

Life Lesson 83
Elijah and Elisha
Text: II Kings 2

Introduction

Do you have a hero? Is there someone you admire and want to be like? Generally, we become like the people we follow, so it's important to follow the right people! Today we will learn about a man named Elisha who wanted to be like his friend.

The Story

We've had lots of exciting stories about the prophet Elijah. He was brave, speaking God's message to wicked King Ahab and evil Queen Jezebel. Because he obeyed God, God took care of Elijah in miraculous ways.

Remember, God:

*Had the ravens bring food to Elijah

*Made the widow's oil and meal last through the famine so she could share it with Elijah

*Answered Elijah's prayer and set the offering on fire when they had the "God contest" with the prophets of Baal.

*Sent down fire to burn up the soldiers who came to take Elijah captive.

Elijah had an exciting life, but maybe he was a little lonely. God knew he needed a friend and helper – someone who would be able to take over Elijah's job as prophet when Elijah grew old.

He found his helper working in a field. Elisha was plowing the field with twelve pairs of oxen. Elijah came by and threw his cloak, or mantle, over Elisha. That was his way of saying, "God wants you to follow me and be my helper."

Elisha left the oxen standing in the field and ran after Elijah.

"I'll come," he said. "But, may I go and kiss my mother and dad goodbye first?"

"Go ahead," Elijah answered.

Elisha went back and told his family goodbye. Then he took the oxen and offered them as a sacrifice. Now, even if he wanted to, he couldn't go back to plowing. He had given his way of earning money up to God.

From then on, he followed Elijah and helped him.

One day Elijah told Elisha, "Wait here. The Lord told me to go to the town of Bethel."

"I'm not going to leave you," Elisha answered. He knew what was going to happen to Elijah soon.

When they arrived at Bethel, the prophets who lived there came up to Elisha. "Did you know that the Lord will be taking your master away today?"

"Yes," he answered. "Don't talk about it. I know."

"The Lord told me to go on to Jericho," Elijah said. "You stay here."

"No," Elisha answered. "I'm going with you."

At Jericho the same thing happened. The prophets came to Elisha and said, "Your master is going to be taken away today. Did you know that?"

"I know," Elisha said. "No need to talk about it."

"Stay here," Elijah said once more. "God told me to go to the other side of the Jordan river."

"I'm not leaving you," Elisha answered again.

About 50 of the other prophets stood at a distance to watch as Elijah and Elisha walked up to the river. How could they get across? There was no bridge and it was too deep to wade.

Elijah took off his mantle and hit the waters. The water divided in two so they could walk over on dry ground.

When they got to the other side, Elijah asked, "What would you like me to do for you before I leave?"

Elisha thought of how Elijah loved and trusted God. He thought about the power God had given Elijah.

“I want a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha said. “I want to be twice the powerful man of God you are.”

“You asked for a hard thing,” Elijah said. That wasn’t something he could give his friend! “If God lets you see me leave, you’ll know He will give you your request.”

Suddenly, a chariot of fire pulled by fiery horses appeared. It came right between Elijah and Elisha and swooped Elijah up. Then it headed like a tornado straight into heaven.

What an exciting way to leave the troubled earth! Elijah and Enoch are the only two men who have ever left the earth without leaving their bodies behind, except for Jesus, of course.

Elisha cried, he was so sad to see his friend leave. Then he saw something lying on the ground. It was Elijah’s cloak, or mantle. He picked it up and went back to the river. Would he have the double portion of Elijah’s spirit he had asked for?

“Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” he cried. And he smacked the water with the mantle. The water parted, just as it had done for Elijah, and Elisha walked right over on dry ground. God had given Elisha the power he had asked for.

The Life Lesson

Elisha admired and followed a man of God. He wanted to be just like Elijah – only more so. God gave him his request. I hope your heroes are people that love and follow God. You might turn out to be just like them – only twice as much so!

Review Questions

Tell me one of the miraculous ways God took care of Elijah.

Had the ravens bring him food, made the widow's oil and grain last supernaturally, set the offering on fire in the God contest, and sent fire from heaven to burn up the soldiers who came to arrest Elijah.

Who did God call to be Elijah's helper?

Elisha

What did Elijah do to show that God was calling Elisha?

He threw his mantle over him.

What did Elisha do before leaving to follow Elijah?

He kissed his parents goodbye and sacrificed his oxen.

When Elijah said, "What would you like me to give you before I leave," what did Elisha ask?

He asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Could Elijah give that?

No, only God could.

How did they get across the river?

Elijah hit the water with his mantle and it parted.

How did Elijah get to heaven?

God sent a chariot of fire down to get him.

What did Elijah leave behind?

His mantle.

How did Elisha get back across the river?

He struck it with the mantle and it parted for him, as it did for Elijah.