The Legacy That You Leave Behind

In this verse we see Elijah and Elisha walking along together and the Lord takes Elijah home in a whirlwind. Upon Elisha’s return to those who waited, they wanted to look for the man of God, Elijah: They missed him and wanted to know just what had taken place. They made quite a search according to scripture, for three days they searched for Elijah and did not find him. He was sorely missed. I remember hearing another preacher quoting Robert Murray McChyene, “Live your life so as to be missed.” That is a good principle to live by, “Live your life so as to be missed.” We ought to all want to do just that. We ought to want to live our lives in such a way that somebody is gonna miss us when we’re gone. I want to do that. I don’t just want to be another headstone in a crowded cemetery. I want somebody to miss me when I’m gone. I want somebody to wish that I was still around. I remember hearing Bro. Buster Seaton telling about his mother. She would tell him, “Buster, I miss your daddy, we had such good times together.” She missed him when he was gone. I remember hearing another preacher years ago saying that he found his mother in her room with a shoebox of old pictures sitting on her bed. A good number of pictures were spread out on the bed to see and she sat there and cried. Not in misery but in fond remembrance of the times that she had had in this life which made some good memories. There were loved ones in her life that were gone, and though she was not living in misery, she still cried for the wonderful memories. She missed those that had gone on.

Oh, friend, don’t you want somebody to miss you when your gone? I do. I want somebody to miss me when I’m gone.

I remember sitting under the old pecan tree out in the back yard and listening to my old grandfather talking about my grandmother. He would cry and tell me, “Son, there won’t ever be another woman like your mammy. She was one of a kind. I never dreamed that you could miss a person this much.” He would sit and talk about the good times that they had and he would tell me that he wished he had been a lot better to her. Oh, he missed her. She was a good woman. I miss her myself. She also had a great many good works that she left behind her. There are many in the community that have missed her since she left here. Oh the people that she has helped and been a blessing too. My grandmother was a great woman, and a woman that loved people. And she was a woman that loved her family above measure. If I have ever met a person that would have gladly suffered in the place of another, it was my grandmother. Isn’t that a wonderful way to remember someone? Are you going to be remembered when you are gone? Are you sure? Would you like to be? There are some things that we ought to strive in this life to leave behind us when we are gone. We ought to want to leave behind some things that will always bear witness of our having been here. And I mean some things that truly matter.
In verses 16 and 17...

…we see that Elijah left behind a missed person when he left here.

We ought to want to leave behind a missed person when we are gone. We ought to want to be missed. I want to be missed. First of all, I want my companion to miss me when I am gone. I want my wife to miss me when I have left her in this world. I know what some people say about not wanting their mates to be broken and sorrowful when they leave here. I am not that way. I love my wife dearly, I know that if anything happened to her I would miss her unbelievably. I don’t know what I would do without her. I hope I never have to try. But friend, when I leave this walk of life, (hopefully before she does), I want my precious little wife to just be heartbroken. I want her to weep and cry bitter tears for me. I want her miserable, for a little while. I would hate to think that our life together did not mean enough to her to weep over my departure. I don’t want my wife to be glad that I am gone so that she can find that mister right that she missed out on the first time.

Please don’t misunderstand me. I have told my wife, and I do believe that she should get on with her life and that if God brings another man into her life and she loves him and God puts them together then she should feel free to marry him, and with my blessing and best wishes. I don’t want my wife’s life to end because of me, but I would like to be missed. I know people who have buried a mate and they later found another who had buried a mate and they were able to comfort one another in their later years. They could sit together and share memories of their previous marriages and laugh and cry together over the good memories. What a beautiful relationship that must be. I would not cheat my wife out of something like that. I have no right. If I go home first, I certainly won’t be in a place of suffering and misery. Neither should she be. But I do want her to miss me when I am gone.

I remember a friend who lost his wife after 63 years of marriage. He and she had such a special relationship. Right up to the week that she died they still loved to talk about how and when they met. They would tell my wife and me about it over and over. Then she passed and he never did let go of her memory. He still loved her as if she was still with him. I know that he knew she was in heaven but he still had a bench put by her graveside and he went to the grave just about every day to have lunch until the time that he was not able because he was going to be with her. What a reunion that must have been when he met her in heaven with Jesus. What a beautiful love that they shared. One day I will again see Bro. Otis Pickle and Miss Nancy. I look forward to that day.

I want my children to miss me when I am gone. It would be a terrible thing to think of dying and there be no major life change with my children. I hope that when I am old and nearing heaven my sons and I will have a good relationship. I love my children more than life and I want them to miss me when I am gone. I look forward to the days that my boys can come to my home and bring my grandchildren. I look forward to the days that the grandkids all want to go to grandmaw’s house and eat, play, spend the night. I love my little family. Someday I want them to sit around long after I am returned to the dust, and say, “I sure miss grandpaw and grandmaw.” I want my kids to miss me when I am gone.

And I want my critics to miss me when I am gone. I hope that I am pressing into the devil’s territory in the ministry in such a way that, when I am gone, the devil will notice the difference. I would hate to think that I am not even enough of an enemy to the devil that he would notice when I am gone. I remember hearing another preacher saying that he hoped the devil gathered up all of his little devils and had a big celebration when he was gone. He wanted to be in the battle in such a way that the devil would even
know when he was gone. Are you in the battle? Does the devil know that you are around? What a blessing it would be to think that we were being a trouble to the devil and his workers here in this life.

In verses 13 and 14…

…we see that Elijah left behind a marked path.

We ought to want to leave behind a marked path when we check out of here. We ought to want others to see just where we are going so that they can follow when we are gone. Leave a marked path. I do want to leave a marked path when I am gone. I want to leave a sanctified path for my children to follow. It would be a terrible waste for me to go to heaven and leave nothing in my life to show my children that daddy was going that way. We ought to live our lives in such a way as to lead our children and our children’s children right along behind us. I don’t know how many times that I have heard my pastor say, “The only treasure you will ever have any hope of taking to heaven with you is your children.” Oh friend, how true that is. Oh the frightening consequences that can occur in the lives of our children if we won’t live a life marking out the right way for them to go. We need to live our life sanctified for the Glory of God. We need to be separate from some things. But we not only need to be separated from some things, we need to be separated UNTO the Lord. Our children should see that there is something to this thing about being a child of God. They should never hear one thing from us in public and see something else in us at home. They should see that as Christians we are different than the world that we live in. We look forward to a better day and a better place, we have a bright future ahead and we want them to share it with us. Would it not be terrible to have your kids stand around your casket one day and say, “Do your think daddy was saved?” or maybe your grandchildren, “Do you think papaw was saved?” Oh no! I want my children to know where I am and that they can see me again one day if they will go the way that I have led. Oh God help us to leave behind a marked path. A path of sacrificial giving. I don’t ever want to have my children think that their daddy thought more of money than he did his family, friends, neighbors, and especially the Lord. I want them to see that it is good to give to the Lord, to His work, to His church. And I want to leave behind a marked path in scriptural worship.

I know that there are some dignified religious professionals that think that we should all be stuffed shirts and zombies at church but I just can’t feel that way. I still believe that it is right to worship God. I still believe that it is good to shout the victory. I know that this is often an abused privilege. Some people will shout the house down over women in pants, or over the King James Bible, or over a man with long hair. Then when a preacher takes us on a trip to Calvary and shows us the Precious Saviour suffering hell on a cross that was rightfully ours, you can’t get a good grunt out of them. That is not real spiritual, scriptural worship. If you can’t shout over the sufferings of Jesus; If you can’t worship and weep over what Jesus went through for us on Golgotha’s hill, then shut up about everything else. I remember once in a special service, the choir was singing and the preachers were sitting up front and God got hold of my heart in such a way that I just had to shout. My oldest son was sitting in my lap and he stood and looked me in the eye. With his little hands on my cheeks wet with my tears he asked me what was wrong. I told him that it was alright, daddy was just really happy and me and the Lord were having a good time. I am glad that my children have had the chance to see that God’s people still weep with joy at His presence and at the preaching of His word. It is still right to worship God and shout the victory. It is not weakness for a man to cry, or to sing for the Glory of God. We ought to stop trying to be so dignified sometimes and just cut loose for the Glory of God for all the world to know that we still worship in the old fashioned way.
Elijah also left behind a Ministry to be Performed…

…when he dropped that mantle, Elisha picked it up and carried on where Elijah left off.

We ought to live for God in such a way that when we are gone someone else can step in and take up where we left off. Leave a clear ministry behind that others can follow and carry on when we are gone. Dr. Ron Gearis performed a wonderful ministry for the Glory of God and for the sake of the lost. He left behind a ministry that just could not be let die when he left this world. It still carries on now that he is in heaven. The Rock of Ages Prison Ministry, by the Grace of God is still carrying on and growing because one man had a vision for the lost of this world. Many millions of people have had the opportunity to hear the word of God and come to know Jesus as their personal Saviour because he was willing to perform that ministry. Maybe our ministry is not the same as his was. We may never be as well known or as widely used as he was but we are to be serving anyway. You may never lead a multitude, may never be famous, but you can be faithful to serve God where you are and in whatever capacity you can. Maybe your ministry is to encourage the saints. Believe me that is a badly needed ministry in our day. I know that from experience. I remember when I first started in the ministry. I suffered a lot of persecution and a lot of want and need for a long time. My wife and I had gotten so discouraged that we were quickly becoming bitter over the way that the ministry seemed to be turning out. It was several years before anyone ever gave us any encouragement. I received a card from a lady in South Carolina, I call her Aunt Louise. Her name is Louise Swearingen, a precious lady that didn’t know how much that card would mean to that preacher boy. The first word of encouragement that I had received from anyone for years, and that was all it took for my wife and I to get excited all over again and it gave us a fresh zeal once again for the ministry and for people. Oh friend, you don’t know how much it would mean just to give a card, a word of encouragement.

Maybe God doesn’t have something public to do, maybe He just wants you to live Godly to expose sin by your example. That is a ministry that is in sorely short supply these days. Maybe God wants you to witness, or go on visitation and tell someone else about Him and what He has done for them. But all of us are to exalt the Saviour. Husbands ought to want to be the best husbands in the world for the Glory of God. Housewives ought to want to be the best housewives in the world for the Glory of God. Carpenter, shoe salesman, doctor, lawyer, nurse, preacher, Sunday school teacher, you ought to want to be the best in the world at whatever you do for the Glory of God. That is a ministry to perform.

In verse 13...

…Elijah left behind a mantle that was preferred.

Elijah left behind a testimony that made Elisha look at him and say, “I want to be like him.” There are men that will look down on others who say this but I recall that great man of God, Paul saying, “Follow me as I follow Christ.” Yes, we are to strive to become more Christlike, and still there is nothing wrong with seeking to pattern your life after another minister or Christian that may be living very close to God and you want that relationship that they have with the Lord. Elijah told Elisha to ask what he wanted of him before he was taken up and Elisha asked for “a double portion of thy spirit.” He did not ask for a lot of superspiritual bologna, he was just being honest. Oh, man of God, I love you so much and an admire you so much, I wish that I could be twice the man that you are, used twice as much. And he got what he asked for. Elijah performed 8 miracles in his ministry, Elisha performed 16. He received a double portion. Elisha saw in Elijah someone who had not only started out right but he was finishing right. And
this is something that is missing in our day too. It seems that many men start out right, and after performing well and being rewarded greatly of God, they are blinded by blessing and they are corrupted by the glitter of gold and led astray by popularity, power and finances, SIN. May we look to someone in our lives that we see to be living a good life. May we find a true example of Christian faith and purpose in our lives and hearts that we want to be like that, or maybe even have a double portion of their spirit. Then maybe, one day, we will have another look to us and say, “Oh, for a double portion of thy spirit.” What kind of legacy are you leaving behind? It is not too late to do something about it.