

## LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM ELISHA #17 “Toggling In Ministry”

2 Kings 8:1-3, 7-13

Airplanes have toggle switches to switch fuel tanks. Planes have crashed when switch doesn't work. A need in ministry.

### I. TOGGLING

A. Our scribe shows a variety of people Elisha encountered in ministry: *A nice old widow – a scheming, vicious murderer*

1. People come in great varieties
  - a. *Matthew 13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:*
2. You have to be able to minister to a wide variety of people – in different ways
  - a. We see Elisha being kind to an old lady: *Offering practical help*
  - b. Confronting Hazael: *Knowing clearly what he was and confronting him; telling the truth*

B. These 2 widely differing stories are found in the same chapter

1. Elisha had to be able to toggle back and forth between 2 different people – 2 very different approaches
  - a. *Toggle: To switch back and forth between 2 modes*
    1. In the same day/in the same line: You have to be able to switch back to a different mode
  2. Some people aren't able to toggle back and forth between different modes: *All confrontation or all kindness*
    - a. You have to be able act in one mode – without it affecting your ability in another mode

### II. CONFRONTING HAZAEL

A. We have to deal with Hazael situations

1. We have to be able to see people and know the worst about human nature
  - a. *2 Kings 8:11-12 Then he set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed, and the man of God wept.* <sup>12</sup> *And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?" He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child."*
  - b. He knew what people are capable of: *Jesus: One of you will betray me*
2. Sometimes it is necessary to confront people – and tell them the truth
  - a. They might not appreciate it; *It can become uncomfortable*
4. A common reaction: People accuse you of being wrong/being biased
  - a. *2 Kings 8:13 So Hazael said, "But what is your servant--a dog, that he should do this gross thing?"*

B. But there is a danger in knowing the worst of human nature

1. Some people become harsh and cynical
  - a. *A person whose outlook is scornfully/habitually negative. One disposed to find fault/One who disbelieves the sincerity of the motives of others*
2. 2 professions produce cynicism: **Policemen and Pastors**; *They see the worst of human nature*
  - a. The danger is you start seeing everyone in this light: *They're all devils!*
3. You can lose the ability to then treat other people kindly/on the level they're at
  - a. We can withdraw from relationships – refuse to invest in people for fear of what they can do

### III. HELPING WIDOWS

A. Ministry fortunately involves some very nice people

1. The Shunemmite had been very helpful in early ministry: *Provided financial assistance/treated with respect*
2. Some people find themselves in hard times/going through it
  - a. Some may involve difficult situations: *Here – financially/death of her husband*
  - b. Some: *Emotionally struggling* c. Some: *Spiritually battling*
3. You speak to them kindly – offer practical advice: *VI a famine is coming – go and find help...*

B. But you can't operate only with the kindness gene

1. Some don't have the ability to be realistic about human nature
  - a. *Man telling PM: he's lying... Why would he lie?* b. *No one in our church would sin/rebel*
    1. So they're blindsided and devastated by reality: *Take it personally – like they're the worst*
2. Some can only be kind: They aren't willing to confront/tell people the truth
  - a. So they don't help the person doing wrong b. They aren't protecting the church – other people

### IV. THE NEED FOR BALANCE

A. We have to ask God to give us wisdom – to be able to see and ability to act correctly

1. Sometimes we have to bring our weariness/cynicism/weakness to God and ask Him to help us