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**Picture of Discipleship**  
**Kings and Chronicles**  
**Series: In the Days of Elijah**  
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**The Village Church**  
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I. **Elijah and Elisha**

A. **1 Kings 19:15–21** (ESV) —

1. 15 And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.
2. 16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.
3. 17 And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death.
4. 18 Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”
5. 19 So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him.
6. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?”
7. 21 And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

B. Context – Elijah’s depression

1. Gave Elijah rest, food
2. Gave Elijah an encounter with God
  - a. To which Elijah’s complaint turned to submission
  - b. Gave Elijah another job to do
3. Job given
  - a. Anoint some people
    - (1) Including Elisha
    - (2) The one who would replace him as prophet
4. Elijah’s job wasn’t done
  - a. Another phase was encountered
    - (1) Transition to another was anticipated

5. Encouragement was given
  - a. 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal in Israel
    - (1) Implication – community of faith within which to work
6. Central to that community was the prospects of another leader
  - a. Leader would be Elisha
7. Elijah keeps working for some years
  - a. Don't hear much about Elisha
    - (1) Until the time Elijah was about to be taken from him

C. **2 Kings 2:1–15** (ESV) —

1. 1 Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.
2. 2 And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.
3. 3 And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."
4. 4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho.
5. 5 The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."
6. 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on.
7. 7 Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan.
8. 8 Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.
9. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me."
10. 10 And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so."
11. 11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.
12. 12 And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.
13. 13 And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

14. 14 Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.
15. 15 Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.
- D. Certainly the climax of the relationship between Elijah and Elisha
  1. Happened over the course of a few days, most likely
    - a. Not a lengthy period
  2. Very illustrative of the nature of the relationship
- E. What was Elisha doing between these two episodes?
  1. **2 Kings 3:11** (ESV) —
    - a. 11 And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, through whom we may inquire of the LORD?" Then one of the king of Israel's servants answered, "Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah."
  2. Between the two seminal episodes, we see Elisha ministering to his master
- F. Discovered in this relationship – **Picture of Discipleship**
  1. Not just any discipleship
    - a. But the discipleship of a leader
    - b. The discipleship of a man who goes from plowing a farm to one of the great prophets of Israel

## II. **Beginning of Discipleship**

- A. **Call of God**
  1. Call comes to Elijah first
    - a. He is given a job to do
      - (1) One dimension of this is to anoint Elisha
- B. **Nature of the call**
  1. **Sovereign**
    - a. Elijah doesn't present a business opportunity; ask Elisha if he's interested in a prophet's job
    - b. Doesn't come like Mission Impossible – "Your mission, should you decide to accept it,..."
    - c. He throws his mantle on him
      - (1) "You're it"
    - d. That's the way we're all called in the final analysis
      - (1) We didn't seek God until He sought us
      - (2) John – we love God because He first loved us
  2. **Yet it calls for decision**
    - a. Critical incident – to follow or not
    - b. Mantle is tossed on him
      - (1) Elisha runs after Elijah – "Wait!"
      - (2) "I've got some things I need to take care of"

- c. Elijah lets him do that
    - (1) Important
  - d. Elisha doesn't leave his family hanging out to dry
    - (1) Sacrificed oxen; fed household
    - (2) Then followed
- 3. We all have this experience
  - a. Faced with the call of God
    - (1) Sovereign
    - (2) Yet involves a decision
- 4. **Irrevocable**
  - a. Called to leave behind his former life
    - (1) All his history
  - b. We're called the same way
    - (1) When Christ calls us, we're faced with whether we'll follow Him or not
  - c. This was a significant moment in Elisha's life
    - (1) The call of God
    - (2) Not just to salvation
    - (3) But to a vocation – prophet
      - (a) Vocation = calling

### III. **Common discipleship**

#### A. **Servanthood**

- 1. **Elisha ministered to him**
  - a. **1 Kings 19:21** (ESV) —
    - (1) 21 And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate.  
**Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.**
  - b. **2 Kings 3:11** (ESV) —
    - (1) 11 And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, through whom we may inquire of the LORD?" Then one of the king of Israel's servants answered, "Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah."
- 2. Poured water on Elijah's hands
  - a. Indicates the nature of the ministry
    - (1) Pretty mundane, ordinary stuff
    - (2) Some would not be satisfied with such a ministry after such an extraordinary call
  - b. Elisha was willing to do whatever Elijah needed
    - (1) However menial and ordinary it might have been
- 3. **Leadership is ultimately about servanthood**
  - a. Certainly Jesus understood that
  - b. **John 13:12–17** (ESV) —

- (1) 12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you?
  - (2) 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.
  - (3) 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.
  - (4) 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.
  - (5) 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.
  - (6) 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
- 4. A lot of common discipleship is menial and ordinary
    - a. Always servant-oriented
    - b. Genuine disciples are willing to do whatever is needed by the Master

B. **Community**

- 1. Wonder – where did the sons of the prophets come from?
- 2. Remember – Elijah is at the end of his rope – depressed
  - a. Thinks he’s the only faithful one left
  - b. But God tells him there are 7,000 left who have not bowed to Baal
- 3. These sons of the prophets appear in Israel almost out of nowhere
  - a. Where did they come from?
  - b. They appear to be faithful
    - (1) Cf prophets of Baal
  - c. They are with Elijah and Elisha in several cities
- 4. Don’t know where they came from
  - a. May be that Elijah recruited them from the 7,000 to help with the ministry
  - b. May be the God told Elijah that the ministry needed to be multiplied
    - (1) That Israel needed more teachers to encourage the remnant
    - (2) That Elijah couldn’t do that alone
  - c. May be that while in NT Paul would plant churches, Elijah would plant seminaries
    - (1) Colleges for prophets
  - d. So that the wayward northern kingdom might know something of the nature and purpose of God
    - (1) Even though separated from the center of worship and devotion in Jerusalem
- 5. Where ever they came from, they provided a community within which discipleship and leadership development could take place

C. Common discipleship involved servanthood in the context of community

IV. **Transition to leadership**

A. **Loyalty to mentor**

1. Elijah tried to lose Elisha when he was about to depart
  - a. Elisha wouldn't go
    - (1) Swore he would remain, no matter where Elijah went
2. That's the kind of loyalty we should have with our mentors, and especially with Christ
  - a. "Until you're taken away, I'm sticking with you!"
3. This mentor was provided by God in the call
  - a. We can never forget that
4. We all have human mentors
  - a. We should certainly have such regard for them, and for God who appointed them for us, to stick closely with them until such time as God calls us somewhere else, or takes away our mentor
5. Certainly we all have Christ as the ultimate mentor
  - a. By His Spirit He leads us
  - b. While there might be some limitations to even the best human mentorship, there are no limitations to our loyalty with Christ
6. We need to have the same attitude toward Christ as Elisha had toward Elijah
  - a. "Where ever You go, I'm going there also!"

B. **Focused on mission, undistracted**

1. Sons of the prophets always seem to want to add their two cents
  - a. "Don't you know your master will be taken from you?"
2. Interesting to see Elisha's reaction
  - a. "Yep, I know; now be quiet"
  - b. "I'm busy following my master. Don't distract me with even legitimate issues. I know he's going away, but my job is not to be interrupted by conversations about the obvious, but to follow him wherever he goes."
3. I think it's easy for the church to get distracted from the primary mission
  - a. Lots of good things to do
  - b. Lots of theology to discuss
    - (1) There is a time and place for it
    - (2) May have been a time to discuss with the prophets college what will happen when the leader is taken
    - (3) But now wasn't the time for it; Elisha had more important things to care for
4. Elisha was focused on his mission; undistracted
5. CMA – one of the great virtues of the Alliance
  - a. We're about planting churches to fulfill the Great Commission
  - b. A lot of other things we could do
    - (1) But Christ's last command – take the message of the kingdom to the uttermost parts of the world
    - (2) Takes precedence over everything

6. All genuine disciples, especially those preparing for leadership, need to be focused on their call, undistracted by the noise around us
    - a. Regardless of how true and valuable those comments might be
- C. **Unbounded by geography**
1. Elisha was not just willing to do whatever, but to go where ever Elijah went
    - a. Where ever was the other side of the Jordan – the Transjordan
  2. Elisha might have been more comfortable in Israel
    - a. But since Elijah was headed across the Jordan, so was Elisha
  3. Hard to tell why God was going to take Elijah from the Transjordan
    - a. That was his home area; might have had something to do with it
    - b. Might have been because Moses was taken from the Transjordan
      - (1) Elijah was akin to Moses in many ways
      - (2) Appeared with Moses in the Transfiguration
  4. Regardless of why Elijah was heading across the Jordan, Elisha was willing to go there
  5. Are we willing to be unbounded by geography? Go where ever God wants us to Go?
    - a. That's another element that marks genuine disciples, especially those who are being disciplined for leadership
- D. **Wisdom sought above riches**
1. When Elijah recognizes who loyal Elisha is to him, he asks what he can do for him
  2. Fascinating to see how Elisha answers him
    - a. Easy to pass by this answer
      - (1) But we can compare it with Gehazi, Elisha's assistant, later, when Gehazi gets greedy and wants some material remuneration for the service Elisha renders to Naaman
    - b. Elisha doesn't ask for anything material
      - (1) Doesn't say, "You know, I've always wanted my own chariot"
  3. Instead, Elisha recognizes the significance of his ministry to which he's called, recognizes his own inadequacy in fulfilling it, and asks for the spiritual resources to do the job
    - a. **Double portion of His Spirit**
  4. He had observed the extraordinary work that Elijah had accomplished
    - a. Some of which he observed directly; some of which he'd heard about
  5. So he wisely asked for spiritual resources, not material enjoyments
  6. Reminds of what Solomon asked for when given the opportunity at the beginning of his reign
    - a. Didn't ask for material blessing, but for wisdom to rule his people well
    - b. Because he asked for wisdom, God gave him that plus wealth
  7. But in this case Elisha asks for the Spirit

- a. Which is what we all should ask for
  - b. If we are believers, we already have the Spirit – indwelt by the Spirit of Christ through regeneration
  - c. But we can always ask for greater enduements of the Spirit, for spiritual power
- 8. **Ephesians 3:16–19** (ESV) —
  - a. 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
  - b. 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
  - c. 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
  - d. 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- 9. But even before we pray for such a thing, we need to be aware of why we should pray such a pray
  - a. Reason – we’re in deep weeds without the empowerment of the Spirit!
  - b. Unless we work and live by the Spirit, our work and lives are without value!
- 10. The value of the Spirit is seen in this interchange
  - a. Elijah – “You have asked a hard thing”
    - (1) Not that it is hard for God to do; God can easily do that
    - (2) But that it is not common, or ordinary, to receive such a gift
    - (3) Which makes the gift that much more valuable
  - b. So Elijah indicates that he will receive it if he sees him when he is taken
    - (1) Which, as you know, happens
  - c. Great encouragement to Elisha
    - (1) Spirit is invisible
    - (2) That there is a visible sign indicating the answer to the prayer is a great encouragement and affirmation of Elisha
    - (3) No longer has to wonder if he has what it takes
  - d. He has what it takes – he has God
- E. **Moment of decision**
  - 1. **2 Kings 2:11–13** (ESV) —
    - a. 11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.
    - b. 12 And Elisha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.
    - c. 13 And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.
  - 2. This is the second momentous decision of Elisha’s life



- a. Not able to see his train of thought in the text
  - b. But you have to know the significance of this moment
- 3. There's the mantle; the only thing left from Elijah
  - a. Represents the prophetic ministry, the call
  - b. Just lying there
  - c. "Do I pick it up?"
  - d. "I can just leave it here and go back to farming if I want"
  - e. "But God called me to this ministry; God has provided His Spirit for this ministry – all the resources I would need"
  - f. "But still, I have to make this decision"
  - g. "Shall I pick it up; do I really want all that this mantle represents?"
  - h. "It's challenges; trials; tribulations"
- 4. But then there is the call
  - a. This is God's call
  - b. This is not really a human decision in the final analysis
  - c. "Yes, I will pick it up."
- 5. He does it; he picks it up
  - a. There comes a time when given the opportunity to step into leadership, in spite of the enormity of the task, we decide to go in the strength God supplies to fulfill His calling

F. **Use of the mantle**

- 1. Give is no good unless it is used
  - a. Takes the mantle and uses it to cross the Jordan
    - (1) To go to the place God has called him
- 2. **2 Timothy 1:6–9** (ESV) —
  - a. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,
  - b. 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
  - c. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,
  - d. 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...

G. **Encouragement of community**

- 1. Finds himself in the midst of a community once again
  - a. For encouragement
  - b. For the opportunity, perhaps, to pass on some of the tasks of ministry

V. Disciple has been created

- A. Called
- B. Spent the time necessary in preparation
  - 1. Servanthood

2. Community

- C. Prepared to pick up the mantle and use it
- D. How is God preparing you for ministry?