're going the wrong way, you're not even in the right city. Follow me, and I will take you to the man you seek" (Verse 19).***

Not a single soldier can see where they're at, nor do they know where they are going. All they can do is blindly follow Elisha's lead. They must place their trust in a man whom they cannot see, believing that he will guide them with their best interests in mind. Sound familiar? Isn't that exactly what we, as born-again believers, do? We follow an unseen God and trust Him to guide us with our best interest in mind.

FAITH IS THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

In his book "Visionaries," Andy Stanley dedicates Chapter 5 to the topic of faith. In fact, he says that "Faith is the Essential Ingredient." The chapter starts with the phrase, *"Few things challenge our faith more than a divinely-ordered vision."*

Committing your life to a vision given by an unseen God can be a terrifying challenge. Step up and **accept the challenge**. Scripture tells us that ***"without faith, pleasing God is impossible."*** Faith is the essential ingredient!

'Faith' is mentioned over 300 times in the New Testament. This is more than the words love, heaven, sin, grace, hope, mercy, or salvation. The importance of faith cannot be overstated.

Doubt only appears 38 times. The New Testament writers mention faith ten times more than doubt. It's for a good reason. Faith is the essential ingredient!

In **Hebrews 11:1**, we find the only concise definition of faith...

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." KJV

For more clarity, allow me to read **Hebrews 11:1** using some different translations:

"Faith is the assurance of things you have hoped for, the absolute conviction that there are realities you've never seen." VOICE

"What is Faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead." TLB

"Now Faith is... perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses..." AMP (excerpt)

TD Jakes said, *"If I see it, I don't need faith for it. I need faith for what I can't see."* Faith unveils what lies hidden to others. It pushes us to take risks others may consider unsafe, to dream beyond practicality, and to expect the seemingly impossible. Faith boils down to believing that God will do what He promises. This faith is crucial for the success of your vision.

During an especially trying time in the work of the China Inland Mission, Hudson Taylor wrote to his wife, *"We have twenty-five cents, and all the promises of God!"*

Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers, W. Wiersbe, p. 242

"WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT"

The realization of **2 Corinthians 5:7** can be seen in Bartimaeus. Blind from birth, he displayed great faith when he encountered Jesus. In the literal sense, ***he walked by faith, not by sight***. Bartimaeus' faith was founded on God's Word, since Jesus declared in **Luke 4:18** that he was here to ***restore sight to the blind***. Jesus physically restored the sight of the blind.

There's another kind of blindness we all have. Blindness to the truth! We can get blinded by fear, prejudice, lack of faith, and sin if we don't see God's truth.

The way to deal with this is to pray and ask God to give us a fresh perspective, one that focuses on faith and hope instead of doubt. God's perspective helps us see that our problems aren't as insurmountable as we thought. Additionally, we'll realize that our resources aren't as limited as we once believed.

Jesus came to give sight to the blind - a vision that sees beyond the surface. With divine insight, you'll be able to live each day with a sense of purpose and clarity, allowing you to navigate life confidently. **He came to help you see.**

FAITH PREVAILS DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Faith never sees defeat!

Elisha knew that victory was inevitable. A mighty army in battle gear has us surrounded? No problem! A larger army set on fire has my back! His faith passed the test! Great leaders of faith disregard outward circumstances, shifting their gaze from problems to the divine.

He was known as 'blind' Bartimaeus. His condition defined him. Without a miracle, he would be blind for the rest of his life. Then Jesus showed up! Instead of focusing on the impossible, Bartimaeus exercised his faith!

Sometimes, the answer (solution, miracle) is right in front of you (Jesus). He was seen by some as a healer, deliverer, and savior, but others did not see Him in those terms. He was regarded by them as Joseph's son, but not as the son of God. By faith, Bartimaeus saw him as a healer.

Other times, the answer (solution, miracle) lies on the other side of your challenge (Angelic army). When you are surrounded by your enemy and there is no escape, dig deeper! To find your answer, you must look past the challenge. Elisha looked past the Syrian army!

It is sometimes necessary to look past certain people. Don't let them frustrate you. You might need to look past attitudes, nagging doubts, and naysayers. Stay away from entanglements. Your faith must be stronger than your circumstance.

For victory, you might need a sword, a javelin, the jawbone of a donkey, or a slingshot and five smooth stones, or, as in Elisha's case, victory might require prayer, revelation, and a plan. As *Leonardo da Vinci* said, *"Obstacles cannot crush me, every obstacle yields to stern resolve, for he who is fixed to a star does not change his mind."*

Every Vision Will Be Tested for Authenticity! Facing a multitude of enemies can be intimidating, but Elisha confidently stood against the Syrian army because of his divine vision. Even when confronted by seemingly insurmountable odds, your vision will embolden you! If the vision is authentic, despite times of stress, disappointment, and pressure, it will come to pass. It's not a question of whether it will be fulfilled; it's a matter of whether we will remain steadfast throughout the test!

Obstacles won't simply fade away and leave you be when you aspire to something greater. When you decide to become someone significant, everything will attempt to hinder your

advance. Prepare yourself for the tests ahead. Be vigilant. Be resolute. Persistence is key. Remind yourself often ... THERE'S NO RESISTANCE IF YOU'RE NOT MOVING!

FAITH PREVAILS DESPITE PREVIOUS FAILURE

Faith never gives up!

The crowd and the disciples tried to shut down Bartimaeus, but their attempts only worked to embolden him even more. He never gave up on getting to Jesus! ***"He cried the more a great deal, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me."***

I encourage you to keep calling out to Jesus! Please don't give up! He is as close as the mention of His name ... so shout out His name! Jesus, ***the name above all names***. This is a name that transforms lives. An unbreakable chain is broken by this name. Those in captivity are delivered by this name. It's a name that changes the atmosphere!

Jesus! Say his name. Say it often! Speak Jesus over your situation. Speak Jesus over your sickness. **Speak Jesus over your vision!** Say the name! Pray the name! Declare his name! Jesus! Bartimaeus refused to be silenced. As his inner conviction grew, he shouted louder.

"Hey Jesus ... over here! Son of David, I need mercy! JESUS!!!!!"

So, things did not go according to plan. You stepped up and stepped out but, in the end, you got stepped on. There were setbacks and challenges you did not anticipate. Do not accept defeat! *"Face the giants in your life, slay them and move on. Do not be daunted by the mistakes and failures in your life"* (TD Jakes). Recalibrate and renew the vision! ^[1]

FAITH PREVAILS DESPITE THE NEED

Faith has no limits!

It never occurred to Bartimaeus that his need might be too great for Jesus to handle. The casting away of his garment symbolized his trust in Jesus. His need was completely in the hands of Jesus, even though he could not see him.

Our personal vision, no matter how big, is not too much for Him to handle. There are no impossibilities with God. **If you can see it, you can achieve it!**

We are living in a time that calls for unwavering faith, characterized by victorious and overcoming attitudes. It's not just about coping with problems, hardships, and dangers - it's about facing life itself with an unshakable confidence rooted in the truth of God's promises.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, *"All I have seen teaches me to trust the creator for all I have not seen."*

Let faith be the guiding force in your life, pushing you beyond what you've known and into the realms of the extraordinary. Embrace the adventure, knowing that when you place your trust in God, anything is possible.

Let's summarize: Faith is unwavering, persistent, and limitless. Consider this in the context of your vision. If you are going to achieve it, you must rise above situations that appear to have you defeated, and you must keep working it no matter how many times you want to throw in the towel.

Believe God – believe His mighty Word. Act on His promises, and you will develop mighty overcoming faith!

NOW YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY

Look at what happened to the Syrian army—they followed Elisha in an act of blind faith. They thought he was leading to a certain place where they wanted to go, but instead Elisha led them straight to the King of Israel. When he prayed for their eyes to be opened, they found themselves in a place they really did not want to be.

You might think this contradicts what we've discussed tonight—after all, they followed a man they couldn't see, trusting that he had their best interest in mind, yet they were led right into the middle of the enemy's camp.

Listen closely, if you pursue your God-given vision, He might lead you to unexpected places. Your faith, then, is not just for the journey but also for the time spent in enemy territory.

As Andy Stanley said, *"God takes pleasure in our willingness to trust Him and delights in our perseverance even in the face of overwhelming odds."*

THE AUDACIOUS PRAYER OF AN ORPHAN GIRL

We should not hesitate to pray audacious prayers if we truly believe in an all-knowing, all-powerful God. The following is a true story from Helen Roseveare, who served as a missionary doctor in Zaire, Africa for 20 years:

One night Helen worked to help a mother in labor. She did all she could, but the woman died, leaving her premature baby and a devastated two-year-old daughter behind. Keeping the baby alive would be difficult. They had no incubator, no electricity, no special feeding facilities, and nights were often chilly.

All they had were blankets and an old, hot water bottle. But when they went to fill the hot water bottle, it broke! There were no drugstores anywhere nearby and nothing they could do. All they could do was put the baby as near the fire as safely as possible, and sleep between the baby and the door to help block the drafts.

The next day, as she did most days, Helen went to the orphanage to pray with the children. Before praying, she told them about the problem with the baby and the little girl who lost their mother. During the prayer time, a ten-year-old girl named Ruth said an audacious prayer:

"Please, God," she prayed, "send us a water bottle. It'll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby'll be dead, so please send it this afternoon... And while You are about it, would You please send a dolly for the little girl, so she'll know You really love her?"

Helen was shocked. Deep down, she did not believe that God could do that. Sure, he can do anything. But this? There were too many problems. The only way this could happen is if someone sent them a hot water bottle. Helen had been working in Africa for nearly four years and had never received a package from home. And even if they did send a package, who would think to send a hot water bottle to the equator?

But that afternoon, while she was teaching in a nurse's training school, Helen received a message that there was a car at her front door. When Helen finally arrived at her house, the car was gone, but a large box was sitting on the verandah. Tears welled up in her eyes. Could it be? In the excitement, she sent for the orphanage children to come see what was in the package. Together, they carefully opened the box.

On top were brightly colored, knit jerseys for the children. Then, knitted bandages for the leprosy patients. Her hope began to fade. Then, she reached into the box and felt it. A brand-new hot water bottle! Helen cried. She did not ask God because she did not truly believe He could do it.

Ruth, who was with the children watching, cried out, *"If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly, too!"* She rummaged through the bottom of the box and her eyes lit up as she pulled out a beautiful little doll. She never doubted.

The package had been sent five months ago by Helen's former Sunday school class. The leader obeyed a prompting from God to include a hot water bottle, and one of the girls put in a doll for an African child. This all happened five months before the audacious prayer of a ten-year-old girl to receive it that day. ^[2]

Resource Credits

1. #Compassion – Gamba with J. <https://justynlove.wordpress.com/tag/compassion/>
2. John Van Diest, *Do You Believe in Miracles?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2012), 43-45.