

Elijah and Elisha (Quality: Good)

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Date: 19 November 1989

Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

- [0 : 0 0] I must venture with God's word which you will find in the second book of Kings, the second chapter reading verse 12.
- The second book of Kings, the second chapter reading verse 12. And Elisha saw it and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof.
- And he saw him no more and he took hold of his own clothes and rent them into pieces.
- I'm sure there are those here that have been aware that in the three hymns which we have already sung this morning, there is the sweet subject of true God-given unity.
- The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And in those three hymns we have been asking the Lord that we might be given humility and love.
- [1 : 3 1] And this is the theme, as it were, of the subject with me this morning. My thoughts have been taken away from God's word and have been brought to this particular verse.
- And this, as one received this morning, the news that dear Mr. Tyler is dying in hospital.
- One of his sons phoned me to tell me that his father had a very deep stroke. And how, in his present case, if he is still in the body, he is unable to move his limbs or to do anything.
- Completely unable to speak, to swallow or anything. And receiving this message from a son who was evidently moved by what it means to him and to them as a family.
- And so it was in this way that the word came. And Elisha saw it and he cried, My father, my father.
- [3 : 0 3] The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Now, with the Lord's help, we would first look into this subject to see what it was that brought these two servants of God together.
- But first, we would just seek to speak of what a father is. Of course, there are many children here this morning.
- And if you listen to this, you'll understand, I believe, what I'm going to say. That is, you know you have a father and a mother.
- You know this by the very fact of your being in their home, of your being in their love, and of all the care and thought that they have for you.
- Well, what a favour it is, dear friends, to have God-given parents. Something that we shall never really begin to fathom here.
- [4 : 3 2] To those of us who have been blessed with God-fearing parents. Fathers and mothers who took us to Jesus before and after our birth, and continue to do so, and in some cases with us, until their dying breath.
- But in this subject we have here, we have a deeper subject than that which is natural. And the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, speaks about this subject, of what it is to have a spiritual father.
- That is, a father in Christ. And this is what he tells the church at Corinth. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons to warn you.

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, ye have yet have ye not many fathers.

For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. Now this is the way in which God favours his servants and his people, with spiritual children.

[6 : 09] I am sure it is right to say that many children in the history of this world, have been thankful for godly parents, and some in a very special way, in which parents may have been used by God to speak to their children's souls.

I wonder how many of us hear the spirit. I wonder how many of us have our memories of things that our parents said to us, or to those whom the Lord laid in their hearts, those who were indeed our spiritual fathers and mothers in Christ.

This may bring back to some here this morning, the remembrance of what perhaps a godly mother said to you, or a godly father, and you have your memories.

And God uses means, he uses instruments. But now, coming a little closer to the subject, you see the apostle, in writing to the church at Corinth, he says, For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers.

For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

[7 : 52] Now, he doesn't mean, he's not saying to them, Now, I want you to follow me. But what he is saying is this, I desire that you may follow Christ.

Christ in me. And dear friends, it is this that unites poor sinners together, as they are brought together in the Lord Jesus, and as they are united to the living vine, and receive life from him.

What a subject then we have before us. The subject that speaks regarding spiritual fathers. We would add the thought spiritual mothers.

And may the Lord help us now in our meditation, that we may be favoured to understand what this really means.

And I'm going to ask you all a question. I wonder how many of us can sincerely say that we have a spiritual father or fathers.

[9 : 06] those that have begotten us through the bonds of the gospel. And so we look into the subject then, regarding these two servants of God, that we might see how they came together.

What it was that united their hearts. And how, in their case, they had sweet union and communion, right through to the very end.

And as Elisha sees Elijah taken up into heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah never saw death, as almost all the human race have and will until the Lord comes again.

And then we are told, then we which are alive and remain will be caught up together with him in the clouds, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

And that day is coming, the second coming of Christ. That day is coming. May we be prepared for it. May we be found ready, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and washed in his precious blood.

[10 : 34] And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

What I believe the second part of this means that I have read, that is the horsemen, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

Elisha, I believe, really is saying that in Elijah, the children of Israel, had a man who was of more value to them than all the armies of Israel.

Now that is as I understand it. He speaks of Elijah in this way. The value that this dear servant of God was to Israel all the while he lived.

He was of more value to them than all their armies. And why? Because he was God's servant to them. He had been used to bring them together on Mount Carmel, when yet again they said, The Lord, he is the God.

[11 : 46] The Lord, he is the God. Verse then, the way in which they were brought together. Elijah had been exceedingly favoured on Mount Carmel.

He had stood with the help of his God before all Israel, before King Ahab, and in that sense before Jezebel, and all the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the Graves.

God had stood by his servant. He had wrought a wondrous deliverance in Israel. And then the crowning blessing as rain fell after three and a half years of famine.

What a time it was. And yet, you will find in the very next chapter, Elijah as a poor man fleeing for his life.

And yet, if we might understand this in a right way, God was as much in his fleeing for his life as he had been as he helped him to stand before all Israel.

[13 : 19] Now, God was as much in that time of victory as in the time of distress and fear that took hold of Elijah.

And dear friends, God has often used such times as a means to bring to pass his purposes. God often brings his servants down.

It's a continual process, but he brings them down into the dust. He leads them in their life and in the path that he has ordained for them that they may be his servants to the people, that they may be his servants to whomsoever he will send them.

Now, God then used this time as a further preparation for Elijah to fulfill his holy will.

I have no thought of speaking of how he was to go forth to anoint those that he must anoint, although perhaps we might just turn back and read what it says there.

[14 : 36] And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

And Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel. And Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel-Meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

Now, what a wonderful word this is. God comes to his servant. He was not in the fire, the wind, the earthquake.

And what have we read? I need just to read it again to you, and I do so hope that the Lord will use his word here this morning, even in this.

And after the earthquake, a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still, small voice.

[15 : 51] the way that God was pleased to speak to his servant. There may be those of you here this morning that have been praying for some very clear direction.

You may have been asking the Lord for some very clear and wondrous revelation. It may not be the Lord's will to grant you this, but what I hope he will grant you is that you may find as Elijah did and after the fire, a still, small voice.

voice. And it would be a very wonderful thing if the still, small voice of God should be heard in this chapel here to die.

That is our great name. Now, I just noticed then that God brought Elijah down that he might prepare him to fulfill his will in his ministry until his work was done.

Now, among other things that Elijah was yet to do was this. He was to anoint Elijah to be prophet in his role.

[17 : 22] We have read of this and how God brought it to pass. It was through the direct command of God. And these words here, go return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.

And when thou comest anoint Azale to be king over Syria and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Miholeh shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

Now what a favour then dear friends we have here. And it's still needed in our chapels today. It's still needed in Zion today.

As we think of God's servant very evidently dying in hospital we are reminded that God is as far as we can judge about to take another of his servants home to glory.

And do we not need to cry out with the psalmist help Lord for the godly man ceaseth for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

[18 : 49] And yet God is working out his purposes and he is still bringing them to pass. But what I desire to be able to speak of for a little while really is this.

The way God brought these two men together. He didn't find him in some eminent position in the land did he?

he found him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. Have you ever noticed how this is worded? And he with the twelve.

Now that to my soul speaks of the humble position that Elijah held in his life. He found him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen and he with the twelve.

Now it speaks of humility and it was in this posture and position that Elijah finds him. And what was it then that brought these two men together?

[20 : 00] Well it was this the anointing of the spirit. The anointing of the spirit brought these two men together. What was it that brought it to pass in the lives of these two men?

Well we have it here. So he departed and found Elisha the son of Shaphat who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him and he with the twelve and Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle on him.

Well how does the Lord do this? He is pleased to do it through his word. Friends he is pleased to do it through his word.

This is what I desire to be helped to speak of really. To those of us who can say that we have a spiritual father or fathers because the Lord may have used more than one of his servants or more than one of his people in our case.

But friends if you have a spiritual father or mother what is it that has brought you together? Could you say this morning before our God that it was this?

[21 : 28] It was God's word that brought you together. God's word that brought you together. God's word God's word God's word God's word Oh I think of dear Mr.

Dawson and one would only mention it just to illustrate what we feel regarding this but I look upon dear Mr. Dawson as my spiritual father and what was it that brought us together in Jesus Christ it was simply this the word of God.

God used his servant to proclaim it but it was God's word that found its mark. It entered my soul. He was the first minister that God ever used to speak to my soul and I look upon him in this as my spiritual father.

Well dear friends do you have a spiritual father? In other words do you have those whom God used to speak to your soul? father.

The Lord may use this service in this way. He may take one or another back in your life to the day when God first spoke to you. It may have been of course without any human instrumentality but thinking of the subject that we have here that is spiritual fathers.

[22 : 56] What was it then that united your heart? To whomsoever God was pleased to use to speak to you. You would have to say this it was God's word.

Whoever God may have used to speak it but it was God's word. And dear friends it is this that unites the church of Christ together.

They are united in the living vine. But you see it's God's word that unites them. And what a power there is in God's word when it reaches the heart.

I know I've said this many times but God's word in my case was this can too walk together except they be agreed and God sent it into my heart.

And it's still there today. Nearly 40 years ago. And it's still there today. Do you wonder then that Elisha cried out my father my father.

[24 : 04] You see God brought these two men together. What a very humble place it was. There they were in the country Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen and yet that was to be the place where God was going to anoint Elisha and it was in that spot of ground where Jesus met with him and what was the effect of it?

Two things I want to notice. One is this. It was the word of God. The means that was used was the mantle that Elijah cast upon him.

The mantle of a prophet. And as he cast his mantle upon him so it conveyed to him authority.

It conveyed as it were an anointing. The anointing of the spirit. Now what did it do for Elisha? Friends it did this.

Immediately he left the oxen and ran after Elijah. And he said let me I pray thee kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow thee.

[25 : 25] You see it had this effect upon him. He must leave everything to follow Christ. Now the teaching is the same today because when God speaks to a sinner it separates them as it were in a moment from the things of the world and it brings them to be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

And when God speaks to a sinner it still has this effect. It makes them willing to leave everything and follow Christ. Well have you known what it is to be made willing in the day of his power?

Just know the spot of ground where Jesus did thee meet? Do you remember when the Lord spoke first to you? And when it had this same effect upon you in measure at least that it had upon Elisha and he was made willing to leave everything.

But then to show you that this came from God. It was not the work of a man and how may we know this? Why in the very words of Elijah and he said unto him, that is to Elisha, go back again for what have I done to thee?

And here we have the clear work of the Spirit. The mantle was cast on Elisha and God conveys things, his will and purpose still today and so often he conveys it through his word.

[27 : 08] I know that he sometimes gives a person a persuasion in a thing. He persuades them that certain things are going to happen.

But to prove that it came from God, Elijah said, what have I done to you, Elisha? It's not what I have done, but it's what the Lord has done.

Now, do we know something about this in our life? Has God spoken to you? Has he spoken to you? Have you heard his voice?

Are you willing to leave all and follow him? Are you willing to take up your cross daily and follow him? So then it was this that brought them together and they were never parted.

What I mean in the spirit of it, these two dear men, they commenced to walk together and they continued right through to the end. Then I want to notice something else here.

[28 : 20] And Elisha saw it and he cried, my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

what a very sacred thing is true spiritual unity.

We shall never find it in any other place or from any other source but the Lord Jesus. God's God's God's God's word that brought them together, the fulfillment of it in both their hearts and I think we could rightly say from that day they began to walk together.

Well let me ask you a question here. Has the Lord favoured you with those that you can walk together with. You can walk together with them.

You know this is something very wonderful. How sweet how heavenly is the sight we hope to sing presently but how sweet how heavenly is the sight when those that love the Lord in one another's peace delight and so fulfil his word.

[29 : 52] When free from envy, scorn and pride their wishes all above each can a brother's failings hide and show a brother's love when love in one delightful stream through every bosom flows when union sweet and dear esteem is known within the hearts of those that have received it.

but it is something to be prized and only the Lord can maintain this union.

There's everything in ourselves to separate us and the devil is ever seeking to get in his cloven hoof among brethren. The devil is always seeking to divide brethren to separate them.

Even those that hope one day to be united forever together in glory with their Lord and Saviour. And the devil is ever seeking to tear them apart and to separate them.

Oh friends we need grace to watch and we need grace that we may ever be upon our watch down in these very things. well in coming to a close this morning let us consider then for a little while what this really is.

[31 : 27] Here are these two men. The day had come when Elijah was to be taken. And have you noticed or did you notice what we read in our reading?

And Elisha said unto Elisha tarry here I pray thee for the Lord has sent me to Bethel. I believe that he speaks like this not that he had no wish for Elisha to be with him but I believe he wanted to bring it home upon Elisha's heart what this journey was going to mean what a journey it was.

And Elisha said unto him as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.

You see how they travelled first to Bethel and then further and then to Jericho and then to Jordan. But in each case you see they couldn't be separated.

and viewed in a right way. This is just how it is with the Lord's dear people. Friends if we are among the Lord's people we are united to him.

[32 : 50] Oh think of it. Oh that we might be favoured to consider this united to Jesus the vine. And all his dear people united together in him.

He is the head of the body the church. And his body and every member has a part in that mystical body and yet you see they are united in him.

And then again we read in the Psalms of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today.

And he said yea I know it hold ye your peace. You see Elisha knew that this was going to happen. God was about to take his beloved Elijah but he knew that it was going to happen.

It didn't come as a surprise to him but here they were together. Friends what I desire to convey to you this morning is this may the Lord help us to walk together.

[34 : 09] May he help us yet here as a church and people. He has favoured us and yet only God can maintain this favour but friends the Lord help us still with all of us.

one of the things that is upon my heart this morning is to tell you or to remind you of our need to value one another while we have them.

Your loved ones your dear ones friends we need grace that we may value them hold them while we have them because there's going to be a parting day and so we read these very wondrous words so they came to Jericho and again the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho they came to Elisha and said unto him knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today and he answered yea I know it hold ye your peace and then again Elijah said unto him tarry I pray thee for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan and he said as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee and they too went on well of course I do not know how this will affect your hearts this morning but is there something in this that is attractive to our soul think of it the Lord's dear people walking together and the nearer we get to

Jordan and yet walking together kept together held together what is the cement that holds the church of Christ together friends it's the love of Christ it's love that cements there's no other cement that will hold the church of Christ together but the love of Christ and it's this and this alone that will hold us together but we do need grace to rightly value God's mercy and his goodness and his favour and so these two they come to Jordan and to my soul it speaks regarding the Jordan of death but how sweet it is we think we look back do we not even this morning we have our memories we have the things that we remember you may be taken back this morning to a dying bed and your thoughts and that that the

Lord has favoured you with and when you knew something of this as recorded in one of our hymns and love surrounds a dying bed well love surrounded the death of Elijah and Elisha and there's one further thing before I leave it Elijah was very aware that he was to continue as the prophet in Israel he knew this he'd been anointed he carried this anointing for however long it had been and he knew that this was to be his position now in Israel he was to be the prophet in Elijah's room and what did he feel to need

[38 : 05] I wonder how many of us here this morning have known what it is to feel this and the thought of how it's recorded and it came to pass when they were gone over that Elijah said unto Elisha ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee and Elisha said I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me well I can remember when I had this exercise I do not know if there are those here this morning and you have this exercise you see there was this burden in Elisha's heart he knew that he was going to need this a double portion of thy spirit that is the spirit that Elijah had as

God's servant the authority that Elijah had as the servant of God now it was given to him and it came to pass as they still went on and talked but behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire and parted them both asunder and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven and Elisha saw it and he cried my father my father the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof and he saw him no more and he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces and then a final thought before I sit down when the sons of the prophets came to meet Elisha they were made aware of this that the spirit of

Elijah rested upon Elisha and friends it was this and this alone that gave Elisha the authority that he needed and it was the authority of God's word Amen include our service by singing hymn 1082 how sweet how heavenly is the sight when those that love the Lord in one another's feast delight and so fulfil his word 1082 2082

Thank you.

Thank you.

[42 : 11] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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[44 : 55] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS