

"The Life and Miracles of Elisha"

Part 4

Introduction: For the past three studies we have been walking with Elisha as he has been called of God to be a disciple of Elijah. When the call upon his life came he was quick to answer the call and he was completely devoted to walking in the will of God.

He was called away from a life of wealth and security for he served his father on the family farm and his father was a man of substantial wealth.

1 Kings 19:19-21

¹⁹ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

²⁰ And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

²¹ And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

The devotion of Elisha is seen in the fact that he used the wooden yokes from the oxen to make a fire to roast the oxen. By this he was stating that he was committed to following Elijah and his life was now to be lived to serving God and he would not be deterred nor would he return back to the wealth and the security of the family farm. He respected his parents, but his family ties were subordinate to his spiritual bonds. He and his family joined in a great celebration as Elisha started out on a path that only God knew where it would lead. On the family farm Elisha lived by sight but now he was stepping into a life that would now be lived by faith.

So, when we left I Kings 19 Elisha was a committed servant of Elijah. The old life was left behind, and he was now on a path of faith. This is exactly the way in which God desires us to be as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:17

¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

We are to be committed to following Jesus Christ and we are to let the old life behind. We are to bring our natural affections under the authority of our spiritual bonds and we are to walk by faith.

Now when a believer is willing to take this step of faith we can be sure that there will be times of testing and many of those tests will come the moment you take the first step of faith. Elisha was tested in many ways after he left the old life behind.

I. **The Testing of Elisha**

Part 2

Elisha went through 7 tests two of which we looked at last week.

1. **A test of affections.**

This was when he was called to leave home.

2. **A test of sincerity.**

Notice 2 Kings 2:1-2

Here in these verses Elisha has now learned that Elijah was going to be taken away and so the question is, "Will he stay the course?" Elisha was truly sincere in his commitment and he would not be deterred from walking in the will of God. The journey may not go the way he had dreamed but he would accept what God brought into his life and he would stay the course.

3. **A test of the will.**

Notice 2 Kings 2:2-3

Elisha and Elijah make their way to Bethel and it is there that Elisha is approached by the sons of the prophets. These were young men who were in a school for prophets. They were prophets in training. They knew Elijah and they knew he was going to be taken away. They therefore came to Elisha and encouraged him to stop following Elijah. They were basically saying, "What is the use in traveling with Elijah for the Lord is going to take him away."

Let us not miss the fact that the men who were used to test the will of Elisha were not the prophets of Baal. They were not the partners of Ahab and Jezebel. They were servants of God.

Application:

God often allows such tests for the disciples of Jesus Christ to try their will. Many times, the tests come from the people we know within the body of Christ. When they know that

you are going to take a step of faith for God they will many times try their best to discourage you from doing so. They will point to the comforts that are around you at the present time and say, "Why would you leave all of this behind, what is the use?" Or maybe they would say something along this line, "You cannot do that for you are not experienced nor are you equipped."

Let me show you what Paul wrote concerning his call to be an apostle.

Galatians 1:15-17

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

¹⁷ Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Paul knew he was called and there were many who would not understand because of his past.

Let me just remind you that when God places a burden on your heart you must not allow others to talk you out of walking in the will of God. Now I know what Proverbs 24:6 tells us;

Proverbs 24:6

⁶ For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

There are many things we need to seek counsel on but when we know the will of God then we must not let those don't understand keep us from moving forward.

Let me give you two points of encouragement here:

1. **God will equip you for the mission.**

There have been many believers who have stepped out for God and have not had any training or have not had the resources for the mission and God provided everything they needed. When you see yourself as inadequate then you are the very person God is looking for because in the inadequate servant God receives all the glory.

Jeremiah 1:4-9

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

⁵ *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

⁶ *Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.*

⁷ *But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.*

⁸ *Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

⁹ *Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*

Jeremiah saw himself as one who was completely inadequate, and he was, but God gave him what he needed. Let me show you the encouragement God gave to Joshua.

Joshua 1:1-2, 5-9

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

² *Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.*

⁵ *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

⁶ *Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.*

⁷ *Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.*

⁸ *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

⁹ *Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

2. There will always be people who do not understand God's will for your life.

You and I can expect there will be people who do not understand what God has burdened our heart with and so they will respond in different ways. Let's suppose God places a

burden in your heart for an individual you know who is deep into sin and you know deep down inside God wants you to share the gospel with them. Don't be surprised if someone comes to you and tries to discourage you. They may say, "That person will never listen. Others have tried to witness to them, but they rejected everyone, so they will never listen to you." We must NOT allow others to keep us from the will of God. There will always be those who do not understand.

Genesis 37:5-6, 11

⁵ *And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*

⁶ *And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:*

¹¹ *And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.*

Joseph's brothers hated him because of the dream that was given to him by God. They did not understand what God was going to do.

This is exactly what we can expect when we step out in faith. There are going to be people who oppose us, and they are often those who are of the family of God. God permits this to happen to test our will.

3. **A test of faith.**

Notice 2 Kings 2:2-4

While they were at Bethel Elijah encouraged Elisha to stay while he moved on to Jericho. Oh, what a test this was! Bethel was known as the "House of God". This is where Jacob was given the vision of the heavenly ladder.

Genesis 28:16-19

¹⁶ *And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.*

¹⁷ *And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

¹⁸ *And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.*

¹⁹ *And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.*

Bethel was the place of Divine Communion. Surely this is the place where Elisha would want to remain since Elijah was going to be taken away. This is the place any believer would desire to be. This reminds me of the mount of Transfiguration and Peter's response.

Matthew 17:1-4

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

² And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

³ And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

⁴ Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Peter wanted to stay! God was in this place and Peter loved it and he wanted to set up camp. Bethel was the same kind of place, but Elisha knew that God could bring blessing to him no matter where he was at, so he refused to stay at Bethel for he was called to follow where God led.

Application:

God still tests His servants this very way today. A believer may find themselves in a place where God's blessings are fall all around them and communion with God is enjoyed all the time and then God calls them away from that very place. Let me show you another example.

Acts 8:

⁵Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

⁶And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

⁷For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

⁸And there was great joy in that city.

Samaria was the place to be. God was doing amazing works. Who would want to leave this city?

Acts 8:26-29

²⁶ And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

²⁷ And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

²⁸ Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

²⁹ Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

Then God calls Philip to go to the desert because there is one man who needs salvation.

Let me get you back to Elisha again. He was in Bethel a place known as "the house of God" and God calls Elijah to Jericho. Let me show you what Jericho was like.

2 Kings 2:18-19

¹⁸ And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

¹⁹ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

It was a city that was barren. The water was contaminated and before fruit came on the vine it all died. This is where God called Elijah and Elisha to.

We should not be surprised when God takes His people from places of great blessings and much fruit and leads them to dry and barren places. We must remember that He wants to use us to bring about a change.

Conclusion:

Matthew 5:13-16

¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

We are salt and light and so we cannot light that which is already lighted, and we cannot stop the decay on that which is not spoiled. So, we must go into the darkness and have contact with that which is decaying.