**THE CALL OF ELISHA**

1 Kings 19:19-21

Key verse 20

Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.”

**Introduction**

 In the previous passage, Elijah was comforted by the Lord. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 reads, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of **all comfort,** who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” Romans 15:4-6 reads, “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. **May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other** that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now he was asked to anoint a future king in Israel as well as a successor for his ministry. Today’s passage shows that God helped him to meet Elisha first. Although we have only 3 verses, it is an important lesson because of God’s desire to raise up a disciple. In this way, God’s work continues no matter what.

1. Read verses 19. What happened as Elijah went from the place where he had met God? (19a) What kind of person was Elisha, son of Shaphat? How was Elisha called? (19c)

1-1, Read verses 19.

 So Elijah went from there and found Elisha, son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yokes of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.

1-2, What happened as Elijah went from the place where he had met God? (19a)

 ***So Elijah went from there and found Elisha, son of Shaphat.***

* “Elijah went from there” means that he went from the place where he had met God personally and he was moving out of the place of loneliness and discouragement by renewing his heart and spirit by God’s great help.
* He found Elisha, son of Shaphat. God allowed him to meet him first, although God mentioned a political king first in the previous passage.

1-3, What kind of person was Elisha, son of Shaphat?

***He was plowing with twelve yokes of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair.***

* He was plowing with twelve yokes of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. This appears to indicate that he belonged to a family of considerable wealth.
* He was not goofing around but diligently working like Peter who was a fisherman or Matthew who was a tax collector sitting in a tax booth.
* Many young people believe that they would become God’s great servants if they go to prestigious Bible schools to be ordained. But it is not true.
* Learning to work or trade helps one to develop character, faithfulness, resourcefulness and responsibility. Then one can be used by the Lord!
* Accepting a prophetic calling also means a financial loss to him, for twelve yokes of oxen must have been his security for his future as a young man.

1-4, How was Elisha called? (19c)

***Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.***

* By throwing his cloak around him, Elijah called Elisha. This mantle was the official garment of a prophet. His mantle was probably made of animal hair.
* This garment is also a kind of symbolic meaning of sacrifice and commitment instead of a luxury garment to show himself to others.
* In a sense, today we are priests called by the Lord thanks to Jesus’ blood sacrifice. 1 Peter 2 reads, “4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...9 But **you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession**, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”
* Someone may argue that we are not full time ministers. But as a matter of fact, we are all full time priests because we are given Jesus’ garments, so called spiritual gifts. Each and everyone has a unique gift to build God’s house together.
* Our gifts can be used 24/7 with the same goal to build up God’s church for God’s glory although each person has a secular job in the world.
* 1 Peter 4:10 reads. “Each of you should use **whatever gift you have received to serve others**, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”
1. Read verse 20. How did Elisha reply to Elijah’s calling? (20a) What did he ask before he would go with him? (20b) Describe Elijah’s response. (20c)

2-1, Read verse 20.

20 Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.”

“Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”

2-2, How did Elisha reply to Elijah’s calling? (20a)

***20 Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah.***

* Elisha immediately responded by leaving his oxen and ran after Elijah. What a decisive action it was! There was no hesitancy at all by accepting God’s calling.
* As a matter of fact, it was not asked of him to make a specific decision because the direction was already given to him by Elijah, God’s servant.
* Oftentimes we heard that many young people wanted to hear God’s direction and liked to wait merely. But God’s direction is clear and we do not need to wait.
* All we have to do is to accept His will and fan into flame our spiritual gifts and contribute to expand God’s kingdom together immediately.

2-3, What did he ask before he would go with him? (20b)

***“Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.”***

* We might misunderstand where he was coming from based on what he requested to go back to his family to say goodbye. But it appears to be the opposite when we think of verse 21 together.
* It was probably from his desire to respect his parents and clarify his decision and position to follow God by declaring this clearly to his family and friends.

2-4, Describe Elijah’s response. (20c)

***“Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”***

* “Go back” indicates that Elijah understood him and granted his request. Then “What have I done to you?” means that it was from the Lord Almighty, not from a human being like Elijah.
* It must have helped him to think of the importance of this calling before God and any close human relationship may not be a stumbling block.
* It was a kind of Elijah’s mentoring to help him to have faith and put trust in the Holy Spirit who will guide him to the best way.
* Also Elijah was an instrument to call Elisha to be a servant of God. Elisha is accountable for God’s personal calling and is responsible to be loyal to the Lord.
1. Read verse 21. What did Elisha do? What does it show about him? What can we learn from his decision and the actions he took to become God’s servant?

3-1, Read verse 21.

21 So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

3-2, What did Elisha do?

 ***So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.***

* This verse indicates that he literally burnt the bridge behind and committed himself fully to follow Elijah and became his servant.

3-3, What does it show about him?

3-4, What can we learn from his decision and the actions he took to become God’s servant?

* He was willing to become Elijah’s servant. He did not calculate nor hesitate. Rather he knew the value of being God’s servant.
* Being with Elijah was not only an education in theology, but also a practical training in humility, submission to authority, loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience in being a servant.
* In this way, he must have prepared himself to grow as a leader in the nearer future. In order for him to give direction later, he must first learn how to receive and follow directions.

**Conclusion**

 Without total surrender, we can not be Jesus’ disciples. Elisha was an ordinary young man like Elijah. But he became extraordinary and outstanding because he made himself fully available to the Lord and His use. Likewise daily the Holy Spirit convicts each of us to surrender ourselves to become His servants. Rather than being limited with negative thoughts, we should always look at the bright side and be thankful to our God who endowed us with time and gifts as 5 loaves and 2 fish. In this way we may sacrifice some opportunity for our comfort so that we may redirect our attention to God’s prime concern in salvation and we may contribute our time, gifts, and resources to build up God’ kingdom together to render glory to the Lord our God in our generation.

**One word: Elisha became Elijah’s servant!**