

"The Life and Miracles of Elisha"

Part 3

Introduction: As we return to our study of Elisha tonight we are again going to see yet another lesson from his call.

Notice 1 Kings 19:19-21

Last week we looked at how Elisha's life would be changed as he would answer the call of God upon his life.

1. **He would be leaving the security of his father's farm.**

Elisha plowed with twelve yoke of oxen which tells us his father was a very wealthy man. To surrender to the call of God he would be walking away from the security he knew at home.

2. **He would be identifying with a man that had many enemies.**

1 Kings 19:14

¹⁴ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

There were many who desired to kill Elijah, and this is who Elisha would be identifying with. Therefore, he would be transitioning from a secure safe home into a life of danger and unknown trials. He would go from relying upon his father's wealth to relying upon God to fully meet his needs.

Notice 1 Kings 19:20

When the call came to Elisha he sought permission from Elijah to return to his father's house to give a final good bye to his family. He was not returning to his family to get their approval. He was not controlled by his family. There was a higher calling upon his life and he would not allow his family to stand in the way of serving the Lord. Elisha was a living example of the words Jesus spoke in Luke 14.

Luke 14:26-27

²⁶ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

²⁷ And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

I. The Call of Elisha

Part 3

a. His Response

Notice 1 Kings 19:21

Here in this verse we see the devotion and commitment of Elisha. He sacrificed one of the yoke of oxen and he used the wooden yoke to build the fire to roast the meat. This was a "going away celebration". There are two important lessons here that we need to see.

1. **It brought great joy to Elisha to be able to serve the Lord.**

To Elisha there was nothing greater in life than being called to serve the Lord. There was a great celebration that day as Elisha and his family rejoiced at the door that was opened for Elisha.

Application:

There are many things which we can be busy at as we go through this life but there is no greater privilege than to be able to serve the Lord. There is nothing greater than to be able to use our energy and our resources in a way that they will count for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Elisha had the opportunity to live a very secure and a very wealthy life if he would stay at home on the farm but instead he saw the opportunity to serve God as something of far greater in value. Moses was the same way.

Hebrews 11:24-29

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

²⁸ Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

²⁹ By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Moses could have stayed in the palace under the care of Pharaoh and lived a very luxurious life but instead he chose a life of afflictions so that his life work would count for eternity. With his mind's eye he could see that serving the Lord in the afflictions would lead to a greater reward than all the riches of Egypt put together. This was the very same attitude that Elisha had also.

The same attitude should be in every one of God's people today. We should be quick to serve God and to reject the riches of this world even when it means suffering affliction for our stand.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2. **The killing of the oxen and the burning of the instruments showed the commitment and the faith of Elisha.**

When Elisha killed the oxen and burned the instruments he was making a statement that he was committed to following God and no matter what happened and no matter how difficult the road ahead he WOULD NOT return to the farm. He would trust God with whatever came his way.

Application:

This is the very commitment and faith that God desires to see within our lives. He desires that we trust Him no matter what comes our way and He desires that we carry out His will apart from the option of quitting or returning to a life of ease and comfort. When God knows we are committed then He begins to move in ways that we would never have imagined. His Providence is often not seen in our lives until we prove that we are committed to staying the course.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Joshua 3:14-17

¹⁴ *And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;*

¹⁵ *And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)*

¹⁶ *That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.*

¹⁷ *And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.*

It was not until the priests stepped into the raging waters of the Jordan that God stopped the waters and allowed the people to pass on dry ground. There had to be a show of faith and commitment before God would move and stop the waters.

The same is often true within our lives. God waits for us to exercise faith and show Him that we are committed no matter what the path is like. It is then that God begins to open doors. Let me show you another example of how God worked when a man was committed to serving Him.

Nehemiah 2:1-8

And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

² *Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,*

³ *And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?*

⁴ *Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.*

⁵ And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

⁶ And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

⁷ Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

⁸ And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

This is amazing that the king would send his most trusted cup bearer away to do the Lord's work. This was the Providence of God at work in the mind of the king because Nehemiah was committed to serving Him.

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

So, in all of this we can see that Elisha was committed to following Elijah in answer to the call of God. But there were tests that were yet to come.

II. The Testing of Elisha

When we profess that we are ready to step out and follow Jesus Christ wherever He leads you can be sure there will be a series of tests that come our way. The same was true of Elisha. He would be tested 7 times, and, in each test, he would pass. The first test happened when he was called, and he passed that test easily.

1. The test of affections.

This was the test to see if he was willing to break the ties to his parents. He loved his parents, but he would not allow his affections to stop him from answering the call.

Application:

For anyone who is thinking of entering the ministry they should check their affections and be sure that it is their affection for God that will lead them. If someone wrestles with leaving home or going against the opinion of their family then that person should NOT step

into the ministry. No person is ready for the ministry until he or she is ready to place natural ties under the authority of spiritual bonds.

2. The test of his sincerity.

Notice 2 Kings 2:1-2a

What was the reason for Elijah pressing Elisha to remain behind? Some say it was because he did not want to bring grief upon Elisha when God took him away. Some say it was because Elijah desired to be alone because he was modest, and he wanted to spare Elisha from seeing the great honor that was going to come his way when God would catch him away. I believe there is something else here and it was a test for Elisha. Here now was an opportunity for Elisha to return home. The question was, "Would he stay the course after hearing of what was going to happen to Elijah or would he return back to his father's farm?"

Notice 2 Kings 2:2

Elisha's reply was, "*As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.*"

Elisha's commitment had not changed, and he was willing to follow Elijah right to the very end.

Application:

This has not always been the case with many who have stepped out in faith for God. Remember the words Paul wrote to Timothy?

2 Timothy 4:10a

¹⁰ For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica;

Many more have returned to the comforts of home and the comforts of a familiar life. They have quit because the path became too rugged, they have quit because they ran up against opposition, they have quit because they started their journey on an emotional high and the feelings have faded, they have quit because there seemed to be only small windows of opportunity for them while others seemed to have bigger opportunities and more recognition, they quit because life became too lean, they have quit because they have failed at one point or another, and they have quit because they felt as though they were serving all by themselves.

Elisha was sincere about his service. He did not know what tomorrow would hold but he knew who held tomorrow. Let me show you some words of encouragement.

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

⁶ *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Psalm 37:3-7, 25-28

³ *Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

⁴ *Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

⁵ *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

⁶ *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.*

⁷ *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

²⁵ *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

²⁶ *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*

²⁷ *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*

²⁸ *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

Conclusion:

I will leave you with a quote from Murry:

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way."