

A Good Disciple

Elisha was a disciple of the great prophet Elijah. He was designated as Elijah's successor but first worked as Elijah's servant (1 Kings 19:15-21). When God was ready to take Elijah to heaven by a whirlwind in 2 Kings 2:1-14, Elisha showed the qualities of a good disciple. If we will live by these qualities, we will be good disciples for our Lord's cause. Let's notice these qualities.

First, a good disciple follows (2 Kings 2:1-2, 4, 6). Wherever Elijah went Elisha insisted on going too. We should follow our Lord Jesus this diligently (Luke 9:23; John 12:26). Truth deserves to be followed and preserved. "Buy the truth and sell it not ..." (Proverbs 23:23). But just as Elisha surely learned the difficult life of a prophet of God, so the Christian learns the difficulty of following the Lord. It is difficult to follow the Lord when your friends or family ridicule your position on doctrines such as instrumental music and church-supported institutions (although I certainly hope this is never the case). It will be difficult to follow the Lord when your brethren oppose you on doctrines such as divorce and remarriage, fellowship, or creation. Ridicule and opposition will not end, so we must endure and follow the Lord.

Second, a good disciple is faithful (2 Kings 2:3, 5, 8). Even though Elijah and the sons of the prophets both seemed to try to dissuade Elisha from following, he was faithful. He was not going to be dissuaded (Luke 14:26-27; 1 Corinthians 4:2). A faithful Christian will not be pulled away from serving the Lord by a whim or by some unimportant, irrelevant, trivial reason. They will put God and His kingdom first. Far too many Christians now do not love the Lord more than they love their job or their recreation. Sadly, this fact is often demonstrated when Christians are not even willing to attend worship services regularly or gospel meeting services that are arranged by a local congregation (Hebrews 10:24-25). Is this a good disciple?

Third, a good disciple has foresight (2 Kings 2:9-12). When Elijah asked Elisha what he wanted, he asked for a double portion of his spirit. The enormity of the loss of Elijah so gripped the humble Elisha that he asked to be granted spiritual power far beyond his own capabilities to meet the responsibilities of the great task that lay before him. He wished that Elijah's mighty prowess might continue to live through him. In short, he asked for a spiritual blessing. If we could choose anything to be given us, would we waste that choice on a material possession or would we desire

something greater and more heavenly? Solomon chose wisdom and an understanding heart above material riches (1 Kings 3:9-13). Are we willing to seek for knowledge and understanding of the Lord's word rather than financial advantage in this life? The assaults of the Devil in the forms of immorality and false doctrine never stop. Congregations need strong, wise servants of the Lord who can see the end of a matter and know the Bible and how to defeat ungodliness and error.

Fourth, a good disciple has faith (2 Kings 2:13-14). Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle and performed the same miracle that Elijah had done earlier. He had the faith to believe that God would give to him the power to work miracles like his great predecessor. It is our faith which gives us the ability to overcome the world (1 John 5:4). This victory does not take the form of miraculous actions, but of a victory over sin and Satan. When we cast off the dominion of sin, we must do so by faith. Christ's disciples live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:6).

Are you a good disciple? If you were to take stock in how you have lived your life to this moment, would you hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21, 23)? If not, then maybe you need to repent!

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