



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Plugged In: Worthwhile Relationships”

Ps. James Lowe - Jan. 25, 2015

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Who was your best friend growing up? What's one thing you liked about him/her?
- Who was one of the best teachers or coaches you had growing up? Why?
- If you could befriend anybody, who would it be? Why?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

Elijah had recently experienced the great triumph over the prophets of Baal, but afterwards had fled the death threats of Jezebel, and consequently lapsed into depression. God, however, strengthened and encouraged him, calling him to further ministry. It was at this time that Elijah found Elisha, who was called of God to be trained by Elijah and become his successor. Elijah needed Elisha just as Elisha needed him.

1 Kings 19:19-21 ESV 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. 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?” 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.

Elisha served Elijah for many years. Nothing of significance is said of him in Scripture during this time. It is not until Elijah is about to pass from this world that Scripture speaks of Elisha in a significant way. Elisha's commitment to Elijah throughout these years probably wasn't easy, but it was important. As we read the Scriptures we perceive that Elijah was a flawed man, like every other human. But Elisha remained committed to him and served in menial matters for a long time.

2 Kings 2:1-15 ESV Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 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. 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.” 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. 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.” 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. 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. 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. 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." 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." 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. 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. And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 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. 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.

Elisha's faithful commitment to remain in relationship with Elijah was rewarded. God rewarded him through his mentor, his spiritual father. Elisha went on to serve as a great national prophet, ministering to the royal courts of the nation. So great was his ministry that after his death a young man was raised from the dead after his body was thrown on top of Elisha's bones.

God has designed us so that we all need others. We need people who disciple, mentor, and train us, and we need to disciple, mentor, and train others. We need spiritual fathers and mothers in our lives, and we need to become spiritual fathers and mothers to others. We need relationships with other believers who can help us grow in Christ and in our callings, and we need to help other believers grow in Christ and in their callings. Both kinds of relationships are important.

Three key lessons from Elisha's story:

1. Stay - Don't quit on the relationships that God has put you in, even if you are unhappy. Know God's will, and do it.
2. See - Become aware of what God can do if you will stick it out. Look at the good that God is bringing you through the flawed people with whom you are in relationship.
3. Stand - Fulfill the duties that come when the blessings come. Do not be moved from the work of the Lord, but stand in the grace God supplies to do the work.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- Who is one person in your life that is discipling, training, or mentoring you spiritually? What does that look like; how is it practically expressed?
- Who is one person in your life that you are spiritually discipling, training, or mentoring? What does that look like; how is it practically expressed?
- What could you do to increase the quality and fruitfulness of your discipleship/mentoring relationships? With someone helping you? With someone you are helping?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would soften our hearts to humble ourselves and become dedicated, disciplined learners from spiritual fathers and mothers.
- That God would soften our hearts to give our time and energy selflessly to spiritually disciple, train, and mentor others.
- That God would open our eyes to any new people that we could reach with the Gospel.