

What Would You Ask God For? Lessons from Elisha on Faith, Calling, and the Holy Spirit

If God appeared to you today and said, "Ask me for whatever you want," how would you respond? Your answer reveals more about your heart than you might expect. The story of Elisha stepping into his calling as a prophet offers three powerful truths that are just as relevant for followers of Jesus today as they were in ancient Israel.

What Does the Bible Say About the Number of Our Days?

The passage in 2 Kings 2 opens with a striking phrase: "When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind." Before anything else happens, we are reminded that God is the one who determines when a life on earth is complete.

You may remember that earlier in his ministry, Elijah was so discouraged and exhausted that he prayed for God to take His life. God did not answer that prayer, not because He wasn't listening, but because Elijah's work was not yet finished. The timing of our lives belongs to God alone.

The Psalmist puts it plainly:

"Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." - Psalm 139:16 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus reinforces this truth in Matthew 10:

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." - Matthew 10:29-31 English Standard Version (ESV)

If God cares about the death of a single sparrow, how much more does He care about you and the days of your life?

Why This Truth Brings Peace

The 19th century Anglican priest Henry Martyn said it well: "You are immortal until God's purpose for you is complete." That is not a reckless statement. It is a deeply comforting one. Your life rests securely in the hands of a sovereign God who has not forgotten you and has not finished with you.

How Does the Enemy Try to Pull Us Away from Following Jesus?

Three times in this passage, Elijah tells Elisha to stay behind. Three times, Elisha refuses. He responds each time with the same declaration: "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you."

Scholars agree that Elijah was testing Elisha's commitment. He was giving him one last opportunity to walk away from the calling God had placed on His life. And Elisha passed the test every single time.

This mirrors how the enemy works in our own lives. As 1 Peter 5:8 warns, our enemy prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. He wants to devour your faith and your commitment to Jesus.

Two Common Ways Satan Tries to Draw Us Away

- Through suffering, sickness, and disease. This does not mean every illness is caused by Satan, but Scripture is clear that he can and does use suffering as a tool. Job experienced it. The woman in Luke 13 was kept bound for 18 years. Paul described his thorn in the flesh as a messenger of Satan. The goal is to wear you down and cause you to question God's goodness.
- Through the lure of the world. Paul mentions a man named Demas in his letters, someone who walked alongside him in ministry. By the time of 2 Timothy, Paul writes that Demas "loved this world" and had deserted him. The things of this world, money, success, comfort, security, can quietly pull a person away from their commitment to Christ.

Paul warns about this directly:

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." - 1 Timothy 6:9-10 English Standard Version (ESV)

When Elisha said yes to God's call, He meant it. The question for each of us is whether we mean it too, especially when the pressure comes.

Why Can't We Accomplish God's Mission Without the Holy Spirit?

When Elijah asks Elisha what he can do for him before being taken away, Elisha's answer is remarkable. He does not ask for wealth, influence, or an easier path. He says:

"Please let there be a double portion of your Spirit on me." - 2 Kings 2:9 English Standard Version (ESV)

The concept of a double portion comes from Deuteronomy 21, where the firstborn son was entitled to twice the inheritance of the other sons. Elisha takes that principle and applies it not to material things but to the Spirit. He understood that without God's power resting on him, He could not do what God was calling Him to do.

What Jesus Said About the Holy Spirit and Our Mission

Jesus told His disciples the same thing before His ascension. He told them not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the gift the Father had promised. He knew they could not carry out the mission on their own strength. Then He said:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." - Acts 1:8 English Standard Version (ESV)

One of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit is to empower believers for ministry that exalts Christ and glorifies God. This is not optional. It is essential.

What This Means for the Church as a Whole

This truth applies not just to individuals but to the church as a body. Any vision, any mission, any goal a congregation sets out to accomplish will fall flat without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit working through it. The Spirit gives life. Apart from Him, we can do nothing of lasting kingdom value.

As a church family, the call is to keep placing great emphasis on the presence and work of the Spirit, in worship, in Bible study, in small groups, and in everyday life. When people gather, they should encounter the living Spirit of God.

Life Application

This week, take Elisha's request seriously. Set aside time each day to get on your knees and ask God for a double portion of His Spirit. Ask Him to fill you, to work through you, and to use you for His glory in the ordinary moments of your week.

It takes courage to pray that prayer, because when the Holy Spirit moves, He will stretch you beyond your comfort zone. But that is exactly where God does His best work.

Ask yourself these questions as you reflect on this message:

- If God asked me right now what I wanted most, what would my honest answer reveal about my heart?
- Where in my life am I being tempted to walk away from my commitment to Jesus, whether through suffering or the pull of the world?
- Am I trying to live out my faith and fulfill my calling in my own strength, or am I genuinely depending on the Holy Spirit?

God's purpose for your life is not finished. His Spirit is available to you. The only question is whether you will ask.