

1Kings 19:19–21

Through Whom and How God Began to Overthrow a Wicked Dynasty

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**Wednesday, July 20, 2022 ▪ Read 1Kings 19:19–21**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What did Elijah do, when the LORD finished talking (v19)? Where did he go (cf. v16b)? Whom did he find there? What was Elisha doing? What does Elijah do? What does Elisha do (v20)? But what does he ask to do first? How does Elijah respond to this? Then what does Elisha do instead (v21)? Using what? For whom? With the means and materials of his old life out of the way, what does Elisha now do? What does he become?*

**How does God bring down evil dynasties?** 1Kings 19:19–21 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these eighteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God often does great things through simple people and resolved commitment**.

The reinvigorated faith of Elijah. Last week, in the first eighteen verses, we met a prophet who had a dim view of the effectiveness of his ministry so far. But God reminded him that he is just one servant among seven thousand even at that moment (v18), and that he would yet be used to ordain a triumverate of enemy-exterminators (v16–17) in following generations.

How do we know that this Word took effect? Because Elijah immediately set his GPS for Abel Meholah. Elisha was supposed to be the final member of the triumverate, mopping up whomever the other two couldn't. And that's where Elisha was from, according to v16. So Elijah arrives in town, gets directions to the Shaphat farm, finds a young man attending his particular ox in the plowing, and throws his coat onto him as a way of conscripting him as prophet-in-training and chief hand-washer (end of v21, cf. 2Ki 3:11).

Sometimes, we come to worship deflated but are reminded that we belong to God, as does the fruit of our work. A good response is just to proceed with whatever our particular calling is. Going home, loving our wife, teaching our children, working our job, resuming attendance upon the public means of grace whenever they are offered. When we trust that God is using our lives, we resume the things that God says that He is using.

The simple man that the Lord is pleased to use. The 2Ki 3:11 reference above shows the humility into which Elisha entered as servant in v21. But our little passage also shows us a simple, hard-working man. Certainly, his family came from some wealth. 24 oxen (twelve yoke, v19) is nothing to sniff at, and it took two of them to feed the entire household at Elisha's going-away party (v21). But despite the number of servants available, the son is plowing the field, attending personally to one of the twelve oxen that are in use.

All callings are dignified because in God's providence they are *callings*. And often it is the Lord's way to take someone who has been diligent and faithful in little (like attending to a plowing ox) and call him to something else little (like handwashing). And then sometimes, the Lord calls him who was faithful in little and entrusts him with much (like becoming the chief prophet).

The wholehearted commitment that the Lord gives His servant. It's significant that Elisha asks to kiss his parents. Rather than read stalling into v20, it is better to read eagerness. He wants to give dad and mom the definitive goodbye. In contact, Elijah seems to indicate that there's no reason to think that the throwing of the mantle would forbid this. In fact, the anointing referred to in v16 is not described yet as having taken place.

Furthermore, by slaughtering the particular oxen to which he was assigned and using that particular yoke for the food prep, Elisha renounces his former calling and way of life. He is giving up everything to become a servant. Such commitment comes from the Lord. If we have it, let us bless His Name for it. If we lack it, let us take our lesson here and look to the Lord to make us live with wholehearted commitment in whatever particular callings He has given us in home, church, and nation.

In all of this, the main message is that the plan of God described in v15–18 is being carried out. And though He has not appeared to us to tell us His plan for our own life and its part in His work, aren't we still sure that He is doing it? So let us not despise the day of small things but be grateful when He gives us reinvigorated faith, simple duties, and wholehearted commitment. The LORD is at work by these things!

What are your particular callings in life? When your diligence or commitment sags, where can you go for encouragement? Whose plans are you hoping to see fulfilled by your daily efforts in life?

*Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for calling Elijah and Elisha for specific works and giving them the faith and commitment to obey promptly and completely. Give us such faith, too! Give us such commitment, too! Forgive us for when discouragement dulls our zeal, or when we are unwilling to let go of other attachments to do what we know from Your word that You have commanded. And work in us according to Your good will, in which we ask You to use us and make our lives bear the fruit that You intend, in Jesus's Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs:** ARP1 "How Blessed the Man" or TPH551 "We Plow the Fields"

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First Kings, 19, verses, 19 through 21. These are God's words. So he departed from there and found Alicia, the son of Shafat who was plowing with 12, yoke of oxen before him. And he was with the 12th. Then Elijah really past by him. And through his mental on him, he left the auxin and ran after Elijah and said, please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.

And he said to him, go back again for what have I done to you?

So Elijah turned back from him and took yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment and gave it to the people at the eight and he rose. And follow the larger and became his servant.

So for the reading of God's inspired and inherent word, several things to note here as God starts the bringing down of Ahab and Jezebel sandwiched between this entire sequence. They're sandwiched around this entire sequence or the Elijah, both in the running. And the thing that horrib and last week's passage, and then these three verses that are in front of us this week, but before we have Jezebel's threatened afterward, we have invisible showing aab how to do tyranny correctly.

When we get to chapter 21, but the the big story is not, Ahab, defeating the Syrians in chapter 20, or what Jezebel is able to do. Big story, of course, is what God

is doing. Lord made that clear to Elijah when he had the things that appeared to be of great consequence but reminded Elijah.

That really, it's it's the Word of God that is in control and in which God is most displaying Himself operating. So versus 19 through 21 taken in the context of the section of first Kings as a whole is, what are the kinds of things and who are the kind of people that God uses to overthrow great empires.

And one of the things that got uses is the reinvigorated. Faith of his servant. Elijah was in ministry, depression not too long ago thinking that he wasn't having any effect the Lord reminded him. That the Lord's work is much bigger than just the one man. Even right now, he has the 7,000 that he didn't need Elijah for to keep from bowing the knee to bail.

And So the Lord currently has, the 7,000 is preserved for himself that Elijah doesn't know anything about. And Elijah is going to be the one who anoints three. Others him, the Lord ends up using to destroy his enemies and wipe out completely the household of Ahab. So Elijah now hurries up and starts on this mission, that the Lord has given him.

He departed from there. Verse 19 and found Elijah. Son of Shafette, Where did he find him? Well, he was in of El Mahala. So Elijah goes to Belle Mahala and he asks for the household of fat and they direct him to the household of Fat. Any finds Elisha. So he immediately starts doing again, what the Lord has called him to.

And this time, it's very specifically to go anoint Elisha the Lord uses encouragement and zeal and diligence in our colleagues, We ought to operate a servants of the Lord, the way, Elijah did whatever our calling is and now our callings are not going to be necessarily to anoint. The person who is going to overthrow all the wicked or the wicked ruler that it's over us right now.

But that brings us to our second point, which is the kind of man that God decides to use a successor as a successor to Elisha. So sorry to Elijah. And he is a diligent, man. He comes from a wealthy family, Elisha is plowing with 12, yoke of oxen. So 24, oxen, 12, yoke, and he himself is with the 12th.

So obviously very wealthy family, they have servants, that could be doing this work, but Elisha is the one who is doing the work. And we know that it's his household because he has the authority to slaughter the two oxen that 12 yolk that he is working with just a lot of the two oxen and use their yoke for the setup.

In order to boil the flesh and put on the feast. If he was just a servant in the household, he wouldn't be permitted to do that. So he's diligent and his prompt because of some of the linguistic similarity between this and Jesus telling the man come follow me. And the man says, let me bury my father and mother first.

Some have seen Elisha's response as a hesitation. It's not a hesitation he says please let me kiss my fault, my father and my mother and then I will follow you. He's saying I'm gonna make a clean break right now. He's not saying let me bury my father and my mother which might not be for years and years like the man that Jesus interacts within the gospel and Elijah's response is basically.

I haven't anointed you yet. Yeah. He's like, wow, you're an eager beaver. When he when he says go back again for what have I done? He's like, I, you know, I all I did was throw my throw. My cloak on you Elijah you know, didn't even stop. Apparently, you just threw his cloak on Elisha as Elisha was passing.

Elijah Elisha understood what it meant but the whole kind of anointing him and formerly taking him on. As that's his profit student successor guy that all hadn't taken place yet. Even and Elisha was already ready to kiss his mom and dad. Goodbye. So we have humility and diligence, and promptness and wholehearted commitment, He was wholehearted commitment in his previous calling, which was, you know, plowing with the oxen and his whole-heartedly committed in his new calling which includes, you know, we compare script with scripture just the pouring

Pouring. His pouring water on Elijah's hand, second Kings 3:11 that, when they describe Elisha, they say, the guy who just used to pour water on the hands of Elijah. His even in his new calling, he is just being a servant and doing whatever the chief profit needs. So, we shouldn't think that we have to make great display of ourselves.

We shouldn't have high thoughts of ourselves or low thoughts of simple and ordinary callings. It is the Lord who does the great work in the world and he gives us whatever our callings are. So, whether you are doing your school or doing your chores, or teaching school, or keeping the house, or going every day to work, and just putting in a good day's work, and then coming home and leading your family.

Well, you know, whatever the Lord gives us to do in life is dignified because it's a calling from him. And and the kind of man and the kind of work he is as humble, diligent zealous, wholeheartedly committed and so forth. And then especially this wholehearted commitment, you see in the clean?

Break that Elisha makes with his old life, not only the kissing, his father and mother comment in verse 20. But a lot to turns back, he takes a yoke of oxen and slaughters them and boils their flesh, using the oxen's equipment and gives it to the people and they eat.

This must be a big household by the way, if they could eat two ox and a feast you know which gives more evidence of the wealth of his family. Therefore, when he

What do we call it? It's not swearing off as inheritance forfeits as an errance. It's not quite the right word that has a negative connotation gives up. When what can't think of a better phrase right now when he gives up his inheritance, he's giving up a lot. But he understands that he has a new calling now and he commits himself wholeheartedly entirely to his new life.

This is something that for instance, you do with marriage. This is something that someone who comes from outside the faith into the faith, he does, when he comes to faith, in Jesus Christ, it changes everything. The church becomes His people, he he cuts off old friendships and makes new ones when you come to faith in Jesus Christ.

It's not going to be as drastic. You already part of the church, you already part of a Christian household but your whole lifelong. There are things that you need to examine in your life is this consistent with a whole hearted commitment to God. In what ways am I living is someone who's still belongs to this world.

And what ways am I living for pleasure? Instead of finding pleasure, Lord and so forth. When you get married, it changes everything you leave. Father and mother your husband or your wife, is your number one Priority relationship in this world and everything, it every other relationship or activity in life.

Suddenly, it comes through the filter of how does it serve your spouse? How does it serve your marriage, even your Christian service is first and foremost in your marriage and then only secondarily applied to the church. We learned from first Corinthians 7. So this realization that there are new particular callings for Eliza.

It was the particular calling to be Elijah's understudy if the Lord calls you into the gospel ministry. There's a lot that you forsake and give up to give yourself wholeheartedly to that but conversion, especially obviously and then marriage. And particular particular callings in the church. Public callings in the church, so

the Lord gives wholehearted commitment to his servant.

So what kinds of things does God do. When he is about to overthrow kingdom. Well, and what kind of things does he use? He uses simple men for diligent. They're calling's aren't ashamed to do humble things and our wholeheartedly commitment committed to whatever the Lord calls them to. You want to be useful in the hands of God don't have overly grand.

Humanistic kind of ideas of what that looks like. It looks like simplicity. Diligence commitment. Humility. Those kinds of things. Let's thank the Lord for what he gave to Elijah and Elisha here as he was about to start using them and ask him to work in us. Similarly as well.

Her father in heaven. We thank you. You are judge of all the earth that you raise kingdoms up and you tear them down. And that not only well the wicked be judged in the last day, but evil empires evil authorities have their days. Numbered and the course of history, we look at the history of men and we confess that you are just and righteous in the way you tear down.

Wicked kingdoms. That we thank you. Lord that. In this particular instance, we set before us, the type of men you used and the work that you did in their lives. When you use them, we pray Lord that you would give us all. I hope and a confidence that you are doing righteously and you are working powerfully in a power that the kingdoms of this world cannot understand but Lord help us to live, not according to their understanding of power.

But as those who serve you help us, Lord each of us in the things that you have called us to today. To do them diligently as those who serve you and gladly this, those who get to serve others, pray that you would and give us some sorts of encouragements as we see you giving Elijah here.

We pray that you'd give us same humility and diligence willingness to do the lowly jobs as you gave Elisha and pray that you would give us wholehearted commitment, whatever it is. You have called us to. We pray that you would give us generosity that that we would be glad to give freely to others and even to give up much in this world, if it enables us or is consistent with whatever life you have called us to do, make us those who have the strength and joy of spirit from you to be able to sacrifice for your glory, for your service, and for good of others.

We thank you, Lord. That Christ did this. Most of all in becoming a man and dying for our sins and it isn't him that we ask you to do this in each of our lives as your spirit, conforms us to him which we ask in his name. Amen.