

Elisha's Faithfulness

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores Elisha's faithfulness and the stages of spiritual development leading to God's anointing.

Scripture: Genesis 28:19-22, Joshua 5:8-9, Joshua 6:20, 1 Kings 19:19, 2 Kings 2:1-14, 2 Kings 3:11, Matthew 3:13, Hebrews 10:20

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes Elisha's faithfulness and persistence in following Elijah, illustrating how God tests His servants at various stages of spiritual development. Elisha, initially engaged in secular duties, was anointed with a double portion after demonstrating unwavering commitment through trials at Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and ultimately Jordan. Each location symbolizes a stage in the Christian journey, from forgiveness to fellowship, supernatural power, and identification with Christ. Poonen challenges believers to press on beyond the initial stages of faith to receive God's best, which requires total surrender and commitment. The message encourages Christians to evaluate their spiritual journey and the tests they face.

Transcript

God anointed Elisha with a double portion of the anointing that Elijah had. This was God's seal of approval on Elisha's life. But before God anointed him thus, he had been tested. As in the case of all true servants of God, Elisha too was called to the ministry, while he was faithfully doing his secular duties. "Elijah found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him." (1 Ki. 19:19). Thereafter, Elisha spent many years doing menial jobs for the prophet Elijah. He was known as the one "who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah." (2 Ki. 3:11b). He did not seek great things for himself, but God had great plans for that young man.

Before Elijah went up to heaven, Elisha had to be tested. And so Elijah told Elisha to stay on in Gilgal, while he himself went on to Bethel. Elisha refused to stay back but was determined to go with Elijah. At Bethel, Elijah again tried to shake off Elisha by saying that he had to go to Jericho. But Elisha stuck on like a leech. Finally, at Jericho, Elisha was tested once more in a similar way. Again, Elisha passed the test of persistence and accompanied Elijah to Jordan. It was thus that he got the double portion of the anointing - God's best for his life (2 Ki. 2:1-14).

What is the message here for us? There are various stages in our spiritual development at which God tests us to see whether we are satisfied with what we have already received or whether we will press on to God's highest. Gilgal stands for the place where our sins are forgiven. "The Lord said to Joshua, 'Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.' So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day." (Josh. 5:8,9). Many Christians get thus far and stop there. Some press on till Bethel (meaning 'the house of God') - which stands for fellowship with believers in the family of God. "And Jacob called the name of that place Bethel. Then Jacob said, 'This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house.'" (Gen. 28:19,22). Some stop here. But a few go still further to Jericho - which stands for the manifestation of the supernatural power of God. "The people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat.....and they took the city (of Jericho)." (Josh. 6:20).

This is as far as most Christians ever go. Very, very few go all the way to Jordan - which stands for identification with Christ in His death, as symbolised in baptism. "Then Jesus arrived at the Jordan, coming to John, to be baptized by him." (Mt. 3:13). Very, very few are willing to walk the way of the cross - "the new and living way that Jesus has inaugurated for us through His flesh." (Heb. 10:20). But it is these few, who are wholehearted enough to press on to total death to Self, who receive the double portion - God's best. All of us are being tested today, as to what stage we will stop at.

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