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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**March 15, 2015**

**Elijah Disciples Elisha**

**1 Kings 19:15 - 2 Kings 2:1-14 NKJV**

**Prayer:** *Father God, we do again thank you for your grace, we thank you for your goodness, and we thank you for your word. What a privilege it is to each week open up your book and to look into it and just see the abundance of wisdom that is there, and again we just acknowledge the need for your Holy Spirit to open up our eyes, our ears, and to give us the ability to understand this and to again make this a permanent part of our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we are back once again look at the life of Elijah, and we are discussing the -- this new assignment that God has given him after appearing to him in the wilderness. It's found in *1 Kings 19:15-21*. I'll just do 15 through 18. It says this, it says: *Then the Lord said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu, the son of Nimshi as king over Israel, and Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet your place. It shall be that whoever*

*escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."*

God gives Elijah three separate anointing assignments, like I said, he had given him two kings and a prophet. And we looked last week at the kings, at Hazael and Jehu, and saw that they were used mightily by God to discipline Israel despite the fact that Hazael, the king of Syria, who was the ultimate outsider and that Jehu, the insider, was also an incredibly bloodthirsty king and the fact is, Elijah never got to anoint these kings. And he never got to anoint them because he approached the task that God had given him geographically instead of chronologically. He started out heading obediently towards Damascus in the north because that's where God had instructed him to go, and the very first one that he meets on his journey north is Elisha. But God's timing was perfect because he used Hazael and Jehu in spite of the fact they were never anointed by Elijah. In fact, Hazael was never anointed by any man of God. He just stole his authority as king by murdering his standing king, Ben-hadad, and Jehu was anointed by an associate of Elijah's successor Elisha. But even the timing of that anointing was perfect as well, because God basically engineered a delay in Jehu's anointing in order to protect the life of Ahab. And I say

Ahab, understanding we think of Ahab I almost always say "wicked Ahab" because as wicked as Ahab was, when he finally realized that he had filled up the cup of God's wrath, he offered up genuine repentance to God, and because of that display of repentance, God extended mercy to him. What God told him is that he would delay pouring out his wrath on his line until after he had died, and it was Jehu who poured out that wrath. It was Jehu who pursued God's wrath with a vengeance. He's the one who beheaded all seventy of Ahab's sons. He's the one who had Jezebel thrown out of a -- out of a window. You know, if Elijah had anointed Jehu right from the start, Jehu would have first taken out Ahab, but Ahab was someone whom God had extended mercy. So God's curse was on Ahab's progeny and Jehu saw to it that that curse was enacted and he saw it with a vengeance. It was Jehu who wiped out all traces of Ahab's line, but by the time Jehu was anointed king, Ahab was already dead. God had kept his word to Ahab.

So the only real anointing that Elijah does in this is the anointing of his successor Elisha. And we're going to take a look at that this morning. This is *1 Kings 19*, it says this, it says: *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.*

Well, there's a great deal of information in this passage and through it we can learn an awful lot about Elisha's calling into the ministry and about his response to Elijah. You see, God gives Elijah the task of calling Elisha to be his prophet even though Elisha appeared to have the wrong experience, the wrong calling, and the wrong reactions. Now, I say Elisha had the wrong "experience" in quotes because Elijah found him where? He's plowing a field. That's not the normal venue for a prophet or a preacher. And it appears that Elisha's training and experience is not theological, it's agricultural. Elisha apparently is also no casual gentleman farmer either. Elijah finds him deeply involved in a major operation with multiple plows, each with their own set of oxen all plowing side by side. You know, it's one of these ancient agricultural versions of those multi gang monster plows that you see out west plowing up those gigantic fields of wheat. Apparently Elisha was part of a wealthy agricultural family and he was discovered by Elijah while he's busily working. The scripture

says he -- quote -- *"found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth."*

So first of all, Elijah's experience was -- quote -- *"all wrong."* Really? You see, if you're thinking that only professional Christians have any business being called into ministry by God, well consider the folks that the Lord Jesus Christ called into service. In *Matthew 4:18* it says this: *And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.* You see, we spoke last week about that *Romans 8:28* connection to all of this, that God causes all things, all things to work together for good, and that is including a career spent fishing. Jesus was able to make fishers of fish into fishers of men. And God through Elijah was -- enabled a farmer to become a prophet and he's also able to take whatever unique training you have, from homemaker to professional to blue collar, white collar, no collar, whatever profession you are

in, God will either take you out of that field to accomplish something else or he will equip you to work in that field as your mission field. See, if you're a child of God, experience is not a limiting factor. It wasn't for Elisha and it should never be for you.

One of my favorite statements about understanding how we fit into this world we live in is this statement by Abraham Kuyper who said this, he said: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'" I mean, this world that we live and breathe and move in belongs first and foremost exclusively to Christ. I mean, he created it, he sustains it and he owns every square inch of it. And you know, we seldom stop to consider how blessed we are. I mean, you and I have been chosen by Christ to uniquely occupy a niche in his creation in order to present the good news of the gospel and reclaim that particular niche for Christ. You know, it's Christ alone who told us to pray: "*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,*" and we may be a long, long way from that becoming a present reality, but every single one of us has a part in making that happen. I know it's easy to lose sight of God's sovereignty when we see the cultural decay that's all around us, when we hear about the persecution of our brothers and sisters, the sad state of the church today. We think things

are not that different than they were in Elijah's day when he complained to the Lord that, again, *1 Kings 19*: "The people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." And when Elijah complained to God that he was the only one left, God's response was to tell him: "I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." See, God knew then exactly who was who. He knew who belonged to him and he knows that now. The number is considerably more than seven thousand. But only Christ knows who are his lawyers, his doctors, his cops, his homemakers -- you fill in the blanks. But every single position that exists in this world belongs exclusively to him, and he wants to populate it with those who are sold out to him and willing to work inside those niches to see his glory grow. And it is that pursuit that gives our lives meaning. See, I don't care what it is you do, no matter what you do, the bottom line is that at some point if you're a good employee, eventually you're going to get the equivalence of a gold watch and some golf clubs and maybe a pat on the back and then what? You know, you'll be able to look back at your entire career and say well, what was that all about? However, if you've understood your mission first and foremost as glorifying God in the way that you work, in the way that you speak, in the way that you

love your fellow employees, in the ways that you seek to make his kingdom come and his will be done right here and right now, well then retiring is simply receiving a new assignment from God as to what to do next. You see, if you've spent your entire career seeking God's wisdom and strategizing in prayer and seeking out fellow co-workers and just doing the best possible job you could do for the kingdom's sake, well then at the end of that time, regardless of whether or not you've ever led anyone to the Lord, you could look back on that career with an immense amount of satisfaction. And I fear that somehow or other that message has not really been established in each of our lives. And I just wonder, I said, you know, ask yourself, in what way do you see yourself? You know, Elisha saw himself first and foremost as a farmer. Well, that never stopped him from becoming a prophet. You see, it doesn't matter if you're a student or a professional or a homemaker, you are first and foremost a child of the King sent here to glorify your king and advance his kingdom. Or not. Elisha's experience or lack thereof certainly didn't stop him from impacting his world, and your experience should be no different.

Secondly, Elisha's calling. It was all wrong. The scripture says that *Elijah passed by and threw his mantle on him*. Well that's not the way you do it, I mean, Elisha's calling came not from a missions conference or a seminary degree in missiology but from



some weird midday meeting in the middle of Elisha's busy season with Elijah dropping a mantle on Elisha. And it makes me wonder, where do you and I get our calling from? You know, folks today have this idea that there's this professional class who are hired and paid to bring the gospel to the world. And the primary venue where that's supposed to happen, according to this view, is Sunday mornings here in church. You see, it's your job, according to this view, to get people to come to church and it's the church's job to be so attractive that people are going to want to come and then once they're here, the professionals will have the opportunity to tell them all about Jesus and get them all saved. Is that the way church is supposed to work? I think that couldn't be further from the truth. You see, the point of the church is to equip and to edify and instruct and encourage you all as you go out into the world with your primary calling as the gospel first and whatever else you do second. And church is supposed to be the place where you come back to from the world to share with your brothers and sisters how God is using you to impact that world. You see, we are first and foremost witnesses to the mercy of God. A witness is who you are. It's not necessarily what you do. And being a witness is the primary calling of every single child of God. It requires no special education and no special training. Now if you're a witness to a consider accident, you don't have to study automotive engineering in order to describe or explain what it is you saw; you

simply describe it and you describe its relationship to you. Well, listen to how that works. Listen to 1 John 1:1-3. This is what God says. This is what John says, he says: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life -- the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us -- that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.* See, that is exactly what God expects of us. We are to be witnesses. And if you are a child of God, you are already a witness of his grace and the power of the Holy Spirit living within you. And you don't need a Ph.D. in theology to explain that. You just need the courage to open your mouth, trusting that God is going to give you the words that you need to say. A witness is a witness is a witness. And that's what you and I have been called to.

And thirdly, Elisha's response. His response to Elijah's calling was all wrong. This is what he said in verse 20, he said: *He left the oxen and he ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you."* Well, you know, on the surface, Elisha's response sounds an awful lot like some

empty words that Jesus heard and responded to in *Luke 9:59*. This is what happened, this is an incident that Jesus described. He said: *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."* 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."* So I'm scratching my head and I'm saying, okay, how is Elisha's response any different from that response that Jesus obviously castigated in that passage? I mean, Elisha says, *"Let me kiss my mother and father and then I'll follow you,"* and this follower of Jesus gives an almost identical response, and Jesus says: *"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* How does that work? Well, there's one thing that we can say for certain about Jesus, in that he alone could distinguish between words that were empty and words that were genuine. And we know that because the scripture is very clear that Jesus could read the thoughts and the intents of an individual's heart. *Matthew 9:4*, it says: *But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"* In *John 2:23* it says: *Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to*

*them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*

So I conclude this, I conclude that Jesus knew what words were empty and what words were not. And the words that he castigated were empty words. The words that Elisha spoke to Elijah were sincere, they were heartfelt, they were also accompanied by an action. Verse 20, it says: *And he left the oxen and he ran after Elijah.* Elisha immediately stopped what he was doing and he began pursuing Elijah. So much so that Elijah says: *"Go back again, for what have I done to you?"* You know, the translation there is unwieldy and people are still trying to kind of work out what it means, but it seems to mean that what Elijah is saying is you go back and make your decision freely and voluntarily without me having any of the input on this. I want you to make up your mind on your own. Elisha's response is to slaughter his oxen and to throw a big party. I mean, in terms of Elisha's response, we can immediately see that he had the right attitude. Just think of how extraordinary this is, I mean, God through Elijah says to Elisha, stop what you're doing right now. He's in the middle of a huge operation, you know, twelve sets of plows and they're plowing a field. He says stop what you're doing, change your direction immediately and follow me. And Elisha basically instantly does. It remind me of Isaiah's words in *Isaiah 6:8* which says *this, it*

*says: Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."*

Now how would you and I respond if God called us in that same way? You know, you see, Elisha had the wrong experience, the wrong calling, and the wrong response only if you judged him by the wrong standards. I mean, Elisha's experience is wrong if you think that only those formally trained belong in ministry. And his calling was wrong if you think God can't call those right in the middle of one task for a task that's radically different. And his response was wrong if you think dropping everything to follow God's call is a mistake. You see, any step that we take toward the kingdom, it's going to feel counterintuitive. It's going to feel often times like it's downright foolish because we're in a culture that is so rooted in materialism that it's very easy to be ensnared in this Christianized version of what the American dream is, to somehow believe that we can really have it all, but we can't. We have to choose between God and mammon and often times we refuse to choose, and that itself is a choice. Listen to David Platt's challenge. This is what he says. He says: "You and I have an average of about seventy or eighty years on this earth. During these years we are bombarded with the temporary. Make money. Get stuff. Be comfortable. Live well. Have fun. In the middle of it all, we get blinded to the eternal. But it's there. You and I stand on

the porch of eternity. Both of us will soon stand before God to give an account for our stewardship of the time, the resources, the gifts, and ultimately the gospel he has entrusted to us. When that day comes, we are convinced we will not wish we had given more of ourselves to living the American dream. We will not wish we had made more money, acquired more stuff, lived more comfortably, taken more vacations, watched more television, pursued greater retirement, or been more successful in the eyes of this world. Instead we will wish we had given more of ourselves to living for the day when every nation, tribe, people, and language will bow around the throne and sing the praise of the Savior who delights in radical obedience and the God who deserves eternal worship."

So what is your response to God's call on your life? And on mine? You see, what God is asking of us right here and right now is not a matter of having all of the right answers, it's much more a matter of asking all of the right questions. You see, it's not a matter of saying, "God, how am I supposed to know if you want me to be a missionary in Somalia?" It's much more a matter of saying, "God, if you wanted me to be a missionary in Somalia, would I be willing to go; and if I wasn't, would you make me willing to go?" See, God is very capable of dropping his own Elijah in on you anywhere in any way at any time to tell you what plans he has for your future, but you've got to be willing like Elisha was, to take up the mantle

that God gives you and to go with it. And the very first thing that God wants from all of us is faithfulness, faithfulness in little things. You know, God may not be asking you to go to Somalia but he might just be asking you to cook a meal for the Bontragers or to go visit Leon or check in on Annie or to check on where Paul and Connie have been. They haven't been here for months because they are older and getting much, much weaker and frailer. They need some kind of encouragement. Maybe it's praying at Planned Parenthood or any of the other dozen of little things that God is calling each of us to do. You know, *Luke 16:10* says: *He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.*

Well, so what is it then that Elisha did right? Well, first he had the -- he had the right confirmation. The scripture says that *Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.* You see, Elisha didn't just make up his own mind that he was going to be God's prophet. He responded to a clear call that was affirmed by someone else. In this case it was Elijah. You see, it's important to have your ministry -- and trust me, every single one of us in this building has a ministry -- it is important to have your ministry confirmed by someone who is outside of you. And part of the importance of a congregation is that it serves to identify and affirm or for that matter deny something that God may be calling

you to do. Now I've met numerous people who were convinced that they had this or that gift or ministry without any corroboration by the body of Christ, and often times they were proven to be wrong, and sometimes it was disastrously wrong. I know there are exceptions to this rule and I know that God has done extraordinary things through people who struck out on their own, but the vast majority of believers are called to act within the context of community. You know, if God has given you a gift and I shouldn't even say if God has given you a gift, I should say since God has given you a gift, because if you're one of his, you've been given a gift and that particular gift is for the edification of the body. It's that the body of Christ could be built up and strengthened. It's very hard to imagine such a gift going unrecognized by that same body. *1 Corinthians 14* says: *Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.*

Secondly, Elisha had the right reaction. Verse 21 says: *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.* You know, one of the things that I've always told my kids over and over and over again, when you're leaving a job, when you're doing something different, when you're changing the direction that you're going in, do not burn your



bridges. It's good advice. Elisha figuratively and literally ignored that advice. You know, first he demonstrated his love and respect, he said good-byes to his family but then he figuratively and literally burned his bridges. And finally he celebrated that change by having a meal in which everyone could participate. Elisha had the right confirmation, and he had the right reaction, and thirdly, he had the right response. Scripture says: *Then he arose and followed Elijah and became his servant.* Now you notice that Elisha didn't just assume Elijah's position, he became his servant. Now this may be the earliest acknowledgment of the critical importance of discipleship. You know, Moses had Joshua and Paul had Timothy and Jesus had the twelve apostles, Elijah had Elisha. And discipleship is about not just teaching someone but showing someone what it means to live the Christian life. Jesus was no academician who was just standing in front of a chalkboard diagramming theology. He spent three years living life with his disciples, and during that time it was life itself that was the chalkboard that Jesus was writing on. Now it's been said, every single person in the church has someone they can teach and someone that they can learn from, and that if you've been a Christian a week, you should be able to disciple someone who's been a Christian a day and learn from somebody else who's been Christian longer than you have. Now we have this incredibly rich resource of committed believers that are right here in this body, and they can show you

if you're a new believer if you're looking to be disciplined, they can show you what it means to be a Christian homemaker or a cop or a contractor or a teacher or a nurse or a carpenter or a camp director or a widow or a retiree or a software developer, a lawyer, a musician, a business man, an electrician, a camp worker, a water and sewer worker, a secretary, an administrator, a salesman, a business owner, an employee, a stockbroker. I just went through the whole church list. I looked at everybody, what they did. I mean, these are the niches that we all occupy at Grace Fellowship. I mean, these are the parts of the whole domain of human experience in which Christ cries "Mine!" And he's declaring that through you and me. And he's expecting you and me to disciple others who are coming up behind us in the very same spheres. You know, part of the task that everybody in this body has is really no different than the tasks that Elijah had in discipling those who are younger in the faith. And it means not just explaining what it means to be a believer but showing them how you handle the individual pleasures, pressures, and peculiarities of the niche that God has given to you. I mean, I would love to be a clearinghouse for anyone who needs to be disciplined and for anyone who understands God's command to disciple. And what it basically involves is a willingness to mesh life in some way with somebody else so that they can grow and benefit from your experience. It's also one of the reasons why small groups are so important. They're not just

"coffee clatches," they're not just "guys groups." These are the places where discipleship often times takes place. Individual discipleship happens when the Elijahs take the initiatives with the Elishas. So don't wait for somebody younger in the faith to decide, oh, I need discipling. Ask God right now whom he wants you to disciple. If it means taking your faith more seriously than you ever have, consider that to be a blessing. So speak to me and I'd love to match you up with somebody who's walking down a pathway that somebody is just beginning and somebody else has been down for many, many years.

Elijah disciplined Elisha. And the particulars the Bible is pretty much silent on and so as we're looking in the scripture, the very next time we read about Elijah and Elisha together, it's at the very end. Elijah is about to be taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. This is *2 Kings 2*, it says this, it says: *Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. See, at this point Elijah knows his end is near and he wants to spare Elisha the trauma of seeing him go, but at this point Elisha will have none of it. And you can sense the deep affection Elisha has for Elijah.*

He's not prepared to leave his side. We pick up in verse 3 and it says: *And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan.*

So we have this picture, Elisha and Elijah continue to walk and talk and they're walking and talking from Gilgal to Bethel through Jericho all the way to the Jordan. And what's happening is Elijah is basically saying his final good-byes to all the prophets. And they all know that Elijah is departing the earth this very day, and at each stop, Elisha is told once again he's about to lose Elijah. And we can hear the pain in his voice when he says, "Yes, I know

it; keep quiet." In verse 8 we pick up, it says: *Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me."* Now a lot of folks I think misunderstand what he was saying there. He's not saying I want to double your status, I want to double your power. What Elisha was saying is that he wanted the portion that was reserved for the firstborn. You see, the firstborn always had the double portion and Elisha wanted to be treated as if he was Elijah's firstborn. And Elijah says well, that's really up to God. Verse 10, he says: *And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but you do not see me, it shall not be so. And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. Again Elisha is crying out in agony as he sees Elijah disappear, "My father, my father!" And he takes hold of his own clothes and he tears them into pieces. Now, true discipleship is an expression of the deep love of Christ*

translated into mine and your every day experience, and Elisha gives proof of that. Elisha is grieving as if he has lost his own father because Elijah loved him like a son. We know that Paul had deep love for Timothy and Jesus love for his disciples is the model that all of us have as disciplers or disciples. And Jesus left us with the great commission as he departed us like Elijah departed Elisha. He said this in *Matthew 28:19*, he said: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* We can reduce Jesus's final words to just two words. He said, *"make disciples."* You know, it's been said that when it comes to discipling, you can never lead somebody any further than the place that you've already been. Now, I'm just wondering, is that a hindrance to you? I mean, consider what Paul said in *1 Corinthians 11:1*, he said this, he said: *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.* I mean, does that challenge, excite, or intimidate you?

Let me just close with a series of questions. How would you feel about somebody consciously imitating your walk with Christ? Does it sound exciting? I mean, does it sound like something you'd love to have the opportunity to pass on or does it make you wonder why anybody would ever want to imitate your faith in any way? I mean,

do you see how a relationship can benefit both discipler and disciplee? I mean, there was only one perfect disciple and discipler and that was the Lord Jesus Christ, and every one of us who engage in discipling understand we all have feet of clay, but that understanding should move us all the more to help younger brothers or sisters with their feet of clay. You know, if you know somebody who is looking to you for leadership in how you lead your walk of faith, would that make you take it much more seriously? Are you committed to discipling as the Lord leads? 'Cause I can tell you right now that the Lord is leading, and he's looking for faithful servants to pass on what has been passed on to them from before, and there are lots and lots of Elishas out there, and they're looking for Elijahs. And my prayer today is that you would heed God's call and be willing. Let's pray.

*Father, I do thank you for the testimony we have of Elijah and Elisha. I thank you for the testimony of what it means to be a discipler or disciplee. Father, I just, I pray that you would be speaking to each and every one of us in this congregation about whom we can disciple, about who can be disciplined. I pray that you would give us the ability to allow our lives to mesh with somebody else, allow our experience to mesh with somebody else, give us the ability to edify and grow others who are younger in the faith. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*