

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

April 25, 2010

“In the Lord’s Service”
Focal Passage: 2 Kings 2

Central Idea: Obedience to God is a Spiritual call and only possible in the Spirit. In our flesh we desire our will and our purposes, but in the Spirit we desire to do God’s will and fulfill His purpose. It is best to be focused on obedience to God, no matter the circumstances. Elijah was focused on following and that made him a great leader. Elisha was a committed follower and likewise became a great leader. Both men scarcely wavered from the ultimate leadership of the Lord Almighty.

Lesson Idea: We are called to serve God, period. We should serve every minute of every day that we have of life. In our obedience we will find the security and all the blessing that comes from following God.

Historical Context: Chapter 2 of II Kings picks up where I Kings 19 leaves off. When God spoke to Elijah he told him that his successor would be Elisha. An extended period of mentoring ensued and now God has seen fit to take Elijah home and usher in Elisha as prophet. He is not the only prophet but the leader of Elijah’s students and the voice of God to His people. The Kingdom of Israel has continued its decline and the clear prophetic voice is imperative.

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

April 18th – April 25th, 2010

Apr. 18 2 Kings 1-3
Apr. 19 2 Kings 4-5
Apr. 20 2 Kings 6-8
Apr. 21 2 Kings 9-10
Apr. 22 2 Kings 11-13
Apr. 23 2 Kings 14-16
Apr. 24 2 Kings 17-18
Apr. 25 2 Kings 19-21

Read the Bible Through

Highlights of the Week:

April 18th – April 25th, 2010

2 Kings 2 Elijah taken up to
Heaven in a chariot of fire
2 Kings 4 The Widow’s Oil and
The Shunamite woman
2 Kings 5 Namaan Dips into the
Jordan River
2 Kings 6:24 Famine in Samaria

2 Kings 9:30 Jezebel killed
2 Kings 12 Joash repairs the
Temple
2 Kings 14:23 Jeroboam II
2 Kings 17:7 Israel exiled
2 Kings 18 Hezekiah's Reign
2 Kings 19:20 Isaiah prophesies
against Sennacherib and Assyria
2 Kings 20 Hezekiah's illness

2 Kings 2: 1-18 Elijah Taken Up to Heaven

¹ When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

² Elijah 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.

³ The 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?"

Note: The tense of Elijah's instruction to Elisha to "stay here" are not in the command form nor is there any Divine prohibition given for Elisha not to go with Elijah. Therefore it is highly possible that Elijah was testing his student's commitment level or giving him a choice

QUESTIONS

1. How did Elijah spend his last day on Earth?
2. How does our view of life effect our obedience?
3. What does Elisha's request from Elijah communicate about his desire?
4. Who granted Elisha's request and how does the text let us know this?
5. Why did Elisha eventually let the other prophets look for Elijah?
6. The Spirit of God took Elijah on in to heaven. Where else had it taken him before?
7. Where has the Spirit of God led you?
8. Where is the Spirit leading you now?

2 Kings 2:19-22 God Appears to Elijah

¹⁹ *The men of the city said to Elisha, "Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive."*

²⁰ *"Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.*

²¹ *Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'"*

²² *And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.*

QUESTIONS

1. Why was the water in Jericho bad? (See Joshua 6:26)
2. Whose judgment is ended in this miracle?
3. What did the Lord use to perform this act of mercy?
4. How does God use His people to bring His mercy into the lives of others?

2 Kings 2:23-25 Elisha is Jeered

²³ *From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. "Go on up, you baldhead!" they said. "Go on up, you baldhead!"*

²⁴ *He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths.*

²⁵ *And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.*

Elisha's sweet memories of Jericho received a souring touch at Bethel (v.23). The public insult against Elisha was aimed ultimately at the God whom he represented. Indeed Elisha's whole prophetic ministry was in jeopardy; therefore the taunt had to be dealt with decisively. The sudden arrival of the two bears who mauled forty-two youths to death would serve as both an awful sentence on unbelievers—and thus, too, on Jeroboam's cult city—and a published reminder that blasphemy against the true God and his program would be met with swift and certain consequences (v.24).

Gaebelein, Frank E. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Volume 4*. 177. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, © 1988.

QUESTIONS

1. Does Elisha's reaction seem selfish?
2. Whether they knew it or not who were these youth actually taunting?
3. When Elisha's could have been deeply hurt, where did he turn?
4. Why such a dramatic reaction?

APPLICATION

It is a powerful thing to be ushered into service for our Lord. All believers are called to this service in a variety of ways (Eph. 2:10). This is a call we should humbly and obediently accept. Our lives on Earth should be dedicated to the work of the Lord as He reveals it to us. On our journey we will be tempted to be frustrated and discouraged for a variety of reasons. The last half of Romans 8 tells us that we should be at peace with all men and know that if we are doing the Lord's work He will handle those who are enemies of Christ.

Far too often we as Christians waste time figuring out who our enemies are and neglecting the work of our Master. The lives of Elijah and then Elisha were centered on doing service for the King. We must remain centered in Christ not veering to the right or the left.