

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Kings 19

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 Kings – as we make our ways through the scriptures.

After tonight – we have two more chapters – and then, by the grace of God, will be done with 1 Kings

So 1 Kings 19

We are currently studying the life of Elijah

And we have been looking at how the Lord exercised the faith of Elijah.

God gave a word for Elijah to speak

God sent Elijah to do something, somewhere.

“Elijah, go tell Ahab that there will be a drought and the drought will not be over until you say so”

Elijah – go hang out by the brook – and I will provide for you”

Elijah, go to this heart of Baal worship – and I will provide for you”

And Elijah responded in obedience –

Elijah saw wonders that the Lord worked through him

God used him to bring the widow's son back to life.

All these things the Lord was using to build his faith.

And two weeks ago, we looked at Elijah's mountain top moment –

when he stood before King Ahab and 450 prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel

As God used Elijah to show that He is truly the One True God by consuming the sacrifice and the altar that Elijah had set up.

Elijah then prays – it starts to rain.

But then last week, we saw what happened when Elijah came down from the mountain

–

He allowed fear to cloud his vision –

So when Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him – he ran and ran and ran – and went into hiding.

He went into a state of depression – and he threw himself a pity party in a cave on Mt Horeb.

But even in his state of depression – we saw the grace of God – as God tells him that he wasn't done using him.

In our text this evening, we are going to see Elijah going back to work.

As God uses him to call Elisha.

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and we thank you for a few moments here in the middle of the week to just push everything aside and just be focused on what really matters – and that is our relationship with You

And so – help us to draw closer to You and walk with You and have a relationship with You

And show us – as we look at this calling of this prophet – almost 3000 years ago – show us what it means to follow Your calling in our lives.

Apply these things to our hearts.

And we lift this up Jesus name -

Amen

1 Kings 19 – we are going to do the last three verses of the chapter-

[1Ki 19:19-21 NKJV] 19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who [was] plowing [with] twelve yoke [of oxen] before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen 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?" 21 So [Elisha] turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

In our study last week –

We saw God repeatedly trying to get Elijah out of the cave

Elijah goes out the first time

And the Lord bring a great wind against the mountain – but the Lord was not in the wind

The Lord bring a great earthquake upon the mountain – but the Lord was not in the earthquake

And the Lord bring a fire up the mountain – but the Lord was not in the fire.

Elijah was used to seeing God work in wonders – this is how he expected to hear the voice of God – in big things

But it was in the still small voice – in the whisper, that Elijah heard the voice of God.

God was trying to get Elijah and us to grasp – that just because we don't see God moving with our eyes – it doesn't mean that He has forsaken us.

Elijah thought his life was over

He was ready to die

In his mind, he had completed his work and he had no great effect –

This is why God repeatedly asked Elijah – “What are you doing here?”

And the Lord begins to reveal to Elijah that even though it appeared the evil was winning -

Even though it appeared that the nation was still defined by unrighteousness and the leadership of Israel continued to harden their hearts –

God was going to use Elisha and two kings to bring judgment.

God also revealed that Elijah wasn't the only one who was devoted to God in Israel – there were 7000 others who were faithful to Him.

So even though it didn't appear that God was working – He had always and is always working.

So God puts Elijah back to work – as He takes his eyes off of self and has him minister to Elisha

So let's look at our text -

[1Ki 19:19-21 NKJV] 19 So he departed from there, **and found Elisha** the son of Shaphat, who [was] plowing [with] twelve yoke [of oxen] before him, and he was with the twelfth. **Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.**

So Elijah departs from the there, from this cave, this mountain where he's been in self pity –

And notice, right away we are told that he finds Elisha.

Elisha is the prophet who God called to follow in the footsteps of Elijah

And I believe that this is a picture for us today – of what it looks like for you and I who are called to follow in the footsteps of the One who has gone before us – Jesus.

We recognize that this is what Jesus has called us to be – His followers.

His disciples

Jesus' message to those 12 – was come and follow Me

So when we put our faith in Jesus, we understand that it is not simply a commitment we are making to a certain creed or a belief system or even a church.

It is a commitment to following the character and the standard of Jesus.

So as we are looking at the call of Elisha by Elijah, we are ultimately looking at the call that Jesus makes upon every one of us.

So we learn some very powerful applications in just these three verses.

Elijah leaves and he goes directly to where Elisha lived.

Notice -

Elijah is the one who goes searching for Elisha.

Elisha is just living his life when Elijah finds him.

Now – the thing to understand in this is that this calling, this anointing was initiated by Elijah and ultimately of course, by the Lord

And that is how it is in every one of our lives.

God's call in our life is His initiative.

It originates not with us but with Him

Jesus speaking to His disciples – mark this verse down.

[Jhn 15:16 NKJV] 16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Jesus went looking for them.

They didn't go looking for Jesus.

Yes, we have to respond to His reaching out to us

But the reality is that He chooses, and He calls us first.

And this shows us how much He values our lives – He wants to use us.

But there is another implication in Him choosing us

If God is the one who took the initiative in this relationship then, that means that He's invested in to seeing that the calling He has on our life will be fulfilled.

This is what Paul writes in Phil 1:6

[Phi 1:6 NKJV] 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete [it] until the day of Jesus Christ;

If God put all this care and effort into calling us into His purpose – then we don't have to worry about God second guessing Himself when we are not making enough progress –

He is not going to give up on us –

He is going to finish the deal

He is going to see us through.

So – not only does He initiate it

Something else we see here is that God's calling comes in the midst of daily life.

What was Elisha doing when Elijah found him?

He was working

He was doing what a farmer does

Plowing fields

He was digging in the dirt – carrying out his daily duties when Elijah shows up with a totally new direction for his life.

Our tendency is to think that this calling would come upon Elisha as he was praying or while he was meditating on the scriptures.

But it comes as he was carrying out his everyday responsibilities.

I think about how the Lord called me to ministry

It was about 10 years ago that I was pulling weeds – at a church workday – I was just there because they made an announcement that they needed help. And my pastor shows up and asked me, “What is the Lord calling you to do?”

And it was that conversation that the Lord used.

I had no aspirations of getting into ministry –

Think about Jesus’ disciples

Jesus comes to them – while they were in the temple? No – He comes to them while they were fishing –

Jesus shows up and calls them to cast a different type of net.

We think that in order for God to call us to something – we have to be in the midst of some religious setting or work

But He draws nearer to us and speaks to us in the midst of our daily routine.

You want two more biblical examples???

Think about what Moses and David were doing when God called them?

They were both tending sheep.

They were both in the midst of their daily routine.

So – the call of God is initiated by God, then often comes in the midst of daily life and we see something else at the end of verse 19

Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him

The call of God comes with the power and the authority of God

Notice -

Elijah doesn't even speak a word to Elisha – he simply removes his cloak and he puts it on Elisha.

This was a symbol of the passing of the torch

The call upon Elijah was being passed on to Elisha

Elisha was going to be the prophetic voice of the nation and the same empowerment and authority that had gone with Elijah as he obeyed God's call would now go to Elisha.

Think about God's calling to Moses –

“Moses, I want you to stand before Pharaoh and tell him that you are there to take away all his free labor away”

Moses responded - Who am I?

So He (God) said, “I will certainly be with you. Tell them I AM has sent me to you

And just like Moses and Elisha –

God's calling upon our lives comes with the power and authority of God.

He never just calls but He also equips

And just like the mantle was passed from Elijah to Elisha

Jesus has promised that the Holy Spirit would come upon you and if we would simply make ourselves open to receive.

Now, Elisha knows fully well what has just happened.

20 And he left the oxen 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?"

The calling upon Elisha was initiated by the Lord but Elisha had to respond

Elisha had to choose

Elisha could have said – no thank you – I am going to stay here with the oxen and continue to be a farmer.

But Elisha responds with “yes” I will follow you – but let me tell my parents goodbye first.

To which Elijah responds –

Had you make a note

"Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

Now, some people actually say that Elijah is rebuking Elisha for his response.

And they will make the connection between Elijah’s response and two of Jesus’ rebukes in the gospels.

Turn to Luke 9

[Luk 9:59-62 NKJV] 59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." 61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go [and] bid them farewell who are at my house." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

When we first read these accounts – it may seem kind of a harsh response from Jesus.

Especially the first person

But the issue was not that the guy just wanted to attend his father's funeral or that his dad had recently passed away.

He wanted to live with his father until he passed away and then he was willing to follow Jesus

The issue with the second guy in verse 61 and 62 was that Jesus didn't want him to stay attached to his old life when he was being called to something new.

Jesus was warning him to make sure that his priorities were in order.

I don't believe that Elisha had a priority issue.

So what did Elijah mean when he said "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

In the original language –

That phrase , for what I have done to you – is used by David when he is being pursued by Saul.

Saul wanted to kill him

And David says to Saul – what have I done to you to deserve this???

David is saying that he is innocent of anything – remember, Saul wanted to kill him because he was jealous of David.

So Elijah is saying the same thing

Elisha comes and says – I want to say goodbye to my parents.

Elijah says – I did what God called me to do –

Go say your goodbyes but ultimately you have to answer to God.

God is going to know your heart

God is going to know your motives

Ultimately – it is not your response to me – it is to Him.

21 So [Elisha] turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

Elisha could have gone home

He could have gone online to see try to sell his oven and equipment.

He ends up killing a yoke of oxen and using the equipment to start a fire to cook them and then offers a free meal to the community.

And this brings us to the next principle of God's calling

The call of God requires sacrifice

Elisha was willing to leave it all behind

His family

His job

His financial security – remember, we read that he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen –

Think of a farm using 12 tractors to plow the field

And also keep in mind that it wasn't the most popular time to be a prophet – remember, Elijah was threatened by Jezebel.

But Elijah is making a statement here

There is no going back to farming

He is all in – in doing what the Lord called him to do

He is sacrificing his old life – seeing it go up in flames as he chooses to go in the direction that the Lord has for him.

Turn to Mark 10

[Mar 10:28-30 NKJV] 28 Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.” 29 So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, 30 “who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.

Jesus never watered down the requirements of following Him

He made it very clear that sacrifice was a must

Jesus didn’t say – we could follow Him and still keep our agenda –

do we want to do –

Keep our own priorities

Jesus made it clear what the cost would be – to truly link our lives with His

But He also made clear that the benefits are eternal

Elisha was willing to make that sacrifice – and he did it openly

And I had you make a note of the last portion of verse 21

Because here we have one more truth of God's calling

Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant

God's calling always leads to servanthood

Whenever we make the decision to follow Jesus that's exactly where we will find ourselves as well, as a servant.

And this is one of the things that Jesus had to continue to teach His disciples.

He had to continue to retrain their mind

That to follow Him, is a path that going to have us taking up a towel and washing the feet of others.

And it is going to be different for each of us.

Turn to John 21

[Jhn 21:18-22 NKJV] 18 "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry [you] where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." 20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had

leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what [about] this man?” 22 Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you? You follow Me.”

We all have different callings

But no matter where the Lord has called us – the one common denominator is that it will always involve being a servant.

It will always involve death to self

That is the path that the Lord leads every one of us down

He has called us to follow after Him

He has a plan for us

He has a purpose for our life

And if we are going to walk in all that He has for us

By His grace, I believe that we would do well.

And that loved ones – is what we can earn from Elsha’s calling.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

