



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The Mantle of Elisha given to Elisha

2 Kings 2

~ Brent Russell ~

- Today we journey on with our OT characters
- Wonderful people of faith
- Today we delve into the life of Elisha
- The successor to Elijah

Read 2 Kings chapter 2

- This is the story of the great **prophet Elijah** a man of God who had served God faithfully and fearlessly
- **But Elijah is old**
- He is **tired and in his heart he knows that God has is calling Him home**
- He has **done the work** that he had been called to do
- **Standing up for truth**
- **Bringing God's word to those who needed to hear**
- **And so as he and Elisha walk along the road this magnificent sight of the chariot and horses appears**
- **Elijah disappears and all he leaves Elisha is his mantle**
- **A cloak or a shawl or scarf of sorts**
- **All that remains is this rather ordinary Garment**

- Shortly before Elijah disappears forever Elisha asks him for a **double portion** of His spirit
- In those days the **inheritance of a father** would be given to his sons
- The land and all the father cumulative wealth would be given to his sons
- And the oldest one would receive a **double portion of the inheritance**
- **And so what Elisha is asking for is his rightful portion of spiritual inheritance**
- **As Elisha has become a spiritual son of Elisha he wants to inherit what he feels is rightfully his**
- **Elisha really wanted the fullness of what Elijah had been trying to teach him**
- As your ministers we have tried hard to pass on to you the **baton of faith**
- A little like the **Olympic relay teams**
- **We have tried to pass onto you this faith so that you can run your own race of faith**
- And so that you can too **pass it on to others**
- **We believe that you come to church on Sundays because in some sense you too want a double portion of God's spirit**
- You to want the **inheritance of blessing**
- **You want to receive from God**
- **And so Rod and I have taught you the things of God**
- **As we run our own race of faith we have passed the baton of faith to you**
- We have **failed at times** to pass things on to you as well as we could have
- We have stumbled and fallen
- We have neglected to say things to you when we should have
- At times we have **not always been sensitive** to your own spiritual journey
- **But as best we can we have tried to give you your rightful inheritance of faith**
- **We have tried to lead you to a place where you can inherit a double portion of the Holy Spirit**
- **Like Elisha you want nothing more God's blessing through His spirit**
- **Each of you wants to experience God's power in your lives**

- **And also at times we get frustrated because we don't see God's power in our lives as we think we should**

- **In vs 13 You can sense Elisha's frustration**
- **He asks for a double portion from Elijah**
- **Elijah tells him "if you see me when I go it will be yours"**
- **And Elisha sees him go**

- **But nothing happens...**
- There is **no supernatural handing over of power**
- **There is no deep sense of God's blessing**
- Elisha has no **profound mystical experience** that God has given him the double portion of Elijah's spirit
- Elisha does not **quiver and fall over**
- **He does not pray in tongues**
- He is not **slain in the spirit**

- Other than the magnificent vision of His master being taken up into the clouds nothing out of the ordinary happens to Elisha
- **And so Elisha is irritated and perhaps a little discouraged**

- **Many Christians live with some sense of disappointment with their lives**
- They like Elisha are **expecting some great work of God** in their lives
- **They come to church**
- **Do Bible studies**
- **Pray until they can pray no more**
- **But they still feel that God has not given to them a double portion of His spirit**

- But out of the ordinary happens

- **But as we look at the rest of Elisha's life we see some things that show that God's spirit does in fact rest with him**
- And at one level they are **absolutely ordinary** things

- **What I am suggesting that for both Elisha and for us we often fail to see God's power**

- **Not because it is not there...**

- **But because we are looking for the wrong things...**

A STRANGE GIFT

- **"Where is God now?" Elisha cries out**
- It's like when someone in your family goes on holiday and brings you a gift
- And it is one of those **T-shirts** "My dad went to New York and all I got was this lousy shirt!"
- I expected something more
- "Where is God now?"

- **Instead of a powerful revelation of God's power all Elisha gets is Elijah's robe**
- A **simple garment** out of a rather coarse and ordinary fabric
- Not a finely woven silk robe like a king might wear
- But a simple mantle

- **But Elijah was passing onto Elisha a symbol of who he now was**
- **Elisha was no longer the assistant prophet**
- No longer the **subordinate**
- Elisha had now become the **man of God**

- **And the robe was a sign**
- A **symbol for all the world** to see that this man **belonged to God**
- A **mark** so that everyone who saw Elisha would know that this was the **man of God**

- **The greatest works of the spirit are not always those where people experience great power**
- God's power is often revealed in us **simply when we acknowledge that we are his**

- **The spirit's power is made known when we are able to show the world who's we are**
- **When either consciously or unconsciously we can show the world that we belong to Jesus**

- Rod spoke last week about Elijah and at one point he said that Elijah was a **fool for God**
- **I recall a t-shirt once "I'm a fool for Jesus – who's fool are you?"**

- Elisha wears the robe of Elijah as **public statement of faith** in God and an acknowledgement that he was indeed the man of God
- In **Matthew 10:32** Jesus in fact says this if you acknowledge me before men I will acknowledge you before my father in heaven
- **God's work in us is revealed when we stand up and acknowledge that we are men and women of God**

Rest

- **In 1 Corinthians 12:3 is this powerful statement no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the spirit**
- If you can say in heart that Jesus is Lord it is only by the power of Gods Holy Spirit that you can do this
- **The evil one can counterfeit many of the miracles of God**
- The scriptures tell us that what some attribute to God may be fakes by the evil one
- **But no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the spirit of God**
- Don't look for the big things to see God in you
- **To see whether you have inherited the Holy Spirit**
- **If you can honestly say publicly and truthfully before the powers of heaven and hell Jesus is Lord then that is proof that you have inherited the Holy Spirit**

THE MINISTRY OF BRINGING OF GOD'S GRACE

- **Elijah's ministry was characterised by great miracles and wonders**
- **Elisha is not as grand**

- **Elijah is recognized as a great prophet**
- **Elisha is never given as much importance**
- Elisha had a vastly **different ministry** to Elijah
- But it was a **powerful ministry of God's grace**

- **Whilst Elisha wanted to see God's power manifest like it was in Elijah's life**
- Stopping the rain from falling and miracles like that
- **His ministry was more one of bringing God's grace to hurting people**
- In the 18 miracles attributed to Elisha in the book of 2 Kings almost all of them have to do with **helping people**
- **In chapter 4:1-8 he meets a widow who has great debt**
- Her sons are going to be sold into slavery to pay off these debts and all she owns is a jar of olive oil
- And Elisha multiplies this oil and so she is able to pay off her debt and live off the profits
- **In chapter 4:8-17 Elisha meets a shunamite woman who is barren**
- And he miraculously helps this infertile woman conceive a son
- **In chapter 4:17-37 this same boy given to this lady dies of heatstroke**
- The man of God is called and he restores the boy to life quite similarly to an incident in Elijah's life
- **In chapter 4:38-41 In a famined area Elijah restores a stew that has been poisoned** by someone unknowingly adding a poisonous vegetable
- **In chapter 4:42-44 Elisha feeds a hundred hungry men some bread and it miraculously multiplies quite similar to Jesus ministry**

- **Friends over and over and over again Elisha ministers to the needy people**
- To the **poor**
- To the **needy**
- To the **outcast**
- To the **hungry**
- **The power of God's spirit in Elisha life in fact worked itself out in rather ordinary ways**
- **Elisha ministry whilst certainly miraculous was not what he had expected because he was expecting the wrong things**
- But the power of God was evidenced in his life because he was concerned with people

- **Elisha loved the hurting**
- He loved to be there in times of great need
- **People came to the man of God because they realized that they would find God's grace for them there**
- God's power in your lives often works out in the most **simple and ordinary** ways
- **We are sometimes expecting great and miraculous things**
- **But God's power seeps out of us to those around us in simple ways where we may not even recognize it as God at work**

- **When the life of a Christian is lacking the simple graces of a spiritual life then God's power is absent**
- **When there is absence of compassion - that is when people have failed to inherit God's power in a double portion**

- When people's hearts have become hardened and calloused no matter how well they know the Bible or no matter how powerful they may seem - God's power is absent in their lives
- **We all want to see God at work in us**
- **We want to experience God's power in us**
- We want to see **God's power through us**

- **But don't expect the wrong things**

- **I am not sure what Elisha was expecting when Elijah left**
- **But he clearly was let down**

- **But God's power is predominantly exhibited in far more plain and ordinary ways**

- Often we don't recognize the great works of the Holy Spirit in us because they **happen gradually**
- As we **slowly change**
- **As the Holy Spirit moulds and renews our minds**
- **We find ourselves becoming more aware of where our real home is**
- And we will be able to look back and see God's grace pouring out of us
- The power of the Holy Spirit in Elisha's life was **not through great prophetic truths**
- **It was most certainly not through profound miracles or though there were a few**

- **The power of the Holy Spirit in Elisha's life was his ability to let the world know who's he was because he was not afraid to acknowledge before people that he belonged to God**
- **The power of the Holy Spirit in Elisha's life was the ability to be used by God to love and to serve the world**

- **To be a tap where people could come to drink great gulps of God's grace**

- **Two simple, simple things**
- **To be able to acknowledge that you belong to Jesus**
- **And to be a fountain of God's grace**
- **That is how you may know that you have inherited a double portion of God's grace**