

## Finding Your Mission in Life

**Opening text: 1 Kings 19:19-20** - <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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?" <sup>21</sup> 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.

**Introduction:** For those less familiar with the man at the centre of the passage, let me just say that Elijah was a prophet who lived at a time when Israel, especially the northern kingdom, was ruled by kings who were degenerate, vicious and cruel and who didn't serve God. They worshiped Babylonian and Assyrian deities (around the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC).

Elijah's mission was to bring God's word and to demonstrate God's power to a people that were far from God. Today, God is still using people to do that. God is still announcing His plan to people who are far away from Him.

This passage relates to a time when the prophet emerges from a season of deep discouragement. Elijah was exhausted and felt overwhelmed. However, God visited him in a cave and renewed his strength.

Elijah felt alone. In chapters 18 and 19, he said to God 3 times "*I alone am left*" (18:22, 19:10,14).

Elijah felt alone and as if he was fighting a losing battle. However, God brought Elisha into his life, not just to be his intern, but also to encourage him.

God is into teamwork. We can do so much more if we work together!

**Deut. 32:30<sup>a</sup>** - *How could one chase a thousand,  
And two put ten thousand to flight.*

The association of Elijah and Elisha is also symbolic of the power of different generations working together – young and old and everyone in between will accomplish so much more if they work together.

Elisha means "God saves".

Today, I want us to look at the encounter between these two men, Elijah and Elisha.

- 1. This was not just a casual encounter. It was not just something random or accidental, but it was one of those life-changing God-ordained moments.**

God doesn't do random or accidental. God appoints times and moments like that.

Prophets in the Old Testament were also called 'seers' because they saw things God showed them. What Elijah saw that day, was more than a man working the ground in the sweat of his face - he saw a man about to be anointed and appointed to live life in a different dimension. As a result, he throws the special garment of prophets over him – the *addereth* – a large overgarment made of animal hair.

- a) Two men meet but they are at two different levels: one comes from the presence of God in the mountain and has just experienced God move in his life. The other, Elisha, is at work in the field, and at that point is unaware of God's plan for his life. One is on a divine mission, the other just fulfilling some basic tasks of natural life, like working and making a living.
- b) Most people perhaps stand where Elisha is standing when he met the prophet: living life in the natural dimension, unaware that God created them with a specific mission in mind. God had a mission lined up for Elisha. His very name indicated 'mission': "*God saves*".

**2. Today's message is basically a reminder that God has an assignment for your life.**

You can live purely in the natural dimension, or you can be bold and embrace a life driven by a sense of mission and divine purpose. You can live a missional life. (When I say "mission", I am referring to the assignment of God for your life, the purpose for which you were created, the high calling He has for you).

I believe that finding your assignment and fulfilling the mission you were born for is the secret to a happy and fulfilled life. God wants you to enter His mission.

**3. Elisha could have resisted the call**

After all his hands were full – literally. He was ploughing with 12 yokes of oxen (that is a lot for just one set of hands). He was a busy man.

Not only his hands were full, but Elisha had much at stake: in order to have that many cattle and land he must have been very wealthy. Also, his father's name was Shaphat which means '*governor*'. He probably belonged to the local elite, or at least the higher levels of that society.

Lastly there was also the expectation of his parents. Elisha had to count the cost. That is why he said, '*let me kiss my father and my mother*' (v.20). He did not want to dishonour them.

He could have objected or resisted the call. However, he didn't, and he responded promptly, regardless of the cost.

**V.21** - *So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.*

Once he made his decision, he didn't want to ever look back: he burned the things that no longer belonged in his life. He was ready to embrace the mission he had been born for, unhindered by his past.

**Luke 9:62:** *But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

- Elisha was working with oxen when the prophet found him,
- Saul was looking for donkeys when Samuel found him to make him king
- David was tending sheep
- Amos, the prophet, was also tending sheep when Amaziah came to him.  
**Amos 7:14:** *"Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheep breeder and a tender of sycamore fruit."*
- Nehemiah was in the kitchen, when God called him to rebuild Jerusalem.
- Peter was fishing, when Jesus found him.

They all had a natural occupation. However, all of them also had one of those God-moments when, one day, something radically shifted in their lives, one of those turning points, one of those defining moments when they suddenly connected with the higher purposes of God and found the assignment for which they were born.

**I am today encouraging you towards that shift:** find your calling, find your place in the mission of God. That is not to say that you are to neglect the natural side of things. No. This is simply to encourage you discover and to embrace your God-assignment in life.

We are all called to a specific assignment in God:

**Hebrews 3:1** - *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*

**2 Tim.1:9** - *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,*

**1 Peter 4:10** - *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

**Ephesians 2:10** - *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

## Conclusion

1. Live a missional life: You are part of God's plan for mankind. Live life driven by your heavenly assignment.
2. Pursue and acknowledge God-moments and God encounters
3. Trim away excess and things that do not belong in your calling, and never look back.
4. Look for opportunities. Take risks and embrace what God puts in front of you.