

Sunday 25th August 2013

Elijah Part 14

Last study we saw how committed God was to Elijah. How he brought him out of his darkest hour and gave him a companion in Elisha (God is Saviour) Someone to come alongside and pick up his mantle.

There is a part of Elijah's life that we skip over. God used Elijah to take care of Ahab and Jezebel. Their wicked ways continued and they defrauded Naboth out of his vineyard. God says enough is enough. (The cross) **Read this episode in 1 Kings 21:1-29 through to 2 kings 1:1-18**

2 Kings 2:1-14 Read

Elijah's final journey. God sends his servant Elijah to three significant places. From Gilgal he journeyed to Bethel, then to Jericho and onto the Jordon.

We read that Elisha his faithful servant and friend is by his side and no matter what Elijah says. Elisha will not leave him alone.

We read that Elijah did not experience death but went up in a whirlwind to heaven. What a way to leave this world!!

Finally we see the mantle of our hero passed onto Elisha to continue God's work.

Elijah's no death Contract: Rather than death be scary or mysterious, we find the experience of Elijah's parting exiting. Almost Fun!! Listen to the Apostle Paul describes the experience for those who believe. There are some similarities.

1 Thess 4:13-18 Read

The hope I have in the Gospel of Christ tells me that I am going to part of this great adventure together with all those who are asleep or not. (nicer way refer to death)

The only thing that dies is the flesh. Some of us may be glad to say goodbye to our mortal bodies.

So we come to Elijah's last day on Earth.

This remarkable episode in Elijah's life tells that he knew he was going to heaven without dying. Elijah, Elisha and the sons of the prophets all knew that it was Elijah's last day.

We don't know how or when god did this, but it is set for us as an example on how we should live our lives,

In Anticipation of Christ's return.

What this was your last day?

Would you be scrambling around trying to put things right or would it be a day of reflection as we see in Elijah's life. His work was done.

2 kings 2:1 And it came to pass when the Lord would take Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

Whirlwind: In a gust, In a windy moment. A storm, a tempest.

With this ending in mind, our hero has a remarkable peace and purpose. **He knew how where and when.** He wanted to make the most of his last day.

Saying: When a person comes close to death, that there whole life passes before their eyes.

Close brushes with death, serious illnesses. An instant picture of your life passes before the eyes. You look back on all that happened.

Elisha realised this and on many occasions told the sons of the prophets to be quite. No questions, just peace and quite.

Elijah's last day began at:

Gilgal: The place of beginning. A Circle of stones.

Joshua 4:19-20 **Read**

Israel crossed over the river Jordon and entered the promised land. They took twelve stones from the river and set them up as a memorial to God's deliverance. They were near the place of battle but not there yet. They were in a place of safety, communion with God and a place of preparation.

Our Gilgal, our beginning is when God delivered us. When we were born again. A time when we had safety, constant communion with God. A place where god began to prepare us for the journey ahead. Prepare for the battle to come.

When was the last time you visited Gilgal? Where God took you out of Egypt and placed you in the promised land.

Next stop: Bethel: The House of God.

Elijah's next place of reflection was the place of prayer.

Gen 12:8 And he moved from there to a mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, having bethel on the west and Haion on the east, and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

During difficult times in his life Abraham often revisited Bethel in times of need. The place where he first worshipped and prayed to God for answers.

Elijah also had altars in his life and as he walked the streets of Bethel, he reflected on the times that God met his needs.

Cherith: The bootcamp where he learned trust and reliance on God

Zeraphath: Where he stayed with a widow and brought all his daily needs to God. A place where he had the confidence to pray for the impossible

Can you remember times such as this. A time you trusted god for all your needs. A time when you had the faith to pray for the

impossible. How through all the hurt and brokenness, God brought you through. How you learned how to pray, how to commune with God

Next Stop: Jericho: The place of battle.

A place where the walls came tumbling down.

Elijah's day just gets better and better. As he stands and recounts the numerous battle that God gave him victory.

Mount Carmel: The evil forces of Baal, Over Ahab, Over Jezebel. And under a juniper the biggest battle of all. The battle to save his life and he was prepared to give up.

Some of us have had some seriously big battles in our lives.

Battle against Rebellion, Battle against additions, Battles with thoughts, Battle with Doubt and battle with the flesh.

Some of these you have trusted to God, perhaps some of them you are still battling. **God never gave up on Elijah as he thanks God for not leaving him under a tree, or in a cave.**

2 Chron 20: 15-17 Read

Elijah knew that the battle was not his but God's.

Why don't we revisit Jericho and do what verse 17 says.

Tomorrow go out against your battles and know that God is with you.

Finally: Jordon: The place of death.

Not just the physical, but the death of self..

I wonder how many times Elijah had to die to the flesh (not my will but yours) during his life.

As a young man he would have had his own plans and hopes and dreams. One by one he surrender them to God and learns to submit to His will. **Jeremiah 29:11**

A reminder that you have left your old life behind and that all things become new. **2 Corin 5:17, Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.**

A life yielded up to God's will can achieve so much.

Matt 10:38 And he that takes not his cross and follows after me is not worthy of me.

Elijah learned that his life was not about him but about the one who made him. He learned of the blessings that followed self denial.

He was at peace, he was ready to meet with God.

Everyday our lives should experience this refection. In our prayer, our worship, our thanksgiving.

Everyday we should do as Elijah did and reflect of God's goodness at **Gilgal** where we experienced deliverance. The beginning where we got saved.

Bethel: The house of God. The place where we learned to pray. The secret place where God answers.

Jericho: The place where the battle was won. The one which belongs to God. Give it to Him.

Jordon; The place where you yielded up your old life and submitted to God's.

2 kings 2:11 **Read**