

Sat Nav'd For Service

"The future belongs to a people prepared."

Introduction – "A Heart To Serve"

READING – 1 KINGS 19:19-21

Just a few things to notice about the circumstances of Elisha's life when Elijah came calling –

- Elisha was a farmer and was out working in the fields.
- Elisha was busy getting the fields ready for planting.
- Elisha comes across as an ordinary man, from a town in the Jordan valley, & who was close his parents.

Rick Warren – "Thousands of books have been written on leadership, but few on servanthood. Everyone wants to lead; no one wants to be a servant. We would rather be generals than privates...But to be like Jesus is to be a servant. That's what he called himself."

What needs to be left behind?

What did Elisha leave behind to go forward with Elijah?

1. **His Family** – before leaving to go with Elijah, Elisha makes one request – he wants to go & say goodbye to his mother & father. How does this compare with the man who Jesus called in Luke 9:61-62? The difference is this – "Elisha goes back to sever his connections, not to delay his commitment." (Dale Ralph Davis "2 Kings: The Power & the Fury")
2. **His Comfort** – Elisha was from a wealthy family as evidenced by the number of oxen that were out in the fields. He left a comfortable situation to become the servant of Elijah.
3. **His Future** – Elisha's future was tied up with the farm & the land the family owned but he kills his oxen & burns the plowing equipment. Steve Ely writes (see SermonCentral.com - "Kiss Your Ox Goodbye") - "Elisha went all the way. He had an encounter with God & made a decisive decision to kill everything that would hold him back. He left his wealth. His job. His inheritance. His family. His dreams. His plans. He left no doubt that he would follow all the way."
4. **His Identity** – Elisha was leading the 12th team of oxen. This was a sign of authority. He had a position within the structure of the farm but he left it all behind.

C.T Studd, who in the nineteenth-century, turned his back on a successful cricket career and, subsequently gave away a fortune which he inherited at 25 years of age, said "If Jesus Christ is God, and he died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him."

What needs to be embraced?

1. **The Mantle** – When Elijah threw his mantle around Elisha, he was symbolizing the Old Testament usage, that the Spirit would come upon the prophet (the Holy Spirit would clothe Elisha). This challenges us to embrace the power & the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
2. **The Master** – In verse 21 we see Elisha going with Elijah & becoming his servant. The call of Jesus is still (John 12.26) "Follow me." The Greek word translated "follow" means to follow intimately. Nelson Price ("Servants not Celebrities") writing further on the word "follow" – "It speaks of nearness that would result in the one's following, stepping in the footprint of the one leading the instant the leader's foot is removed from its track."
3. **The Mission** – Elisha was chosen to bring justice & righteousness back to the nation of Israel. He was also instrumental in founding prophetic communities. He was called with a mission to fulfil.
4. **The Mystery** – Here I am thinking of "the big picture". Although Elijah had been a great prophet & God gave him an insight into the future; he was not part of that future. Others, Elisha being one, would carry God's purpose forward. John Wesley said – "God buries his workmen, but his work goes on."

When and Where?

The world sees greatness in terms of power, possessions & position. The Bible describes greatness in terms of service. We have an example to follow – Jesus, "who came not to be served but to serve." The final challenge comes from "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren – "If you remind yourself at the start of every day that you are God's servant, interruptions won't frustrate you as much, because your agenda will be whatever God wants to bring into your life. Servants see interruptions as divine appointments for ministry & are happy for the opportunity to practice serving."

John Wesley' motto – "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."

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