

A Double Portion of the Spirit

2 Kings 2

Introduction

- Memorabilia of loved ones who have passed
 - Something that reminds you of someone special
 - Eternity seems to distance you from that person, however the memorabilia keeps the memory of that person alive and gives you a sense as though that person is close.
- My grandmother on my mom's side
 - I only knew her for 7 years of my life
 - Unfortunately she died of cancer
 - In those 7 years I became very close to her
 - When she died it was the first major death that I had experienced in my life
 - There are many memories I have of her, but one in particular comes to mind especially as we continue with the story of Elijah today.
 - When she was too sick to go to church, I discovered that she would read a little book.
 - This little book she had was called "*Our Daily Bread*".
 - I asked her about the book and she told me it was a daily devotional book.
 - The book had Bible verses with a short message for each day.
 - I asked for my own copy and when I went home I would pick up the book often.
 - It had special meaning for me because even though I was far from my grandparents, I could pick up my copy of "*Our Daily Bread*" and read what they were reading.
 - There was another part of that book that connected me to both my grandmother and grandfather. The book smelled like them. So I would often take the book off my bookshelf and just smell the book which made them feel close as well.
 - After my grandmother passed, I continued to pick up copies of "*Our Daily Bread*" to read. That memory began a practice of reading my bible daily.
 - To this day, I can't pick up a copy of "*Our Daily Bread*" without thinking of my grandmother.
- Conclusion of Sermon Series "God's Messenger: How Elijah Communicated During Uncertain Times"
 - Elijah is preparing to hand-off his prophetic role to Elisha- the next generation of faithful followers
 - Elisha is aware that his time with Elijah is limited; soon Elijah will leave the earth and it will be up to Elisha to continue the prophetic work
 - As the time draws near, Elijah provides Elisha with one last request

- Elisha requests to have a double portion of Elijah's spirit
- We can't be sure of the length of time that Elijah mentored Elisha, but there is no doubt that Elisha had grown close to Elijah. He had watched Elijah's prophetic ministry and had great admiration for him.
- Now as Elisha prepares to take the mantle as Israel's prophet, he knows that the work is not going to be easy. If he could only remain as faithful as Elijah.
- Elisha's desire is to have the same character, faith and strength as his mentor.
- I'm sure that most of us can think of someone who has shaped our faith
 - It might be a parent or grandparent
 - A pastor or Sunday school teacher
 - A Youth leader
 - A friend
- Remember throughout this series how we have discussed the significance of acknowledging the ways God reveals His presence to us
 - An invitation to God's grace
 - What we do with that revelation is up to us
 - The people who have shaped our faith are God's messengers that God has used to reveal His presence to us.
 - God is not only asking us to recall the legacy of those individuals, but to also play the role of mentor to someone else.
- Things to consider as we look at today's passage
 - The way in which Elijah hand's-off the ministry to Elisha
 - The example Elijah left for Elisha
 - What it takes to be a messenger of God

Don't Fall Away, Draw Closer

- 2 Kings 2:1-3
 - Elijah is going to journey to heaven in an unusual way
 - He is not going to die
 - He is not sick
 - Instead, he is going to be whisked up to heaven
 - Everyone appears to know what is about to happen
 - Elijah
 - Elisha
 - The sons of the prophets (followers of Elijah's ministry)
 - Elisha will not leave Elijah's side
 - Elijah travels to three different places: Bethel, Jericho, the Jordan
 - Each time Elijah asks Elisha to stay behind

- Each time Elisha refuses to leave Elijah's side
- Most of us have been in this situation
 - Someone close to us that we know is going to die
 - All we want to do is remain beside that person
 - Soak up every moment we have
 - Love and respect- which is how Elisha felt about Elijah
 - Says a lot about Elijah and it says a lot about the special people we have had to say goodbye to in our lives
- Consider Elisha's journey with Elijah
 - Elijah was directed to anoint Elisha as his successor during a very difficult time in Elijah's life
 - Wilderness experience
 - Lost
 - Ready to give up
 - So Elisha witnesses Elijah at one of his weakest moments and then watches Elijah find a renewed purpose and strength
 - Hand of God
 - Low Whisper
 - God's Provision
 - What kind of an impact do you think that had on Elisha- especially in this moment when he knows Elijah is about to depart to heaven?
- This moment, which really is a culmination of Elijah's impact on Elisha's life, will dramatically impact Elisha's life and ministry
 - A key part is that while this is a difficult moment when Elisha will have to say goodbye to some special, Elisha doesn't fall away from God, but instead draws closer to God.
 - Later, when Elisha requests a double portion of Elijah's spirit, what he is requesting is to experience the power of God in his life.
- *Take a Turn Here* Prepare for Absence
 - My guess is that at some point before the end of the year that we will once again have to cancel in-person worship services
 - If the study that I shared with you last week is accurate, there is a real threat that our spiritual engagement could diminish¹.
 - And yet, these are the moments that we can draw closer to God

¹ Christianity Today. *Bible Reading Drops During Social Distancing*. David Roach. www.christianitytoday.com July 22, 2020. Accessed July 23, 2020.

- If we can apply the same idea of “memorabilia” to our relationship with God, especially during these times- there is great potential that we can draw closer to God, rather than falling away.
- “*Our Daily Bread*”- daily devotions, Bible reading, Prayer; including Video Devotions
 - Hard-copy
 - Website www.oddb.org
 - App
 - My commitment to you
 - Join you
 - Emails
 - Facebook
 - Website
- Challenge: Draw closer to God, rather than fall away

Double Portion of the Spirit

- 2 Kings 2:9-12a
 - Distinction between “spirit” and “Spirit”
 - Elisha is referring to Elijah’s spirit- person, character, strength
 - Holy Spirit is a reference to God’s power revealed in our lives
 - Elisha admires Elijah
 - Observed his life and ministry
 - Understands the work ahead of him is going to be difficult
 - Wants to remain as faithful as Elijah
 - What enabled Elijah to have that kind of “spirit”
 - Hand of God
 - Low Whisper
 - God’s provision
 - Our spirit is shaped by the people who leave a legacy in our lives
 - Our faith is also dramatically shaped by the commitment we make to engaging God’s Word
 - Daily Devotion
 - Bible Reading
 - Application
 - Prayer
- Difficult times, uncertain times, will either make us or break us
 - Asked you last week, “How would you describe your spiritual state?”

- Engaged or curious
- Just consider your commitment to engage God's Word and Devotion to prayer
- Like a muscle that grows when exercised, your spirit can grow as you engage God's Word and pray.

Answer the Call

- 2 Kings 2:12b-14
 - Reflection of Jesus' ministry
 - Well aware of the impact of Jesus' ministry
 - Death and Resurrection
 - Lord's Supper as preparation for Departure
 - Great Commission-invitation to ministry
 - Empowered by the Holy Spirit
 - Elisha now had to answer the call
 - Observed Elijah's ministry
 - Double Portion of Elijah's spirit
 - Empowered to answer the call
 - Miracles were a sign that Elisha was appointed as the successor of Elijah
 - Elisha's challenge
 - The sons of the prophet (Elijah) thought maybe that Elijah was just displaced
 - They didn't fully trust Elisha
 - Kids in the community mocked him
 - Elisha doesn't back down- instead he reflects the spirit of Elijah
- What does it take to be a messenger of God?
 - The journey is not easy- commitment
 - Trust God's provision
 - Practice Spiritual Disciplines
 - Devote time to reading the Bible and prayer
 - Engage God
 - Find strength for the journey
 - The journey becomes the message

Conclusion

- Family Garden
 - Talked about it for a couple of years
 - Amy did some research for how we could create a minimalist garden
 - Began planting mid-July

- Too late??? Never too late to start to learn
- Take a look at your spiritual state; your relationship with God
 - You may feel like when you look around you that everyone seems to have fruit in their life and you haven't even tilled the ground
 - It's never too late to start planting seeds
 - It is as simple, but yet as powerful as committing to a daily devotional time
 - *Our Daily Bread*
 - Read the Bible
 - Pray
- Let your journey of faith speak as you draw closer to God

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