

# Bethel

## Prayer Meeting Addresses

### Number 53

#### The Lord Round About His People

**Reading:** 2 Kings 6. 8-17

8 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

### Address

There is a most wonderful truth in these words, and it is this: that the Lord is ever round about His people, and there is their safety. “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.” Now may that be our hope and that be our security as we venture into this new year.

How wonderfully this was revealed to the prophet Elisha! Now he had enemies. He had foes. There was even a great army that had come against him,

seeking to capture him, to slay him. And as we venture in the new year, we have things against us, devils against us, the world against us, temptations against us, perhaps people against us, and like the prophet we have no might, we have no power against them. But, “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.”

You realise how this account begins: the king of Syria kept sending his army to battle against Israel, but the Israelites were always waiting, they were always forestalling it. The king could not understand it. He thought there must be some kind of fifth column, that there must be some traitor in the camp, because all his plans, however secret, seemed to be known by the king of Israel. Somehow some of his servants knew the reason. They knew what was happening. Almighty God was revealing this to the prophet Elisha and the prophet Elisha was letting the king of Israel know. Elisha was a man of God and he lived close to the Lord, and literally he proved that word: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” What a blessing these Elishas are to Israel, to any nation! It would be a wonderful thing if we had some in England, wouldn’t it!

You can imagine the king of Syria being angry, seeking revenge, so he sent a great army to capture the prophet Elisha. Even in this there was some degree of foolishness. If he really believed what he had been told, that Elisha had Almighty God on his side, Almighty God helping him, Almighty God revealing his secrets, Almighty God showing what his enemies were doing, what hope was there of succeeding? O but the blindness of the world when left to itself!

So you find the prophet alone with his servant boy in the city of Dothan. They woke up one morning and it is the servant boy who first sees it: “Behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots.” He knew why they had come. You think, a great army fighting against two, and those two unarmed. But there is a very blessed word. “*If God be for us*, who can be against us?” It was a frightening sight, and you can understand this young servant crying out, “Alas, my master! how shall we do?” And that is how all our hearts work by nature, and that is how unbelief always works, and unbelief can rise no higher than this: “Alas, how shall we do?” Perhaps some of you tonight as you think of tomorrow, as you think of this week, as you think of the coming year, as you think of the things that are before you, as you think of the things which you know are going to take place, going to come to pass, you say, “How shall we do?” Or like the hymnwriter, “How shall we stand the trying day?” “Alas, my master! how shall we do?”

“And Elisha prayed.” Now prayer is the answer when we say, “How shall we do?” Prayer is the answer. “Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see.” That is what we need: our eyes to be opened spiritually. “The Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” “If God be for us, who can be against us?” But we do need our eyes to be opened. That lovely hymn we sing on the Holy Spirit:

“Come, Holy Spirit, come;  
Let Thy bright beams arise;  
Dispel the darkness from our minds,  
And open all our eyes.”

Because our natural eyes can see a lot of things and our unbelieving eyes can see a lot of things, but there are some things only the eyes of faith can see. There is that prayer, “Give me the wings of faith,” and there is another prayer: “Give me the eyes of faith.”

May the Lord open our eyes to see these blessed truths that we believe, to see the Lord Himself, to see Him present with His people, to see Him with us, to look beyond it all, to see the outcome, to see the afterward. O may that be our prayer here at Bethel and our prayer in our families, and as we venture forth, “Lord, open our eyes that we may see.” And may it also be the prayer of many for those in our congregation who sadly have the appearance of still being spiritually blind, who see not their danger nor the refuge. O Lord, open their eyes that they may see. But open *our* eyes that we may see.

“And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man,” and he did see. But not only did Elisha pray, but he also spoke, and he said this: “Fear not.” Now look, there was everything to fear, everything to be afraid of. We read these things. We know the story; we know the end of it. But you think if there were just two of you and there was a great army coming to kill you. “Fear not.” When the Word of God says, “Fear not,” it gives a reason and it gives a good reason. Sometimes the world will tell you, “Don’t fear; don’t be afraid,” and the world is being kind, but really there is every reason to fear, every reason to be afraid. But when the Lord says, “Fear not,” then, “Thou hast little cause to fear.”

But he gives a reason and it is a very blessed one. “They that be with us are more than they that be with them.” It seemed ridiculous at first. That young boy, he could have said, Master, there are hundreds of them; there are two of us.

“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” O that we might see it! If God is with us, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, one God – and then you can think of all the things bound up there, and you can see them rising higher and higher, a multitude. “They that be with us are more than they that be with them.” An army of divine strength, almighty power, the tender, loving, watchful care of a Father, His all-wise providence, that nothing can ever touch you or harm you without His divine permission, the precious blood of Jesus to atone, His glorious righteousness, His all-prevailing intercession, all the precious promises that are yea and amen. You could go on: all the doctrines of the gospel, everything that there is in our God and Saviour. You can count these things up. Then you know something of the meaning of this: “Fear not,” as you face tomorrow, this week, the coming year. “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

And one final word that summarises it: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” That is what happened here. “And delivereth them.” Or as it is put in the paraphrase:

“The hosts of God encamp around  
The dwellings of the just;  
Deliverance He affords to all  
Who in His succour trust.”

“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”  
And the outcome of it: deliverance.

“Eternal victory thou shalt gain,  
Nor shalt thou seek His face in vain.”

*This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,  
on Monday, 4th January, 2010*