

One of the prayers in our hymnal says, **“Give us strength to face the evils of each day with fresh confidence”** (Christian Worship, page 32). In our Bible passage today, God tells us that we can have confidence as we face the challenges of each new day. The theme of our sermon today is:

Face Challenges with Confidence.

- I. **God’s Angels Surround You.**
- II. **God’s Presence Dwells in You.**

First, we can face the challenges of each new day with confidence because God’s angels surround us. Our Bible passage today comes from the life of the prophet Elisha. Elisha lived about 800 years before Jesus was born.¹ Elisha’s mentor was man with a similar sounding name, Elijah. Elijah was the one who went up to heaven in a whirlwind. In 2 Kings chapter two it says, **“As [Elijah and Elisha] were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.”** (2 Kings 2:11)

After Elijah went up to heaven Elisha succeeded him as prophet. God did many amazing miracles through Elisha. In our passage for today, Israel was at war with a country called Aram. And in the verses just before our passage it says that God allowed Elisha to know every military move that the King of Aram was going to make. Every time the king of Aram moved his army, Elisha knew where the army was going and he would warn the king of Israel. The king of Aram thought he had a traitor in his army. In the verses just before our passage it says: The king of Aram **“summoned all his officers and demanded of them, ‘Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel!’ ‘None of us, my lord the king,’ said one of his officers, ‘but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom.’”** (2 Kings 4:12-13). So the King of Aram brought his army and surrounded the city where Elisha was.

That’s where our passage for today picks up: **“When the servant of the man of God got up and went out the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city”** (2 Kings 6:15). This poor servant woke up in the morning. He walked outside and he was surprised to discover that he was surrounded by an enemy army!

This makes me think of us. We get up in the morning. We put on our coffee. And as we go out our front doors, we have no idea what challenges are going to face us in this new day. Should that make us afraid to go out our front doors in the morning? This servant was certainly afraid. He went out his front door in the morning and he saw an enemy army and he said, **“Oh no, my lord! What shall we do!”** (2 Kings 6:15).

“Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” (2 Kings 6:16). The servant must have been thinking, “How can that be? There are 2 of us and there is an entire army of them.” The servant must have been thinking, “We’re surrounded!” But the servant didn’t realize that even though they were surrounded by the enemy, they were also surrounded by angels. **“And Elisha prayed, ‘Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”** (2 Kings 6:17) They were surrounded all right. They were surrounded by angels.

And the Bible says that God also sends his angels to protect us. The book of Hebrews says, **“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”** (Hebrew 1:14). And in the book of Psalms, it says, **“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways”** (Psalms 91:11). Elisha

¹ Timeline in NIV Zondervan Study Bible, 2015.

asked God to open the servant's eyes so that he could see the angels that were protecting them. If God were to open our eyes, we would probably see that there were a lot of accidents and disaster that didn't happen because God's angels were protecting us.

Elisha told his servant **"Don't be afraid" (6:16)**. They were surrounded by God's angels. Knowing that the angels are with us to protect us certainly gives us confidence to face the challenges of each day with fresh confidence. When we wake up in the morning and make our morning coffee, we don't know what challenges are going to face us in this new day. But we can still walk out the door with confidence because we know that God sends his angels to protect us. **Face Challenges with Confidence because God's Angels Surround You. And Face Challenges with Confidence because God's Presence Dwells in You.**

The servant of Elisha was afraid. Jesus' disciples were probably also afraid. Jesus' visible presence was about to be taken from them. But Jesus promised them that they would not be alone. He promised that the Father would send them the Holy Spirit. He also promised this. He said, **"Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them" (John 14:23)**. The Bible teaches that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit dwell in believers. Not only do angels surround us, but God himself dwells in us. Not only do we have protection on the outside, but God dwells in us on the inside. Not only do we believers have an outer protection we also have an inner peace and that inner peace comes from Jesus who dwells inside of us.

In our second lesson for today Jesus said, **"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person and they with me" (Revelation 3:20)**. Eating together usually implies a relationship. Well, Jesus says that if anyone believes in him, he eats with them. Not just in a restaurant, not just in their home, but in their heart. Every day Jesus is with us to remind us of his love for us, to remind us that he died for our sins and that he rose from the dead to give us eternal life. And so we can face the challenges of each day with confidence because God's angels surround us and because God's presence dwells in us.

You might wonder what happened to Elisha and his servant. Well, in the verse right after our text it says, **"As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, 'Strike this army with blindness.' So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha asked" (2 Kings 5:18)**. Elisha led the blinded army into the capital city of Israel. Then the LORD restored their sight, and the Aramean army found themselves surrounded by the enemy. Elisha gave them all a nice meal and then let them go. And after that the Aramean army **"stopped raiding Israel's territory" (2 Kings 6:23)**. We don't always know how God is going to resolve the challenges we face. Some challenges God might allow us to wrestle with right up until we get to heaven. But when we wake up each morning and step out our front door, like the servant of Elisha did, we can face the challenges of each day with fresh confidence, because God's angels surround us and God's presence dwells in us. Amen.