

"The Death of Elisha"

2 Kings 13:14-21

Introduction: Tonight, in our study of Elisha we have arrived at a message which will deal with the events which took place around his death. We do not know how old Elisha was when he died. I did read the comments of others this past week and there are those who say based upon the reign of the kings which took place during his life, that Elisha was close to the age of 120 when he died. But we cannot be dogmatic about his age because God did not give to us that detail, but He did give to us some other details that are very important, so we shall look into that which we have.

I. The Sickness

Notice 2 Kings 13:14a

Elisha went the path that everyone of us will go if the rapture does not happen in our lifetime.

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Job said the same thing, but he worded it a bit different.

Job 14:1-2

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

² *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

James also spoke of the path which all people will travel.

James 4:14

¹⁴ *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

Getting back to Elisha; he had a sickness and it would be from this sickness that he would die. He was a prophet whom God used to bring about many miracles, but Elisha would not be healed from this sickness. He had raised a young boy from the dead, but he would not escape this sickness.

Application:

As we pass through this life we will experience sickness from time to time and God will allow us to recover from many of the sicknesses but there will be a day and there will be a sickness that we will not recover from. One of the sicknesses which we get will be the one which will take our lives. There is a boundary which God has established for each one of us to live in and we cannot go beyond the boundary which God has established.

Job 14:1-5

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

² *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

³ *And doth thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?*

⁴ *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*

⁵ *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*

Our lifespan is in the hands of God and when our appointed time comes we will die and not one person will be able to prevent our death. Elisha was fast approaching his day. We will one day die, and we do not get to pick the way in which we will die. That is God's choice.

Some die quickly, some die in their sleep and others suffer for months and even years of a terminal illness. This is often a concern for even believers as to how we will leave this world. But let me give you several thoughts that bring comfort:

- a. **God's grace is sufficient for whatever path God has appointed to us.**
- b. **God will walk with us on the path He has appointed.**
- c. **Death has been conquered by our Lord and it is now only a door into heaven for us.**

Notice 2 Kings 13:14 again.

In the second half of this verse we read something very interesting. Joash the king of Israel came to visit with Elisha when he was on his death bed. This is very unusual because kings never visited with dying people. They desired to be surrounded by people who were positive and encouraging. The would did not want to be surrounded by negative situations or depressing situations.

Nehemiah 2:1-2

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.**

Joash made it a point to visit with Elisha on his death bed and when he came he wept over him. This was not a weeping because they were really good friends. This was a weeping from fear in the heart of Joash. Notice the words Joash spoke over Elisha,

"O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

These are the same words which Elisha spoke when he knew that Elijah would be leaving.

2 Kings 2:9-12

⁹ And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

¹⁰ And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

¹¹ And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

¹² And Elisha saw it, and he cried, **My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.** And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

So, the king spoke these words over Elisha and Elisha spoke these words over Elijah so what do they mean?

The chariot of Israel and the horsemen were the mark of strength. So, when Elisha spoke these words over Elijah he was saying that he saw Elijah as the strength of the nation of Israel. Elisha did not want to see him leave for he knew the impact which he had upon the people and the society.

In the same way when the king spoke these words over Elisha he was making the bold statement that he viewed Elisha as the strength of Israel. He knew how God had provided victory through Elisha and when he heard that Elisha was dying his heart was full of fear because he viewed his dying as a removal of Israel's protection. His tears were selfish

tears. He was concerned about losing his position and his control. His tears were not because he was losing a good friend.

Application:

There is much for us to learn from this verse.

1. Joash had his faith in a man and not in the God of that man.

Sure, Elisha was used in a mighty way by God, but it was not Elisha's power that brought about the miracles, but it was God's power. Even after Elisha was dead God was still God and He was just as powerful after Elisha's death as He was before. But Joash had placed his faith in the man instead of God.

This happens in many churches today also. People place their faith in the Pastor for the success and the growth of the church. They forget the Words which Jesus spoke to Peter.

Matthew 16:15-18

¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

*¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will** build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Pastor's and other workers are used by God in a mighty way, but the church is not built in the power of a man, but it is but in the power of Jesus Christ.

So, when a Pastor dies, or he retires many lose hope especially if the man has been in the position for an extended period of time. I want you to understand that if I were to die unexpectedly that you must not lose hope because this church exists and is used of God because of Jesus Christ and not me. God will place another man in my position and He will use him to continue the work.

2. Let us live our lives in a way that when we are gone others will miss us.

Now let me clarify this statement. We must never live to be accepted by the world and we must never compromise to be praised by the world.

Luke 6:26

²⁶ Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Jesus warned about living for the praise of men.

But we should live our lives like Elisha in the sense that those who know us know that God answers our prayers, that He uses us to make a positive difference in our society, and that He uses us to show forth His power and might.

Elisha, as a man of God was held in high esteem and those around him recognized his value to the nation. Notice the words of an unnamed writer:

"Let us seek so to live that even ungodly men may miss us when we are gone. It is possible for us in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, so to adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior in all things, that when we die many will say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," and men shall drop a tear, and close the shutter, and be silent and solemn for an hour or two when they hear the servant of God is dead. They laughed at him while he lived, but they weep for him when he dies: they could despise him while he was here, but now that he is gone they say:- "We could have better missed a less-known man, for he and such as he are the pillars of the good of others: they bring down showers of blessings upon us all," I would covet this earnestly, not for the honor and esteem of men, but for the honor and glory of God, that even the despisers of Christ may be compelled to see there is dignity, and a respect, about the walk of an upright man."

The days we live in today are very much like the days in which the judges ruled.

Judges 21:25

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Israel had no king and so the land was full of lawlessness. Today we could say there are very few leaders who set the example by how they live. So, there is an open door before us who are believers today to live our lives in a way so that others can see Jesus Christ in us.

Another way to see the opportunity before us is to understand that we live in a society of darkness today and so we have an opportunity to be the lights which God wants us to be.

Matthew 5:14-16

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.*

Let me just tell you that one of the ways in which we let our light shine brightly is to show grace to those whom we have contact with. Let us remember that we are ambassadors for Jesus Christ and He shows us grace constantly and if you really want to have an impact upon someone's life then I have found recently that when something happens to you and it is caused by another person, be quick to show grace to that person or persons. Let me share with you a story as told by Max Lucado:

"Longing to leave her poor Brazilian neighborhood, Christina wanted to see the world. Discontent with a home having only a pallet on the floor, a washbasin, and a wood-burning stove, she dreamed of a better life in the city. One morning she slipped away, breaking her mother's heart. Knowing what life on the streets would be like for her young, attractive daughter, Maria hurriedly packed to go find her. On her way to the bus stop she entered a drugstore to get one last thing. Pictures. She sat in the photograph booth, closed the curtain, and spent all she could on pictures of herself. With her purse full of small black-and-white photos, she boarded the next bus to Rio de Janeiro. Maria knew Christina had no way of earning money. She also knew that her daughter was too stubborn to give up. When pride meets hunger, a human will do things that were before unthinkable. Knowing this, Maria began her search. Bars, hotels, nightclubs, any place with the reputation for street walkers or prostitutes. She went to them all. And at each place she left her picture--taped on a bathroom mirror, tacked to a hotel bulletin board, fastened to a corner phone booth. And on the back of each photo she wrote a note. It wasn't too long before both the money and the pictures ran out, and Maria had to go home. The weary mother wept as the bus began its long journey back to her small village.

It was a few weeks later that young Christina descended the hotel stairs. Her young face was tired. Her brown eyes no longer danced with youth but spoke of pain and fear. Her laughter was broken. Her dream had become a nightmare. A thousand times over she had longed to trade these countless beds for her secure pallet. Yet the little village was, in too many ways, too far away. As she reached the bottom of the stairs, her eyes noticed a familiar face. She looked again, and there on the lobby mirror was a small picture of her mother. Christina's eyes burned, and her throat tightened as she walked across the room and removed the small photo. Written on the back was this compelling invitation.

"Whatever you have done, whatever you have become, it doesn't matter. Please come home." She did."

Conclusion:

Might we too live in a way that others know we are people of God and that they may miss us when we are gone.