

Asking a Hard Thing

by Phil Beach Jr.

The true meaning of a double portion is sonship and character, not power or authority, and it requires death to self and cooperation with God's grace and power.

Duration: 47:36

Scripture: 2 Kings 2:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Sonship", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the significance of asking for a 'hard thing' in our relationship with God, using the story of Elisha's request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit as a foundation. He explains that this request is not about seeking power or authority, but rather about desiring a deeper relationship with God and embodying the character of Christ. The sermon challenges listeners to examine their motives for wanting spiritual gifts and to understand that true sonship requires dying to self and following Jesus wholeheartedly. Beach calls for a revival that focuses on character transformation rather than mere displays of power, urging believers to drop their personal ambitions and follow Christ's example. Ultimately, he invites the congregation to seek a genuine awakening to the call of God in their lives.

Transcript

For the presence of Jesus Christ, we acknowledge his lordship. We acknowledge that it is he who we are seeking to please. We ask this morning, Lord, that you would provide us with the eyes to see and the ears to hear your word.

That it would be spoken and received in meekness. The engrafted word which is able to save our soul, deliver our soul from the tyranny of independence, the tyranny of wanting to do its own thing. To deliver our soul from the lust that it has in seeking to serve its own interests and its own desires.

And that the soul might be delivered and learn to live in subjection to and in obedience with the word of God and with the Lord Jesus Christ who is our life. We commit this into your hands, we pray in Jesus' name. The title of this message is Asking a Hard Thing.

Asking a hard thing. I'd like to begin by reading in 2 Kings chapter 2. 2 Kings chapter 2. Please let me know when it's about quarter after 12. What time is it now? Okay, let me know when it's about quarter after 12, please.

2 Kings chapter 2, we're gonna begin reading in verse number 1. And we're gonna read for several verses, but please just follow along with me. Suffer, allow, permit the word of God to be read this morning. And let's allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us through the word because in this word this morning we're going to discover something that God is seeking to see in all his children that are washed in the blood of Christ.

Beginning in verse 1. And it came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it. Hold ye your peace.

And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yea, I know. Hold your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan.

And he said, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they too went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off.

And the two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters. And they were divided hither and thither, so that they too went over on dry ground.

Listen carefully. 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.

And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing. Another translation says, It was a hard thing in asking what you asked. Another translation, The thing that you asked is extremely difficult.

Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee. But if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

And Elisha saw it. And he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Just a quick note here, it's my belief, based on reading this and studying it and looking at what scholars say is the Hebrew language, Elisha was saying, My father, my father, you are the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

It's not that Elisha saw the chariot of Israel and horses come down, and Elijah sat on it and rode up, but he said, Thou art the chariot of Israel. Thou art the horsemen thereof. There's significance to that, which we won't get into.

And he saw him no more, and he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces. He took also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan, asking a hard thing. Now, it is very easy for our minds to follow a certain direction when we read this story about Elijah and Elisha.

In particular, we think about the incredible mantle of power that rested upon Elijah and all of the miracles that he performed and all of the authority that he had. You remember Elijah in 1 Kings 15 and 16 called fire down from heaven, and there the sacrifice was consumed and the prophets of Baal were destroyed. Elijah had a tremendous ministry of power, and there is a tendency to think that the desire to have a double portion of Elijah's mantle was the desire to have power, the desire to be able to do the things that Elijah did and possibly even do more things.

But the real issue of this text based upon the request of Elisha is not having power and authority, but it is having relationship. You see, we're snared by the things that we say with our mouth. When we read this portion of Scripture, most of the time the sin of our own heart is revealed because we look at a man who said, give me twice as much power as you have, and we see that power come upon him, and immediately we got the whole church crying out, oh God, give me a double portion.

Give me a double portion, oh God. I want power. I want authority.

I want to be able to perform miracles. And we don't realize that that very thing is tainted with impure motive. Why do we want power and authority but to be seen of men? To put a show on in front of people.

To rule over people. To be known as some anointed one. The spirit of this text, the burden of the Holy Ghost, and the heart of God on this matter is not at all that the church would desire a double portion of what Jesus has so that the church can do greater works and greater miracles than Jesus did.

That is not what the Lord is after in this text. There was one man in the New Testament, Simon the sorcerer, and he had this in mind. You remember the story in the book of Acts? When he saw that Peter laid hands on people and they received the Holy Ghost, and he said, hey, how much money do I need to give you in order to have the same power that you have so that when I lay hands on people, they can receive the Holy Ghost? And Peter looked at him and said, your heart's not right with God.

You're full of the devil. You're full of wickedness. You don't have a pure motive before God.

You can't buy the gift of God. This has nothing to do with purchasing power with money, but what you're seeing has to do with a relationship with God. It has to do with sonship.

It has to do with being a son of God. Not doing something for God, but being something in God. There is too much of an obsession in the church today to do something for God, and not enough desire within the church today to be something for God.

You can't do anything for God until God makes you something in Him. You have to become something before you can do something, because you're doing apart from the divine energizing power of grace working in your life is of no avail in God's eyes. There's only one vessel fit for the Master's use, and His name is Jesus Christ.

And until we can capture this revelation and understand that there's only one man who can do anything for God, and that's Jesus, and the degree and measure that we die to ourself and live by Him, to that

measure alone can we do anything for God. That will result in eternal fruit. We've got to get our minds and our eyes and our dreams off of ourselves.

It's not what I can do for God. It's not, hallelujah, I'm the gift of God to the body of Christ. It's not my ministry.

It's not my church. It's not my gift. It's not my calling.

It's not my charisma. It's not my personality. It's not my skill.

It's not my Bible knowledge. It's me dying. John had it.

He said, I must decrease and He must increase. Until that is the passion of our hearts to decrease and let Jesus increase, we are of no use to God. We are of no use to God until we are desiring to decrease.

Lord, lower me. Lord, let me get out of the picture. Lord, let me die.

Lord, let my anger be gone. Lord, let my roving, lustful eye be gone. Lord, let my taste for money and the voluptuous desires to go out into the world die.

We've got to decrease. When people read this portion of Scripture, the first thing in their mind is how big they can get. Oh, Lord, give me the double portion.

Well, who do you think's in mind when they're asking the Lord for that? It's them, the big I. They want God to anoint the I, so the I can be head above the church, so the I can have His name in neon lights, so the I can put His name on TV, so the I can be seen in front of everybody. Beloved, that's not God. God's not interested in anointing the I. God's interested in Galatians 2.20, I am crucified.

The I must be crucified and die by faith in the work of the cross of Jesus Christ, and the Christ must arise in a new I. You see, it's not that I cease to be a person. It's not that I cease to be a unique personality, but that I, that ego, that self-life, that principle of sin that works in the soul and is in the body, needs to die, and that new I will arise that is recreated in true righteousness and holiness, impregnated with the character of God. That new I will possess the life of Christ.

That new I will not exalt itself. That new I will walk in the meekness and the humility and the long-suffering and the patience of Jesus Christ. That new I will not make a name for itself.

That new I will exalt Christ alone. So, the reason why Elijah said, You have asked a hard thing, is because the spirit of prophecy, hallelujah to God, the spirit of prophecy was speaking through this prophet of God, and this prophet of God was saying by the Holy Ghost, Elisha, if you want a double portion of what's upon me, what you're saying is I want the blessing of the firstborn. In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 7, you don't have to turn to it, you can mark to it, there God says that He gives a double portion to the firstborn.

In that particular context, it basically is saying it's irrevocable. You've got to give the first blessing to the firstborn. And what Elisha was wanting, what the spirit of prophecy was speaking was this.

You've asked a hard thing because in order to get a double portion, you have to come under the discipline and scrutiny and the scourging of God in order to produce in you the stature and character of a true son. It's a hard thing because it's not the power to work miracles, it's the power to die. It's a hard thing, Elijah

said.

Elisha, do you know what you're asking, son? Do you know what you're asking, son? You're asking and saying that you want a double portion, but a double portion upon you means death to your own way. A double portion upon you means death to your own desires. A double portion upon you means Elisha can't make decisions anymore on his own.

Elisha can't decide what he's going to do. Elisha can't follow the dreams of his own heart. Elisha has to forsake his mama and his daddy.

Elisha has to forsake the thing that's holding him. Elisha can no longer worry about his reputation. Elisha can no longer worry about what the prophets who live at Bethel think, or what the prophets who live at Jericho think.

Elisha has to die and walk in obedience and union with the God, Jehovah. The cry for a double portion in the church today is perverted for the most part. Because it's a cry that's springing out of the sin of Simeon, the sorcerer, or Simon, the sorcerer.

It's a desire for power so that the creature might be exalted rather than the Creator who alone is blessed forever and ever. The question, the request, why was the thing asked for hard? Answer, because it was a prophetic request pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ and the pathway to sonship. Christ is the firstborn among many brethren.

Christ is that Son alone who perfectly pleased the Father. Christ is that Son alone in whom we see the perfections of manhood, the perfections of the character of God demonstrated in a man. So the request is hard, it's difficult, because it is a request suggesting that if the double portion is to come upon any of the children of God in the church today, it's got to come as a result of seeing Jesus Christ, the kind of life that He lived, and the claims that He has upon our life today, and a desire and willingness to let Him bring us down to total death.

It's a hard thing to die to yourself. It's a hard thing to look in the mirror and say, you troublemaker. It's a hard thing to look in the mirror and say, you're the reason why I'm in so much trouble.

You're the reason why I get myself into trouble. Oh, it's easy to look at the other one. It's easy to look at your brother.

It's easy to look at your sister. What did Adam say when God said, Adam, what did you do? What did he say? Huh? Did he take responsibility for his action? Did he confess his sin and say, oh, God, I have sinned against You. Forgive me, God.

No, he said, God, it's that woman. It's her fault. She's the one, Lord, to blame.

So, God goes over to Eve, probably saying, oh, my, I knew this was coming. Now, that's not in the Scriptures, but God knows everything. And when He asked Eve, what have you done? He knew what Eve was going to say.

He knew that was the beginning of what He in eternity foresaw was going to happen when He created man, but it didn't take Him by surprise because Christ was the crucified Lamb of God before the foundation of the world. God already had the provision in His own person to deal with the fall of man and

restore Him back to the original intention, which is sonship. Sonship.

Man in His image and in His likeness. Death to independence. Death to I think I will exalt myself.

So, what did Eve do when God questioned her? Well, God, it's the serpent's fault. He beguiled me, and God went to the serpent and didn't ask Him because He's the father of lies. Sin originated in His heart.

He was created perfect till iniquity was found in Him. Ezekiel chapter 38. Isaiah chapter 14.

So, God pronounced a curse on Him. But the very principle of sin started in Adam and Eve, and they refused to take responsibility for their sin. So, it's a hard thing.

This issue of the Holy Spirit moving in this hour today, and God's people crying out, Oh God, oh God, fill us with Your Spirit, fill us with Your power, fill us with Your glory. I'll tell you, the Lord would want to search the heart of any company of people, and He would want to ask them, Why are you requesting that I fill you with My Spirit? Why are you requesting that you be empowered with power from on high? Why are you desiring a double portion? Why are you getting together and praying and fasting and calling on My name? What is the motive of your heart? What are you really after? Are you really after the double portion for the miracles? Or are you after the double portion because within the double portion is inherent the concept of sonship, and within the concept of sonship is inherent a heart that wants to please Father, a heart that wants to die to self, a heart that wants to be crucified with Christ, a heart that wants to forsake every area of darkness and sin, a heart that wants to arise in the purity and beauty of Jesus Christ. Why do you want power with God? To do something for God or to be something in God? Let God search your hearts today.

Let God search your heart today. God will not entrust the throne that Jesus invites the overcomers in Revelation chapter 3 to sit down upon with Him. God will not give that throne to a believer who is after the power, after the authority, for any other reason than to come into full character expression of sonship.

Character expression of sonship. The outstanding feature of a son is he's like his father. That's the inherent beauty of having a son.

A son is like his father and what? Carries the seed. And the son is able to take the name of the father and to communicate it and have another name. Father, son.

You see, it's father to son. Son grows up and becomes a father and then has sons who grow up, becomes fathers and have sons. The seed is in the son.

Well, the father wanted to demonstrate among many things that was inherent within the work of Jesus Christ, he wanted to demonstrate to the holy angels, to the principalities and the powers and to all the world what it was that Adam failed to do. So he named his son the last Adam. Paul said Jesus was the last Adam.

And in the son we see a man who laid aside his deity, was born of a woman. He was truly man. We see God impregnated him with the divine nature and he grew and matured and walked as a man demonstrating the character of God.

And it's the intention of God in the church to replicate, to reproduce in the church the character of the son. That's why we're here. It's not essentially to be great big people in the eyes of the world who have this power to do whatever we want.

That's ridiculous. Character is the issue of God. Sonship is the groaning within the heart of a son of God to be made into the image and likeness of the firstborn.

Seven times in the book of Revelation chapter two and three, there are promises made to the overcomers. Overcomers. The word overcomer in the book of Revelation represents those who hear the call of the Spirit, who long for double portion, who ask the greater Elijah, the Lord Jesus Christ, for a double portion of his spirit.

And in asking, they are requesting not that they might have miracle working power to be seen of men, but rather they're asking to be made sons in character and stature to those who overcome and conquer the world, the flesh, the devil, and sin, and live a life in union with the Son of God. To them, God promises the throne and the authority. To them, God will give the glory.

Not to men who want power to be something in themselves. The request, give me a double portion. The meaning, sonship, character, death to self.

The condition, Matthew chapter three. Matthew chapter three, verse 13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him.

But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and the lightning upon him.

And, lo, a voice from heaven sang, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The condition upon which the promise of receiving a double portion hangs upon is our cooperation with the working of God's grace and power in us, enabling us by faith to fully follow Jesus down into the waters of baptism. When Jesus went down into the waters of baptism, he was doing it as representative man.

He was representing all of the old humanity, all of the sin, all of the things in us that are antagonistic toward God. And he took it down into the waters, there to forever bury it in the eyes of God. Jesus wasn't baptized for his sin.

He knew no sin. But Jesus became sin who knew no sin. What sin did he become? Your sin and my sin.

A propitiation and atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. So when Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, he was bringing down into the water through his own body all of your sin, all of your selfishness, all of your ego, all of yourself, all of your own ambitions and desires. He buried them down into the waters.

And when he rose up, he rose up as the son of God, the man who was in union with God, the man who would become the head of a whole new creation called the church of Jesus Christ. And this whole new creation would live on the basis of who he is in glory and not on the basis of who they were because that has been crucified and buried in the waters of baptism. My God! Help us to see, Lord.

Patient Lord Jesus. The condition. You want a double portion? You want sonship? You want character? You want to know Jesus in his fullness? Then pray and meditate in the Word of God until Jesus by the Spirit gives you a revelation of the river Jordan.

And Christ's baptism was your baptism. And Christ's burial was your burial. And Christ's crucifix was your crucifix.

Inherent within sonship is the fact that we come to an end and that he becomes preeminent in us. Now listen, beloved. I'm closing up in five minutes.

God help me. Listen closely, all right? Thank you, Norman. Be patient, all right? Please.

We looked at the request. Then we looked at the condition. Now we want to look at the call from Jesus.

Many times in the New Testament, listen closely. God, give us ears to hear. I'm asking right now.

Many times in the New Testament, Jesus said, ask of me what you want. He asked one man who was blind, what would you like? And he said, I want my sight. And Jesus gave it to him.

In Matthew chapter 7, don't turn to it, 7 through 11, Jesus said, ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.

Everyone that asks receives. Everyone that seeks finds. And whosoever knocks, the door shall be opened unto him.

In John chapter 15, verse number 7, Jesus said, ask and I'll give it to you. In John chapter 15, verse 16, Jesus promised that we would bear much fruit so that whatever we ask, we may receive and that God will be glorified and our joy will be made full. In 1 John chapter 3, verses 21 through 22, 1 John chapter 3, verses 21 through 22, this issue of asking is all through the New Testament.

Verse 22, 1 John chapter 3, and whatever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 1 John chapter 5, verses 13 through 15, the same truth there. Verse 14, and this is the confidence that we have.

If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us and we know that he hears, I'm sorry, and if we know that he hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired from him. So Jesus, all through the New Testament, is subtly, I say subtly for this reason, because most people aren't hearing what he's saying. When Jesus is saying, ask whatever you want, request of me what you want, he is hoping, he is hoping by asking us to ask him whatever we want, that he will find certain ones, I think it's his will that everyone, but it's not true, everyone doesn't do it.

He's hoping that certain ones will hear, inherit within those words, the very words that Elijah spoke to Elisha, and he's hoping to hear the same response from us with the right motive. In other words, he wants to be the Elijah speaking to us, and we, the Elisha, who is following him, wanting to be mentored by him, and he's hoping for us to say, oh Jesus, I want a double portion of your spirit, but he doesn't want it to be tainted with that human religious ego, so that I could become some great thing in the eyes of the church. No, he's hoping that as we hear him in the world say, ask and you shall receive, that we'll say, oh Jesus, make me a true son in character, make me like you, let me die to myself.

How many of us are spending our days, though we have responsibilities and we have work, that's all fine, that's part of God's plan, but how many of us are spending our days in spirit, groaning for this request? How many of you are hearing Jesus say, ask of me and I'll give it to you, and how many are seeing sonship and the desire to be like Jesus? How frequently we hear this, ask and you shall receive, and we're

asking for this, and we're asking for that, we're asking for this, and we're asking for that, we're asking for big homes and a lot of money, and we're asking for big ministries, we're asking for this, and Jesus is so sad, because he realizes that we're falling so short, of what he wants to really give us. He tells us not even to take thought for earthly things, and here we are spending all our time asking for those things. Jesus says lay it to death, don't be asking for all those things.

Your Father knows what you have need of, but seek first the kingdom. When we seek the kingdom of God, we start realizing there is a call to sonship. What are you requesting? And I'm closing.

What are you requesting? At the voice of the greater Elijah, who is now saying to everyone listening, what would you like me to give you? What have you asked for? What have you asked for? Turn your Bible to Matthew chapter four, we're closing. Matthew chapter four. First of all, the request.

Secondly, the condition. Thirdly, the call from Jesus. And lastly, the practical application.

The practical application. Matthew chapter four, verse 18 through 22. I'm closing.

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea. And they were fishers. Listen, and he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And they straightway left their nets and followed him. And going on from there, he saw other two brethren, James and John, with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets. And he called them.

They immediately left the ship and their father and followed him. The practical application of this message. If you hear Jesus, the greater Elijah, hallelujah to God, saying to you, ask what you want from me.

And you find, because of revelation, because of the word of God, because God is being gracious to you, that you're seeing this call to sonship. You're seeing this call to ask for a double portion, meaning to ask to be made a son in full stature and character. Then be it known to you today by the word of the Lord that it will require that you follow Jesus and drop your nets.

Revelation chapter 14, verse four. And these are they which follow the lamb, whithersoever he goeth. What nets are you holding onto today that Jesus is requiring that you drop if you follow him? Elijah had to drop the nets.

He had to drop everything. Your nets might be a desire to be successful in the eyes of men. Jesus might be saying to you, drop those nets.

Your desire might be a successful ministry. Jesus might be saying, you have to drop those nets if you want to follow me and commit that to me. It might be the security of a home, the security of a nice, comfortable life.

Jesus might require you. I didn't say he will. He might require you to give up the security if you want to follow him.

It's different for everybody, but the one thing is certain. If you follow Jesus, you have to drop the nets. So in closing, may I ask this question? Have you asked the Lord for this hard thing? And if so, will you follow him wherever he requires you to go with him that you might receive it? The invitation is open.

The call is open. Now, I'm asking God for a revival. God has promised me he's gonna give it.

I'm asking God for a mighty outpouring of the spirit. God has promised he's gonna do it. But I'm asking God not for a revival that's characterized by noise or whatever.

Although noise might be a part of it. The heart of what I'm asking God to do, and I'm closing on this, and that's asking God for that. I'm asking God for a revival that will produce a corporate awakening within a company of people to understand the hard thing to ask God for and to understand the way to get it and to be desirous to press in to get it.

Not a revival of simply miracles. Not a revival of simply, oh hallelujah, Jesus saved me. That's all good.

God has given in my heart a unique passion to see corporately in the body an awakening to the call of the spirit of God to the church. That's the kind of revival I'm asking God for. I cannot accept anything less.

I am prepared to keep praying until we see it, and I invite you to join together with me and others. I wanna see a revival where people's lives are apprehended by the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and where corporately people are laying everything down not to become some anointed ones going around and seeing of men but where they'll become sons and daughters of God in character and where God can entrust them with something that he'll only entrust those who are like his son with. Father, thank you for your word this morning.

Thank you for the movement of the spirit. I pray God in the name of Jesus that this word will bring forth 100 fold in the lives of those who hear it and that you would reproduce in us the same desire that Elisha had you would enable us to hear the call of the spirit asking us to ask the son whatever we want and that we would call out and request this hard thing. Lord, in Jesus' name, produce it in the body, I pray.

Amen and amen. Thank you, Lord.

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