**ELISHA’S SPIRITUAL AMBITION**

2 Kings 2:1-25

Key verse 9b

 “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

**Introduction**

 In chapter 19, Elijah wanted to die after he won the great victory because nothing seemed to change according to his expectation. He was greatly disappointed at the unchanged nation and wanted to stop doing the work as a prophet. But God did not allow him to die that day. Rather he was given a new direction to anoint Elisha as his successor on top of other political kings. Now at God’s time he was taken to heaven. But today’s passage shows that Elisha said a very remarkable thing, “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.” May the Lord help us to learn of him about his great spiritual desire to serve our generation with the outstanding spirit of God.

1. Read verses 1-10. Why might Elisha have followed Elijah so closely and persistently on the day God was going to take Elijah to heaven? (1-8) What did Elisha ask of Elijah? (9) What was Elijah’s reply? (10)

1-1, Read verses 1-10.

But Elisha said, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.

3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “so be quiet.”

4 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to Jericho.”

And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.

5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, “so be quiet.”

6 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.”

And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.

7 Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

10 “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”

1-2, Why might Elisha have followed Elijah so closely and persistently on the day God was going to take Elijah to heaven? (1-8)

***But Elisha said, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.***

***3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”***

***“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “so be quiet.”***

***4 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to Jericho.”***

***And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.***

***5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”***

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***6 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.”***

***And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.***

* Elijah went to visit the prophet schools in Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan. Perhaps he had some final words of wisdom and encouragement for the young prophets.
* Several times he told Elisha to stay behind, but he was determined to go with him every step of the way. “I won’t leave you.”
* It indicates that Elisha had a great desire to learn everything from Elijah. He did not want to leave his teacher but clung to him to the last minute.

 ***Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.***

* Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. Then the water divided and 2 of them were able to cross over.
* It was a kind of signal for the new work to begin just as Moses and Joshua did the similar works.

1-3, What did Elisha ask of Elijah? (9)

 ***When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”***

***“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.***

* When Elijah offered to do anything for Elisha, he asked for the best thing he could ask for. He wanted even more of God’s Spirit than God had given to Elijah.
* It might seem to us that he was greedy and wanted to be more famous than his teacher. But it was not the case. Greed has to do with earthly things only.
* In Bible times, a double portion was the amount of property and belongings that a father gave to his oldest son.
* Although Elijah was not Elisha’s actual father, Elijah had become like a spiritual father to him. Elisha did not ask for money or any tangible things.
* He knew that God’s Spirit was better than anything this world had to offer, and he wanted the spirit the most.
* He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father’s strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him. (Deuteronomy 21:17)

1-4, What was Elijah’s reply? (10)

***10 “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”***

* Of course, this was not up to Elijah. It was rather up to God Himself. Elijah told him that if God allowed him to see his master taken up to heaven, he would know that God had given him what he asked for.
1. Read verses 11-18. What happened as they were walking along? (11) How did Elisha respond? (12) What did he do with Elijah’s cloak? (13-14) Describe how he helped 50 able men. (15-18)

2-1, Read verses 11-18.

 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

13 Elisha then picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. “Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

15 The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. 16 “Look,” they said, “we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley.” “No,” Elisha replied, “do not send them.”

17 But they persisted until he was too embarrassed to refuse. So he said, “Send them.” And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him. 18 When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go?”

2-2, What happened as they were walking along? (11)

 ***As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.***

* This passage shows how Elijah went up to heaven. They were walking along and talking together. Elijah must have shared with him about everything just as Jesus had done in the same way to his disciples.
* It was a spectacular scene for Elisha. Two of them crossed the river and only Elisha had a chance to witness it.
* Chariots of fire and horses of fire and whirlwind are heaven made reception and rich welcome for Elijah.
* Elijah was known as an enemy of Ahab all the time because he had to serve him and the Israel people from idol worship. He had to fight the good fight at the front line against all false prophets.
* He was threatened to be killed by Jezebel and he had to run away and suffered depression and loneliness for a while.
* His life was so humiliated very much oftentimes that he wanted to die. But God did not let him die according to his wish.
* According to God’s wish, he raised a spiritual son Elisha until he was ready to serve God’s ministry with an independent spirit.
* Now he was welcomed richly to heaven. It reminds me of 1 Cor 15 that we planted a seed and would receive a glorious resurrection body.

2-3, How did Elisha respond? (12)

 ***Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.***

* Although Elisha was not an actual son, he called Elijah “My father! My father!” It indicates that they had a close and holy relationship in the Lord.
* “The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” Elisha recognized his father as the spiritual armies in Israel who used to fight the good fight for the name of the Lord throughout his life.
* He took hold of his garment and tore it in two. He expressed a sad feeling as he lost sight of his spiritual father.

2-4, What did he do with Elijah’s cloak? (13-14)

 ***Elisha then picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. “Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.***

* “Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” Elisha wanted to check it out at once if he was given a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. He struck the water with Elijah’s garment and experienced the same miracle at once to divide the Jordan river.

2-5, Describe how he helped 50 able men. (15-18)

***15 The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. 16 “Look,” they said, “we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley.” “No,” Elisha replied, “do not send them.”***

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* Company of prophets as well as 50 able men searched the body of Elijah although they were advised not to do so by Elisha.
* Already Elisha became a leader or a mentor for others when he had the spirit of Elijah. But he did not force them to obey. He waited until they tried and guided them with gentle rebuke.
1. Read verses 19-25. What miracle did Elisha perform for the people? (19-22) What does this show about his ministry? Why were some youths mauled by two bears? (23-25)

3-1, Read verses 19-25.

 The people of the city said to Elisha, “Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive.”

20 “Bring me a new bowl,” he said, “and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him.

21 Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, “This is what the Lordsays: ‘I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.’” 22 And the water has remained pure to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.

23 From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some boys came out of the town and jeered at him. “Get out of here, baldy!” they said. “Get out of here, baldy!” 24 He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the Lord. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. 25 And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.

3-2, What miracle did Elisha perform for the people? (19-22)

3-3, What does this show about his ministry?

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* Elisha turned the bad water of Jericho. It was like the first miracle of Jesus Christ who turned water to wine in a wedding in Cana.
* In this way, Elisha’s ministry would be the one that heals the sick and overcomes death.

3-4, Why were some youths mauled by two bears? (23-25)

 ***From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some boys came out of the town and jeered at him. “Get out of here, baldy!” they said. “Get out of here, baldy!” 24 He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the Lord. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. 25 And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.***

***15 The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, (2 Chronicles 36:15-17a)***

***21 “‘If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. 22 I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted. (Leviticus 26:21-22)***

* From a legal point of view, it was too much for Elisha to curse young boys because they were not adults yet.
* But It was Bethel where Jeroboam built a counterfeit idol temple. Since then, the people in Bethel must have despised God, God’s word and His servants.
* So it was a very serious matter to despise God’s servant because they represented the spiritual condition of the whole residents in the city.

**Conclusion**

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit!” In other words, how can we receive the fullness of Jesus Christ? May the Lord help us to not despair with some necessary difficulties and not lose our faith and shrink back. Rather fix our eyes on Jesus as the author of faith and endured his sufferings by remembering the joy set before him. May the Lord help us to never give up on the series of difficulties but love each other to engage in spiritual battle together and proactively to evangelize all campuses God has given us already. Then at God’s set time, all of us will be richly welcomed by the Lord in heaven like Elijah!

**One word: Let me inherit a double portion of your Spirit!**

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