

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

**“DO YOU WANT MORE OUT OF LIFE:
MORE SPIRIT”**

The Christian life does not have to be “just getting by”. The Lord has promised us a life of spiritual abundance. This is only possible by one means: the Holy Spirit. If you are a believer, He already indwells you but do you limit His work in and through your life?

DAY 1

Today's Scripture:

1 Kings 19:16, 19-21

The Word

I am horrible with names. Just recently I was talking to a friend about a Linda Carter in the church. My friend stopped me and said, “Wonder Woman does not attend our church.” I had mixed up this ladies’ name with the actress who played a comic superhero.

Many people mix up names in the Bible. There are two names we are going to get straight this week. They were mighty prophets of God, performing acts of superheroes. One is Elijah and the other Elisha. Since the names are similar, you can remember their order in the Bible by the fact that they are alphabetical. Elijah came before Elisha. In fact, Elijah was the one who called Elisha into the ministry of God.

1 Kings 19:16

¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.

Verse 16: Elijah was one of the greatest prophets who ever walked the earth. He was a powerhouse: called fire from heaven to consume his enemies, declared a famine upon the land, was fed by ravens at a river, and worked many other miracles by the Spirit of God. He was an amazing man yet the work at this point of his life was ending. The Lord told Elijah that he would be replaced by Elisha. The time had come for Elisha to know.

1 Kings 19:19

¹⁹ So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.

Verse 19: Elijah meets Elisha on the field, in the middle of his work. Since there are twelve pairs of oxen, we can deduce that Elisha came from a very wealthy family. Without a word, Elijah throws his cloak on Elisha, symbolizing him as the successor to his prophetic ministry.

1 Kings 19:20

²⁰ Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-by," he said, "and then I will come with you."

"Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

Verse 20: Immediately, Elisha submits to Elijah. He asks permission, not demanding it, to go and tell his parents. The life of every believer is about submission. Our ultimate authority is the Lord, yet He has placed other leaders in our lives. Elisha recognized the authority of Elijah and yielded to it.

1 Kings 19:21

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 attendant.

Verse 16: This is one of the most powerful visuals of dedication to God. Elisha literally put to death his livelihood. By killing his oxen and burning the plowing equipment, he was saying, "I am not turning back." Many of us say the words but are we following through with our actions? Before friends and family Elisha said, "I am never going back to my old way of life. From this moment on, I will serve the Lord."

I have heard it said, "You may have the Spirit but does the Spirit have you?" Many of us want to live a Spirit-filled life but it can only come by obedience. We must obey the Spirit and follow His leading. Just like Elisha, we may need to ask those more mature in the faith what the Lord wants us to do. When we receive the message, we must follow through.

Up Close and Personal

Confess any areas of your life that are not in submission to the Spirit.

What is the Lord asking you to give up?

How will you follow through in obedience?

Who will you tell about this decision?

DAY 2

Today's Scripture:

2 Kings 2:1-9; John 15:5

The Word

Some people have lost best friends. Relationships have parted due to misunderstandings, distance, or even death. But I think I can safely say that only Elisha experienced a loss of a friend due to the fact that Elijah was caught up in the whirlwind of God and taken to heaven. That was a once in history type of occurrence.

2 Kings 2:1-2

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.

Verse 1-2: Elijah and Elisha both knew that the Lord was about to take Elijah away. Before he was to leave, Elijah was traveling to different places, most likely to minister to the prophets in the different regions. Elisha refused to leave his side, despite the distance they would cover.

2 Kings 2:3

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."

Verse 3: Pain runs deep. Even though Elisha knew the separation was ordained by God, he was still hurting about it. Following the will of the Lord is sometimes difficult. Please do not think the Christian life is "happy go lucky". This is simply not true. There are hardships in our lives. But with Christ, we never face them alone. Elisha knew Elijah would be gone but his God would not. However, he was going to spend the last moments he could with his beloved mentor.

2 Kings 2:4-6

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.

Verse 4-6: Elisha followed Elijah, but he was not the only one. Other prophets who knew what would occur, also stayed near this mighty man of God.

2 Kings 2:7-8

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.

Verse 7-8: This is the final miracle Elijah did before being taken away. Elisha witnessed this miracle as did the company of prophets. Because they were faithful to follow, God showed them His mighty power. When we are faithful and persevere, we will see the hand of God at work.

While all the prophets observed the miracle, only Elisha got to walk through it. Our friendships will take us to places we may never expect. Together, we can do more for the Lord than we ever thought possible. However, even if our friendships must end, the work must go on.

The Lord bonds people together in ways this world does not understand. Deep friendships are made as men and women labor side by side for the work of the gospel. Elijah and Elisha had shared times of ministry. Elisha knew ministry would be different without his friend, yet he continued to be faithful.

I knew a man in college who was called to missions. His best friend, Kyle, had cystic fibrosis. They labored together for the Lord and won people to Christ. Kyle finally succumbed to his disease and passed away in his sleep. Without Kyle, this man refused to go on. He turned his back on ministry and embraced the world. It was heartbreaking.

Elisha was about to experience a significant loss as well. But instead of succumbing to the pain, he chose to petition for more strength to persevere through the journey of life.

2 Kings 2:9

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.

Verse 9: "Elijah was not expressing a desire for a ministry twice as great as Elijah's, but he was using terms derived from inheritance law to express his desire to carry on Elijah's ministry. Inheritance law assigned a double portion of a father's possessions to the firstborn son." (NIV text note)

Elisha realized the power of the ministry of Elijah. It was not based on talent, charisma, luck, or anything else. Elisha knew that everything Elijah was and did could be traced back to the Spirit. And because he loved Elijah like a father, he wanted to carry on his mentor's work in a way that would also be Spirit-filled. Elisha knew that he could accomplish nothing worthwhile on his own. It is all by the Spirit. The same is true for us.

John 15:5

⁵ *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

Verse 5: Apart from the Lord we can do nothing. It is only by Him that we accomplish anything that is significant. Elisha did not want a life marked by worldly success but one that was considered successful by the Lord. By observing Elijah, he knew that it was only possible by the Spirit.

As you embark on this journey of life, what would you ask for? Wealth, talent, happiness, comfort, popularity: the world seeks after these. But the children of God should ask their Heavenly Father for more of the Spirit.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord that He is willing to give us His Spirit.

Why is it important that your closest friends be godly people?

How are your friends encouraging your walk in the Lord?

Thinking back on your prayers this week, what are you asking the Lord for?

What does this show about the condition of your spiritual life?



Today's Scripture:

2 Kings 2:9-14

The Word

Humility is a quality not often associated with leaders. Yet, the last lesson that Elijah passed down to Elisha was one of humility. I believe it is something Elisha carried with him throughout his life.

2 Kings 2:9-10

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."*

Verse 9-10: This mighty prophet of God did not presume of God. "Elijah left the answer to Elisha's request in the Lord's hands." (NIV text note) Elijah did not patronize Elisha and tell him, "of course that will happen" because he did not know. Elijah did not feel jealous of Elisha possibly living more of a Spirit life than he himself experienced. Instead, he just left it all up to the will of God.

Often we apply promises of the Lord inappropriately. "Do you want money? God will provide. Do you want to be healed? God will heal you." Unless we have a direct word from the Lord, then we should not guarantee how the Lord will act. He is in control, not us. Elijah models the answer we need to have: if it is the Lord's will then He will do it. If it is not, then He will not. We do not know all of His ways to dictate what God will do in the circumstances. We need to humble ourselves and recognize that God is God, we are not. Whatever He chooses will, in the end, bring Himself glory.

2 Kings 2:11

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.*

Verse 11: I cannot even picture how amazing this scene must have been. I love to try to view it in my imagination but I know that it is more marvelous than anything that I could possibly dream about. While I long to see it, there was another who was broken by it.

2 Kings 2:12

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.

Verse 12: Elisha tore his robes in sorrow. His father in the faith was gone. The amazing display of the power of God did not minimize his pain. This is so comforting to me. The Word of God gives us permission to grieve. We do not have to wear a fake smile and pretend everything is alright. Elisha's torn robe would have been a public display of his broken heart. Even when following the will of the Lord, life will be painful. Do not hide it. Instead, be open and share it. However, do not allow it to keep you from following the will of God. Move forward with His power.

2 Kings 2:13

¹³ He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

Verse 13: Picture this scene with me. Elisha is standing on one side of the river. Fifty prophets are on the other side. All of them saw Elijah hit that river with his cloak, allowing him and Elisha to walk through on dry ground. Elisha is standing there holding the cloak. Thoughts are racing through his head. He remembers when Elijah threw the cloak over his shoulders while he was plowing the fields. He knows that it symbolized that he would be Elijah's successor. He recalls killing the oxen in the field and burning the plow, never to return to his former life. He thinks on conversations with his beloved mentor and friend. He asked for a double portion of the Spirit. It was promised if he would see Elijah taken away. He had. He takes in a deep breath, rolls up the cloak and...

2 Kings 2:14

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.

Verse 14: Elisha did not know the miracle would happen. It was by faith he struck the water. Mixed in his faith was some doubt! He is questioning if God would work through him as he had through Elijah. We do not have to have perfect faith to go forward in the Lord. God will meet us where we are. Elisha doubted but he still struck the water. Suddenly, it parted, just as it had with Elijah. At this moment, Elisha knows, the Spirit is with him.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to increase your faith.

Are you open about pain in your life or do you try to hide it? Why?

How can we have both faith and doubt at the same time?

How is our faith increased?

DAY
4

Today's Scripture:
2 Kings 2:15-18

The Word

The waters have parted to the right and to the left. Elisha begins to walk through. His robes are torn from his sorrow over the loss of his mentor, Elijah. His mind is slowly grasping the fact that the Spirit is upon him. Others immediately come forward to confirm his ministry.

2 Kings 2:15

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.

Verse 15: The prophets recognized the movement of the Spirit. They verified Elisha as the successor to Elijah. It is difficult to step into God's calling, much less when you are stepping into the shoes of one of the greatest prophets in history. For a modern day example, imagine being called to fill in for Billy Graham. I am sure that Elisha was overwhelmed with the enormous undertaking before him. These prophets were such encouragers. We need more people to come alongside the servants of God and help them use their spiritual gifts for the Lord.

2 Kings 2:16

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."

Verse 16: While the prophets were right in encouraging Elisha's ministry, they were inappropriate in caring for his emotional needs. They attempted to fix the problem (trying to find Elisha) rather than just being with Elisha. Often we attempt to solve other's situations when all they really need is our presence. Instead of trying to meet Elisha's needs, they pressed for their own agenda.

2 Kings 2:17-18

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?"

Verse 17-18: The prophets had known that Elijah was going to be taken up. Yet, they ignored the truth and wasted three days for a futile cause. Elisha gives them a big "I told you so" when they returned. They ignored the known will of God and put their hope in something false. This always leads to failure.

Elisha had faced the reality of the situation. He knew that the Lord had chosen to carry Elijah away. Now, he must press forward in ministry all by himself. Perseverance is a key trait to those who have the Spirit. People who receive the Spirit are willing to press forward in both easy and good times. They do not waste their efforts on searching for temporary happiness, but stay committed to the will of God.

The Lord has given us His Spirit so that we may live for Him. The life before us will have pain and joy, bad and good. But when we live by the Spirit, we will experience victory in the tragedy, hope in the trial, strength for the journey. What more could you ask for?

Up Close and Personal

Praise God that He encourages our hearts.

How do you encourage others?

Who do you know that needs encouragement now?

How will you encourage that person this week?

Do you try to fix problems instead of just listening and caring for others? How will you work on changing?

Why is this “false encouragement” no encouragement at all?



Today's Scripture:

Galatians 5:22-23; Luke 11:9-13; Romans 8:6

The Word

Elisha wanted a double portion of the Spirit, and he requested it. He had seen the benefits of the Spirit through Elijah. The evidence of the Spirit is seen in our lives because of all the Spirit brings to us.

Galatians 5:22-23

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Verse 9-10: The Spirit is willing to fill our life with every spiritual blessing in Christ. These blessings are not a hope for the future. We can ask for more of the Spirit today.

Luke 11:9-10

⁹“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Verse 9-10: In the game of hide and seek, the object is to not be found. Often, we think the same is true about spiritual matters, as if God is hiding from us and purposely avoiding us finding Him. The opposite is true. The Lord wants to be found by us. He says, “You want more of Me? Ask and I will give you more of my Spirit. You desire to know me? Seek and you will find. You are looking for answers? Knock and the door will open. I guarantee it. You have my Word.”

God loves you. He is your Heavenly Father. He wants what is best for you. And He knows that more of the Spirit working in and through your life is what keeps you in His will, which is the best place to be. He is ready to give, but you must be ready to receive.

Luke 11:11-13

¹¹"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹²Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Verse 41: If you want more of the Spirit, ask for Him. He will fill you. He will give you what you want.

Romans 8:6

⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

Verse 6: Who does not want life and peace? God is willing to give you this by His Spirit. This is not a trouble-free life but instead a triumphant-filled life. It is facing problems with Almighty God guiding you. It is making decisions with the Counselor advising you. It is overcoming loneliness with the Lover of your soul. It is battling temptation with the One who overcame the world. The Spirit is within you and He is willing to give you full access to all of God, if only you will ask.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to fill you with His Spirit.

What is the difference between receiving the Spirit at salvation and being filled with the Spirit?

What are the benefits of a Spirit-filled life?

In what ways do you need the Spirit in your life right now?