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SERMON TITLE	Keep On Keeping On
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SERIES	
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DATE	11/27/2022
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KEY SCRIPTURE	2 Kings 13:14-22
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SYNOPSIS	The contrast between the dedication of Elisha and the indifference of Jehoash shows the importance of never giving up.
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HIGHLIGHTS	
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☞ Keep On Keeping On

2 Kings 13:14-22

14 Now Elisha was suffering from the illness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. "My father! My father!" he cried. "The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" 15 Elisha said, "Get a bow and some arrows," and he did so. 16 "Take the bow in your hands," he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. 17 "Open the east window," he said, and he opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot. "The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram!" Elisha declared. "You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek." 18 Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. 19 The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times." 20 Elisha died and was buried. Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. 21 Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

First observation: Elisha was old and not in good health, and yet he still served the Lord.

☞ **There's no such thing as retirement in the Kingdom of God.** Sure, there may be a modified way of serving and a slower pace, but it never ceases. Elisha was still recognized as a leading man of God and when called upon, he stepped up to serve the Lord.

Then we get to the meat of the story. This short little story about shooting arrows and striking the ground is full of meaning. Jehoash was facing his enemy, the Arameans. Elisha was speaking prophetically into the situation with his instructions regarding the arrows.

In a nutshell, we see that Jehoash showed little interest in what he was told to do. He was going through the motions but with little faith. He did not take the Word of God seriously. Elisha was the one who showed faith in God.

Elisha means "God is salvation" and he demonstrated his faith in God's ability to save. He healed the waters of Jericho. He multiplied a widow's oil. He raised the Shunamite's son from the dead. He cured Naaman of leprosy and made a borrowed ax head float. When surrounded by enemy chariots, he could see into the spirit realm and knew that God's angelic forces outnumbered them. It was also Elisha who predicted an end to the famine "this time tomorrow" when Samaria was under siege. And, in today's story, he is still filled with faith and proclaims, "the Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram. You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek."

Aram, also known as Syria, means "highland" or "exalted." Aphek means "fortress." The devil's most fortified "high places" can be demolished through the power of God!

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NKJV



For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

We all have our areas of weakness and vulnerability, which can seem out of reach and too strong for us. **Sometimes the things we struggle with seem like insurmountable fortresses, which we cannot overcome.** How many times have you struggled with that temptation and still caved in to it? How many times have you lost the skirmish with that bad habit? **But, with God, all things are possible. (Matthew 10:27)** In this case, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands which shows that God is with us, when we follow his word. So, when we face the enemy or our own sinful tendencies, we know that God is with us and with God, all things are possible.

Elisha knew this and even prophesied victory for Jehoash and Israel. It all started with this prophetic action of shooting an arrow out a window. It was the east window, which was the very direction toward Aphek. When we decide to trust God and overcome the enemy, we must focus our attention in the right direction. In 1 Corinthians 9:26, Paul didn't want to run aimlessly or to fight like a man beating the air. I think this means **we should be very specific in our prayers.** So, instead of a generic prayer like, "Lord, help me overcome my sin." Be specific – "Lord, help me overcome my tendency to complain when things don't go my way."

In fact, this entire interaction about shooting arrows and striking the ground is a picture of prayer. **Shooting the arrows required effort and aim, and so does our prayers.** When Jesus prayed in the garden, it was so intense that he sweat blood. *Shooting the arrows was directed by the prophet. Our prayers should be directed by the Word of God. *Shooting the arrows was an act of faith, not knowing the exact outcome. Likewise, prayer is an act of faith, trusting God for the results.

Then, after that initial shot, Elisha tells Jehoash to strike the ground with more arrows. This actually means to shoot some more arrows into the ground. So, the king did three more times and stopped. This angered, Elisha, who said he should have done it at least five or six times. Then Aram would have been completely destroyed.

A couple of thoughts here. It seems that the arrows were right there, handy. That's the way our prayers should be as well. We should be ready to pray on the spot, anytime, anywhere. This series of events also speaks to the importance of **persistence in prayer.** In Luke 18, Jesus told about the persistent widow to illustrate that we should always pray and not give up. That includes those things that we feel we've prayed about over and over again.

Jehoash gave up too soon. If he had a typical quiver full of arrows there were between 8 and 10 on hand, but he only released a total of 4. That's barely half. I guess you could say he was halfhearted in his demonstration of faith. His name means "fire of the Lord," but he wasn't living up to his name in this case. He seemed more like "barely flickering." With a name like his, you'd think he would show some zeal, but he didn't. In this instance, he was indifferent rather than impassioned. He relinquished when he should have been relentless. Church, don't give up when you need to go on. **Don't fizzle out just when you need to forge onward.**



Now, Jehoash might have thought, “this is ridiculous. It won’t change anything. It is just some religious thing I have to do, so just get it over with and move on.” It’s a disregard for the Word of God, because he has little faith in God. He did not take the promise of God seriously. He did not take God seriously. So, he only lackadaisically obeyed.

Since he gave up too soon, he would only win 3 battles, when he could have completely destroyed the Arameans. God wanted to give him victory and deliverance. But since he was halfhearted he would only strike the enemy a few times instead of putting an end to them once and for all. He could have crushed Aram, but now he would only contain them. Not because God was unwilling or unable to, but because the King was unwilling to believe Him. He was reaping the fruit of his unbelief.

When we are facing the enemy, whether it be a direct spiritual attack, or simply a chronic bad habit, we need to **believe God and be zealous about it. You can’t overcome spiritual strongholds with a lukewarm attitude.** You need to live up to Jehoash’s name and be fired up in your prayer and faith.

--John Trapp... There are many situations in which we should keep “shooting the arrows,” but we content ourselves with a small effort. He should have continued smiting till the prophet had said, “Enough.”

--David Guzik... When God invites us to take something by faith, we must receive it boldly — and ask Him knowing that He is a great king who is honored by bold, reverent requests. Only Jehoash’s lack of faith prevented his destroying the Syrians utterly. And it was unto him according to his faith. We think of all the excuses that Jehoash could have made; yet none of them are valid.

- *“I stopped shooting because I didn’t want to be presumptuous and ask for too much.”*
- *“I stopped shooting because I’m not a very good archer.”*
- *“I stopped shooting because Elisha didn’t help me more.”*
- *“I stopped shooting because I thought three was plenty.”*
- *“I stopped shooting because I didn’t think it would do any good.”*
- *“I stopped shooting because I wasn’t in a shooting mood. I didn’t feel like it.”*
- *“I stopped shooting because I didn’t want to get over-excited.”*

What excuse do you use? Some of you have quit a bad habit... three times! But that's not enough! You may have to shoot five or six or ten or twelve arrows at that pesky little sin! Keep shooting until you have the victory! Some things need to be shot again and again and again ... until they are completely defeated. Keep shooting arrows! Don't be casual and nonchalant ☞ about such important things! We need to **P.U.S.H.** in our prayers = **Pray Until Something Happens.**



--Commentary... *It displeases God that we do not ask more from him. His controversy with us is not that we ask too much, but that **we do not ask enough**. Jehoash missed the full blessing by stopping in his asking.*

☞ Jehoash didn't achieve the full victory that he could have. **When we stop too soon, we continue struggling with sin and losing our personal spiritual battles.**

Instead of completely destroying the enemy in Jehoash's day, Israel only partially won. In our ☞ day, **giving up too soon may mean that the church has much less impact on the world around us than it could have.**

Because of this story of Jehoash, the nation of Israel was negatively affected. **When we stop too soon, it can also negatively affect others.** Never forget how others are watching your example and following in your footsteps. Your children will follow what they see from Mom and Dad. Your friends and family will notice your faith or lack thereof, too.

Jehoash could have become a beloved king of Israel, but instead he is barely mentioned in the ☞ bible. **When we stop too soon, our spiritual growth is stifled.** We often settle for less than God intended us to be.

Don't stop too soon! Keep on keeping on! Be persistent when you pray. Believe and obey when you read God's Word. In your giving, be consistent and generous. In your serving, be steadfast. In all things, God values faithfulness. Elisha was faithful right up to very end. And, even in his death we see the power of God at work through him. In verse 21, a man's body is hastily thrown onto Elisha's bones and then came to life and stood up on his feet.

Even without Elisha, and only with his bones, God did a miracle. And even in our time, God can still do miracles. He hasn't changed. **He's the same yesterday, today and forever.** (Hebrews 13:8) God has the last word. His salvation is certain. Our victory is sure. But is this ☞ what we truly believe? **Do we really trust Him? Will we keep on trusting him?** Don't be a Jehoash and give up too soon!

You may be just one more prayer away from victory! Maybe just one more shout of praise. Just one more trip to the altar. What is your limit? Will you keep the faith? Will you continue shooting the Lord's arrow of victory? Don't stop too soon! Don't give up!

☞ **Keep on keeping on!**