

The Challenge of Elisha

2 Kings 2: 9-14

As we continue our study in the life of Elisha, you would have to agree that it has been an interesting journey thus far. This young man was busy living life, likely never dreaming of such an opportunity or the responsibility associated with it. The Scriptures are silent concerning the time of preparation, but I am confident that it has been a powerful and enlightening experience with Elijah.

Elisha has made the trip with Elijah, remaining committed to follow him. He has endured the difficulties and hindrances, finding himself standing with Elijah on the other side of Jordan. His master will soon be taken from him and now Elisha is faced with his greatest challenge yet.

We are all familiar with the “double portion” passage. We will certainly deal with that, but another portion of this passage has caught my attention in a profound way. I am very interested in the response that Elijah gives in regard to the double portion: [Thou hast asked a hard thing](#). Keep that phrase in mind as we seek to discover the [principles](#) involved with: [The Challenge of Elisha](#).

I. Elisha’s Petition (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.](#) This petition involves an opportunity and an objective. Notice:

A. The Opportunity (9a) – [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.](#) Elijah asks a very sobering question that reveals a wonderful opportunity for Elisha. He has offered to grant any request that Elisha may have before he is taken from him into heaven. This was an opportunity that should not have been taken lightly, and it wasn’t.

- We likely can’t imagine the joy that the young apprentice must’ve felt as he was offered such an opportunity. He had witnessed the power Elijah had with the Lord and surely he was confident in Elijah’s ability to deliver.

- As I pondered this awesome opportunity, I was reminded of the opportunities we enjoy. We are serving a greater than Elijah. We are serving the King of glory, the God of heaven! He has provided an opportunity for each of us to receive His marvelous salvation and be of service to Him. There is nothing greater than being of service to the King! You may have never realized these opportunities, but they are there! [Luke 11:9 – And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.](#) [Rom.12:3 – ...God hath dealt to every man](#)

the measure of faith. Rev.3:8 (Philadelphia) – I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. What a privilege we have in the opportunity to serve the Lord!

B. The Objective (9b) – And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

Elisha realized his opportunity and he chose wisely. He could've asked for anything, but he wanted what Elijah had. Elisha sought a double portion. He knew that Elijah had power with God and he wanted twice as much as Elijah enjoyed. That is a serious request, but it is a noble one. He could've sought a way out, but instead he sought the power of God upon his life.

- We need those in our day to seek a double portion. The presence and power of God has rested on this place and its people in the past. I am interested in receiving what they had. Few want a single portion, much less a double portion. What do you desire from God?

II. Elijah's Caution (10b) – And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing. Thou hast asked a hard thing!

What a statement from the man of God. This is really saying something. The word **hard** literally means “*severe, fierce, harsh, difficult, or burdensome.*” Why would Elijah say such a thing? Was God not able to supply this request? Did he doubt that God would give Elisha his desire? Not at all. Elijah knew of the power of God. He had experienced the power of God and he certainly had displayed his faith in the Lord time and again. (Illus. Elijah by the brook, at the widow's house, Mt. Carmel, and Mt. Horeb.)

- Elijah wanted Elisha to understand the consequences of such a request. He could have the double portion, but it would come at a cost. Elijah knew that serving the Lord and experiencing His power would not come without submission and sacrifice. Having the touch of God came at a price!
- Are we willing to pay the price and seek the hard thing? I fear that few in our day are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to truly experience a double portion. I can assure you that it won't be obtained through a couple hours of church attendance on Sunday morning. We will have to get serious and seek the Lord, humbling ourselves before Him! Oh how we need those in our day who will genuinely seek the hard things for the glory of God!

III. Elisha's Preparation (10b) – nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. Elijah revealed the condition required to grant such a request. He had to keep his focus; he had to remain committed. Elisha had to keep his eyes on the man of God and in essence on the ways of God. Such a request would not be granted for one who was unconcerned of uncommitted.

- Some may seek a double portion, but few keep their focus long enough. We live in a society of instant gratification. Most are not willing to seek the Lord and keep their eyes on Him long enough to experience His power! Do you desire a touch of God? Are you willing to seek the hard thing and remain focused on the goal? We can't have power with the Lord while keeping our eyes on the world. We must focus upon Him!
- By the way, Elisha had no idea when or where Elijah would be taken from him. He had to be committed to endure for an indefinite period of time. He had to continue to follow, even when he couldn't see or understand the way. He had to keep his eyes on Elijah, and in doing so, walk by faith.
- You'll never receive that double portion if you aren't committed to the journey. There is no place for the child of God to sit down or give up. We have not been called to follow the Lord for a season. Being a Christian isn't just a title that has been placed on us – it is who we are, the life we live! [Gal.5:7-9 – Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?](#) ^[8] [This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.](#) ^[9] [A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.](#) Luke 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.](#)

IV. Elisha's Ordination (11-14) – As they walked and talked in the journey, the time came for Elijah to depart. Elisha was faithful to the task and kept his focus. It is here we discover his character and commitment to the Lord. God honored Elisha's faithfulness. Notice:

A. His Activity (13) – [He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan.](#) Elisha wasted no time. He didn't stand around mourning or doubting. He picked up the mantle that had fallen from Elijah and embraced the responsibilities. His heart had been prepared and he was ready to be used of the Lord and follow in the path Elijah had shown him.

- There have been some great saints of God who have traveled this path before us. Many of them have been called home. Their mantle has fallen, and sadly many of them have never been picked up. They could never be replaced, and we wouldn't try, but the work must go on. Someone needs to pick up the mantle and go for God!
- I am convinced the reason many of the mantles are lying idle is because few are willing to assume the responsibility and activity required to serve the Lord in that capacity. We will give account of the lives we've lived. Have we done all that we could? Have we fully surrendered to the call of God and submitted ourselves to Him? Someone needs to pick up their mantle and serve the Lord! God will choose someone to carry on.

B. His Assurance (14a) – [And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah?](#) This is not a question of doubt, but an affirmation of confidence. Elisha had no doubt that God would prove Himself faithful. He was assured in Him.

- We live in a day where many choose to dwell upon the past. There is nothing wrong in rejoicing in past victories, but I am tired of those who seem to think that God is somehow hindered in our generation. They love to talk of the glories of the past, but refuse to believe in the power we have today!
- Could I remind you that Elisha served the same God that Elijah did? The same God who parted the Jordan on the journey over was still in control as Elisha came again to Jordan. The Lord has not changed. He has not lost His power. We serve the same God that performed mighty miracles in the midst of former generations! Our lack of faith may be a hindrance in our day, but God remains the same.
- This generation needs those who will step out in faith, claim the promises of God, and fulfill His desire for their lives. We need those who have no doubts about God's ability. I am weak and frail, but my God isn't. If He has called me to it, He will lead me through it!

C. His Anointing (14b) – [And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.](#) God honored the request of Elisha and anointed him with a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Just as Elijah had power with the Lord, Elisha would too. This anointing was received by faith and obedience.

- Much of our service unto the Lord is fruitless because we lack the anointing of God. Our lives are weak spiritually. We lack the fullness of His Spirit. We spend little time in the Word or prayer. We desperately need those who will get on their faces before God and refuse to be satisfied with anything less than a fresh anointing! We need a fresh touch from the Lord. I am not talking about a shallow, emotional experience, but a sincere filling of the Holy Ghost. Our churches lack power because we lack His anointing!
- Do you desire a touch from the Lord? Are you interested in His power resting on your life and the services you attend? The church is made up of believers and it will only be as strong, as spiritual, and as fruitful as those who make it up. I am looking for a fresh touch in my life. I hope you are also!

Conclusion: I have been challenged greatly by this passage. I wonder if we are willing to seek the hard thing to receive that double portion. Somebody needs to rise to the occasion and pick up their mantle. We need those who are committed to serving the Lord and making a difference!