



# Message **Transcript**

## Do Not Fear

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Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise for who you are. And Lord, our desire is to exalt you. Our desire is to hear you. Our desire is to believe what you show us in your word and our desire is to align our lives with you. Lord, we want to put into practice the things that you show us by the help of your Holy Spirit. And so here this morning, Lord, as we seek your face, have your way with us, and we will be quick to give you all the praise, glory, and honor that you so rightly deserve. And now all God's people who are ready to receive his word and put it into practice, agree with me by very loudly saying the word amen.

Last year, it was several months ago, my kids wanted to go see a movie. And as always, I checked the listing and this movie was rated PG. So I called Kim and ask, "Hey, is it okay if I take them?" And they were with all their friends. And she said, "Well, you need to call their mom too." So I did. Got permission, took these kids to this movie. Turns out this movie was a little bit scary, even though it was rated PG. And for about several weeks following, every night my kids were going to bed, they were asking me to check under their bed for this certain character or in the closet because they were just afraid that this character was going to show up. Which really wasn't that surprising because I remember the book that I read as a kid, the three little pigs and had a little record that's like a plastic disc type of thing that you put on a turntable.

And I would listen to this story and I would always ask my parents, "Hey, mom, just check under my bed. Make sure the big, bad wolf's not under it. Check my closet, make sure the big, bad wolf's not under it." Why was I doing that? Here's why. Because your mind cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is false.

What you feed your mind, determines how you respond. It's why you can go to a movie and you can be looking at a screen. You know it's fake, you know it's just acting and yet your heart can experience all sorts of different emotions while you're watching. Or perhaps you've read a book before and while you're reading the book, it's just words on a page, but while you're reading the words on a page, things are stirring on the inside.

I remember reading Frank Peretti's fictitious novel, *This Present Darkness*, years ago. And then I was falling asleep wondering where all the demons were and which ones were looking at me. Why? Because you can't tell the difference between what is real and what is fake. What you feed your mind determines how you believe. That's why the word of God is so important. The title of this message, do not fear. Why? Because for many of us, even though we know that Jesus Christ is the Lord and even though we know that he sits on his throne, even though we know we can read words in the Bible like do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, for tomorrow will have enough worries of its own. And yet what do we do? We worry. And even though Philippians four: six and seven says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, present your requests to God." so on and so forth.

But what do we do? We're anxious and we worry. Why? Because we don't feed our mind and own the fact of who our God is and so we live in fear. And the reason we live in fear is we forget the promises of God and we forget how much God loves us and how much God has in store for us. Church, do not fear. If you've trusted in Jesus

Christ, you do not need to ever live in fear. I encourage you to open your Bibles this morning to Second Kings chapter six. It's in the Old Testament. It follows First Kings, surprisingly. And as you open there to Second Kings chapter six, I want you to think about your own life for a second, because before we get into this text and before we start thinking, many of you will say, "I don't have any fears. I'm not really worried about anything. I don't really have any..."

Think about this. For many people that are here that are single, they get anxious and they fear that they're never going to meet the right one. For those of you who have met the right one in your marriage, you get fearful that your marriage isn't going to be all that you thought it was designed to it be. For some of you that don't have employment, you're worried that you're not going to find it. For those of you who do, you worry that you're going to lose what you have. For those of you that don't have the kind of relationships that you want, you worry about finding the right people to surround yourself with. Those of you that have good relationships, worry that perhaps illness or sickness or moves are going to take those people away.

Some of you worry about the fact that you're healthy and you might get sick. Some of you are sick and worry about the fact you might not get healthy. The devil has a way to work in and through all of our lives to get us to fear. And the word today is do not fear. If you have your Bible, open to Second Kings chapter six. This story takes place in the time of Elisha. Elisha followed Elijah. And Elisha is the prophet of the day in the land of Israel and here's what takes place. It says this. Now the king of Aram was warring against Israel; and he counseled with his servants saying, "In such and

such a place, shall be my camp." The man of God sent word to the king of Israel saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Arameans are coming down there." The king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God had told him; thus he warned them, so that he guarded himself there more than once or twice.

So in the setting of this story, here's what we have. In the setting of the story you have the Arameans, which were the Syrians that were doing attacks against Israel. They were plotting little attacks and what was going on is the king of Aram was telling all of his servants, "Hey, let's set an ambush over here. That's where we're going to go." So he would take his soldiers over to set an ambush, but here's what happened. Every time that he would go to plot what he was doing, Elisha, who was the prophet, told the king, "Hey, be careful over there because they're setting an ambush for us and they're going to come attack us."

So the king of Israel made sure that they didn't get attacked because why? He knew where the attacks were coming. Christian, listen up, God delights in protecting you. God delights in protecting his people when they are obedient. if you're a child of the most high God, God delights in protecting you. When you go through an attack, when you go through something, you have to realize the only way that attack can happen in your life is for Satan first to get permission from almighty God to deliver the attack. Do you remember back in the Old Testament in Job, the man who suffered more than anybody else? Prior to him experiencing the suffering that he went through, Satan was coming before the throne of God and God asked him what he was doing. He says, "I'm just toiling around the earth."

He said, "Have you considered my servant Job?" It's like God gave his attention to Job. He said, "Hey, you might want to go pick on him for a while." Why would God allow attack? God allows attack for one reason and one reason only, so that he can get the most glory out of your life. So there's no attack that's coming that God is unaware of. And by the way, keep this in mind. There are more attacks that God has kept you from than you've ever experienced because God delights in protecting his people. In this part of Israel's history, Israel was living obedient to God. And so what happened? When the enemies were planning attacks, God was like, "All right, here they come. Take care of it. Here this one comes, take care of it." You can be aware of what's going on when you're living obediently with the Lord.

Now, why do we need to do this? Because First Peter chapter five verse eight says this, "Be sober and on the alert for your enemy or your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." It's the same that Paul writes in Ephesians chapter six versus 10 and following. He says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God so you will be able to resist in the day of evil and having done everything to stand firm." Why does the Bible give us so much instruction about how to armor up for attack?

Here's why, because attacks can come. God often prevents attacks from ever coming. But where do we get the strength to endure attack when they come? In the Lord Jesus Christ. What are the full armored pieces that God has? They're in Christ. We have all those. The word of God, the belt of truth, the sword of the spirit. All those come from being in Christ. Christian, why do we talk about this? Because I've been a Christian for almost 30 years and in touring around the world and being a pastor and talking to many Christians, there are many Christians who will say, "I know that I'm saved. I believe that Jesus died on the cross from my sins. I know he was buried. I know he rose from the dead. He's my only hope. I believe in him. I know for certain that if I were to die today that I would be in heaven with God."

And yet that same person would say, "But I live in fear because of what happened in my past or what may happen in my future and I don't live in the present and I don't really believe that God has my back." I have good news for you this morning. God not only has your back, he protects you from everything that's coming your way. That's what our God does. Now notice what happens in this story. Back in Second Kings chapter six. So after this, here's what happens. The king of Aram gets upset. Why? Because everything he plans to do to God's people is failing. So notice verse 11. Now the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this thing and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you tell me which one of us is for the king of Israel?"

So what happens? Every time he sends out a band of soldiers to go invade Israel, they come back and say, "They already knew we were coming. They stopped

us." So finally he rallies all the soldiers and servants together. He's like, "I got one question. Which one of us is for them? In other words, which of you is the traitor because we're the only people that know about these attacks and so clearly somebody here is leaking the word." And notice the courage of one of his servants, what he says in verse 12. One of his servants said, "No my lord king, but Elisha the prophet, who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." What's he saying? He said, "No, you got to realize it ain't us. We aren't telling anybody anything, but what you whisper in your innermost chamber, God is telling Elisha and he's telling the king. You have no secrets before God. You can't hurt God's people."

God sees everything. He sees all the things that you can't see. What do we do? Now, there's nothing wrong with purchasing insurance. It's okay. But we think that by purchasing insurance, we're protected. We think we can protect every little thing we do. You can't. You have no control to protect yourself. Only God can protect you. In this awesome story, if God doesn't want Israel touched, what's going to happen? They aren't getting touched. If God doesn't want you touched, guess what's happening? You're not getting touched. Why wouldn't God want you to get touched? Because you belong to him. You're his beloved. You're his choice possession. He can't stop thinking about you. He's not going to let somebody come in and hurt you. That's who our God is. Believe that. God delights in protecting his people when they're obedient. All throughout the Old Testament, if you want to have a fun read sometime, read Leviticus chapter 26 or Deuteronomy 28 and you see all the blessings and curses.



God promised the nation of Israel, "If you do good, I'll bless you. If you do bad, I will curse you." It was their entire history. And you would wonder when you read for the Old Testament, why wouldn't Israel just continued to walk with God? When they did everything went well. And yet what do they do? They went their own way and then they were cursed. And we see God allow attack into their life so that God can still get his glory and show that he's the God of all. In the Old Testament, when Israel is doing good and God is blessing them, all the nations of the world look on and say, "Man, they're God's God." When Israel is being disobedient and God is punishing them severely, all the other nations are looking on saying what? "They're God's God. Don't mess with him." God's going to get his glory either way. That's the whole point.

And when we walk with the Lord, when we walk in obedience to him, we experience his protection. We're different than the nation of Israel. We are God's covenant people as his children. But here's what God invites us to do. He invites us to abide in him. That's our obedience. Our obedience is abiding in him rather than living independently of him. And just for some of you legalists out there that think obedience means I do everything right a hundred percent of the time and I may have done something wrong. That's not obedience. You have done things wrong. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Obedience is my desire is to align my life with the things of God and when God shows me through his word and his spirit that I'm not aligned with him, I'm going to be repentant and confessing before him so that I can get realigned with God.

That's what obedience looks like. Obedience is not I'm perfect therefore God's

got to protect me. There is no one good. No, not one. It is, am I abiding in Christ? Am I living out obedience? Am I desiring to let God live his life in and through me and where I'm not, am I repentant and confessing so God can forgive and I can continue to move on with Jesus? When we live that way, I'm going to tell you God delights. It makes God happy to make sure that his servants are being taken care of. Here's my question to you. Are you aware where the enemy attacks you? Are you aware when he comes? In studying my life over the last 30 years, I know some of the times that God comes to me. Here's one time that I'm most prone to an attack.

How about this? When I'm tired. You ever notice that? When you haven't slept for a couple days? Married people, you know what I'm talking about? You're a little cranky. You're not getting your way or you haven't eaten. I'm aware that some of Satan's biggest attacks come to me when I'm physically weak. One of the most spiritual things that you can ever do is sleep and get rest. When you're just burning the candle at both ends and you're stressed out and you have no margin for anything, I know for me, that's one of the times in my life be very, very careful. I know for me being a pastor, I feel it starting about Friday night, but for sure, every Saturday, every Sunday morning and every Monday. When I'm getting ready to preach, when I'm preaching and after I'm preaching, I hear the whole words of you're going to fail. You're miserable. You're lousy. You're no good.

While I'm preaching, I hear the same things. And after I preach, I get confirmation. You screwed it up this time. Nobody's ever coming back the next week. I

already know that. Are you aware when those things are going to come in your life? Because the more aware you are, the better you can be prepared for attack, which means this Christian, listen to me, especially if you're newer to the faith. When you come into the faith, there begins to be things that the Lord starts shaping in your life that are radically different than what you were before. As he begins to shape those, as he begins to reprove you, let the Lord have his way. Don't hang on to little sins. Don't hang on to those little things like, "Well, this isn't a big one. I look at porn sometimes, but it's not bad porn and it's okay and I only look at it like once a month, it's not a big deal."

Don't do that. If there's sin in your life, you confess and repent of it and you move on so that you don't have little things that later the enemy can grab when you're feeling down. If you have an issue with alcohol, then stop drinking. If you have a former issue with drugs, don't use them. Just make sure that whatever hindrance you may have in your way, that you rid that because when attacks come, that usually is the place in our flesh that we want to go to. And here's what he's saying. He's like, "Are you aware where you're going to be attacked?" The more you're aware, the more you'll be prepared.

And here's how you fight. You fight with the word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says that the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates to divide both soul and spirit, joints and marrow and judges the attitudes and intentions of the heart. Jesus said, "Thy word is truth." Ephesians 6:17 calls it the sword of the spirit. We have the word of God. That if you seriously read God's word, hear God's word

proclaimed, desire to know what Jesus wants in your life, he has a way of showing you the things he wants to carve out. He has a way of showing you areas that you need to repent of. He has a way of showing you things that you need to do. And let me just tell you one that's comprehensive for all of us in the church. One of the biggest ways I've ever seen in the church that the enemy uses to attack us and it's this, you know what it is? It's called unforgiveness.

If you go to Second Corinthians 2:11, you'll hear the apostle Paul talk about this. Really beginning in verse 10, Second Corinthians 2:10. But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what have I forgiven? If I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ. Why? So that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan for we are not ignorant of his schemes. What's one of the schemes of the enemy? Here's number one scheme, you're a victim and they hurt you. Hold on to unforgiveness. Yeah, but my wife did... You're a victim. Hold onto unforgiveness.

She hurt you. Yeah, but my husband... Yep. You're a victim. Hold onto unforgiveness. He hurt you. Yeah. But my pastor... Yep. You're a victim. Hold onto unforgiveness. He hurt you. Yeah. But my small group... Yep. You're a victim. Hold on unforgiveness. They hurt you. That whole mindset is of the enemy. Church, listen to me. If you go to a great church with God fearing people, you will get hurt because there's nobody here that's perfect. And if you become a victim and you have unforgiveness in your life, the enemy can continue to pull on that string anytime he wants. It's why in a marriage if you want your marriage to thrive, you got to keep short

accounts. You got to cut that string. Forgiven. Done. We're not bringing this up anymore. We're not talking about this anymore. I love you no matter what. Christ forgave it at the cross, therefore I forgive it too. We're moving on. I love you.

Church, my small group did this. They said that about me. I've forgiven them. I've cut it. We're not bringing it up anymore. I'm moving on. Unforgiveness is a ploy of the enemy to make you a victim for you to hold on to stuff and it not only hurts you, it hurts everybody else around you. God delights in protecting his kids. He delights in protecting you when you're living obedient to him. When you are able to forgive others in the way that Christ has forgiven you, God delights in taxing what Oswald Chambers would call the most remotest star in the world to come to your aid to help you. If you have unforgiveness in your life, even right now where you're sitting, ask for God's help just to forgive that person so that you can move forward. Amen.

But God not only delights in protecting his people when they're obedient, check out what God also to delights in. I love this. God delights in protecting his prophets when they're faithful. Another way to say that would be, if God's willing to protect his people in general, he's also willing to protect those who step up in leadership and speak on his behalf. Notice what happens. So check this out. Everything that's going on in this story has been every time Aram decides to war against Israel, Elisha knows what's going to happen so he tells the king and nothing works out. The king of Aram calls all his people together and says, "Hey, what's up? Which of us is for them." He says, "No, king, you don't get it. It's Elisha. He hears everything you say."

Now, just think about this for a minute. If it's a bad plan to go attack Israel because Elisha knows everything that you're going to do in advance, think about how bad this plan is. Notice verse 13. So he said, this is the king of Aram talking, "Go and see where he is." That's Elisha. "That I may send and take him." And it was told to him "Behold, he's in Dothan." So in other words, since we can't attack Israel because Elisha knows everything, let's go attack Elisha by surprise. You talk about the all time dumb battle plan, this would rank up there. So in verse 14, he sent horses and chariots and a great army there. And they came by night and surrounded the city. So check out what happens in verse 15. Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold an army with horses and chariots was circling the city and his servant said to him, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?"

In other words, here's the deal. It's one thing to stand tall and talk about how good God is when everything's going well but how about when people come after you specifically? It's one thing in general to say God loves all Christians. It's one thing in general parents to tell your kids about the love of God. But what about when you as parents get attacked for saying that? What about when you lead a small group and you're telling everybody how good God is but then you get attacked and you get to decide whether he's really that good for you. What about for preachers when they stand up and say, "Thus, sayeth the Lord." and it sounds really good coming from the pulpit, but then you get challenged personally about what you're going to say? Here's the deal. They couldn't get to the people of Israel.

So now there's going to come and say, "Who's going to take out the head?"

Who's going to take out Elisha. We're going to surround him." So his servant wakes up in the morning, goes outside and here's what he notices. Chariots and horses all surrounding, they're moving around the city. There's the servant and there's Elisha and there's an army. The servant says, "Oh my goodness, what are we going to do?" What would you say if you were Elisha? Run. What would you say? I love Elisha's answer. Notice what he says in verse 16. His first words he answered, do not fear. Why? Notice what his answer is. For those who are with us are more than those who are with them. Say what? Here's the servant. Look at all the soldiers, look at all the armies, we're being encamped. We're doomed. What do we do? Do not fear. Those who are with us are more than what you see.

Let me just tell you something. Regardless of what battle you're going through right now, the Lord's presence and his power is greater than whatever you're going through. There are more on your side than are coming against you always. Why? Because you plus Jesus Christ make a majority every single time. He's the Lord of the heavenly armies. Even when Jesus was being tried before Pilate, he said, "Hey, if I wanted to, I could call before me legions of angels to come get me. You're not doing this unless I gave you power to do this." Listen, what the enemy does is he lies to you. And he says this, "God is not for you, God is against you." My word says in Romans 8:31, if God is for us, who can be against us. First John 4:4; Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

There's so many promises in God's word that says greater is he that is in your

circumstances than the one who is lying to you about them. So how does he lie? Here's how he lies. You're sick and you're going to die. You're going to get divorced. Your marriage is never going to thrive. Your kids aren't going to turn out right. You're never going to have enough money to retire. You're never going to have. You're never going to have. You're never going to have. This isn't going to work. He's a liar. Here's what God says. All things are possible with me and I love you. And I got your back and I'm going with you. And I hold your present. I've forgiven your past and I hold your future. Quit listening to the enemy. Do not fear. Those who are with you are greater than those who are against you every single time if you're on team Jesus. That's a word some of you need to hear.

This is what Elisha is saying. Now notice what he does. He's going to pray a few times here. So he's going to pray. It's a great thing to do when you're fearful. So he prays. Verse 17, Elisha prayed and said, "Oh Lord, I pray. Open his eyes that he may see." So he's praying that the servant's eyes would be open. That's all he prays. Open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. Amen. Elisha prays, "Open his eyes that he may see." And you start hearing the music. Chariots of fire. Now think about this. Here's what I want to tell you. Remember the things that you've seen God do because they'll be important for where you're going.

Remember how Elijah was taken up into heaven? There was a chariot of fire that came and separated between Elijah and Elijah and Elijah was on the chariot and off he went into heaven. What's Elijah seeing now? He's seeing chariots of fire all around him.



He's seeing God's armies all around him. Elisha has the ability to see what nobody else can see. If God would open our eyes today, you would see the Lord's armies and they are greater than anything that you are dealing with and any lie that you are hearing and anything that is going on. That's reality. That's a fact. And Elisha's like, "I know what's going on." So you don't fear. I'm not fearing. Do not fear. Those who are with us are greater than those who aren't. Lord open his eyes so he can see what I see. And God opens his eyes and all of a sudden his servant's like, "Okay."

Can you just see him? He's gone from nail biting and pain and agony and anguish and where's God? Does anybody care? To, "I'm glad I'm on this team." Do you see what's going on here? God asked us to open our eyes. Remember that song we sang back in the '90s, open the eyes of my heart, Lord, based upon Ephesians 1:18? You sing like 37 verses of the same thing. Open the eyes of our heart Lord that we can see you, that we know that you're here, that we know you're in this circumstance, that you got this, that we don't need to fear. That everything going on, you're going before me. You're in it. You're not surprised by it and you're bigger than it. And nothing is impossible for you. That's the word. God protects his people. God protects his prophets.

Now notice, he protects his prophets when they're faithful. I remember when the first day I was at Dallas Theological Seminary, Chuck Swindall was speaking in the chapel service. And he said, "Hey, just by being here and by coming to this school and by taking this step of faith, all of you have put a bullseye on your front and on your back and you are going to be targets of the enemy's attack." And I remember thinking I

don't even know what that really means, but it must be a pretty big deal. 30 years later, I know exactly what it means. That if you're going to step forward and I've watched this in people, whether it's, "I'm going to join a church. I'm going to go to church. I'm going to get in a small group." Whatever next step of faith you take. "I'm going to go plant a church. I'm going to stand up and preach on God's behalf."

The more steps of faith you take, the higher the intensity of attack will become every single time. I used to think falsely that there would be this plateau I would get to where I could just cruise and abide in Christ and then I would have the enemy under my feet and it would just be great. And then I could just instruct other people how to get where I was. What I find is just the opposite. The more I take steps of faith with Jesus, the more I feel the breath of the enemy on my back telling me, "You're going to fail. The church is going to fail. I'm going to take you out. I'm going to take your wife out. I'm going to take your kids out. You're done, buddy. You need to stop what you're doing." Why?

Because the only thing Satan can do is lie and keep you from continuing to take steps of faith. So if you're hearing that lie, it probably means you're moving closer to the things of God. You want to hear the lie. You just don't want to continue to listen to it. You want to listen to the voice of God where God says, "No, you don't understand Jeff. I've already forgiven all your past and I already hold all your future. And all I'm asking, just take one more step. I got this. I'm asking you to stand firm. I'm not asking you to fight, Jeff. I'll do your fighting for you." Isn't that great that our God does that? And when we're faithful, that's what God does. I know what some of you are thinking.

Well, wait a second. God doesn't protect his prophets. Let's talk about some of them because a lot of them died.

Remember John the baptist? Don't you remember the apostle Paul? And what about Jesus, the greatest prophet of all? He was crucified on the cross. That doesn't sound like protection to me. Now let's think about it for a minute. When John the baptist came preaching and teaching, what was he calling? He was telling people to repent for the kingdom of God as near. And all of the Pharisees and religious leaders that hated him went out to see what he was preaching. And when they arrived, do you remember what he told them? He didn't say, "Hey, welcome. Love you guys. Get a cup of coffee. Sit down. We got a big message today." No. He says, "You brood of vipers, who told you about the coming wrath? You horrible people. Repent."

Was John the baptist afraid to tell the truth? No. All the way until his death, even when he was in prison, he was calling out king Herod for his inappropriate relationship with his brother's wife. John the baptist continued to proclaim. What about the apostle Paul? Did he ever shut his mouth? Was he ever unfaithful with what he was called to proclaim? No. He proclaimed it faithfully. And what was he? He was stoned. He was shipped wrecked. He was beaten. He was in mob violence. When I read through the New Testament and I see the apostle Paul goes to jail, it's almost like, "What a break. What a blessing jail was for Paul because it was way better in jail than it was outside." He had people in the church that hated him, people outside the church that hated him.

And what did he do? He said for me to live is Christ to die his gain. And what do I

care? As long as I continue to proclaim that Jesus Christ is the Lord. And what about Jesus Christ the greatest prophet of all, the God-man, Jesus? Fully God, fully man. Where we get the sermon on the mount, where we get how to live as Christians. All the way to his death, what was he doing? He was proclaiming that he was the way, the truth and the life. And he said, "If I had the opportunity, I could turn away but this is what my father wants and I'm going straight to the cross." And we look at this, we hear that prophets die. And so we think God didn't protect them. Because we look at death as a bad thing.

But if you're a Christian, let me just tell you something. If you're a believer, the moment that you breathe your last on this earth will be the most alive that you've ever been in your entire life. Galatians 2:20, the first words of it says I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. To become a Christian means this, I've died to myself. I've died to my goals. I've died to my way of thinking. I've already died. Every moment I get from this moment on is extra life given to me by God had to live for him because I've already died and it doesn't matter if today's my last day on earth or I get 50 more years. I'm living for the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what it means to be a faithful prophet.

So let me ask you this. When I think about Isaiah 54:17 that says no weapon formed against you will prosper. Did it prosper to kill John the baptist? No, because we still read about him 2,000 years later. Did it prosper to kill the apostle Paul? No. All it did was spread the gospel and plant more churches. Did it prosper to kill Jesus Christ? No, all he did was conquer death and rise from the dead. No weapon formed against

God's people will ever prosper. Here's our problem. We think that being a Christian is about self-preservation. We think that God's job is to make us safe and comfortable and nice. God's job in us as a Christian is to faithfully proclaim his glory to the nations and he will always protect his prophetic word when God's people are faithful to him. And by faithful, I'm talking two things.

Number one, faithful and proclaiming the accuracy of what God wants proclaimed. We live in a world where more and more it's rarer and rarer to see somebody who will open God's word and say, "Thus sayeth the Lord." We see weak, watered down, westernized Christianity to sugarcoat everything, to make sure people come back. And very few that will say, "No, this is what God says. I'm saying what God says. I'm not trying to win you over. I'm trying to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ." And then secondly, faithful in their walk. God protects that. This is a hard thing for me to talk about because I'm a pastor so I don't like talking about pastors being a pastor, but you need to know this because you'll say, "Well, pastor, I know several pastors that have fallen and several pastors that aren't walking it with Jesus.

And what makes you any different? Because pastor Jeff, I know how thoroughly depraved you are and that part you got right. So what keeps you from walking faithful? Because I'll get questions like this or statements like this, because people will say things to pastors they really don't say to anybody else. Do you know that? People will say things to me now that I'm a pastor they wouldn't have said to me before. Something like this, "Pastor Jeff, I'm just hoping you stay humble." Do you tell your neighbor that? But I know what they're saying. They're saying, "I've seen a lot of

pastors fall and I see fruitfulness in your ministry so what keeps you from going that way?" So I just want to tell you, real proactive things you can do for me as your pastor.

Because I can tell you this. Kim and I have had this conversation. I would rather be hit by a bus, struck by lightning or decapitated today than to know that at some point in the future that my ministry was going to take because I didn't walk faithfully with Lord Jesus Christ. That's who I am. I want to finish well. So here's what I find. Everybody I know who has fallen in ministry, here's the number one thing they lost at some point in time. They lost the fear of the Lord long before they ever fell. They stopped fearing the Lord and started thinking about who they were or what they could do for God. They lost the fear of the Lord. So here's how you can pray for me. Pray that I will always fear the Lord. Pray that I will always walk in humility before the Lord.

And number two, everybody I know in ministry that have fallen, they stopped seeking the Lord. It wasn't a delight for them to seek the Lord. They lost their first love. And long before they ever fell, they lost their first love and they lost the fear of the Lord. And when you lose your first love and you lose the fear of the Lord, now you can be played into the enemy's hands and anything can happen to you that can happen to anybody else. But those who have finished well in ministry, they kept their whole ministry, the fear of the Lord and a desire to seek the Lord Jesus Christ. And I would just encourage you as a church, you want to keep me humble, quote-unquote, pray for me and pray say, "Hey Lord, may pastor Jeff always fear you. Lord, may pastor Jeff always delight in seeking you."

And here's why, because I know that when I read my Bible, God has a way of reproving and rebuking me unlike any other human being. He has a way of chasing me and showing me ways I need to change. And may I always be a person that does that. Why? Because I care about him and I care about his church and I want to finish very well. Now here's the truth. Notice this. Elisha saw what was going on. He saw the Lord's power and what was going on. I think prophets have the ability to see things before they happen. And I'll tell you as a prophet of the Lord, I'll tell you some things that are happening in our culture. One is this, there's a sifting coming in our nation, where to be a Christian, you're going to have to make a choice as to whether you really want to follow Jesus or you don't.

When I was growing up in high school, if you were a Christian, you wore a WWJD bracelet, what would Jesus do? And then that designated you as a really super Christian. And it took a lot of courage to wear the bracelet. There's a day coming where if you come to Brave Church, it's going to cost you something. It may cost you your job. It may cost you your friendships with your family. It may cost you a number of different things because that's what it means to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. There's a sifting coming. You're going to have to choose am I really going to go all in with Jesus or am I not? That's a choice that you're going to have to make.

Number two, I'll tell you this. There's persecution coming. Anyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. The very things that I say from this pulpit that are simply just biblical things are now considered hate speech. The day's

coming where for me to proclaim what God's word says is going to cost me something. It's going to cost you something to be a person that listens to that. You better choose well. And you better be ready to endure it. But I'll give you really good news too. I believe there's a glorious revival coming. And you're going to get to experience it. And what happens is every time that the world gets dark in the church of Jesus Christ gets bright, the world knows they're for real.

And God can use a church that's on fire for him to reach the nations of the world. Not because of the caliber of coffee that's in the church and not because of the design of the building and not because of the liking of the people, but because Jesus Christ's glory is put on display and there's a group of people that love him and love each other more than anything else in the whole world. Amen. That's what's going on. That's what's going to happen. And so I tell you this, because when I talk like this, then people will go home and they'll get scared and they'll be like, "Oh my gosh, persecution's coming. Pastor Jeff said it is. And if they're going to take the chip in the head or the forehead with the 666, I'm never going to be able to eat. And I'm totally scared. The antichrist is going to consume." Read your Bible.

Do you ever notice that in the most desperate of times that God always provides for his people. He does miraculous things. He's still the God of miracles. So what if we can't buy or sell according to the world's economy? Does that mean God can't provide food for his kids? Does that mean God can't provide fellowship? You don't need to hoard a bunch of stuff at your house and buy guns so you can shoot everybody. That's not Christian. It's faithful to say that no matter what happens, my



God will meet all of my needs. According to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. So we don't look forward to persecution, but you shouldn't be afraid of it because God will always take care of you. Nothing changes. It just makes his character even more miraculous. Amen. God delights in protecting his people when they're obedient and his prophets when they're faithful. And I love this final one. He loves protecting his purpose when he is honored.

He loves protecting his purpose when he is honored. We've already alluded to his purpose. His purpose is his glory. That's what God cares about more than anything else in the world, is his glory. Notice what happens in verse 18. It says when they came down to him, this is the armies, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, "Strike these people with blindness, I pray." His prayers are so short. Your prayers do not have to be long and flowery. Did you notice that? Listen to his prayers. "Oh Lord I pray, open his eyes that he may see." That's prayer number one. Prayer number two, strike this people with blindness, I pray. That's it. So what's God do. So he struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. Then Elijah said to them, "This is not the way nor is this the city. Follow me and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." And he brought them to Samaria.

Now picture this. These are the most rugged soldiers the Aramians have. Every time they go to fight Israel, they can't fight them because Israel's always right where they're going in the secret place. Now they decide we're going to go get Elisha. They encamp the whole city of Dothan and they're getting ready to go tack one man. And they're coming down the hill and as they're coming down the hill, this man Elisha prays,

"Oh Lord, I pray you strike them with blindness." And now as you're coming down the hill as a soldier, not only are you blind, everybody you're with is blind. And so now you're like this walking around. And Elisha tells them, "You've come to the wrong place. This isn't the right city. Let me take you where you want to go."

He takes them on a 14-mile hike to the capital city of Israel at the time, which is Samaria. He takes them there. Can you imagine this now? You ever seen people walk when they can't see? Or like one of those youth games where, "Hey, tell me the way I'm going." Now you have a whole army going for 14 miles like this. And they're walking around. They can't do anything. And he's going to bring them into the city, the capital city of Samaria. And check out what happens next in verse 20. When they come into Samaria, Elisha said another short prayer, "Oh Lord, open the eyes of these men so that they may see." So the Lord opened their eyes and they saw. And behold they were in the midst of Samaria. Then the king of Israel, when he saw them, said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill them?"

So now check this out. When you talk about a bad day as a soldier, you have a whole army. Your job is to get one man. You come down the hill, you're stricken with blindness, you go on a 14-mile hike. You end up in the capital city, surrounded by all of Israel. And the next thing you see is when your eyes open, everybody's surrounding you and the king's asking Elisha, "Shall we just kill them all?" So now you're thinking this is the worst day ever as a soldier. And notice what happens. Elisha said, "No, you should not kill them. Would you kill those you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? No. Set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink and

go to their master." So he prepared a great feast for them.

And when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away and they went to their master and the marauding bands of the army did not come again into the district of Israel. Check it out. Should we kill them? No. Feed them. Give them some bread and water. They got a long journey back home. Now they get to go back home seeing and guess what they're going to tell the king when they get back there. "Don't ever sign us up to go back into Israel. We are never going back there. There's a God that fights for them unlike any other. We're done. I'm done on this. I'm done attacking." Why? Because God is more powerful than them. And God will always get his glory. And when God is honored by you, you're on the winning side. You all always want to be on the winning side.

When you humble yourself before the Lord, you're on the winning side. God's going to get his glory no matter what. When you think about the Old Testament, when Pharaoh, 10 different plagues before he finally let Israel go. 10. I'm thinking I got frogs climbing all over my bed when I'm sleeping, I'm done. God, you win. This guy continued to harden his heart the whole time up until he lost his firstborn son. Even then, he does what? He goes after him. And what does God do? God shows the entire world, the story we talk about today is, I'm more powerful than the mightiest army in the whole world. I'll kill them. Here's what I believe. If Pharaoh at any point, because God is so merciful, bow his knee and said, "You're God, I'm not. You're the living God. I will serve you with everything I have. All of Egypt will serve you with everything I have."

God would've got his glory that way.

God's going to get his glory no matter what. Now, check out this story. It's an amazing story. Because the first section, what do we see? We see that God sees where the attacks are coming from. The second part of the story is Elisha sees where the attacks are coming from and opens up the eyes of his servants so he can see where they're coming from. What's the third part of the story? Those who thought they saw so well were actually blind. It's a story of this world. For me as a Christian, I believe with my whole heart, we are going to see the glory of the glory of Jesus Christ who's coming back to judge both the living and the dead. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess in heaven, on the earth and under the earth that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the father.

And those who know Christ, it will be the most glorious day they've ever experienced. And those who don't, they will be sent off into an eternal hell in darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth for all eternity. I believe that. That's what the Bible teaches. But isn't it interesting that those who are blind say just the opposite? That those who are blind say there's no way there's only one God. That those who are blind say there's no way I'm going to bow my knee and support him. That those who are blind say I know better than you. And yet those of us who see humbly tell them the truth, that Jesus Christ is Lord. I'm here to tell you today, if you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and savior, there is one way to God, the father and it's through Jesus Christ his only begotten son. Have you confessed him as your personal Lord and savior?

Have you asked the Lord to forgive you of your sins so that you can walk in new relationship with him? And here's the other point. If you have, then what is it that keeps you from believing that God is so good? God established his church so we could be an encouragement to one another. So that we could pray for one another. So that we could build one another up. Psalm 34:7 says this. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. There's so many scriptures in the Bible. You can pick your favorite and Joshua one about being strong and courageous. About Psalm 23; Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you are with me. Church, I got great news for you today, regardless of what campus you're on. If you're in Christ, he loves you with an unconditional love. He will protect you.

And the only way attacks will ever come is so that he can get more glory in and through your life. So guess what happened? That day with the Aramian, what happened? What happened was God got his glory. Why does God allow a test to come into our life? So that we'll humbly submit to him, that we'll trust him to work through them so that as people watch us, what do they see? They see the glory of God in our life. And that no weapon formed against us will ever, ever prosper. When I preach and I go around the world and preach, oftentimes, especially like in India, I'll preach a message for like an hour. And then I invite people forward to pray and we pray for two and a half hours because people actually believe that God is good and that he answers prayer.

And that God response that when we see him. So today what we're going to do on both campuses, we're going to end by worship and prayer. We got two more songs

that we're going to do on both of the campuses but during this time, instead of me finishing the service, telling you that you're loved and having a prayer team up here, our prayer team's going to come forward here in just a minute on both campuses. And here's what I'm going to ask you to do. I'm going to ask you if there's anything that you're fearful about, I'm just going to ask you to pray. And if you're stuck in one of the middle sections, "I'm fearful that I have to get out and go pray with somebody." Then don't be fearful of that because here's what happened. Last night there was an outpouring at altar where we prayed for other people and God was releasing people because God's power shows up when his people pray.

And so there's going to be opportunity today as our prayer team and some of our elders and leaders come forward. That if there's anything on your heart where you would just say, "I'm just fearful. I don't want to be fearful, but I'm just fearful." Would you come so that we could just pray for you and lay hands on you and ask God to remove that fear? Because God doesn't want you to just hear a message and God doesn't just want you to walk out here. "Yeah, I believe God's good." God wants you to walk out of here knowing you have been set free by his power. Amen. So would you stand both campuses as we pray? I'm going to invite the prayer team forward on both campuses at this time. And during the singing of these songs, know that you're welcome to come forward or pray with anybody near you.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus. We give you all the glory honor and praise. And Lord, as we gather here, Lord, this isn't the end of the service. This is the response to your

glory. And so Lord, we are asking you right now in this moment to free people, release people and Lord to honor your word. Lord, we give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise in. Jesus name. Amen.