

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Lord, that We May See

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In 2 Kings 6 we are told the story of how the Syrian army moved in by night and surrounded a city in which Elisha the prophet of God was staying. Their aim was to capture Elisha because he was using his prophetic powers to render intelligence services to the king of Israel. Elisha's servant Gehazi woke up in the morning to discover that they had been caged in by enemy forces and was naturally overtaken by fear and doubt. How will the man of God pull through this? When Elisha saw how Gehazi was panicking he tried to calm him down by saying to him **"Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them"** (v. 16). But who would believe that? So Elisha prayed, **"O Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see."** (v. 17). And God opened eyes Gehazi and he saw that all the surrounding mountainside was full of horses and chariots of fire forming a protective wall around Elisha. His fears were allayed. That day Elisha had an easy victory over his enemies.

Our Gospel today comes after the passage where Jesus had told his disciples that **"The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised"** (Luke 9:22). This was no good news to the disciples who expected Jesus, as the Messiah, to confront and topple the Roman army of occupation and restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). Many of them would have begun to have second thoughts: Is Jesus really the expected Messiah? Is he really the Anointed of God who is to come? Should we go along with him to the showdown in Jerusalem or should we back off before it is too late? At this point Jesus must have felt very much like Elisha in front of his perplexed servant Gehazi. So Jesus decides to do pretty much what Elisha did.

So one fine morning, a few days after, Jesus invites the three leaders of the group of apostles, Peter, James and John, to go with him for a prayer session on the mountains. The mountain is a place of encounter with God. Moses encountered God on the mountain, and so did Elijah. On the mountain Jesus goes into prayer. And the

eyes of apostles, their spiritual eyes, were opened and they caught a glimpse of the true reality of Jesus that their physical eyes never saw. Then they saw that the whole heavenly court was on the side of Jesus. And they heard the voice of the invisible God, **"This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him"** (Luke 9:35). This was all the confirmation they needed. Jesus was indeed the expected one. Heaven itself has borne witness. Now they would listen to him and follow him all the way to the shameful suffering and death in Jerusalem. But no matter what happens they are now sure of one thing: God is on the side of Jesus; final victory will therefore be his.

How often do we experience the absurdities of life such that our minds are filled with doubt and we ask, "Where is God?" Think of people who have experienced the scandalous lives, the deep-rotted individualism and insensitivity of church people, and they ask, "How can God be in this place." Many of these end up giving up the faith. Think of people who are traumatized by their experience of social injustice and discrimination. They apply for a job and people who are less qualified than they get the job because they have the right connections or the right accent. They see people advancing in society through unfair means and they ask, "Where is God?" Or you may know someone undergoing personal and family crisis such as terminal illness, breakdown of relationship between husband and wife, between parent and child, between friends.

Don't we sometimes feel like the whole world is collapsing on our heads? At times like these we need to go up the mountain of prayer and ask God to open our eyes that we may see. When God grants us a glimpse of eternity then we shall realize that all our troubles in this life are short-lived. Then shall we have the courage to accept the meaningless suffering of this life, knowing that through it all God is on our side. All it takes is a little glimpse of heaven to empower us to take up our daily crosses and follow Jesus, knowing that the cross of Lent is followed by the crown of Easter.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Genesis 15:5-18

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 9:28-36

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