

The Lord Finishes What He Starts...

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[0 : 00] The reading from God's Word is from 2 Kings, chapter 2, the whole chapter. This can be found on, that starts at the very bottom of page 367 in the Church Bibles.

Page 367, 2 Kings, chapter 2. When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

Elijah said to Elisha, stay here, the Lord has sent me to Bethel. But Elisha said, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.

So they went down to Bethel. The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?

Yes, I know, Elisha replied, so be quiet. Then Elijah said to him, stay here, Elisha. The Lord has sent me to Jericho.

[1 : 11] And he replied, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you. So they went to Jericho. The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?

Yes, I know, he replied, so be quiet. Then Elijah said to him, stay here. The Lord has sent me to the Jordan. And he replied, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.

So the two of them walked on. Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan.

Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left. And the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you? Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit, Elijah replied.

[2 : 22] You have asked a difficult thing, Elijah said. Yet, if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours. Otherwise, it will not.

As they 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.

Elisha saw this and cried out, My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel. And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it.

Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah, he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and the left, and he crossed over. The company of the prophets from Jericho who were watching said, The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.

[3 : 33] And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. Look, they said, We your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master.

Perhaps the spirit of the Lord has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley. No, Elisha replied, Do not send them. But they persisted until he was too embarrassed to refuse.

So he said, Send them. And they sent fifty men who searched for three days but did not find him. When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, Didn't I tell you not to go?

The people of the city said to Elisha, Look, our Lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive. Bring me a new bowl, he said, and put salt in it.

So they brought it to him. Then he went out to the spring, threw the salt into it, saying, This is what the Lord says. I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.

[4 : 42] And the water has remained pure to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken. From there, Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some boys came out of the town and jeered at him.

Get out of here, Baldy, they said. Get out of here, Baldy. He turned round, looked at them, and called down a curse on them in the name of the Lord. And two bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 of the boys.

And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria. This is the word of God. Thanks, Jesus. For us.

And if you could keep your Bibles open at 2 Kings chapter 2, that would be a great help as we look at that together. We're committed at St. Silas to teaching the whole of the Bible, not just cherry-picking the bits that perhaps we're more comfortable with and we find easier, but committed to Jesus treating the Bible as God's Word, so we'll do the same.

But let's ask for God's help as we turn to this portion of his Word. Let's pray together. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us.

[6 : 01] Gracious Lord and loving Heavenly Father, we thank you today for your provision. We thank you that you made us. We thank you that you speak to us. And we pray that you will speak to us this morning by your Spirit and turn our hearts back to you.

For Jesus' name's sake. Amen. So, fundamentally in this chapter of the Bible, we're thinking about succession. And we see that in life, don't we?

When there's a leader or somebody we're looking to and they move on, we have to think about succession. If you're a Doctor Who fan, at the moment you're still getting used to the new doctor, the first female doctor, because you're thinking about who takes on the mantle.

It's easy with Doctor Who, because he's a Time Lord, or she, that when there's succession, you know that Doctor Who won't disappear. One of my kind of guilty pleasures, I guess, is Batman. I really like the Batman movies, the Batman saga, and the comics. But in Batman, the basic story of most Batman stories is, while Batman's around, everything's fine.

[7 : 03] So, things go wrong because he's not around. So, he gets framed, and he gets arrested, and carnage breaks loose in Gotham City. Or the papers decide they don't like Batman, and he hides away, and then all carnage breaks loose.

Or he gets trapped by the Joker or somebody. And whenever that happens, the criminal underworld takes over until the leader, Batman, is restored again. Now, in real life, of course, we're used to that idea of people who are leaders, as they either die or they step away from their leadership role, we're left wondering, who's going to carry on that great work they were doing?

So, when Steve Jobs died, having made Apple into what it was as the biggest company in the world, a big sense of, well, how could Apple possibly carry on without him when Stephen Hawking died?

And that brilliant mind that had been applied to the big mysteries about how our universe works had been lost. Or just recently, when Aretha Franklin died, and there was this end of an era as the Queen of Soul had died.

We'll see it when Queen Elizabeth II dies. She's now, there's 13 prime ministers that Queen Elizabeth II has been monarch through. And when she dies, there'll be this sense of a key picture of stability having gone.

[8 : 23] So, we end up asking, who's going to finish the job? Who's going to do the job next? Now, we've been in this series for a few weeks looking at Elijah. So, in the Old Testament, in Old Testament history, we're after Adam, and we're after Noah, and we're after Moses, and we're after King David, and God's people, who he's chosen, are living in the promised land that he's given them.

But they're under these kings who have led them away from worshipping God. And so, they're worshipping the false gods of the nations around them. And the God of the Bible, whose name is the Lord, or Yahweh, that's his name.

When we see the Lord in the Bible, that's Yahweh. He sends this great messenger, Elijah, to call the king and the people back to worshipping Yahweh instead of the false gods that they've turned to.

So, there's this great battle going on between the Lord and the false gods, the false god Baal, and it's a fight for the souls of God's people. But here in verse 1, we get this frightening news for the

faithful people in Israel in verse 1.

When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. So, we're asking, without this great man of God around, how is God going to finish the job that he started and call the people back to himself?

[9 : 45] That's the theme of the chapter amidst some of the weirdness of the chapter. And I just want to acknowledge, it is a weird and wonderful chapter of the Bible.

We've got Elijah being blown into the sky by a typhoon, never to be found. We've got a gang of teenagers who get mauled by bears. And a reservoir that gets cleaned up with a bit of salt.

So, it's a chapter where we might be thinking, this is quite tricky to swallow in the 21st century. And I just want to say a couple of things about that before we dive in. The first thing is that whether or not you're willing to accept people's testimony about the miraculous is fundamentally a matter of your worldview.

If you have already made up your mind that the universe is a closed system of cause and effect, then of course, miracles are impossible.

And the events of 2 Kings chapter 2 didn't happen in the way that they're recorded here. And neither, of course, did the gospel accounts by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John of Jesus' life, where they claim adamantly that in front of many reliable witnesses, he performed supernatural signs.

[10 : 55] So, if you've made that commitment as your worldview about the universe, then you're not going to accept miracles, no matter how much evidence you're given.

On the other hand, if you're willing at least to be open to the worldview that there is a personal creator God, that that might be the best way of explaining why there is something rather than nothing, and so much of our human life and how we live.

If you're open to that idea that there is a God who made us and sustains our universe, then of course, of course, that God is able to break into our world if he chooses to and do something supernaturally.

But I think one of the reasons that we find a chapter like this difficult in the Bible, if we just come to it in isolation, is it seems to speak to us on first glance of a world where people thought, this kind of thing happens all the time, and it seems so disconnected from us in Glasgow, as though the writers here thought that supernatural things would just happen in quite a random way.

And it's good to remember, if that's what you're thinking, and if that's a bit of a barrier to you, that that's not what the writer of Two Kings would have thought at all. In fact, what we're seeing here isn't just miracles going on because that's kind of what people thought happened back then.

[12 : 14] We're actually at a really unique point in human history here. As significant for God's people before Jesus came as the Exodus was, we're stepping into this moment where the living God was demonstrating to his people that when they turned from him as a people, he would fight to get them back.

That's what's going on. And so as God shows up in history to demonstrate that, he does things, powerful signs, to mark that something really extraordinary is happening that wouldn't happen at any other time.

That's what's happening here. So it's good to remember that as we come to this chapter, that it is something really unique going on in history. And we're going to think about three take-home points for us today.

The first is to take courage at the Lord's enduring power. The points are in the notice sheet. Take courage at the Lord's enduring power. It's worth saying the chapter works as one unit, and we can tell that because it's got geography running right through it.

I don't know if you're a geographer, but Elijah and Elisha, they start at Gilgal in verse 1, which is in Samaria, just up north of Jerusalem. Together, they go from Samaria down to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, just on the west side of the Jordan River, and from Jericho on to the Jordan River.

[13 : 36] Then Elijah is taken away, and Elisha goes back along the same route, from the Jordan to Jericho, from Jericho to Bethel, and from Bethel to Samaria.

That's the journey that's going on. And while the two prophets travel together to the Jordan River, Elijah says the same thing three times. In verse 2, he says, Now why is that?

It might be to show how difficult it is for Elisha that Elijah is going away. And we see how shattering that is in verse 12, from the cry that Elisha cries out as Elijah goes, where he says, My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel.

That's Elijah he's describing. He's saying Elijah is our army. He is our cavalry. He is the chariots and horsemen of Israel. And it's a shattering thing to see him go. And also, as Elisha is being told several times to stay here, he is being given the opportunity to say yes to God's calling on his life.

[14:52] We already know from the passage we looked at last week, 1 Kings 19, Elisha has been anointed by God to be Elijah's successor. But as he's being told to stay here, each time he responds three times.

He says, As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you. And as he sticks with Elijah, he's saying yes to what God has called him to do. So that by the time they get to verse 7, the scene is set for God to demonstrate in front of witnesses that Elisha will finish the job that Elijah started.

Verse 7, Then Elisha makes his big request in verse 9.

Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit. Not that he wants to be twice as powerful as Elijah. That's the language, the double portion language, is the language of what the firstborn son inherited.

They got a double portion compared to their siblings. So it's a way of saying, Let me be your heir. Let me finish the job that you've started for God. And then we get the center point of the whole chapter, verse 11.

[16:14] Have a look with me, verse 11. As they 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. He's taken away. And Elisha makes that cry. And then notice how the story slows right down in verse 13.

And we're given this eyewitness account step by step. Verse 13, Now what's he done that for? Partly because he is now stuck on the wrong side of the river. Can you picture that? They've gone across together out of the promised land. The water's closed again. Elijah's gone. And the witnesses are watching.

It's quite awkward for Elisha if he's got to just sort of trundle off upstream and find his way home. There's no bridge. But it's also, of course, the real reason is because what's about to happen will answer Elisha's question that he asks in verse 14.

[17:28] In verse 14 he says, Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah? If God's big man is gone, where is God? And when he strikes the water, it divides again to the right and to the left.

And he crosses back over towards the witnesses. Where is the Lord now? Well, the witnesses work it out, don't they? Verse 15, In other words, God is demonstrating here that his power, the power of his spirit, is not confined to one particular period of time.

He's showing us that in two ways as the Jordan River parts. The first way is he's showing us that God's power is not confined to a particular era of human history. If God's people at that time were to think about the glory days, the good old days, it was the Exodus.

When God had rescued his people from being in slavery in Egypt, their ancestors. And he delivered them out of that slavery with mighty acts. And they'd stood on the edge of the Red Sea with Pharaoh and his army coming towards them.

And with Moses there, God had parted the Red Sea and they'd crossed over and been saved. And 40 years later, after 40 years in the wilderness, God had parted the Jordan River so that the people could enter the promised land that he'd given them.

[18:57] Those were the glory days. Now, God's people have forgotten him. And here is God enabling Elijah first and then Elisha to do the same miracles that Moses and Joshua had done.

In front of witnesses. Because God is wanting to show his people that he is just as powerful for them today as he had been for their ancestors when he rescued them.

He is powerful to be their God again. To turn their hearts back to him. Powerful to save them again. And they needed to hear that. And we need to hear that today as well.

We look at Glasgow. We look at the Western world, at Western culture, at our pluralistic society. And the temptation is to doubt that God still has the power to build his church.

To win people to him. We look back at days gone by. Maybe we read Acts and look at the early church and how the gospel grew. The days when the Roman Empire was converted.

[20:02] Extraordinary. Or we might look at the Reformation. When John Knox and other great Scottish men and women of God led the people of Scotland back to God.

And the people of Scotland were so passionate 500 years ago for the word of God, the Bible. They were willing to overthrow the rule of liberal bishops. And Scotland became this land of the book as it was known.

Or we might think of the 18th century revivals. And you can go to Canbertslang and you go to the park there and you can go to the site where George Whitefield preached. And hundreds of people were turned back to God.

And it was like a spark that lit a flame across Scotland. The Canbertslang revival. And thousands of people gave their lives to Jesus. So we hear of the spirit moving in great power in the past.

And yet then functionally when we think about how we plan our church activities. Or how we might plan to witness to our faith. Often it's as though functionally we struggle to believe that God could really do that again today.

[21 : 08] We think, yeah but the times are different now. People are too far back. People are too far from the gospel. Well of course the times are different. Glasgow is different today to what it's ever been.

But God assures us the Holy Spirit is the same. And the Lord can turn hearts back to him. His power is not confined to any particular era.

He's powerful today. And the second way that God shows us it here is as well as showing he's not confined to a particular era. He shows us he's not confined to a particular leader.

As God repeats the miracle for Elisha that he'd done for Elijah. And again we need to hear that today. Because so often we put our confidence in particular Christians.

Don't we? And when they go. When they die. Or when they fall. They fall away from faith in some horrible way. Too quickly we despair. And think without that man.

[22 : 06] Without that woman. God. What's God going to do? How is God going to finish the job? So I don't know who your Elijah would be today. It might be Billy Graham. Who died earlier this year.

Went to glory in February. For me to be honest. Just in terms of thinking about it. You'd be someone different for you. But when it comes to understanding our culture. And speaking into it. And making and demonstrating how credible the Christian faith is. I just spend loads of my time listening to Tim Keller in America. Reading Tim Keller. Listening to Tim Keller.

And I find it so encouraging. But the danger is that I start thinking. When Tim Keller goes. We're finished. He is the one. All God's hopes for the gospel are pinned on Tim Keller in my mind.

And in that kind of way we pedestalize our leaders. And we need to hear that God finishes what he starts. He's the one with the power. It's his church. He's the one building it.

[23 : 06] And whatever era we live in. We live faithfully. We pray expectantly. We share Jesus confidently. Knowing that the Holy Spirit is just as powerful today as he's ever been.

So that's our first point. Take courage. At the Lord's enduring power. Secondly. We marvel at the Lord's transforming work. Elisha then begins this journey back to Samaria.

And he goes to Jericho. And then to Bethel. And he is now the spirit empowered prophet. And God brings abundant blessing. And terrible curse to the people.

Depending on how they respond to this man. Because how you respond to God's spirit empowered prophet. Is a reflection of how you're responding to God. The events look strange to us.

But the background is to remember. That these people had a particular deal with God. They had a particular relationship with God. A covenant. Where God had made binding promises to them.

[24 : 08] And they had made binding promises back. When God rescued them. He promised them blessings if they were faithful to him. And curses if they were unfaithful. And those blessings and curses were tied with life in the promised land.

They were connected with life in the land. Now in Leviticus 26. Back earlier in the Bible. One of those blessings. If they were faithful to God. Was fertility in the land.

But Elijah gets to Jericho. And look at verse 19. The people of the city said to Elisha. Look our Lord. This town is well situated as you can see.

But the water is bad. And the land is unproductive. Literally that the water is foul. And the land suffers miscarriages. Probably that would have meant that the livestock can't breed.

The farmers can't breed properly with the cattle. Because the water is polluted. But they receive Elisha. And you see they called him Lord. They're recognizing that Yahweh is Lord.

[25 : 12] And they ask him for help. It's a step of faith of turning back to God. So that Elisha goes out to the spring. He throws salt in it. And he makes a declaration. Verse 24. This is what the Lord says.

I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death. Or make the land unproductive. And the water has remained pure to this day. In an agricultural society. Nothing could be more precious than that. Clean water is life. This is the Lord's life giving blessing to his people. And this is Jericho.

Jericho was a city under the curse of God. The walls back in 1 Kings. The walls of Jericho were rebuilt. Even though God had said through Joshua. You must never rebuild the walls. It's never to be a fortified city again. And it was under a curse from God because of that. And so as Elisha. As Elisha. Sorry. As God pours out his blessing on the city through Elisha.

[26 : 12] He's showing that when he blesses. The curse is overcome and wiped away. That's the power of God's healing work. When you come to him for help.

He blesses you. And it wipes away your past. And that's wonderful news for any of us here today. Who are struggling with the effects of a past sin.

Of something that we've done in the past. That we feel casts a long shadow over our lives. Perhaps if there's something that you still feel reaps carnage in your life. Something that you did that you so regret.

And you still carry a burden of guilt for that. And we need to hear that God's grace. God's healing work. His blessing is powerful to heal you.

And to restore you. And to give you new life. There is no greater thing than to receive God's blessing. But then Elisha moves on to Bethel.

[27 : 13] And we see what happens if you take your stand against God. Verse 23. From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road. Some boys came out of the town and jeered at him.

Get out of here, Baldy, they said. Get out of here, Baldy. And then Elisha calls down a curse on them. And these two angry bears come out of the woods. And maul them. So if you're anything like me.

What I'm picturing there when I first read it. Is that there's a gang of youths. Hanging out outside a row of shops. Drinking cider. And Elisha just happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He's a funny looking bloke. And he walks past. And they decide to call him names. Baldy. On your way, Baldy. And the next thing you know. Some bears come out and kill them.

That's what I picture. And then you get to it in your daily devotions. And you're thinking. What do I do with this? If you're making a joke about someone's receding hairline.

[28 : 11] Stay away from the woods. That kind of thing. It does seem strange. But we need to look more closely at what's happening. This is Bethel. Bethel was a town where King Jeroboam built a golden calf.

It is an apostate town among the people of God. They worship a golden calf instead of Yahweh. And Elisha is the spirit-filled prophet of Yahweh.

And he doesn't go into the town. He's passing by the town. They have to come out of the town to shout at him. And there are lots of boys here. We hear that 42 of them are killed.

So there's probably more than that. So when they shout, get out of here, Baldy. It's not random mockery of a passerby. The sons of Bethel shout insults at the man of God.

Because the town of Bethel has rejected God. That's what's going on. And they don't want God's word coming anywhere near them. So they go out as a big crowd.

[29 : 11] To drive the prophet of God away. It's a reflection of what they think of God. And these people, just like the people in Jericho, they're under that covenant relationship with God.

So in Leviticus 26, that same chapter, they were promised, if you trust and serve God, the land will be fertile because God is the great life giver. However, if they reject God and won't listen to him, they were warned that God would send wild animals to rob them of their children.

So as we take a step back and we look at Bethel and Jericho, we marvel at the transforming work of God. And there is a challenge here, isn't there, to our comfortable spirituality.

Our temptation to view God as a loving, kind saviour, but not as a just judge, who can be severe, justly, appropriately, when we set ourselves against him.

So Bethel warns us that there is a healthy way to tremble about God, to tremble at his holiness, his judgment. Because he warns us, he warns us today that the wages of sin is death.

[30 : 23] If we stand against him, one day he will stand against us. And while there were tears of anguish in Bethel, there are these tears of joy and relief in Jericho, where God cleaned the water so that he replaced death with life and despair with hope.

For them, it didn't matter that they'd been a city living under God's curse. All that mattered was that that day, they turned back to God. They called his prophet Lord. And we learn that if you stick with God's word through his prophet, you find life-giving grace that restores you and transforms you. So the chapter leaves us to contemplate personally secondly, how are we doing when it comes to our response to God? So that's our third point.

The first was we take courage at the enduring power of God. Secondly, marvel at the transforming work of God. And thirdly, respond rightly to the Lord's ultimate prophet.

So the blessing and judgment of God hang on the prophet's words. We see that theme in Elisha's words as he journeys back from the Jordan. So as he speaks in Jericho and cleans the water, we hear verse 22, the water has remained pure to this day according to the word Elisha had spoken.

[31 : 41] It's his word that's powerful. And it's his word that brings the curse to Bethel as he calls down a curse for them in the name of the Lord. And so we're left challenged to ask, how am I responding to God's word spoken through his spirit-empowered prophet today?

And we don't live in Elisha's time, but this whole chapter points us towards God's ultimate prophet, the Lord Jesus. Let me just point out some of the echoes here.

See, as the spirit anoints Elisha, what God is doing here in this chapter is he's weaving into the pattern of human history a glimpse of how he saves so that when Jesus comes, it enriches and deepens our grasp of who Jesus is and reassures us that he really is God's promised king as we see these ancient patterns fulfilled in him.

So together, Elijah and Elisha, they're a parallel of Moses and Joshua. So Moses died on the other side of the Jordan River from the Promised Land before they entered the Promised Land and they couldn't find a grave.

So it was a mysterious death for Moses. And then for Elijah, he crosses back over the Jordan to where Moses was taken away and he's taken away.

[33 : 08] Then God showed the people 40 years later that Joshua was the right successor to Moses by allowing him to repeat the water parting miracle.

And as Joshua parted the Jordan River, they realize this is Moses' successor in God's eyes. And then what does Elisha get to do? He parts the Jordan River again so that the Lord can say, this is my successor to Elijah.

And those two pairs, Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha, ultimately they point us forward to another pair, to John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist was a great prophet like Elijah, but he hands over to Jesus as his successor and he does it at the very same place, at the Jordan River, as Jesus comes down to be baptized in that same river where Elisha had had succession confirmed for him.

And in front of witnesses, God says, as John baptizes Jesus, this is my son whom I love. And think about the names. The name Joshua means the Lord saves.

[34 : 19] The name Elisha means God saves. They call him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. And in the coming chapters, we'll find Elisha miraculously feeding a crowd with not very much food, cleansing a leper, even raising a boy to life.

All miracles that Jesus then performs as the Lord demonstrates to us that he is the ultimate Elisha. Later in Israel's history, as Elisha dies and is placed in a tomb, a dead body makes contact with the tomb and is given life.

Just a picture of how Jesus' tomb will be empty forever as Jesus conquers death. So Elisha is the one through whom at that time, God gives words of life and words of judgment.

And Jesus promises us, whoever he is my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned. He is crossed over from death to life.

As Jesus goes about doing the things that Elijah did, he demonstrates in a rich and deep way. If you know your Old Testament, here is God's full and final Savior who has come.

[35 : 34] And the events of 2 Kings chapter 2, they whisper his name, they point us to Jesus and the blessing that he can bring. So if you're someone here today who's not personally asked Jesus

before to give you God's blessing of life forever, you could ask him to do that for you today.

Like the people of Jericho did that day for Elisha. Today would be a great day to do that. Elisha gave clean water to Jericho. Jesus offers you living water.

He says that his spiritual life is like living water that means you never thirst again. And for all of us who are already trusting Jesus, we're left to ask, how are we responding to Jesus' words today? Week by week, as we look at 1 and 2 Kings, that's what we're seeing again and again. You show what you think of God, of Yahweh, by what you think of his words. Do his words have authority in your life?

Do they have authority in our church's life? Are we listening to Jesus? And are we obeying Jesus? So it's a great chapter. We see that God finishes what he starts.

[36 : 42] He acts with great power through Elisha to save and to judge. And we know that Jesus is the true and better Elisha. He is God's ultimate prophet, God's savior.

How are you responding to Jesus today? Let's have a moment of quiet and then I'll lead us in a prayer. Heavenly Father, we praise you for the power of your spirit to work today as he has ever worked.

Lord, we ask Holy Spirit that you will work in power in Glasgow in our times, working in us to transform us into the likeness of the Lord Jesus, working in us as we witness to others, as we go out to witness to Jesus' saving power.

Father, we praise you, Lord Jesus, that the Lord God, your heavenly Father and our Father, has given you authority to judge the world. Help us to respond rightly to that authority that we might take refuge in you and find life.

And we praise you and thank you for your life-giving promises, that you are the one who gives us living water, that when we find your grace, the slate is wiped clean, that your blessing is enough to cover all our mistakes.

[38 : 23] And so we pray that you will help us, Lord Jesus, to hear your words day by day as individuals, as a church, that at St. Silas we will be a people who hear your word with great authority and put it into practice in our lives.

And as we do that, Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are the great saviour to whom Elisha points. We thank you for saving us. Amen. We're going to sing together in response to God's word. While that's going on, we'll have prayer ministry over to my right at the front and the back. So if you'd like prayer for anything, do head over there. Amen.