



M2 Week 5: Millennium Men at Work

Your Work is Part of Your Calling

Your calling is what's in your hand:

- Your family, friends and relationships
- Your talents and abilities
- Your job or business

Main Points:

1. Our work is important to God
2. We honor those in authority over us
3. Our work is part of our ministry

2 Kings 6:1-7

An Axhead Floats

6 The company of the prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. ² Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to meet." And he said, "Go." ³ Then one of them said, "Won't you please come with your servants?" "I will," Elisha replied. ⁴ And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. ⁵ As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. "Oh no, my lord!" he cried out. "It was borrowed!" ⁶ The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. ⁷ "Lift it out," he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.

Don't miss the symbolism that's appropriate for us, here today. Many scholars believe that Elisha represents the church today and Elijah represents Christ. Elijah performed many miracles but Elisha doubled the number of miracles that Elijah performed. John 14:12 says, *'Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.'* Jesus ascended into heaven and Elijah also ascended into heaven. Elisha crossed the Jordan with Elijah's cloak, representing the power and authority of Elijah and Jesus gave His power and authority over to Peter, Matthew 16:18:

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Q: What do we take away from the story of the axe-head?

Nate's Take:

1. The company of prophets were not satisfied with their current living arrangements. Proverbs 16:26, *“The appetite of laborers works for them; their hunger drives them on.”*
2. They confirmed the assignment with their covering, Elisha.
3. They worked together. They were a “company” of prophets
4. They asked Elisha to go with them and he went.
5. The tool fell into the water. The reason wasn't given. Accident? Carelessness?
6. It was borrowed.
7. The man went to Elisha and asked for help. That took humility
8. Elisha asked where the axe-head fell?
9. Elisha made the axe float
10. The man had to lift it out of the water

Millennium Men Honor Authority

The authority that God has placed over us is placed there from God. We need to honor that authority. In this case, the authority was the prophet Elisha, representative of The Church. Likewise, our authority isn't from man, but it is the authority given to him by God.

Romans 13:1-7

13 *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.*

When we honor those that have been placed in authority over us, we honor God.

Q: How do you honor those who aren't fair or living honorably?

What Keeps Us from the Blessing of God? SIN

Pride

Lust of the Flesh

Fear

Many believe that when God opens His books of judgement, he's going to go through the ledger and say, "Aha, you cussed here or you stole something there..." But I believe, and this may just be me.. But I believe He is going to go through the ledger and say, "Here, you could have told your neighbor about Me. Here, you could have visited those on prison..." "

Haggai 1:1-11 (NIV)

A Call to Build the House of the Lord

1 *In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak,^[a] the high priest:*

2 *This is what the Lord Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house.'"*

3 *Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: **4** "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"*

5 *Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. **6** You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."*

7 *This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. **8** Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the Lord. **9** "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of*

my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. ¹⁰ Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. ¹¹ I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”¹² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.

Why was God angry? Because the people lived in paneled houses and His house stood in need of repair. The people of Israel were more focused on their own houses than on fixing the House of the Lord, which was His dwelling place. Think of it this way, would you let a King come and stay in a leaning old house that was filled with rotted wood and a leaky roof? Of course not. That wouldn't be honorable. Therefore, God got the attention of the Israelites through the prophet Haggai. Once Haggai explained to them why they were experiencing famine and a diminished harvest, the people realized their sin and they repented. Verse twelve says, “And the people feared the Lord.” This fear of the Lord helped restore them into a right relationship with God. Matthew 6:33 “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be added unto you.”

Proverbs 9:10 (ESV)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Clearly, the “fear of the Lord” is an important step in our Christian walk, but what is the fear of the Lord? How do we get it and why should we fear God?

Q: What is the Fear of the Lord?

Q: What is our viewpoint of Nature of God?

Our View of God

Our viewpoint of God matters. Do we view God as the almighty judge that is waiting to zap us when we mess up or do we view God as our Father who loves us and wants what is best for us? We need to view God as our Father, but we also need to have a healthy fear of God. For those of us who were blessed enough to have a father-figure in their lives, we understand the concept of a loving father but also fearing the consequences of

disobedience. I grew up with an uncle who was a retired Air Force Major. He was a pilot in both the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Being a pilot, he relied on precision and order, therefore, his household was run with precision and order. My uncle owned a Nubian goat dairy farm and that meant we had to get up early each morning to milk the goats. I couldn't tell him that it was cold out or it was raining, or I just didn't feel like going to go to the barn that morning. There was real fear of the consequences. But I also knew that my uncle would make sure that there was breakfast when I came in and a warm place to sleep at night.

The fear of the Lord is a combination of honor, love, respect, duty and to despise evil. Once we get this fear of the Lord, we are well on our way to an effective and productive life. Proverbs says it's the "beginning" of wisdom. The fear of the Lord isn't all of wisdom, but it's the foundation.

Q: How can I reflect God at work?

How we Handle Authority

We are called to honor and respect those that are in authority over us. We are called to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Light illuminates, cleanses and guides. Salt gives flavor and preserves. Part of respecting those in authority over us is following rules, maybe even when we don't want to follow them, paying taxes and honoring our leaders.

The Covenant God Made with You:

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

28 If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ² All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:

³ You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

⁴ The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

⁵ Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.

⁶ You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

⁷ The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.

⁸ The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

⁹ The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. ¹⁰ Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. ¹¹ The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. ¹² The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. ¹³ The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. ¹⁴ Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

The Flip Side of the Coin: Read **Deuteronomy 28:15-68** on your own...