



Elijah & Elisha #4

The Cloak & the Flame

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The Cloak and The Flame

1 Kings 19:19-21

Today we will continue in I Kings where we will finally meet Elisha.

The Hero's Journey

Young hero
Called to adventure
Older mentor
Death or loss
Discovery of unknown power
Victory over evil

But before we do this, let's talk about a hero's journey: ***A young hero called to adventure by an older mentor and then experiences death/loss as a low point, then discovers an unknown power where he has victory over evil.***

This is the basic plot of Star Wars (and many other stories). Young Luke is called to adventure by an older mentor, Ben.

Elijah calls Elisha (a young man) into adventures to learn what God has called him to.



The Story So Far...

The Tishbite from Tishbe
The Tables of Wisdom and Folly
True Rest

I Kings is the story after King David, from his son Solomon onward. It's all about the prophets coming to the kings and calling them to repentance.

1. Elijah comes to King Ahab (Booo) and predicts a famine. God calls Elijah to Jezebel's homeland where he is fed by a widow and resurrects her son.

2. We talked about the tables of wisdom and folly, where Elijah has a showdown on the mountain with the

prophets of Ba'al. Elijah then runs off in fear (from the table of wisdom) to the table of folly of the world, giving into fear.

3. Then, the rain finally comes and Elijah runs from Jezebel to the mountain of God where he finally hears God's still small voice. He finds rest, not in escape or vacation, but in the quiet places where God can send us out on missional tasks.
4. God tells Elijah to anoint Elisha, which is what we will focus on today.

1 Kings 19:19-20

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye," he said, "and then I will come with you."

"Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

Picture the awkwardness of this moment: Elisha is plowing the ground and Elijah, who is still kind of depressed, throws his cloak on him and just keeps walking. Elisha chases after him and Elijah asks, "What have I done to you."



Cloaks are cool: I would love an awesome Jedi cloak, but not in Tucson.



Here is another cool cloak.

The Cloak

Story

Identity

What story does your cloak tell?

Who might you throw your cloak about?

The cloak has gone with Elijah everywhere: there is a story wrapped up in the cloak. In the first book of the Lord of the Rings series, Frodo is the young hero and his uncle is Bilbo. Bilbo leaves his house, taking an old, discolored ill-fitting cloak. This is precious to Bilbo because of the story that goes with it. He wore it on his trip where he fought dragons and wizards.

Likewise, picture the **story** wrapped up in Elijah's cloak.

It might have a blood stain where he fought the prophets of Ba'al...maybe a burned place, a torn place from where he was running from Ahab.

There is also **identity** in the cloak: Elijah only had **one** cloak. I have a hat that I love, the blue one, and if you saw me anywhere, you would know me because of my hat. If someone else wore it, you would wonder why they were wearing Mark's hat. When Elijah puts his cloak on Elisha, he is offering his identity as a prophet: he would continue to live out Elijah's identity.

What story does your cloak tell? How does this tell the story of God in your life?
How does it hold your identity in God?

Who might you throw your cloak about? Our hope is to gather to give each other identities in Christ: who I am will impact who my children are in Jesus! It will also impact the people around me, those in my Pilgrim Group, those in my community?

INTERLUDE

v20 – Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.” “Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”

The interlude is important: Elisha’s question is also repeated in Luke 9 as a question to Jesus:

INTERLUDE

Luke 9:57-62 – As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” He said to another man, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

INTERLUDE

What are you looking for in following Jesus?

Comfort, security, certainty

“What have I done to you?”

Responsibility and grace

Jesus speaks to the physical comforts of following him that we have in this world: **you will not find these in following him.**

The man in Luke was asking to wait for the security of his inheritance: “Let me make sure I will be OK before I follow you.”

The plow is not **saying good-bye**: it’s **looking back**. There is a certain amount of desiring certainty about what will happen. Walking with Jesus offers certainty in the resurrection but there will be twists and turns and uncertainty. If we are constantly turning around and looking back, we will not be proclaiming the kingdom of God.

What are you looking for in following Jesus? We will find comfort, security, and certainty in Jesus but not in this life. If we seek these in this kingdom of the world, we aren’t looking for Jesus.

What have I done to you? Elijah himself has only done what God called him to. It's God calling Elisha; the question is not whether he wants to follow Elijah but whether he wants to follow God. When we disciple and parent others we have both **responsibility** and **grace**: we care for the people God has given us. We offer our story and identity to those we care for and receive incredible grace. We can engage authentically because God is the One who will ultimately work on them.

The Flame

v.21 – So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

What is Elish's response?

The Flame

v.21 – So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. **He burned the plowing equipment** to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

He burned the plowing equipment along with the oxen. There is finality in his action: he is not looking for certainty or security (he didn't sell things things for a profit).

The Flame

v.21 – So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and **gave it to the people, and they ate**. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

He burns them and slaughters the oxen and they eat in a giant feast. A lot of people enjoyed this meat in a celebration that says "God has called me." There is finality and rejoicing.

The Flame

v.21 – So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and **gave it to the people, and they ate**. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

One commentator said Elisha burned the plow of compromise: he won't go back and forth between his decisions. He is at the table of wisdom and moving forward.

The Flame

How is God inviting you to burn the table of folly?

How might you rejoice in the call of Jesus this week?

What do you need to move away from with finality?

How might you rejoice in the call of Jesus this week?

We are in Eastertide: we had the fasting and confession of Lent and now we are in Eastertide, the season of rejoicing and feasting because Jesus has been resurrected. We can walk into this season with confidence and joy. Too often, our walk with Jesus is more like a drudgery: our heads are down and our feet are dragging in the dirt.

To be sure, Elisha would face challenges ahead but right now in the story, he is feasting. What would it look like for you to feast in your story right now? You don't need to slaughter an oxen to feed your neighborhood but there may be something God is asking you to do to feast.

This is a call with a response. Other examples of this in Scripture: Moses/Joshua, Jesus/Disciples, Samuel/David.

How is God inviting you to burn the table of follow and rejoice in the call of Jesus this week?