

The Course of Elisha

2 Kings 2: 1-8

We have read a portion of one of the most familiar passages in all of Scripture. These verses reveal the journey Elisha made with Elijah just prior to God taking Elijah in a chariot of fire.

In our last study we found Elijah casting his mantle on Elisha as God called him to carry on the work of prophet. That has been some four to five years earlier, but we have no mention of Elisha during that time. Surely the Lord has been preparing him for the task ahead. This is the first mention of Elisha since the record of his calling. (I have realized that God often works in our lives much the same way. It is during the quiet times when no one is around or noticing that God often reveals Himself and His ways unto us.)

Elisha had answered the call of the Lord and now Elijah would soon be taken from him. Now Elisha has to make some decisions regarding continuing in the work of the Lord. The journey they make together reveals some valuable [principles](#) concerning our walk with the Lord. I want to preach on: [The Course of Elisha](#).

I. The Commitment of Elisha (1-2) – [And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. ^{\[2\]} And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. Consider:](#)

A. His Determination – Without reading the entire passage again, these verses give us great insight to the determination Elisha had. Three times Elijah urges Elisha – [tarry here I pray thee](#). At each stop along the journey Elisha was presented with an opportunity to abandon the trip with Elijah. He determined in his heart to see the journey through.

- Now, I don't believe there was any contention between Elisha and Elijah. I don't think Elijah had grown weary of his company. I am convinced this was all within God's plan. Elisha had to prove his determination and commitment to the work of the Lord. He had to continue in the journey if he was to inherit the double portion.
- We need those who are determined to serve the Lord today, whatever the situation or circumstance. We need those who will not be deterred or side tracked. Very few in our day have that determination. Most are willing to serve the Lord as long as it is convenient. Others are willing to walk with the Lord as long as it is comfortable. God never promised convenience or comfort, but

He did promise He would never leave us or forsake us. We need those who will step up and determine to serve the Lord!

B. His Devotion – At each of the stops along the way Elisha had the opportunity to stay. He refused to do so because he was determined to serve the Lord and obtain God’s blessing. We also discover another aspect of Elisha’s commitment – his devotion. [As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee](#). Each time Elijah encouraged Elisha to stay, he responded this way. He was committed to walking with Elijah; he was devoted to him and the work of the Lord. There are a couple of things that we can learn from this.

➤ We desperately need those who are devoted to the work of the Lord. We need those who will make it a priority, completely devoted to the task at hand. Some are determined to attend church, but aren’t devoted to the task at hand. Can I urge you to make the Lord a priority in your life? Can I challenge you to devote yourself completely to the Lord? Serve Him if you achieve nothing else!

Our churches have all experienced those who started strong, but fell off in the race. They weren’t devoted to the task as they should’ve been. Don’t end up being a statistic of failure; devote yourself to the Lord.

➤ Also I see in this passage a devotion to the man of God. Elisha was committed to walking with Elijah as long as he possibly could, soaking up his wisdom and knowledge. He wanted to be there with him through it all. I’m sure he desired to enjoy these last moments of fellowship with Elijah. He likely had no idea how it would all end and he wanted to support Elijah in the transition.

I would like to urge you to be devoted to the man of God. He faces the same struggles you do. He feels the same disappointment. He walks through the valley as well. He needs those who are devoted to walking with him. He needs those who will stand by his side and lift him up to the Lord on a daily basis.

II. The Confrontation of Elisha (3, 5) – [And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace](#). Here and again at Jericho, [V.5](#), Elisha was confronted concerning his journey with Elijah. Notice:

A. The Source (3a) – We find an interesting fact in the text. These were not unbelievers who chastised Elisha for going with Elijah. They were not of the world, foreign to the faith. They were

the [sons of the prophets](#), literally Bible students. Elisha was confronted by those who should've encouraged him.

- If you have committed yourself to serving the Lord, you might as well look for opposition. There will be those who seek to hinder and discourage you. And don't be surprised when it comes from those you would least expect. The adversary will use any source or avenue he can to discourage and hinder us in the work of the Lord.
- Don't be surprised when others are not as excited about your work in the Lord as you are. Don't be dismayed when you face words of criticism or skepticism. If you are doing much for the Lord, you might as well look for opposition.

B. The Suggestion (3b) – [And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day?](#) The sons of the prophets sought to discourage Elisha and cause him to doubt. They were arrogant in that they presumed to know more about the situation than Elisha did himself. In essence, these were trying to get Elisha to abandon the journey with Elijah. They might as well have said, "It isn't worth it Elisha. Your master is going to be taken away today and you will be left alone. There is no need to continue; just give up and seek something else."

- This world tries to tell us the same things. Society says that we are crazy to follow One we have never seen. We are viewed as intellectually inferior because of our faith. They believe the Gospel is absurd. Why would God send His only Son to die for the sins of wicked men?
- The world will tell you that it isn't worth the effort. Why not loosen up and live a little? Everyone else is doing it, so what would it hurt if you did. All of this is just an effort to discourage and hinder us.

C. The Stand (3c) – [And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.](#) Elisha continued to stand firm in the faith. He would not be deterred. The Lord had tested him and men had tempted him, but Elisha remained faithful. He was determined to go with Elijah all the way. He sought the will of God in his life.

- I can assure you that trials and difficulties will come. It isn't a question of if, but when. Serving the Lord is not without opposition, but we must be determined to stand fast in the faith and resolve to remain committed to the Lord. Standing isn't easy, but it is right. It isn't popular, but it is what the Lord expects of us. We must continue to stand for the Lord. [Eph.6:13 – Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all,](#)

to stand. 1 Cor.15:58 – Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

III. The Continuance of Elisha (1, 2, 4, 6) – As they journeyed from Gilgal to Jordan, at each stop Elijah urged Elisha just to stay there and not go on. It would've been easy for Elisha to have settled down and decided not to go any farther. Many get complacent where they are, but serving the Lord comes at a cost. In each of these places we see a picture of our spiritual journey. Notice:

1. Gilgal – This was the first encampment that Israel had after entering Canaan. It was there they celebrated the first Passover.

- It is a picture of New Beginnings. It reminds us of the New Birth. We can't begin to serve the Lord until we are born again, but many never want to leave Gilgal. Many are content to stay where they have always been, never seeking any spiritual growth.

2. Bethel – This means "house of God." It represents our worship and walk with God. It speaks of our maturity in Christ. It was at Bethel that Jacob had his dream.

- Many never make it to Bethel to pursue their ambitions of serving the Lord. Others are content to stay there and dream, but never move on.

3. Jericho – This was the first city conquered in Canaan, Israel's first victory. Many seem content to live off of yesterday's victories, living in the past!

- Those victories are great and we ought to be thankful for them, but today is a new day. There are new challenges we must face. There are new victories to be won. Often we get wrapped up in desiring the "days of old." They were great, but we serve the same God today as we did then. Living in the past will never meet our obligations for today!

4. Jordan – We all know that Jordan is a picture of death. It speaks of reaching the end of life, having fulfilled the work of the Lord. It also represents total surrender to God, dying out to self to serve Him!

- We will see in our next study that crossing Jordan was essential for Elisha to receive the double portion. Many in our day need to make the decision to die out to self and move forward with the Lord. He has brought you to this place of decision, but what will you do with it?

Conclusion: We have all been called to travel this journey of life. For the believer it is a journey with the Lord. He has a work for us to do and a place for us to serve. Very few ever reach their place of service because they allow the cares and distractions of life to hinder them.

Where are you in the journey with Christ? Have you reached the place He desires of you? Have you stopped off along the way and realize you need to go on?

If you have never been saved, then you have not begun this wonderful journey with the Lord. He stands ready to save you today, if you will only come to Him. Why not be obedient to the Lord's call?