

God Calls Elisha *1 Kings 19:19-21*

INTRO:

Last Sunday evening we sang, “*Wherever He leads I’ll go/ Where ever He leads I’ll go/ I’ll follow my Christ who loved me so/ Wherever He leads I’ll go.*” What if that leading is to your neighbor or friend? Today we will look at a man who answered that call.

I. The Sudden Call (1 Kings 19:20-21).

1 Kings 19:19-20 *“So [Elijah] 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. 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?’”*

A. The last time we were here God gave Elijah a revelation at Mount Horeb (Sinai) of how He was going to Judge Israel’s rebellion. Part of that judgment included the call of Elisha to be Elijah’s helper and ultimately to follow Elijah as God’s prophet in Israel. The next event on God’s divine calendar for Elijah is to find Elisha and summon him to his new role.

1. Although this call was discussed by the LORD and Elijah, Elisha did not know about the conversation. All he knew was that he was doing what he always did on his father’s farm. He was farming. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Elijah the Tishbit comes strolling across the field and tosses his mantle on Elisha.

2. When God calls us to serve Him, sometimes He does so without warning.(a) Do you remember when the Lord called Paul to be an apostle? He was on the road to Damascus to find Christians and throw them in prison. The next thing Paul knows there is a bright light and he is on his back in the road and the Lord is talking to him. (b) Moses was taking care of his Father-in-law’s sheep like he did every day for many decades and one day his life is interrupted for a word from His creator. God spoke to him in a burning bush.

B. “Wait,” you say. “Elisha was going to be a special person in Israel. He was going to be a prophet in training and then ultimately the prophet who is to walk in Elijah’s sandals.” I am no prophet. This clearly isn’t for me, Joe ordinary Christian.

1. The fact is that the Lord will often bring us opportunities to share and minister for Him. These opportunities are often sudden. We do not realize God planned this encounter in heaven, but we are thrust into this situation for a reason and we need to keep our eyes open for what God is doing.

2. This is the essence of the point of **James 4:15-16**.

“Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”

God’s providence works every day and every hour in our lives. We never know when God will interrupt our lives for a Word from our creator.

II. Cost of Following (1 Kings 19:20-21)

1 Kings 19:20-21 ***“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?’ 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.”***

A. Elisha’s response was immediate. Elisha’s spiritual condition was such that as soon as God called, he answered. Keep in mind his condition at home on the farm appeared to be a prosperous one. How many farmers had twelve yoke of oxen to plow with at one time? How many farmers had field large enough to require twelve yoke of oxen to plow? This was not a calling without a cost.

B. Sometimes as we read about Elisha we remember a scene in **Luke 9:61-62** with followers of Jesus.

“And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’”

C. Elisha did not return to put his family ahead of the call of God. Rather, he went back to forever sever his relationship with his former profession. This resembles the LORD asking Moses ***“what is in your hand?”*** The rod which was his tool becomes God’s rod through which He did miracles.

III. Willingness to Serve (1 Kings 19:21)

v.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.”***

A. What kind of ministry was Elisha called to do? Because we know the end of the story, we know it was to be a glorious ministry. After Elijah is taken to heaven, Elisha would be the man of God in Israel.

B. But before he was used like that, God had something for Elisha to learn and he would learn it as Elijah's servant. Listen to something said about him in **2 Kings 3:11**.

“But Jehoshaphat said, ‘Is there no prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of the LORD by him?’ So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, ‘Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.’”

Elisha had to learn how to serve God and follow before he could lead.

Questions for Us

1. Are we ready if the Lord should interrupt our lives with opportunities to serve?
2. Are we willing to pay a price to serve Him?
3. Are we too proud to follow before we learn to lead? Are we too proud to make glorifying God the ultimate goal in our lives?