

THE LOST AXE HEAD

TEXT:

2 Kings 6:5: But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

Gehazi — a servant of the prophet Elisha — was stuck with leprosy for taking money that had been offered to Elisha by Naaman who had been healed of leprosy. Elisha had refused to take any compensation for this miracle of God.

2 Kings 5:16: But he [Elisha] said, As the LORD liveth, before Whom I stand, I will receive none. And he [Naaman] urged him to take it; but he refused.

Gehazi, however, returned to Naaman pretending Elisha had changed his mind, saying he had visitors and now was in need of some of the silver and garments Naaman originally offered to give him.

2 Kings 5:20-22:

²⁰ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

²¹ So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

²² And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

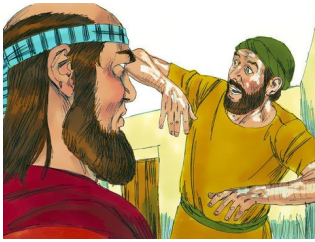


But God revealed Ghazi's actions to the prophet Elisha:

2 Kings 5:25-27:

²⁵ But he [Gehazi] went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha

said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.



26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

In the very next verse, we read:

2 Kings 6:1: And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait [small] for us.

Surely this is very significant in that the little room in which they were meeting had suddenly gotten too small after the one who had no regard for the things of the Lord had exited to a life of shame and dishonor.

The church ought to be a growing body, for it is the most important and best established organism on earth. Its fresh new converts should have a great desire and zeal to work, and every member should be a worker, and not a shirker.

But some were wiser than others for — though poor — they did not organize a Ladies Aid Society to hold rummage sales to get funds. To them, the Lord's Name was too sacred to associate it with a castoff clothing business. The young people did not call in a magician, or organize a carnival, but they put their axes on their shoulders and went to the river's bank where timber was to be found. They did not pray for the timber to come to them; they prayed, then went to the timber.



God's work was being done by God's people, working in cooperation. When we do not cooperate, we operate.

1. Lost power while working.

They went down to Jordan to fell beams to build the new meeting place. It was here that one lost his axe head while working.

2 Kings 6:5: But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

He had not been conscious of the fact that the axe head was loose and in need of attention.

Whenever we think we can teach, preach, sing, or do personal work better than anyone else, we are surely losing our axe head. Lost power often comes after boasting, and the boaster is left beating the air instead of working for God.

He stopped working, greatly troubled, and cried out for help. Many today could have gone on “working”. He might have said, *“I’ll fool the preacher. I’ll make him believe I am still working with the power of the Lord. He will know no difference, for the axe handle is still in my hands, and at least I can act as if I am chopping, and go so fast that he can’t see the missing head.”*

Today there are those in the Church who are merely swinging axe handles and are saying, *“I know I am not where I should be, but I will just say ‘Amen’, and make the people think I am all right.”* They are like Samson, saying *“I will go out and shake myself as at other times”*, but the Lord was not with him, and it was just him doing the shaking. (See Judges 16 for the full account.)

All this shaking, talking, and activity without the axe head is but wasted, useless energy.

I was brought up in the country, and I know it is more difficult to swing an axe handle without a head and still keep the right form. And when your pretense is found out, you will be marked and ruined. It is a great deal more difficult to keep up the mere form of religion than to live the real thing. Many of you here know that I am telling the truth.

It is a great deal more difficult to keep up the mere form of religion than to live the real thing.

2. Lost in a place where we cannot retrieve it.

The axe head had fallen into the water. I know there are those who have tried to pacify the unfortunate soul who has lost his axe head. They have tried to make him think it is not really off! They tell him to just think it is on, and to proceed to use the axe handle, and that he will be alright — just take it by faith. Nonsense!

A lady in Lubbock, Texas, told me she had been taking the Holy Ghost by faith — without really having Him — for the last six years, and that she is tired of that. I would be too!

God pity the soul that is so blinded by sinning that he can no longer see his loss.

Some say you cannot lose the anointing — but that is another lie.

I am glad there was no pretense with this fellow. He knew he had lost the power. God pity the soul that is so blinded by sinning that he can no longer see his loss, and know not where or when he leaked out. The Spirit is safe and faithful as a guard, and if we do not know where we leaked out, He

will gladly show us.

Often it is my experience that the Spirit checks me right then and there when I have done something wrong. I have found also that if I let one day go by, then I am blinded and forget all about that which was wrong. It is necessary to go to Him at once and get our sins covered by His Blood!

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How did you lose the axe head?

- **Was it when the Spirit prompted you to witness, and you refused?**
- **Did God tell you to give, and you withheld, and lost more to the buzzards than you would have given to God.**
- **Did you lose it by careless neglect of prayer, and by not reading the Word of God?**
- **Did God show you to lay aside something not convenient to your spirituality, and you refused?**
- **Did you become too self-important and try to take the glory for the work you were doing in the power of the Spirit?**

There will come at once a separation between you and the axe head. Of yourself, you will not be able to recover it.

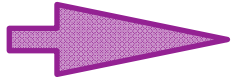
3. He lost that which was not his own.

“Alas, Master, for it was borrowed!” He did not begin making excuses for the lost blessing by blaming it on someone else, or on his lack of experience, or that the axe was not properly fitted. The Lord gives each of us talents, and we must occupy until He comes. Everything we have is borrowed, which does not flatter any of us.

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The good thing about this man was that he was painfully conscious of his loss, and was concerned about the recovery. ***“Alas, Master”***, he cried out. Here is a deep lesson to learn. It pays to stop working and examine your axe head.

2 Corinthians 13:5: Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?



It is only when we take our walk with God seriously, and the power of God as necessary, that we will get anywhere in our Christian life.

4. The loser must go to the Master for Him to restore.

We cannot get the power ourselves by any kind of work, magic, or efforts. Confessing our loss is the necessary condition to recover our loss. No unspoken request is allowed here.

5. The Lost is found, only miraculously.

“The iron did swim.” He got it where he lost it. When it has been lost thru worldliness, self-seeking, carnality, getting angry, pride, loose talking, or jesting, then fess up!

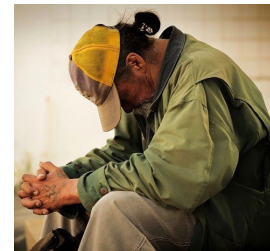
This gift was restored by the prophet, thru a miracle. It took the death of another — Jesus Christ — for our receiving the blessing again.

A Sunday School teacher lost her axe head.

Entering the service clad in rags, there sat an old man in the pew. My friend went on with the service, when all of a sudden the man sat up and said, *“Sir, may I speak?”*

“Certainly”, said my friend.

The man said, *“This is my father’s church. He was an officer here. This is his pew. With six other boys, I was in Sunday School here. Our Sunday School teacher used to have us in her home on Saturday afternoons. She taught us the names of a deck of cards. Up until then we never knew them. Then she taught us card games. After a while we said to her – ‘not so much lesson, and more cards’. Then we forsook the Sunday School, and while others were there, we were away playing cards.*



“Sir, of the seven of us boys, two have died on the gallows, three of them are in prison for life, one of them is a fugitive from justice, and I am the other. If the officers of the law knew I were here, I would be put in prison.”

For a moment he stood perfectly still, and then he said, *“All I have to say is that I wish to God my Sunday School teacher had had a different influence.”*

He walked out of the church, and my friend said, *“We never saw him again.”*

But there rose a woman, dressed in black. She started out into the aisle, staggered and fell. As she fell, she said, “*My God, sir! I was that teacher.*”

Like that Sunday School teacher who was full of regret when she realized she had lost her ‘axe head’, you, too, may know where or when you lost the power that can only come from a close walk with The Lord. But please let me say that if you are out of fellowship with Him, I have no unkind word for you, for your life is your reproof. Your relationship with Him — like the axe head — has been lost. Where did it fall?



In our opening scripture verse, the lost axe head resulted in a call of distress when he realized he had lost something he had been given that he, himself, could not afford to buy back. Without it, he could not continue the work for the Lord. Only by Elisha’s miraculous power was the axe head found and returned.

There’s One greater than Elisha, and if you will call upon Him, He will return your ‘axe head’ to you, and you will once again be able to move in the power of His anointing.

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