

## The Call of Elisha

1 Kings 19:19-21

I hope to spend our time in the next few weeks looking at the life of an ordinary individual whom God used in extra-ordinary ways, the prophet Elisha. He was the one God chose to succeed the prophet Elijah. This was no small task, but God would be there to equip and lead Elisha throughout this great and influential endeavor.

Before we get too far into this line of thought, we need to take a moment to consider the events leading up to where we are in the text. This was a very unique time in the lives of God's people. It was a time of great *opposition*, as well as a time of great *opportunity*. This season in the history of Israel was a particularly dark and desperate season. They were ruled by a cowardly king, Ahab, who basically ruled by the dictates and desires of his wicked wife Jezebel.

We are familiar with the great victory that Elijah won over the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. It was there God clearly proved that He alone was the only true and living God. However, it didn't take long for depression and doubt to take root in the heart of Elijah. Shortly after this great victory we find him fleeing to the wilderness in hopes that he might die. God comes to him in a cave on Mt. Horeb, hiding in fear. It was there Elijah confessed to God that he was the only one left who cared anything for the ways of the Lord. God graciously revealed that there were 7,000 who had not bowed their knees to Baal and he was to seek out Elisha as his apprentice.

I think you would have to agree that we are living in a day much like the days of Elijah and Elisha. These are days of opposition, but they are also days of great opportunity! We need those in our generation who will answer the call and rise to the challenge in service unto the Lord. I hope we will be challenged and encouraged in our journey with the Lord. I want to begin by considering the [truths](#) revealed concerning: [The Call of Elisha](#).

**I. Elisha's Activity** (19) – [So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.](#) As Elijah came to Elisha he found him busy and working. God seeks those who are busy and willing to be used. If you desire to be used of the Lord and make a difference for His glory, get busy doing whatever you can for Him! Consider:

**A. His Cultivation** (19) – Elisha was found with his father, Shaphat, plowing in the field. He was busy cultivating the ground, preparing the soil, and planting seed. These were qualities and talents that would serve him well.

- The church and our world desperately need those who are willing to cultivate the soil and plant the seed of the Gospel. We need those who will sense the urgency and take hold of the Gospel plow! [Hosea 10:12 – Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.](#) We need to take an honest look at the situation around us and get busy!

**B. His Cooperation** – We also discover that Elisha was content to labor alongside his father. Apparently he realized the benefit of laboring together to ensure the harvest. There isn't any mention of contention or jealousy. He is simply working in cooperation to reach a common goal.

- The labor in the Lord's harvest desperately needs those who will lay aside their egos and personal agendas for the common good of the harvest. We are all working toward the same end and we are all in this together. It isn't about me or you; it is all about the Lord! Do you ever consider what this local body of believers could accomplish if we all worked together? We will never achieve that if we are not willing to work together!

**C. His Compensation** (19) – Granted this was a difficult environment in which to serve the Lord. Jezebel had already desired to kill Elijah. The prophet wasn't the most revered among many in Israel. But, we cannot possibly measure the enormity of this call. God had hand-picked Elisha for this task. He was blessed beyond measure to have the privilege to serve in this capacity! He may have been despised by his brethren and forced to depend on God for daily needs, but he enjoyed the awesome presence of God.

- I realize the earthly compensation and recognition may be less than desirable serving the Lord, but the benefits are out of this world. Nothing compares to being of service to the King! It is not a burden, but a tremendous blessing. I wouldn't step down from the pulpit to serve the interests of the world for any amount of compensation. If you have the opportunity to serve the Lord, be thankful for your abundant blessings!

**II. Elisha's Apprehension** (20) – [And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?](#) We find nothing in the text to support the fact that Elisha didn't want to follow Elijah, but I think it is apparent that he was a bit apprehensive at first. He was apprehensive:

**A. Regarding the Call (20)** – We found in [v.19](#) that Elijah had [cast his mantle upon him](#). Casting the mantle upon Elisha was a symbol of God's calling. Surely Elisha knew the magnitude of what had just happened in his life. He was being called as the great prophet's successor.

- He was there busy in the field, and out of the blue, God placed a call upon his life that would change his life from that moment on. This was something that wasn't to be entered into lightly, but it couldn't be ignored. God had called and it was up to Elisha to respond.
- God may have spoken to you about an area of service. If so, this is not something that can be ignored. The desire of God will not simply go away. It is fine to pray, seeking certainty, but don't hesitate too long. When you are sure of His will, respond and get busy! You will never be content or used of the Lord if you are not serving according to His will. You can seek to avoid it, even being busy in other areas, but God expects us to respond to His will.

**B. Regarding the Cost (20)** – [And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?](#) This was no small order. There was a price to pay, a cost involved.

- Now, don't misunderstand me, we cannot, in any way, purchase our salvation. We could never do enough to merit such a gift, but serving the Lord will come at a cost. There is a price to pay serving the Lord! I see three things in Elisha's life regarding the cost of serving the Lord. Notice:

**1. It involved Surrender** – We must keep in mind that Elisha had not sought this endeavor. He had not appealed to Elijah to become his apprentice. God came calling, at a moment when Elisha likely least expected it, and he was faced with a decision. Elisha had to count the cost. Would he be willing to abandon his wants and desires? Would he be willing to lay aside his plans and aspirations for the call of God?

**2. It involved Sacrifice** – As far as we know Elisha was content with his life as it was. Apparently he enjoyed a good relationship with his father. He may have stood to inherit much by staying and working for the family. He had to be willing to sacrifice those things he held dear to follow the call of God. He had to be willing to let go of anything that stood in the way of being what the Lord wanted him to be.

**3. It involved Selling Out** – This was the only life Elisha knew. He had been raised at his father's side, learning the trade of farming. He likely had aspirations of taking over the day to day operations at some point. When God came calling, he had to make a choice. Would he hold on to the desires he had, or would he sell out completely to the will of God?

- This is what seems so difficult for many. A lot of people are willing to surrender to the will of God. Some might even be willing to make some sacrifices for the Lord. But very few are willing to sell out completely. Few ever reach the point that they are willing to lay themselves before the Lord and submit their entire being to the will of God.
- If we are to be used of the Lord and see His glory in our day, we must be willing to sell out to Him! That requires laying it all on the table. There can be nothing that is “off limits” when it comes to serving the Lord. This will certainly be uncomfortable and challenging, but it will bring joy like you’ve never experienced. **Lu.9:62 – And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**

**III. Elisha’s Acceptance (21)** – **And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.** Elisha embraced the call of God and it clearly impacted his life. In this verse we find how Elisha reacted when he accepted the call of God.

**A. He Worshipped** – **Elisha took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen.** This is a beautiful picture of the sacrifice Elisha offered unto the Lord. He was well aware of the call and the holiness of God and it created an attitude of worship in him.

- Being in the will of God will create an attitude of worship. You can’t experience God in this way and not have a desire to worship. Serving God isn’t always easy or what we expected or desired, but it will create a desire to worship.

**B. He Witnessed** – **Elisha gave unto the people, and they did eat.** God had called him to a life of service and Elisha shared that blessed encounter with his brethren. He couldn’t keep it to himself; he had to share it!

- Responding to the call of God is something we cannot keep quiet about. If you are unwilling to share the call and testify to it, then I would argue that you haven’t sold out to the Lord. Keep in mind, this is our purpose for existence. We are here to be salt and light. We are here to bear witness to the goodness and glory of our Lord!

**C. He Went (21b)** – **Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.** The moment of truth had come. Elisha had told Elijah he would follow him; he had even testified of the call to his

family, but all of that would have been in vain had Elisha not followed through. [He arose and went](#), according to the call of God.

- I fear many have heard the voice of the Lord and as of yet have not responded. Knowing the will of God isn't enough. Publicly announcing that you have discovered and submitted to God's will isn't all that is required. We must be willing to follow wherever and whenever the Lord leads. We need to determine as Isaiah did – [Here am I; send me](#).

**Conclusion:** I am convinced God has spoken to hearts through His Word. We think of the call of God in regard to preachers, and rightfully so, but all Christians have a call to serve. Have you responded to that call? Have you surrendered, but as of yet been unwilling to completely sell out? If so, now is your opportunity to completely commit to serving the Lord at His leisure.

Maybe you are here and you've heard the call of salvation, but have been reluctant to respond. Why not come to the Lord right now? Don't put it off; tomorrow may never come.