

**"The Life and Miracles of Elisha"**

**Part 5**

**Introduction:** Tonight, as we come back to our study of Elisha we are going to continue to look at the testing which he was faced with as he made a commitment to follow Elijah.

**I. The Testing of Elisha**

**Part 2**

Elisha went through 7 tests.

**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**

As Elisha and Elijah make their way to Bethel it is there that Elisha is approached by the sons of the prophets. These 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."

**Application:**

God often allows people to step into our lives to test our will when we step out to follow Jesus Christ. There may be those who try to talk you out of what God has called you to do and sometimes there are those who just don't understand the burden on your heart and so they may attempt to steer you in another direction.

Last week I gave you two points of encouragement here:

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

2. There will always be people who do not understand God's will for your life.
4. A test of faith.

#### Notice 2 Kings 2:2-4

Last week we looked at how Bethel was known as the house of God. This was the place where Jacob saw the heavenly ladder. It represents the place where God is active, and His hand is seen working. Jericho however was a barren city. The test for Elisha was did he have the faith to believe God could bless him wherever he was so long as he was in the will of God? Elisha did have faith and he was willing to follow wherever God would lead. He knew that if he was in Bethel or in Jericho God was the same and would bring blessings no matter where he was so long as he was in the will of God.

#### Application:

God often tests the faith of His people by calling them to step out into the darkness of the world and many times He calls them from places where His hand is at work among His people.

It is really a test of stepping outside of our comfort zones. To make a difference for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ we must be willing to step into some uncomfortable places and live by faith. There is an excellent lesson on this thought for us in Matthew 14.

#### Matthew 14:22-30

<sup>22</sup> *And straightway Jesus **constrained** his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.*

<sup>23</sup> *And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.*

<sup>24</sup> *But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.*

<sup>25</sup> *And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.*

<sup>26</sup> *And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.*

<sup>27</sup> *But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*

<sup>28</sup> *And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.*

<sup>29</sup> And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

Jesus forced His disciples to get in the boat and sail into the storm. It was during the storm that Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on the water. Stepping out of the boat meant stepping out of his comfort zone. But in so doing he did something that only the Lord Himself had done and that was walk on the water. When he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the wind he began to sink.

**Application:**

Sometimes it is God's will that we too go into the middle of the storms. It is not for the purpose of making us uncomfortable, but it is to strengthen our faith. When we learn to walk by faith and step away from our places of security it is then that God can use us in ways that glorify Him.

5. **A test of patience.**

**Notice 2 Kings 2:4-6**

Elisha has now encountered the same thing. Elijah went from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho and now from Jericho to Jordan. In all this nothing extraordinary has happened. They are simply walking from one city to another. They have now covered many miles. The test was would Elisha get impatient or would he grow weary? Elisha passed this test very well. He had seen no results of his commitment, but he was determined to persevere through the tests and the trials.

**Application:**

One of the most difficult tests for any believer to endure is the test of patience. There have been many believers who have started out being committed to following the Lord but after difficult work and times of seeing no visible results they have grown weary and chose to quit. Elisha could have reasoned that if he stayed with the sons of the prophets he could at least accomplish something other than walking from place to place. As we follow the Lord there will be times of weariness and even discouragement. But quitting cannot be an option. We have no idea how God will bless our perseverance. The Bible exhorts us to not grow weary and to continue to persevere.

**Galatians 6:9**

<sup>9</sup> And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

**2 Thessalonians 3:13**

*<sup>13</sup> But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.*

**1 Corinthians 15:58**

*<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

When we begin to grow weary we must take time to get alone with the Lord. Let me show you something that happened to David.

**1 Samuel 30:3-6**

*<sup>3</sup> So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.*

*<sup>4</sup> Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.*

*<sup>5</sup> And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.*

*<sup>6</sup> And **David was greatly distressed**: for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: **but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.***

I was taught years ago that if you pour more out than what you take in sooner or later the tank will run dry. The point is that we need times of refreshment in the Lord. If we spend all our time investing into the lives of others and we take no time to feed our own souls, we will eventually grow weary and become discouraged. We must be on guard against weariness. Do you remember the battle Israel had with Amalek in Exodus 17? Let me show you something about that battle.

**Deuteronomy 25:17-18**

*<sup>17</sup> Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;*

*<sup>18</sup> How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and **weary**; and he feared not God.*

Amalek is a picture of the flesh or the sin nature in the believer. One of the lessons here is that when we grow weary and faint we are more likely to fall to the lusts and the desires of the flesh.

Getting back to the point, we must continue in patience and be sure we feed regularly upon the Bread of Life. There may be times when we see no visible results of our labors but that does not mean God is not working.

6. **A test of character.**

**Notice 2 Kings 2:7-9a**

Here in these verses we learn that Elijah was testing the commitment of Elisha and now that Elisha has proved himself to be steadfast he is faced with another test. Elijah asks him, "What shall I do for thee?" This would be the most revealing of all tests. Elisha's answer would reveal his heart. It would tell Elijah what his heart was truly set upon.

**Notice 2 Kings 2:9-10**

Elisha rose above all fleshly lusts and worldly desires. He asked for that which would truly glorify God and that which would benefit the people he ministered to. He did not desire wealth, personal honors, worldly power or prestige. He asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Let me show you a few verses from Deuteronomy.

**Deuteronomy 21:15-17**

*<sup>15</sup> If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated:*

*<sup>16</sup> Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn:*

*<sup>17</sup> But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, **by giving him a double portion of all that he hath**: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.*

Elisha desired to be treated as the first born of Elijah. He desired a double portion of his spirit. He did not desire a double portion of his material possessions but instead he longed for that which was spiritual.

This request revealed 2 points about the character of Elisha.

1. **It revealed his personal view of himself. It showed he was humble.**

This request showed that Elisha saw himself as weak and insufficient. He was conscience of his inability to do what God called him to do in his own power. He knew that to carry out the will of God in his life he would need a double portion of the spirit that Elijah had.

This is the very way that every servant of God should see his or her own self. Blessed is the servant who is aware of their weakness and their inability to serve God in the power of the flesh. Blessed is the person who can claim the words of the Lord as recorded in Zechariah.

**Zechariah 4:6**

<sup>6</sup> *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Elisha was not a man of pride. He walked with Elijah for an extended period of time, but he did not rest in his own ability or his own knowledge. He did not boast in who he knew or who he served under. That meant nothing in the battles against wickedness in high places. He needed the power of God working in him if he was going to accomplish anything and he knew that. The same is also true for you and me in the spiritual battle we are in. To do anything that counts for the Kingdom it must be the power of God working in and through us.

**Philippians 4:13**

<sup>13</sup> *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

**John 15:4-8**

<sup>4</sup> *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

<sup>5</sup> *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

<sup>6</sup> *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

<sup>7</sup> *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

<sup>8</sup> *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

**2. It showed his concern for the prophets who would serve under him.**

The request for the double portion of the spirit showed how much concern Elisha had for those whom he would train. He knew he would need the wisdom and the power of God. He knew that he would need to be growing in order to lead the younger prophets in their growth.

**Application:**

We have talked about this before, but I will say it again. A leader cannot teach those under themselves to reach a higher level than what they themselves have reached. Elisha knew this, and he knew he needed a double portion of the spirit to be the prophet God called him to be.

**7. The testing of God's power.**

**Notice 2 Kings 2:10-14**

After Elijah was taken up Elisha was confronted with the Jordan River. It was a time to use the gift that had been given to him.

**Application:**

When God burdens our heart to step out and serve Him we can be sure He will place before us opportunities to use the gift or gifts He has given to us. This has proven to be a great obstacle for many who have stepped out for they will look at the situation a fear they cannot do what they have been called to do. Fear controls their lives and they return to where they were called from. I need to remind you that God is going to bring us to obstacles that in our own power we cannot overcome. We must trust Him and use the gifts He has given to us. We cannot allow fear to stop us.

**Conclusion:**

I will end tonight with an example of God's power.

**Genesis 17:16-19**

*<sup>16</sup> And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.*

*<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*

*<sup>18</sup> And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!*

*<sup>19</sup> And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.*

**Philippians 4:13**

*<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*