

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

“Two Lives, Two Legacies ” - 2 Kings 1 & 2

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the contrasting legacies of King Ahaziah and the prophet Elijah from 2 Kings 1-2, emphasizing how our response to suffering reveals where we place our faith and how finishing well determines the legacy we leave behind. The message challenges believers to consider where they turn in times of hardship—whether to false gods and temporary comforts or to the one true God. Through Elijah's miraculous departure and faithful mentorship of Elisha, the sermon illustrates the importance of discipleship and spiritual investment in others. Pastor Matt emphasizes that while suffering is inevitable, it either draws us closer to God or pushes us away, and that living with the end in mind—preparing to finish the race well—is essential for leaving a godly legacy.

Key Points:

- Where you run in suffering reveals where you place your faith
- When Ahaziah fell and was injured, he turned to Beelzebub (a false god) instead of the God of Israel
- God showed mercy and patience, giving Ahaziah multiple opportunities to repent before his death
- Elijah demonstrated unwavering faithfulness to God throughout his ministry, standing against cultural idolatry
- Elijah's legacy included powerful prayer, refusing to compromise with false gods, and mentoring Elisha
- Elisha's request for a "double portion" was a recognition of Elijah as his spiritual father and a desire to continue his ministry
- How you finish the race strengthens or weakens the legacy you leave
- Finishing well requires both being disciplined and discipling others
- Suffering will either draw you closer to God or push you away—it will not leave you where you are
- We must prepare to finish strong by considering what it means to live faithfully to the very end

Scripture Reference:

- 2 Kings 1:1-17 (Ahaziah's inquiry of Beelzebub and subsequent death)
- 2 Kings 2:1-25 (Elijah's departure in a whirlwind and Elisha's inheritance of his mantle)
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (The Shema and instructions for teaching children about God in the home.)

Stories:

- The illustration of a three-year-old child running to the one they trust most when hurt
- The youth mocking Elisha ("Go up, Baldy") and being mauled by two bears
- Personal anecdote about playing middle school basketball with five players named Matthew
- Experience in South Africa at a youth night where a "youth" participant was 32 years old

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question:

Think of someone (famous or personally known) whose life left a clear legacy—good or bad. What specific choices or patterns do you think most shaped that legacy?

I. Where you run in suffering reveals where you place your faith

1. **2 Kings 1:1–4:** In this passage, what specific evidence shows that Ahaziah's functional trust was in Baal-zebub rather than in the Lord, even though he ruled God's covenant people? Compare his response to the crisis with Psalm 46:1–3. Based on both passages, identify at least two concrete ways a person today might reveal that their true trust in suffering is not in God, even if they are outwardly religious.
2. **2 Kings 1:13–17:** Compare the third captain's response with Ahaziah's response. Using James 1:2–5 and Psalm 34:17–18, evaluate which response shows genuine humility and faith in suffering and which reveals hardness of heart. What specific attitudes or actions in each case support your evaluation?

II. How you finish the race strengthens or weakens the legacy you leave.

1. **2 Kings 2:1–10:** Looking at this interaction, identify at least two ways Elijah is intentionally preparing for a faithful “handoff” of his ministry to Elisha, and at least two ways Elisha is demonstrating serious commitment to continue Elijah's legacy. Compare this with 2 Timothy 2:2 and explain how both passages together show that “finishing well” necessarily includes investing in others.
2. **2 Kings 2:11–15:** Using this scene and Hebrews 12:1–3, explain how Elijah's departure and Elisha's picking up the mantle illustrate the relationship between one generation “finishing well” and the next generation “running with endurance.” Identify at least two practical implications for how a believer today should think about their personal finish line and their responsibility toward those coming after them.

III. Suffering will either draw you closer to God or push you away; it will not leave you where you are.

1. **2 Kings 1:2–4, 16–17:** Contrast Ahaziah's response to his suffering with Job's response in Job 1:20–22. Identify one key belief about God that each man is acting on in his crisis. Using Romans 5:3–5, explain how each belief would logically lead either toward spiritual growth or toward spiritual hardening.
2. **2 Kings 1:3, 6, 16:** God confronts Ahaziah with the same piercing question multiple times. Looking at this repeated question and Romans 8:28–29, explain how God is

using Ahaziah's crisis as an opportunity for repentance and transformation rather than only as punishment. Then, apply that logic: identify one current or recent hardship in your own life and, using these passages, determine at least one specific way that hardship could be intended to draw you closer to God rather than push you away.

IV. Faithful legacy involves both being disciplined and discipling others.

- 1. 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15:** From these verses, identify at least two indications that Elijah's ministry was not isolated but existed within a discipling community ("sons of the prophets"). Compare this with 2 Timothy 2:1–2 and explain how both passages together show that a faithful legacy requires intentional, multi-generational discipleship, not just individual spirituality.
- 2. Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Matthew 28:18–20:** Using these two passages together, identify at least two specific spheres (contexts) where every believer is clearly commanded to pass on the knowledge and love of God (e.g., home, church, workplace, nations). Then, in light of Elijah discipling Elisha in 2 Kings 2:1–10, determine one concrete, realistic next step you personally should take either to be disciplined or to disciple someone else in one of those spheres.

5 Day Devotional

Day 1 – Where Do You Run First?

Reading: 2 Kings 1:1–4, Psalm 46:1–2

Devotional: Ahaziah's life is suddenly disrupted when he falls and is seriously injured. His instinct is not to seek the Lord but to send messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, a false god in a foreign land. His actions reveal what he truly trusts when things fall apart. Our first response in crisis is often the clearest indicator of where our functional faith really lies. God stands ready as a refuge, but we must consciously turn to Him rather than to our usual "substitutes" for security and comfort.

Reflection / Prayer: Ask God to show you one specific "Baal-zebub" in your life—something or someone you reflexively run to for comfort, answers, or control instead of Him. Pray: "Lord, in my next crisis, help my first instinct to be to call on Your name and seek Your wisdom rather than my usual substitutes."

Day 2 – God's Patient Warning

Reading: 2 Kings 1:5–17, Romans 2:4

Devotional: Ahaziah receives multiple warnings. The messengers return quickly with a clear word from God; captains and their men are dramatically judged by fire; a third captain humbly pleads for mercy and is spared. Every step offers Ahaziah a chance to recognize God's reality and to repent of his idolatry, yet he remains unmoved. God's severe acts in this chapter are not random—they come after significant patience and clear opportunities to turn back.

Reflection / Prayer: Consider whether there is an area where God has been giving you repeated, gentle warnings—through Scripture, conscience, or other believers. Pray: "Father, don't let me harden my heart to Your warnings. Give me the humility of the third captain, not the stubbornness of Ahaziah."

Day 3 – Finishing Well and Passing the Mantle

Reading: 2 Kings 2:1–10, 2 Timothy 2:1–2

Devotional: As Elijah nears the end of his earthly ministry, he intentionally walks with Elisha from place to place, almost testing his resolve: "Stay here... the LORD is sending me on." Elisha refuses to leave, demonstrating deep loyalty and a serious desire to inherit a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit—in other words, the rightful share of a spiritual firstborn son. Elijah's finish is not about personal comfort but about faithful transition; he invests in someone who will carry on God's work. The New Testament vision of discipleship echoes this: receive truth, then entrust it to others who will do the same.

Reflection / Prayer: Ask yourself - Do you currently have at least one person you are learning from spiritually and at least one person you are helping to grow? Pray: "Lord, show me who I should invite to walk more closely with me spiritually—both someone to learn from and someone to pour into."

Day 4 – Picking Up the Mantle

Reading: 2 Kings 2:11–15, Hebrews 12:1–2

Devotional: Elijah is taken up to heaven in a whirlwind with chariots of fire, a dramatic sign that his ministry has reached God’s appointed finish. Elisha tears his clothes in grief yet does something crucial: he picks up the fallen mantle of Elijah and cries, “Where is the LORD God of Elijah?” His confidence is not in inheriting Elijah’s status but in the same living God who empowered Elijah. Every generation of believers must do something similar—grieve losses, remember the faithful before us, and then take up the responsibility to walk with the same God in our own time.

Reflection / Prayer: Think of one faithful believer (alive or dead) whose example you respect. Ask: “What part of their ‘mantle’ is God asking me to pick up in my own context?” Pray: “Lord, thank You for those who went before me. Help me not just to admire them, but to walk by faith in You as they did.”

Day 5 – Holy Power and Holy Fear

Reading: 2 Kings 2:16–25, Proverbs 1:7

Devotional: After Elijah’s departure, Elisha confirms his calling with a gracious miracle at Jericho—healing bad water and making the land fruitful. Immediately afterward, a group of youths mock both his calling and the reality of God (“Go up, baldy!”), and judgment comes through two bears who maul many of them. These stories together show both the kindness and severity of God: He heals and blesses, but He will not be mocked. A right response to God’s power is a healthy fear—a deep reverence that shapes how we speak, listen, and live.

Reflection / Prayer: Examine your heart: Is there any way you’ve treated God’s Word, God’s people, or God’s name casually or mockingly—even just in your thoughts or jokes? Pray: “Lord, teach me the fear of You in a biblical, healthy way. Let my reverence for You shape my words, decisions, and relationships today.”