

Welcome: We would like to welcome you here today for our worship service with our theme today **“Trials Test My Faith and Lead Me to the Cross.”** This is message four in our series “Trials of the Prophets.” “Note” the messages each week are also available on the sermon player on our web page www.lightofchristwi.org.

Sermon Outline

1. What is God telling you in the context?

2. What are you hearing from the story, what verses stand out to you?

3. What is Jesus doing in your life right now as you respond to the message?

4. How is Jesus challenging you as you listened to today’s message?

5. What do you believe Jesus wants you to do this week?

Main thoughts of the sermon message:

- 1. The Lord often asks us questions to engage us because we are not where we should be, or not doing what we should be doing.**
 - a. After Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden the Lord called to him as he walked through the Garden in the cool of the day, “Where are you.” Although God knew where Adam was the Lord still began with a question.
- 2. When God tests His children, His purpose is to prove that our faith is real.**
 - a. Not that God doesn’t know, but he wants us to know.
 - b. *For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Romans 8:14.*
 - c. *Psalm 119:105 it says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*
 - d. Through his word and His Holy Spirit the Lord will guide us through our life.
- 3. When I fail, the Lord calls me to the cross to ask him...will you forgive me.**
 - a. Each day we live, we sin, and in many ways, we fail. We try to cover it up thinking it is not all that bad, but the next day we fail again and the Lord convicts us of our sin and we again find ourselves at the foot of the cross.

Failing is humbling, but when I repent of my sins the Lord lifts me up and sets me on a new path.

- b. It is because the grace of God that we are lifted up when we fail. I am a sinner in need of salvation. It wouldn't be enough for God just to show me a better way to live. To set things right, God must both save and rearrange my life. Christ's death and resurrection makes this reality.

Message 04 / Series: The Trials of the Prophets / Theme: Passing the Mantle Elijah to Elisha 2 Kings 2:1-18.

1. Open with prayer
2. Review the guidelines below
3. **Note: Tell the people that as you tell the story to put yourself into the story...be Elijah or Elisha**
4. Tell the story orally
5. Rebuild the story
6. Read the story
7. Go to the questions of the heart



TARGET

We want the participants to understand why they are here and to lay a foundation of the guidelines for small group's discussions. It is helpful to go over these guidelines briefly every time your huddle meets.

SMALL GROUP / HUDDLE GUIDELINES

SAFE ENVIRONMENT: This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing with one another. Below are some guidelines that will help create a safe environment:

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussion by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO “CROSS TALK”: Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement; speak truth, point to Jesus. Don’t try to solve or fix each other.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

“I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church,” “us” “we”, etc.

LISTEN TO THE STORY: When the story is being presented the most effective way to understand the story at this point is just listen...don’t try to follow along in your bible. Opening the Bill will come later.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (there are many others)

- If someone sins against you
 - Matthew 18:15-20
- Restoring someone in sin:
 - Galatians 6:1-5
- Forgive a sinner:
 - Colossians 3:12-13
- Reconciling differences
 - Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5

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Elijah Taken Up to Heaven

2 When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ²Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel.”

But Elisha said, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.

³The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “but do not speak of it.”

⁴ Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to Jericho.”

And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.

⁵ The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, “but do not speak of it.”

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.”

And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.

⁷ Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. ⁸ Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

¹⁰ “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise not.”

¹¹ As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. ¹² Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.

¹³ He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. “Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

¹⁵ The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. ¹⁶ “Look,” they said, “we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley.”

“No,” Elisha replied, “do not send them.”

¹⁷ But they persisted until he was too ashamed to refuse. So he said, “Send them.” And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him. ¹⁸ When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go?”

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (2 Ki 2:1–18). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Questions of the Heart

1. What verse or verses spoke to you or verse that the Lord gave you revelation about?
2. Three times Elijah says to Elisha stay here...vs 2, vs. 4, and vs 6 and each time Elisha says, “I will not leave you.” Why would Elijah ask the same thing of Elisha three times?
 - a. What do we learn about Elisha that he wanted to stay with his master?
 - i. What do you think Elisha found out about himself that day when he refused to leave the side of Elijah?
 - ii. Tell about a time where you were tested by the Lord...how did that affect you? What did you learn? Why is obedience so important in our walk of faith?
 - b. How does the Lord test us our faith, and what is the purpose of testing? (Ref. Genesis 22:1 the Testing of Abraham...*Some time later God tested Abraham.*)
 - c. If God is all knowing why is testing our faith important?
3. Why would the Lord reveal to the prophets at Bethel (vs. 3) and the prophets at Jericho (vs. 5) that Elisha master Elijah was going to be taken from him (today)?
4. ⁷ Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. ⁸ Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.
 - a. If you had been in the company of prophets that day what was the Lord teaching you as you observed the power of God when the Jordan was parted?
5. What do we learn about Elijah when he asked Elisha in verse 9...*Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?*
 - a. Why does the Lord want us to come to him and ask as in prayer requests?
 - b. In the Sermon on the Mount, *Jesus says that whoever asks receives, whoever seeks finds, and whoever knocks will find an open door (Matthew 7:7–8)*. But with this and all other verses we must examine the context. Jesus goes on to say that God will not fail to give His children good things (verse 11). So, this is one condition to the promise of “ask and receive”: what we ask for must be good in God’s estimation. God will give *advantageous* gifts to His children; He will not give us bad or injurious things, no matter how much we clamor for them.
 - i. What do we learn about God that he only gives to us what is best, no matter how many times we ask.

- ii. Tell about a time where the Lord granted your prayer request and or a time where the Lord did not grant your prayer request. What did the Lord teach you through that?
- 6. Why would Elisha want a double portion of the spirit of Elijah? In the days of the Old Testament the oldest son would receive a double portion of the estate.
 - a. What responsibility would come with a double portion of the spirit of Elijah?
 - b. What are you asking the Lord about today?
- 7. Why was it important for Elisha to part the water with the cloak of Elijah?
 - a. Why did Elisha tear his own clothes apart...vs 12?
- 8. *Ephesians 4: 22-24 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*
 - a. Why is it important to take off the old and put on the new? How does this change your life?
- 9. What is significant that Elijah went up to heaven in a chariot of fire and horses of fire and then went up to heaven in a whirlwind?
 - a. What is significant about fire...what does fire do?
 - b. What does this tell us about God?
- 10. Why do you think the prophets did not believe Elisha when he told them not to search for Elijah...that they were not going to find him?
 - a. When they came back after not finding Elijah...how do you think that changed Elisha's credibility?
- 11. What can we learn from the life of Elijah and or Elisha?
- 12. What does this story tell us about God?

Application and accountability

1. What is our theme for our message this today?
2. As you reflect on this story what is the Lord telling you that you need to do or maybe change in your life? Why is that a challenge for you? How can we hold you accountable to accomplish what the Lord wants you to do?
3. Who do you think needs to hear this story?

Close with prayer