

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
ELIJAH AND ELISHA—PART 2
1 KINGS 19:19-21

Introduction

Last time we saw how the LORD had sent Elijah to anoint the plowboy Elisha as the prophet who would eventually be Elijah's replacement! We said three important things about this:

- A. No One Is Irreplaceable In The Ministry!**
- B. The LORD Is The One That Does The Calling, Not Man!**
- C. The LORD Is The One That Determines When One's Ministry Is Over!**

Elijah thought his ministry was over when in fact, we will see that Elijah spent ten years training Elisha with Elisha ministering to Elijah and the two of them ministering for the LORD alongside each other!

From what we see in Scripture, the prophet Elijah's recorded ministry was about 13 ½ years while the prophet Elisha served the LORD at least 64 years.

Elisha was anointed five years before King Ahab died.
He served through King Ahaziah's 2-year reign. (*1 Kings 22:51*)
He served through King Jehoram's 12-year reign. (*2 Kings 3:1*)
He served through King Jehu's 28-year reign. (*2 Kings 10:36*)
He served through King Jehoahaz 17-year reign. (*2 Kings 13:1*)
He served through King Joash's reign for 16 years and then he died during the reign of Joash. (*2 Kings 13:9-20*)

All of that stemmed from the call of God upon Elisha's life that we see here!

I. WE SEE ELIJAH CASTS HIS MANTLE UPON ELISHA. (Vs.19)

The cloak or mantle was the large outer garment or cape that was worn in that day. It could served a number of different purposes:

It was used for Protection... against the hot sun and frigid desert nights.
It was used for a Pillow...
It was used for a Place to sit.
It was used for Packing... supplies were sometimes wrapped in it.

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In certain instances one could indicate Pain or Plight with it. When the mantle was torn into shreds, it indicated grief.

But what we see here, the tossing of the cloak over the shoulder of another indicated a transfer of power or position.

Elijah did this to Elisha. And it is apparent from Elisha's reaction that he knew what this meant.

It meant that the LORD had shown the Prophet Elijah that He had chosen him to be a Prophet in his place!

II. WE SEE ELISHA'S DEVOTION TO HIS PARENTS! (Vs. 20)

Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah.

With enthusiasm, excitement, and zeal he ran after Elijah, requesting that he might kiss his parents farewell and then follow him.

Elisha's response was immediate obedience and submission. When the LORD calls us to do something that should be our response too!

The response of Elijah to Elisha was, "*What have I done to thee?*"

Elijah was basically saying, "*This is between you and God, Elisha. I'm not forcing you into service. You make up your own mind.*"

When it comes to serving God and answering His call, we are not puppets. We can choose to obey or we can choose to resist. I recommend choosing to obey! The LORD knows what's best for us!

We will see in a minute that Elisha was willing to "*burn his bridges*" behind him. He was willing to cut his ties to his parents!

In following Elijah and the LORD's will for his life, Elisha was saying "*good-bye*" to wealth and comfort. Comfort and wealth happen to be two main reasons why Believers spurn the LORD's call in their life!

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In *Luke 9:59-62*, we find a similar incident with different results.

In *verses 59 and 60*, we find **an excuse of indefinite delay**. The father was not dead yet. He did not want to leave home until his father died and he received his inheritance.

That could take as long as 30-40 years. He was not truly ready to follow the LORD. In *verses 61 and 62*, Jesus knew the heart of the young man and rebuked him.

Elisha's attitude was much different. He wanted to express love, gratefulness, and consideration for his parents as he broke away to serve the LORD!

**III. WE SEE ELISHA “BURNING HIS BRIDGES”, SO TO SPEAK.
(Vs. 21)**

Elisha took one yoke of the oxen, probably the oxen he was plowing with, and boiled their meat using the wooden portion of his tools! So, he destroyed his tools and the beasts that he used to plow with!

It says that he fed some people with the meat! Apparently Elisha gave himself a going away party of some sort to celebrate God's calling in his life and to say “good-bye” to his friends and family.

He then followed and ministered to Elijah. Elisha was not ashamed for others to know about God's calling in his life.

It is difficult to follow the LORD's will without others knowing about it. There is no such thing as the secret service in the Lord's work!
(Illustration: Boy with a mutt who he said was a “*police dog*.”)

Matthew 10:32-33 – “*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*”

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Look at what Jesus said in *Matthew 5:14-16*!

So Jesus said, “*Let your light so shine before men...*”

Let's talk about this matter of commitment that we see here in Elisha. When you kill your ox and boil him with the wood of your plow, that is commitment that says— “*I am no longer a plowboy! I am the LORD's boy!*”

When I was a boy, I went swimming periodically on Jekyll Island off the coast of my home town of Brunswick, Georgia on at a place called *The Aquarama*. It had an Olympic size pool that had a high dive diving board with a lot of spring in it. I loved to watch folks dive off of it!

Now, me and heights don't get along real well, but I decided one day that I was going to overcome my fears and jump off of it! When I climbed that ladder I wasn't demonstrating commitment.

When I walked to the edge of the diving board, I wasn't demonstrating commitment. Commitment came when I actually jumped off the board. There was no room for return or retreat. On the way down I can tell you that I did have second thoughts about it, but it was too late! Because when I came off that board I was committed to hitting the water below! And hit it I did!

Listen, God wants total commitment from us. He wants us to “*burn our bridges*” with no turning back!

Look at *Luke 18:18-23* (Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler)

Listen, the LORD calls us to SACRIFICE some things here! There can be no effective service without some sacrifice!

Bottom line though, you will not be effective for the LORD if you are not totally committed to Him.

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When times get tough, when the pressure is on, when people hurt or betray you, when you are deeply discouraged, your commitment to Christ will help see you through and keep you steadfast for the LORD.

Many believers are ineffective and powerless because they are unwilling to fully commit their lives to the LORD! There is usually something that they hold on to that keeps them from fully committing!

They are unwilling to sacrifice, to surrender their lives to the will of God, or to be uncomfortable.

Hudson Taylor said, *"God is looking for wicks to burn. The oil and the fire come free."* The question is, are we willing to become a wick and burn for the Lord Jesus Christ?

Paul said in *Philippians 3:8* – *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"*

We should be willing to burn our bridges in order to go forward for God. Notice what Jesus said.

Luke 14:33 – *"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."*

Those who surrender their lives and burn their bridges will be rewarded by the LORD.

Luke 18:29-30 – *"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."*

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Living our life for Christ is a great privilege and opportunity for us to express our love for Him. True sacrifice is the thrill of giving and yielding the best we have to the One we love the most. We are not doing God a favor by serving Him. He did us a favor by calling us to serve Him.

1 Timothy 1:12 – *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;"*

IV. WE SEE ELISHA BECOME ELIJAH'S MINISTER! (Vs. 21)
Elisha's first responsibility was to minister to Elijah, the Prophet of the LORD! The things that he did for Elijah some would say were the functions of a slave.

ministered = "to attend as a menial"

Ephesians 6:5-8 – *"5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."*

Character and humility are developed by starting low and working up to greater responsibilities. In God's kingdom, the way up is down.

1 Peter 5:5-6 – *"5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."*
6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Proverbs 22:4 – *"By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life."*

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James 4:6 – “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

James 4:10 – “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

If one wants to be in a place of authority, they must first learn to submit to authority placed over them.

Are we willing to serve the LORD and submit to His will for our life?