

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 9

Elisha's Calling

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To teach the students that there is nothing we can leave behind that is more valuable than answering God's call to follow Him.

Key Verses

1 Kings 19:19-21—Main Teaching Passage

Luke 9:23, 57-62

Luke 18:29

Philippians 3:8

Memory Verse - Luke 9:23

"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'"

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Psalm 103:10, 14.

Tell the class that whoever you touch on the shoulder has to follow you and do exactly what you do. Choose someone and lead them around the room, then have them choose someone else.

After a couple rounds of follow the leader, have them sit down and say, "Imagine that you didn't just have to follow someone around the room, but follow them wherever they went from now on." That's what happens in our lesson today when Elijah called Elisha to follow him.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In today's lesson we are introduced to Elisha (not to be confused with Elijah). In Elijah's discouragement, God told him to anoint three people: two kings and a prophet. That prophet was Elisha, and he would be the one to take Elijah's place when Elijah was gone.

Elijah obeyed God's call to action and traveled 150 miles to get to Elisha's home, where he was busy plowing his father's field. Elijah walked up to Elisha and, without a word, placed his mantle on Elisha's shoulders and walked away. Elisha, understanding that this meant God was calling him to be Elijah's successor, ran after Elijah and asked permission to say goodbye to his parents before following him. Elijah told him to go, so Elisha took the oxen he had been plowing with, slaughtered them, and cooked them, using the plowing equipment as fuel for the fire. After his family and servants had a farewell feast, Elisha got up, followed Elijah, and became his servant.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Today's lesson only covers a few verses, but there are some important lessons for us to learn. The first is that God gave Elijah a companion in his loneliness. Elijah had felt like he was all alone in serving the Lord, but God brought him to one of the 7,000 people who had remained faithful to the true and living God, and he left everything behind to join Elijah in his travels.

This must have been a welcome change for Elijah, but maybe you know what that's like, to feel all alone. Know that God sees you in your loneliness. Sometimes the Lord has us go through moments in life alone to teach us to depend upon Him, but sometimes people isolate themselves because they like to be alone. God didn't make us to go through life alone. The Bible tells us God also puts the lonely in families (Psalm 68:6). God created us to be in fellowship with other people. Life together is God's design, both now and in eternity. What a moment that will be when we enter into heaven and put loneliness behind us once and for all!

But now back to Elisha. Who is he? His name means "God has salvation." No doubt, with a name like that, his parents had taught him about the true God of Israel. Due to the amount of animals they had, in addition to the equipment and servants needed to use those animals to farm the land, it would appear he came from a wealthy family. When Elijah placed his mantle on Elisha, he was faced with a hard decision.

With this we learn our second lesson: for Elisha, following God's call on his life meant leaving everything else behind. Elijah gained a companion, but Elisha left his family, friends, the comfort of his home, and the security of his inheritance. Try to imagine how hard this must have been! But Elisha knew what this meant. This man was no stranger. The

LOOK (Continued)

call was clear and Elisha was ready to answer.

It's hard to read this without thinking of Jesus calling His disciples. "Follow Me," He said to Matthew as he was sitting in his tax collector's office. "Follow Me," He said to Peter and Andrew as they cast their net into the sea. "Follow Me," He said to James and John as they sat mending their nets. Each one of them immediately stopped what they were doing, got up, and followed Jesus. And here we should take note that everyone who follows Jesus leaves something behind, but all of the riches and relationships in this world are nothing in comparison to the riches that are in Christ Jesus (see Luke 18:29).

Have you decided to follow Jesus? Today, He is calling you to follow Him. You don't have to leave your family behind, like Elisha, but that doesn't mean following Him will always be easy for you. It can be quite hard, but it is always worth it. What does it look like to follow Jesus? Well those disciples, and Elisha, were found working, doing regular everyday things when God called them. We too can please God in the daily things. We don't have to wait for Him to call us. He is calling us! Calling us to serve Him in how we treat our family, do our chores, and do our schoolwork. Because of Elisha's obedience to God's call, God was able to do amazing things in and through his life, and what He desires to do in your life will be just as amazing.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Luke 9:23.

Pray: Thank God for everyone who has decided to follow Jesus, and ask Him to help you to follow Him every day.

Parent Question: How did Elijah call Elisha to follow him?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Kings 19:19-21 & Luke 9 by David Guzik

6. ([1Ki 19:19-21](#)) The call of Elisha.

So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please 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?" So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

a. **He departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat:** Elijah did what the *still small voice* of God told him to do. He happened to do it in reverse order than God described to him in the previous passage. Perhaps Elijah believed that he *first* needed a friend and apprentice.

b. **Who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him:** Elijah found Elisha and commissioned him to ministry when Elisha was at work.

c. **Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him:** The mantle was the symbol of Elijah's prophetic authority. This was a dramatic symbol that said, "I call upon you to join in my work as a prophet."

i. "The *mantle*, or *pallium*, was the peculiar garb of the prophet, as we may learn from [Zechariah 13:4](#); and this was probably made of *skin dressed with the hair on*. See also [2 Kings 1:8](#)." (Clarke)

d. **What have I done to you?** This question "Could mean, 'Go back, but remember what I have done to you.' It might be a rebuke at any delay in following." (Wiseman)

i. "Elijah's reply indicates that he himself had not called Elisha; it was God's call. Whether Elisha would follow that call was his own decision." (Patterson and Austel)

e. **Took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate:** This demonstrated Elisha's complete commitment to following Elijah. He destroyed the tools of his trade in a going away party for his family and friends.

i. "Elisha must have had a considerable estate, when he kept *twelve* yoke of oxen to till the ground. If, therefore, he obeyed the prophetic call, he did it to considerable secular loss." (Clarke)

ii. "Hereby he showed how willingly and joyfully he forsook all his friends, that he might serve God in that high and honourable employment." (Poole)

3. ([Luk 9:23](#)) Jesus calls everyone wanting to follow Him to do what He will do.

Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

a. **Then He said to them all:** It was bad enough for the disciples to hear that Jesus would suffer, be rejected, and die on a cross. Now He told them that *they* must do the same; or at least have the same intention.

b. **Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me:** As Jesus spoke these words, everybody knew what Jesus meant. In the Roman world, before a man *died* on a cross, he had to *carry* his cross (or at least the horizontal beam of the cross) to the place of execution.

i. When the Romans crucified a criminal, they didn't just hang them on a cross. They first hung a cross on him.

ii. *Carrying* a cross always led to *death* on a cross. No one carried a cross for fun. The first hearers of Jesus didn't need an explanation of the cross; they knew it was an unrelenting instrument of torture, death, and humiliation. If someone took **up his cross**, he never came back. It was a one-way journey.

iii. In the real-life crosses of the Roman world, no one *took them up* (suggesting a voluntary action). Instead, crosses were impressed upon people, quite apart from their willingness. Here Jesus said that those who follow Him must voluntarily **take up** their cross.

iv. This isn't to suggest that we can *choose* our way to die a living death as followers of Jesus; but as the unchosen circumstances come into life, we choose to bear them as a way to daily die for Jesus' glory.

c. **Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily:** Jesus made **deny himself** equal with **take up his cross**. The two phrases expressed the same idea. The cross wasn't about self-promotion or self-affirmation. The person carrying a cross knew they couldn't save themselves, and that *self* was destined to die.

i. Denying yourself means to live as an others-centered person. Jesus was the only person to do this perfectly, but we are to follow in His steps.

d. **Take up his cross daily:** Jesus made it clear that He spoke spiritually when He added the word **daily**. No one could be crucified *literally* everyday. **Daily** they *could* have the same attitude as Jesus had.

i. This is following Jesus at its simplest. He carried a cross, so His followers carry one. He walked to His self-death, so must those who would follow Him.

5. ([Luk 9:57-58](#)) True greatness is shown in sacrifice.

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

a. **Lord, I will follow You wherever You go:** With the miracles associated with the ministry of Jesus, following Him might have seemed more glamorous than it really was. Jesus perhaps received many spontaneous offers like this.

b. **Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head:** Jesus didn't tell the man “No, you can't follow Me.” But He told him the truth, without painting a glamorized version of what it was like to follow Him. This is the *opposite* of techniques used by many evangelists today, but Jesus wanted the man to know what it would really be like.

i. “In the immediate context of Jesus’ ministry, the saying does not mean that Jesus was penniless but homeless; the nature of his mission kept him on the move and would keep his followers on the move.” (Carson)

ii. The reason this man turned away from Jesus was because Jesus lived a very simple life by faith, trusting His Father for every need and without reserves of material resources. *This is just the kind of thing that would make Jesus more attractive to a truly spiritual man.* “Here is a man who lives completely by faith and is satisfied with few material things; I should follow Him and learn from Him.”

iii. “We have good evidence here that he knew how to shut the door as well as to open it. He knew as well how to warn the pretentious as to accept the penitent.” (Spurgeon)

6. ([Luk 9:59-60](#)) True greatness means that we give Jesus the top priority in our lives.

Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

a. **He said to another, “Follow Me”:** The man described in [Luke 9:57-58](#) offered to follow Jesus. In contrast, Jesus asked this man to **follow** Him.

b. **Lord, let me first go and bury my father:** Actually, this man did not ask for permission to dig a grave for his deceased father. He wanted to remain in his father’s house and care for him until the father died. This was obviously an indefinite period, which could drag on and on.

i. “He was not torn between the right and wrong. He was torn between the right and right. He hesitated between two rival claims, both of them stamped with the seal of the divine.” (Morrison)

ii. The man wanted to follow Jesus, *but not just yet*. He knew it was good and that he should do it, but he felt there was a good reason why he could not do it *now*. The previous man was too quick to follow Jesus; this man was too slow.

c. **Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God:** Jesus pressed the man to follow Him *now*, and clearly stated the principle that family obligations – or any other obligation – must not be put ahead of following Jesus. Jesus must come first.

i. Jesus was not afraid to discourage potential disciples. Unlike many modern evangelists, He was interested more in *quality* than in *quantity*. In addition, Jesus was merely being *honest*. This is what it meant to follow Him, and He wanted people to know it at the beginning.

7. ([Luk 9:61-62](#)) True greatness means that we follow Jesus wholeheartedly, without delay.

And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

a. **Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house:** The previous man offered to follow Jesus after an indefinite, perhaps long delay. This man offered to follow Jesus after a relatively short delay.

i. “O young man, when you are thinking of leaving the world, be afraid of these farewells! They have been the ruin of hundreds of hopeful people. They have been almost persuaded; but they have gone to their old companions just to give them the last kiss, and the last shake of the hand, and we have not seen anything more of them.” (Spurgeon)

b. **No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God:** Jesus stressed to this man the commitment necessary to follow Him. One must have a similar determination as a farmer plowing a field, who must do it with all his strength and always looking forward.

i. In plowing a field in that day, a farmer kept the rows straight by focusing on an object in front and in the distance (such as a tree). If the farmer started to plow and kept looking behind, he would never make straight rows and do a good job plowing. In following Jesus, we are to keep our eyes on Jesus, and never take our eyes off Him. “No ploughman ever ploughed a straight furrow looking back over his shoulder.” (Barclay)

ii. Plowmen also do something else of great importance: *they hold on*. A plowman who lets go is no plowman at all. “Ploughmen are not usually learned persons, nor are they often poets in disguise. But there is one virtue they possess pre-eminently, and that is the virtue of quietly holding to it.” (Morrison)

ii. More than anyone else, Jesus lived this; He *steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem* ([Luke 9:51](#)).