

4. It was a Blessed Call

a. The great prophet Elijah mentored him

- 1) He followed Elijah and became his servant.
- 2) He ministered unto him. "...Here [is] Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah." (2 Kings 3:11)
- 3) The Bible does not say how long Elijah mentored Elisha. Bible teachers calculate that it may have been between 7 and 16 years.
- 4) During those mentoring years, Elisha developed into a godly young prophet. We know this because his prayer before Elijah went to heaven was for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. (2 Kings 2:9) "*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.*"

b. Elisha succeeded Elijah when God took him home

- 1) God did give him the desired double portion of Elijah's spirit.
- 2) As we study the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, exactly twice as many are attributed to Elisha.

📖 *"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose" — Jim Elliot*

Conclusion: God is looking for men and women who will volunteer to share the Gospel around the world. He is looking for men who will be preachers, evangelists and missionaries. He is looking for women to be wives of these servants. He is looking for Sunday school teachers. He is looking for those who will pass out tracts and knock on doors to share the Gospel. Yes, he is looking for those who will answer His call.

Will you volunteer to be used of God in any area He so desires? Will you busy yourself with witnessing and doing what you can and pray that God might call you to do something more?

Song: "For God so Loved the World" theme song. "Praise God He gave His son to die for everyone. This message I must tell, if not I do not well. Since billions do not know, then surely I must go, share the gospel everywhere."

Elisha's Call to Ministry

5 May 2019 PM – 1 Kings 19:19-21 – Missions19 – Scott Childs (1993 Sermon)

Introduction: After leaving Mount Horeb in the Sinai Peninsula, Elijah travelled north to Israel. The parched land was now putting on the garb of a new spring. The drought was over and the rains were softening the cracked soil. Farmers were busy plowing and planting their fields. Half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, he came upon the estate of Shaphat. He may have been a prosperous farmer, for either he owned 12 yoke of oxen or had many kind neighbours. It was here that Elijah presented the call of God to Elisha the son of Shaphat.

Transition: This evening I want us to examine four aspects of God's call and note how God calls people to serve Him in the same way today.

1. It was an Unexpected Call

a. Elisha was not the son of a prophet

- 1) Elisha was a godly man, but did not come from a family of prophets. Jezebel had killed many of God's prophets. The nation was just beginning to recover from the 3 ½ year drought.
- 2) His name means, "My God is Salvation" indicating that his father was a God-fearing man not a Baal worshiper.
- 3) The call of God came unexpectedly to Elisha. There was little warning. There is no evidence that Elisha had given this call any forethought.

b. Elisha was plowing the field

- 1) Elijah found him in the field —not praying, not reading, not sacrificing, but plowing. Elisha was a farm boy. He was not afraid to work. He was guiding a yoke of oxen. Eleven yoke of oxen were ahead of him. Were they driven by his brothers, by servants or by neighbours? We do not know. He may have been the heir to his father's large estate.
- 2) God blesses initiative and despises slothfulness. (Proverbs 13:4) "*The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*"
- 3) If we are faithful over a few things, God will give us greater things to do for Him.

2. It was a Challenging Call

Elijah the great prophet of the day cast his mantle over the shoulders of Elisha. This was a symbol of one passing his power or authority on to another. It was also a token of friendship and an offer to take him under his care.

a. Elisha knew what the mantle over the shoulders meant.

- 1) How would he respond? There was no absolute need for him to respond. He could have ignored the event, but he recognized it for what it was and responded to it.
- 2) The prophetic office had little to offer that would have been appealing to Elisha. Queen Jezebel hated those loyal to God. Elijah was also a wanted man; to follow him could jeopardize Elisha's life.

b. Elisha was challenged to accept God's call to minister

- 1) Elisha sensed the inner voice of God calling him to service.
 - a) Many thoughts must have rushed through his mind as he pondered God's call.
 - b) Elijah did not stay and beg him, he simply presented the call and left.
 - c) He was a godly man when most had turned to Baal worship. Perhaps Elisha had been burdened by the carnal condition of his nation.
- 2) Within minutes, Elisha made his decision to accept God's call.
 - a) He left his oxen.
 - b) He ran after Elijah.
- 3) God called Noah to build an ark. God called Moses to lead Israel. God called Elijah to proclaim a drought. God called Isaiah saying "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" God called Jeremiah as a youth to preach. God called Amos as a farmer to preach. God called Jonah to preach. God called Peter, Andrew, James and John from their fishing boats. God called Saul the persecutor.
- 4) God's call for workers has echoed down through the centuries, and is still resounding today. The need for

labourers has never been greater. In John 4:35, Jesus said, "*Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*"

📖 *To ignore the call of God is to reject God's best for your life.*

3. It was a Life-changing Call

a. He immediately prepared to leave home.

- 1) Having accepted the call Elisha requested time to kiss his parents.
- 2) This was a sign of respect and submission. Possibly, he desired to seek their approval in this decision. (Proverbs 11:14) "*Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*"
- 3) He was not following grudgingly, but with joy in his heart. We see this by the joyful feast that followed. He answered the call by choice. Another way of restating Elijah's statement "*What have I done to thee*" is "Do as you please."
- 4) It appears that Elijah did not stay for the feast but continued on his journey. "*...Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him,...*" (1 Kings 19:20b-21a)
- 5) This may have been a test of Elisha's sincerity in answering the call.

b. He gave up all that he had

- 1) He slew his oxen (both of them) for the large feast.
- 2) He cooked them with the wood from the yoke and plough. By doing this, he literally destroyed all opportunity to return and forsake his new calling.
- 3) By doing this, he was burning the bridges behind him so that he could not return.
- 4) He had a great farewell feast with the people (probably his family, friends, and household servants).

📖 *"The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed" — Hudson Taylor*