

Kings and Prophets 14-03-28b

We pick up our study in 2 Kings chapter 6, the prophet Elisha has somewhat reluctantly accompanied the discontent sons of the prophets from the straightened and uncomfortable place where they have been staying because they have grown evidently numerically and they decide they want to go to the Jordan. of all of the places in Israel where they could go. Why the Jordan? I ask myself, why the Jordan? Well if you are a son of the prophets and you've got a thing for the miraculous, where is the most miraculous place they know of? The Jordan.

Let's go to the Jordan because that's where we saw Elijah get his fiery taxi. That's where we saw the prophet Elisha get his commission. Maybe if we hang around down there some of us will get a similar job offer.

There's a lot of people down there and a lot of them are unhappy with Elisha, maybe they would be happy with a different prophet. I don't know what their motivation was. The actors always say to the director, well what's my motivation? I don't know what their motivation was.

I just know that they were discontent and that's their primary motivation. They are with the man of God and they're discontent. We ask the same question in the Gehazi scenario.

You're the servant of the man of God. You see him, you're intimately involved when the dead are being raised, when God is at work in and among his people and you want to fritter that away for a couple of changes of clothing and some silver because you think that well, I'll be happier if I have a farm. I'll be happier if I want to be the master for a change.

Tired of being a servant, discontent. Why would he be so tempted by those riches except that deep in his heart he wasn't satisfied? If you are satisfied in your marriage, there is no person on earth that can tempt you away from your spouse. If you are satisfied in your growth in the word of God, then nobody can tempt you away into some other program and well, let me try the prayer of Jabez or the spirit controlled temperament or the experiencing God or whatever the latest fad that's blowing through town is.

Let me go back and reread all the left behind books and see if I can catch the fire. Let me go see the latest biblical epic in the theater. See if I can somehow, you know, talk about your wood being wet.

That's about as wet as it gets. But there is an incipient, a beginning point of discontent. This is the biggest point in this story.

It is right at the beginning. The seed begins with discontent. Gehazi ends up leprous, him and his family, because he gets discontent.

The disciples that followed Jesus for a while and then many turned back, they got discontent. Judas followed the Lord Jesus for years. What was Judas' downfall? Got discontent.

He wanted to change the status quo. We don't know what his thought process was. Was he thinking that if he could provoke a confrontation between Jesus and the authorities, the kingdom would come sooner? Did he really value the 30 pieces of silver? We know he was kind of a money oriented guy because he kept the money box and he would take out of it, the scripture says.

He resented when the alabaster box was broken and the ointment was poured out. He said, couldn't this have been sold instead and the money given to the poor? What he means is the money put in the money box and he could have gotten a cut. He was skimming.

He was embezzling money. He betrays the Lord Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. We need to be deeply suspicious.

We need to be deeply aware of the deceptiveness of our nature. I had an insight. I debated whether I would share this with you or not, but I will just because, eh, what can it hurt at this point? I had an idea, a new idea this past week.

I woke up after I'd had a dream. And I think many people have had a similar experience where while you are having a dream, stuff goes on that you are absolutely certain your conscious mind never thought of, has never seen, isn't responsible for. I get surprised in my dream.

I think a certain thing is going to happen and something completely different happens. And my semi-conscious mind that is the operating me in the dream is surprised and confounded. Why did that happen? Now, I don't think I can confound myself.

I'm not talking to myself with a puppet here and it's all me. I'm not a ventriloquist having an argument. The ventriloquist dummy is going to surprise me somehow.

That doesn't really happen. Here's what I think. This is my new idea.

This late in life, I finally figured out what goes on at least in my head, in my dreams. There is more than one processor in my mind. There's more than one place where computations, calculations are taking place, where memories are being retrieved and processed.

There's more than one of them. The conscious me that's staring out of my eyes talking to you right now is just one. There are other CPUs in there.

We used to call this the subconscious. I've got my conscious and my subconscious. Listen, I think there's like three or four.

I think I'm like at least a quad core processor in there. Here's what happens when you're asleep. These other processors can run and can cough stuff up and the little bit of your conscious mind that's kind of operating while you're dreaming is just as confused by it as anybody else would be.

It's a whole other voice. Now, I'm not just trying to be facetious. I'm bringing up a point here.

When the Bible says the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can understand it? Who can know it? I think there is a suggestion of this duplicitous nature. It's not all just me and my reasoning and my processing of what I see and what I hear. I will arrive at it.

There's another little set of ideas percolating in another place and it talks to me. I can say, what are you talking about? It says, well, hey, eat the fruit. It's desirable to make one wise.

I'm going, what are you talking about? This is nuts. Do you ever seem to think that there ... We think, well, it's demons. It may be, but I really suspect that the way God designed our mind, our soul, our heart, the complexity of our being, there are multiple things going on in there.

This is why you can dream things that in your conscious mind and your conscious set of recollections you have never seen before in your cotton-picking life. I see places. I talk to people.

I undergo episodes. It is unlike and beyond. It's like being parachuted into somebody else's life, different place, different time.

It is utterly foreign and strange. I recognize none of it. I come back from it confused.

Well, you probably saw it when you were a child. I promise you, no. No child would have seen this and not been traumatized beyond all imagination.

There's something else in there. There's something else talking, something else going on, and I don't get the sense of a foreign presence. It's another little chunk of me that's loose, that's not subject to my control.

I can edit, and I can censor, and I can ignore, or I can listen and process and consider, but that thing is just in there, but it's me, and I'm accountable. I'm responsible. I'm not saying, oh, my old sin nature made me do it, or the devil made me do it, or a lot of other stuff going on in our head than what our conscious mind can access, process, or be aware of.

Say all of that to say this, discontent can be sourced. You can tell yourself, why shouldn't I be happy? I'm happily this. I'm happily that.

I've got a good this. I've got an excellent that, and nothing's going seriously wrong, blah, blah, blah, and yet there is some weird, almost irrational sense of discontent. Maybe that's just me.

I don't think so, because Scripture addresses it. We in our humanity don't have the tools. We don't have the connections.

We don't have the operating handles to get a hold of this other part of us that is outside the realm of our emotional control, outside the realm of our rational control. It just operates. One of the things I think God does for us at salvation, when we are spiritually renewed, when God the Holy Spirit comes to live in us, is a new constraint and control over this uncontrolled part of ourselves that has its own agenda, its own set of ideas.

You think back, if you haven't run into this thing a few times, and you think, where did that even come from? Well, it's me, myself, and I may in fact be three people, for all I know. But this is where our spiritual resources, and call it what you will, if you want to think of it as a demon from the outside, fine. If you want to think of it the devil made me do it, fine.

If you want to think of it as just the corrupt nature of the fallen flesh, fine. But Paul talks about this, remember, with my mind I serve the law of God, but my flesh is doing something else, and what I don't want to do, that I do. Who will deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in Jesus Christ, through Jesus Christ.

It's part of that in him we've seen in Ephesians. Back to our passage, this initial discontent isn't met with the power of God. These men don't go to the man of God and get the word of God.

They decide that they will fix this discontent. They'll answer this inner voice. They will salve this feeling of constraint and irritation.

And so they develop the whole plan, and they come to the prophet of God with the plan fully formed. We just basically want your blessing. We're going to go to the Jordan, we're going to cut beams, this is what we're going to do.

They've got it all figured out. What does the word of God say to us? What does the spirit of God say to us when we get it in our heads that we're going to go off and do a thing? Go. Sometimes the only way we're going to learn is if we just go.

Talking, cajoling, convincing, rationalizing, every parent knows this. Sometimes you just got to say, go. Eat the second piece of grapefruit.

I'll get the paper towels ready for when you throw up, which I did. Go ahead. I've told you it's not good for you, told you you shouldn't eat more than one.

You think you got to eat it? You think you're going to be fine? Go ahead. Well, will you stay here while I eat it? Well, okay. Will you clean up if I do get sick? Okay.

This is my sweet mother who tried to tell me, enough is enough. You got to limit your portions. Just because you like a thing doesn't mean you can eat unending quantities.

And at a very, very young age, I think before my siblings were even around, I learned that lesson the hard way because she said, go, halak. Do it. And I have not forgotten it in lo these 50 odd years.

Sometimes we have to learn it the hard way. This is why Elisha comes along. There's one guy who is teachable.

There's one guy who has something straight. He recognizes who Elisha is and that they are his servants. He recognizes that he is master.

He calls him master. And when something goes wrong, he immediately, he doesn't say, hey, fellow prophets, help me tromp around in this muddy water. Let's go.

Let's go bobbing for ax heads. You know, everybody take a deep breath. Let's dive and feel around.

It's bound to be here somewhere. Come on. There's a lot of us.

If we work together, we can find it. You know, anybody got a fishing line? Can we drag? His first response immediately, he says, master. This is the mark of a healthy believer.

When we hit any kind of distress, our immediate reaction is father. And that's what this young man does. The iron fell into the water and he cried out and said, alas, master, for it was borrowed.

Now this next verse, I think, is fascinating for how much it tells us without saying very much in words. So the man of God said, where did it fall? What does that tell you? What's Elisha doing while all of this elbows and knees hacking and chopping and hauling of beams and finding trees? Where is Elisha? Is he intimately involved? Is he right next to this young man saying, let me get one end of that for you? Where is he? Elisha, I think, is parked in the shade someplace with his sombrero pulled down over his eyes, waiting for whatever God suggested to his heart and soul would happen. Because he doesn't see this.

Elisha doesn't see it. If he saw it, he wouldn't have to ask, where did it fall? The guy has to take, and some of the commentators, you know, I went around trying to see just what is the common understanding of this, and you can hardly find anything on it. When you do, it's all over the map.

And some people said, well, this shows a real weakness. By the way, this is one of the respected commentaries that's in my Logos software and one of the real expensive high dollar, hey, these guys are good, you've got to pay a lot for it guys. What he says is, well, we're in a period of Elisha's decline as a prophet.

He's getting weak and feeble. Yeah, I know. Seriously? I'll let you tell him that when we get there.

Yikes. Yeah, he says, well, you know, we see the, well, I'll read you just a little bit of this. The stories concerning Elisha in this chapter are unusual.

The miraculous element is minimal. No miracles are performed at the type seen thus far. The first story is open to rationalization.

See above. And what they rationalized above is that there wasn't even a miracle for the axe head. When Elisha cuts the stick, he poked around in the water until he hit the axe head, stuck it through the hole, and lifted it up and made it float, and he said, okay, pick it up.

I'm holding the stick. I've got it. You pick it up.

And there was no miracle at all. Thank you very much. Glad I spent the money on that.

In the incident of the lost axe head, unusual features are seen. More questions are raised than are answered. Although the prophet solves the problem of the lost tool for the sons of the prophets, his control over the situation is not complete.

He has to ask where the tool was lost. The story is characterized by brevity, economy of words, which hint at a lack of confidence in the prophet. His confidence is misplaced.

And then that's all. Now we're with the Syrians in the next section. You know, he's got misplaced confidence in himself.

And by the time it's over with, he's just running scared and can't figure out, whatever. Back to reality. Where did it fall? Why? I mean, did Jesus lack confidence and was getting impotent and powerless when he asked the disciples questions? Why does God or the man of God ask questions? Why am I asking you this question? I'm putting myself in a par with the man of God.

Why am I asking you a question right now? I am asking you a question. Why am I asking you questions? What is the purpose of asking questions in this kind of setting? Get the gears turning, get the, you know, deal with the information, put two and two together, draw a conclusion, prothesis, apothesis, premise, logical deduction, conclusion, right? Get the machinery flowing. So I ask you now, why does Elisha ask the guy, where did it fall? One of two things.

Either he saw where it fell, but he's making this guy tell him anyway, which I really can't see a purpose in that. Or he's reminding the guy, look, I am not in and of this effort. I came here as a favor, but I don't have to watch you do this.

And I'm not watching you. Now you've stepped in it. Show me where.

Where did the accident fall? Elisha was not paying attention to it because he is not engaged. This is not a work that he approved. It's not one he suggested.

It's not one he condoned. He is along. But if you need his help, you're going to have to explain where it went wrong because he's not a part of this process.

He is with it, but he's not a part of it. What did we just see in the preceding Gehazi thing? What about the household? They were with it, and they became a part of it. It is possible to be near a thing without being a part of it.

Could it be that these two stories are sequenced this way for a reason? Family of Gehazi, how does that story end? What is the ultimate statement? You and your descendants, la olam. Your descendants. It's a new thing.

What are the descendants? You say, wait, wait, wait, wait. Stop. You're ending the story.

Descendants. It's the last thing he said. Descendants? What do you mean descendants? Why the descendants? And you're already moving on to another story.

And the careful thinker says, wow, okay. He buried it. He took it and hid it in the house.

All the people in the house knew. He went and stood before the... They're complicit. They're involved.

They did not separate themselves from it. They are a part of it. They share.

They're hoping to share in the potential plunder. Wow, dad's rich. I get a new three-wheeler.

You know, I get a new PS4 or something. I don't know what they thought they were going to get in their day. I'm going to get a new, you know, sheep of my very own or a new whatever.

You know, whatever dad's wealth might buy for his kids, his offspring. The wife is thinking, you know, what wives think when money comes slushing in. And they're complicit.

They're complicit. They go along. They're a part of it.

Here, Elisha is showing us how, for the sake of the one, he is there. The Lord Jesus Christ came down to a sinful and fallen world for the sake of a few. The ninety and nine are in the fold.

One is lost. The shepherd goes out looking for the one and rejoices when he finds it. But he's not a part of this.

And the fact that he has to ask where the axe head flew off is significant. It tells us that he is at a distance from this. He's there, but he is not a party to it.

Something goes wrong. He is willing to help. Notice, what if something like this is in our periphery? Let's say somebody decides they're going to do a thing and you think that is a really bad idea.

Maybe you've got a child and they're going to spend a whole bunch of money on something you don't think they should, but it's their money, they earned it, they can do what they want. You say, okay, fine. Or they're going to go and do a thing that you think is a bad idea.

But you say, okay. And then something goes wrong and you get the inevitable call. Mom, extremis.

Dad, extremis. Well, I could have told you that was going to happen. I thought that was a bad idea from the beginning.

So you dug yourself in, you can dig yourself out. Lost the axe head, shouldn't have been using that axe head. What, did you borrow an axe head for a screwy project like this? You lost the axe

head? Couldn't you tell when I said go that this wasn't a thing to do? I hope you're learning your lesson now there, young man.

I don't know what you're going to have to do. You know, kind of on your own. Elisha doesn't do that, does he? And it's very interesting.

He's not a part of this, didn't approve it, doesn't condone it. But when this young man who is teachable, who is oriented to authority, who understands and respects who and what Elijah is, Elisha is, Elisha at the glimmer of turning to God and to the things of God, Elisha is right there. All right, fill me in, what's going on? And he becomes a part of the solution to this problem.

Notice the guy, the son of the prophets that lost the axe head isn't any better off than minutes before the axe head flew off. He's in the very same condition. Who does benefit? For whom? I mean he benefits in the sense that he's not incurring a debt that he can't pay, but it also benefits this unseen, unknown person who loaned the axe head in the first place.

So there are two people who benefit here. The son of the prophets can make good on his pledge to return what he has borrowed and not be in debt, owe no man anything. And because he turned in the right direction for the solution, there is a spiritual lesson that this young man learns and it is a reflection of the attitude of God.

We mess up, we do foolish things, we do sinful things, we do things that from a human point of view we would think hurt the heart of God, but when we figure out that we have gotten ourselves in a tight spot, all we have to do is go to our Heavenly Father. He is faithful and just, forgiven to cleanse. And we need to develop this attitude for one another.

I don't condone what you've done, I don't approve of your lifestyle or your practices or you went down this road, you made a series of bad decisions and now you're in a really bad way, but you have turned in the right direction, not just, oh, help me, thanks for the cash and then right back in the same situation. This is marked by Elisha's recognition of this young man's spiritual sensitivity. I am not saying that everybody that goes and spends all their money and comes and says, hey mom and dad, I need 500 bucks, the loan shark is after me, we automatically hand him the money.

What is the nature of their thinking? Are we just a quick fix? Are we becoming complicit and becoming a part of their lifestyle? Do we start sponsoring their bad habits and bad behaviors and poor decisions by shoveling money into it when the consequences of it ought to be leading them in a different direction? That's a different thing than this. That's a different thing than this. This is not a young man who is suffering consequences of a series of bad decisions and all he wants is a quick fix so that he can continue in that pattern.

This is a young man who seems to be torn between even going and he says, well, master, aren't you coming with us? He believes that what he is doing is good enough for Elisha to come along. He doesn't recognize it as, well, I'm going to go live with a bunch of drug fiends or I'm going to

go into some kind of a commune full of perverts or I'm going to go do some heinous horrible thing. We're going to go off and get trained in the arts of worshiping Baal.

He says, will you not come with us? Maybe he's the youngest of the sons of the prophets. Maybe he's the newest and he doesn't fully understand the import of this decision on the part of these others. And so he innocently looks to Elisha and he says, will you come with us? And for that guy's sake, Elisha says yes.

And when that guy gets in trouble, he looks to Elisha. He's teachable. He's on a growth experience here.

He's on a growth field trip and Elisha comes along on the field trip to encourage this guy because he's got a different attitude. He's not like the other sons of the prophets. So the man of God said, where did it fall? And he showed him the place.

He has confidence. He doesn't ask a lot of questions. He's totally dependent on Elisha.

He's looking to Elisha. He has trust in Elisha, his confidence in Elisha. He's placing this problem right where it belongs.

He knows that Elisha can fix this. And as misguided as his whole chain of events may be, this element is working right. And isn't that the way God does with us? He looks around and finds the parts of our lives that are working right and encourages us in that.

He stays with us when we go down 40 miles of bad road and it's our fault and we should have known better. But He doesn't leave us and say, well, as soon as you figure out how to recover from that 40 mile journey, I'll be right there with you. The Lord stays with us if and so long as we look to Him and we're teachable.

We have humility. We're wanting to live in a way that pleases Him. God will stick with us into the darkest crevices of the valley of the shadow.

Where did it fall? He showed him the place. So Elisha cut off a stick. This is the word etz, E-T-S.

And it's the same word that's used up above. He went with them. When they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees.

See that up in verse four, the end of verse four? They cut down etzim, etz in the plural. Well, Elisha's not cutting down any trees. Elisha's not building any buildings, carrying any beams.

He's not watching the whole process. He's available, but he's at a distance. When this young man gets in trouble, you know what Elisha does? He cuts down a tree.

He cuts a tree, something he has not done up to this point. He's had no part of this project. But this is cutting a tree for a different purpose.

He does the very same thing. Other prophets, sons of the prophets, could look over there and say, see, what we're doing is legitimate. Elisha's cutting a tree.

We're cutting a tree. Maybe they don't know the details of the lost ax head. And they say, ah, see, the old man's getting in with it.

We're on the right path. And it would be a completely wrong conclusion to draw. This happens in the Christian world and in Christian hearts and minds all the time.

We self-justify. We self-indicate. Well, look, so-and-so's doing it.

Doesn't make it right. Doesn't mean it was thought out. God's word is a critic of the thoughts and intents of our heart.

And he sees right through that stuff. So Elisha cuts off a tree and threw it in there. He threw in a tree.

Now, we talked about two other places where Elisha throws something to fix a problem. What was the salt? Covenant. What is a covenant? We're not just doing a word game here.

What does the covenant imply? What's the nature of a covenant? It is an agreement of trust between two parties, right? I trust you to keep your end. You trust me to keep my part. We agree.

We rely on one another. God relies on his people to be faithful. God's people rely on him to be gracious and merciful and to provide, to protect, to be God.

It is a covenant. And that was the remedy for the sour water in Jericho, the undrinkable water. Now, life and prosperity and multiplication can return.

In the second case, again, something is not consumable. In the first case, it wasn't consumable. The water was undrinkable.

In the second case, the stew is inedible. It's poison. And what does he throw in? The flour, the ground in the mill seed, the barley flour.

And that is thrown into the pot. What does it represent? We say, well, it's the word of God. It's the processed word of God.

It's sort of an epinosus thing. But what does that really mean? In the first case, there is an established relationship of accountability, commitment, and responsibility in a covenant. That's what it's all about, covenant of marriage.

It's a commitment. It's shared responsibility. It's trust.

It is expectation. It is reliance and hope all wound up in that covenant. That's the first case where he throws in the salt.

In the second case, you have this processed word of God to remedy what has been made wrong by man's misguided efforts. And within the covenant, these sons of the prophets who are looking for something to eat from the man of God, what come from the man of God, which was the stew, has been spoiled by the hand of man. How many times has the word of God been corrupted by the hand of man? But somebody who knows more, someone who has processed it, who has assimilated it, who has made it into something useful, can take that corruption and fix it.

This is why we debate people who misrepresent the scriptures. Someone with a good understanding can throw flour into the poisoned stew and keep people from being poisoned and misapprehending the word of God. But all of that only applies to people who are inside that covenant relationship with God.

That comes first. If there's no salt of the covenant, you're wasting your time trying to purify the stew. Everything you eat is poison.

You have no covenant. What about this? What is the tree? What does the wood represent? When you look back, you have the staff, the staff of Moses, the staff of deliverance. What does that staff represent? What is the staff of Aaron that budded, the rod of Aaron that budded in the ark of the covenant? What does David say in the Psalms, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

What does the rod and the staff represent? Always of wood. This is authority, but it's beneficial authority. This is not the scepter of gold.

This is not the rod of iron with which Christ will rule the nations in the millennium. This is the rod and the staff of the shepherd, of the patriarch, of the beneficial leader, like Moses, the beneficial priest, like Aaron, who with that piece of tree in his hand, which foreshadows the cross of Christ, brings benefit and blessing. This is beneficent authority.

This is authority that is designed to protect, preserve and promote and encourage. And so instead of cutting the trees to make a lodging for themselves, Elisha cuts a tree to honor the faith of this young man. He has faith that regardless of the circumstances, God has an answer.

It's not a time for salt and it's not a time for flour. It's a time for that beneficent authority. Why would iron float? Because God has authority over physics.

But you'll notice that in this seven verses, God is not mentioned once. Why is it? Because God is not in this enterprise. God is in the prophet and God is with this one young man.

And even surrounded by faithless people, even surrounded by those who don't understand, who don't appreciate, who are on a wrong track, even though they claim to be believers, you can be near a thing without being party to it. You don't have to be Gehazi's family, but you do have to maintain a distinction and a distance. This young man has not done so, but he's teachable.

So God uses this flying. Who do you think is in charge of axes and whether or not they fly off the handle? Well, God uses this experience and sometimes we have to be the prodigal and go off and suffer for our stupid mistakes. But this guy is teachable.

He knows where to turn and he learns from this. And it has been suggested and it may well be the case. Maybe he leaves these sons of the prophets and goes back with Elisha because Elisha does not stay at Jericho.

He's here long enough to assist this young man and then he's gone. There's no indication that Elisha remained at Jericho. He's back up in Gilgal and Dothan and other places, as we'll see as we move forward.

So it's a fascinating little pericope. This isn't the weakness of the prophet. This is the power of God expressed even amongst the weakest and the ones that are in the process of being led astray by their peer group.

God is with him. Elisha agrees to come because he's been asked. What do you think would have happened if he had not asked? He thought, well, I'm with the group.

Surely they're right. Flying off axe head, impoverished, no lesson learned for God, no fresh appreciation for the prophet, even further from God. It all hinges on this young man, this one, the one, his attitude.

And you could just give him a name and capitalize it, HaChad, HaChad, the one. And we want to be the one, even if we're new, even if we're not experienced and not knowledgeable enough to see that things may be not right. God will be with us where we are.

If we've got the right attitude, he will preserve, he will provide, he will use those circumstances to teach. You think about Joseph, his brothers meant it for evil, he says, but God meant it for good. God works all things together for good to those who love him, to those who are the called according to his purpose.

I would bet shekels that if any one of these sons of the prophets was ever used by God in a meaningful way in northern Israel, it was this guy. He's the one guy that he's like the leper that turned back to give thanks. Ten lepers were healed, only one turned back, and he's a Samaritan.

But he's the one that got it. And that's the one God will bless. God will bless us when we keep that heart of humility, of reliance.

We're not going to live a perfect life. We're going to make all kinds of mistakes. God will be with us.

God will fix it. And there's a bright future for us. But we've got to have this attitude of humility.

And we also have to recognize when and where it exists around us. Elisha saw it in this young

man, and he was willing to do what he had said he would not do, which is to go. The Lord Jesus did this, by the way, when he said he wasn't going up for the feast, and then he went.

There's a reason, and it's grace, and it's faithfulness to the few. Well, let's close here in prayer. We'll pick up with the blinded Syrians next time.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for how powerfully it illustrates and conveys to us the truth that we have to live by, and that is so important for us to understand, that you have placed before us in an emphatic way. We know that our lives are just idle minutes and hours passing by, unless and until they are redeemed and invested in the eternal future.

You have given us the tremendous gift of being able to do that, to make that transformation, that investment of time, to turn mundane things that are temporary and ephemeral into eternal and lasting assets. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will remind us of this wonderful opportunity that we have in Christ, and that we will make use of the enablement to exploit that opportunity, and to, in a very fruitful and multiplied way, reflect your glory, both now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.