

Joseph Carty / General

Work as He Worked / Calling; Ministry; Service / 1 Kings 19:19–20

What does it mean to be a Christian? What is my personal responsibility in the great commission? Have I fulfilled my responsibility if I support the ministry through my money and my prayers? What is God's ideal for my involvement in church ministry?

Notes

Hard Sermon

Elisha's Calling

Elisha was minding his own business. The famine of 3.5 years had recently ceased. Every person and every part of nature was trying to redeem the time.

Elisha, who belonged to a fairly wealthy agricultural family, was working the fields (like all good farmers).

Elisha has not considered any other form of employment other than what was right in front of him. He was expected to take over the family farm. So he worked diligently as a master farmer.

Suddenly the most unexpected thing happened. Elisha was busy working the on the plow. He must not have noticed anyone approaching because Elijah was right beside him.

Elijah's appearance was unmistakable. He wore the most simple yet unfashionable clothing. A coarse garment of hair and a leather belt.

The leather girdle was that of the most poor classes. Those with any funds at all would have bought a soft cotton girdle. The rich would wear fine linen.

But more importantly, it was prophets who wore coarse garments of hair garments.

Elisha's family were among the few committed followers of God during these years of apostasy. Elisha would have recognized Elijah immediately as the "man of God."

Elijah performs an act that Elisha understands immediately. Elijah takes off his coarse hair garment and throws it over the shoulders of Elisha.

Then without another word, he simply walks off.

Apparently, Elisha was a little shocked and just stood there as Elijah walked away because the Bible says that he had to run to catch up to Elijah.

Nobody has to exchange a word. They both fully understood the import of the gesture. There was no confusion in the mind of Elisha what it all meant.

The only question was, will I respond with a yes or a no???

Your Calling

And so it is for you today...

You woke up today, like any other day. You had what is a typical Sabbath breakfast. You put on your typical Sabbath clothes.

Yet, today, I will not let you leave this place until you see that God put the coarse hairy garment of His calling upon you.

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself now.

Status Quo Christianity

- Hard Sermon
 - Permission???

- The average Christian

- is a parasite.

- Definition

Parasite — an organism that lives on or in a host organism and gets its food from or at the expense of its host.

- Most Christians

- don't feed themselves.

- Little to no

- devotional life.

- Survive on morsels

- given by others.

- Parasite relationship

- contrast to **Symbiosis**

- Definition

Symbiosis — a close relationship between two species in which at least one species benefits.

- or

Mutualism — a symbiotic relationship in which both species benefit.

- Parasite
 - steal from host
 - no contribution.
- Average Christian
 - is a parasite.
- Receives and rarely gives.
- Most Christians
 - give what is easiest to give.
 - Wealthy give money
 - Unemployed give time

- Yet, our example
 - Jesus Christ
 - gave what was hardest.

Ephesians 5:2 ESV

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

He Gave Himself

- Jesus only gave
 - what cost him most.
- He could have
 - sent an angel
 - paid some money
 - given get out of jail card
- He sacrificed who He was

Philippians 2:5-8 ESV

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- He is God
 - He put that aside
- He was glorious
 - He put that aside
- He was holy
 - He put that aside
- He was adorned by angels
 - He put that aside
- For what???
 - not just humanity
 - not a king
 - not a wealthy american

- A poor family
 - accused of fornication
 - shotgun wedding
 - nobodies
- Even more
 - to be treated badly
 - mocked
 - abused
 - scorned
 - beaten
 - crucified
 - greatest torture device

Identity

- As Christians
 - we claim

- name of Christ.

- We say,
 - “He is my model.”
 - “I strive to be like Him.”

- Yet,
 - modern Christianity
 - is often devoid of
 - Christ’s character.

- Christianity often
 - requires to little of me.

- Modern Christians.

- (WE)

- Put a fish sticker on car
 - speed

- cut people off
- Listen to “christian music”
 - pass by homeless
 - without a thought.
- Go to church
 - get pumped
 - go home
 - behave the same.
- The only Bible verse
 - many know is
 - “Judge not lest you be judged.”

What’s Missing?

- Partly problem of wealth.

- though not completely.
- Elijah was wealthy.
- Partly,
 - Church as become
 - entertainment.
 - (later discussion)
- What's Missing?

Sacrificial Service

- Christ gave His Church
 - one purpose.
 - (next sermon).
- He gave on thing

- to grow our character.
- He gave SDA's
 - one passage
 - our marching orders:

Matthew 28:18–20 ESV

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 are not
 - enrich ourselves
 - wealth given
 - for gospel.
- We are not
 - entertain ourselves
 - constant distractions.

- We are not
 - make this world our home.
- Jesus is coming soon.
- I ask again:

What is missing

- URGENCY!!!

Christian Service Chapter 9—The Call to Arouse

Let us arouse! The battle is waging. Truth and error are nearing their final conflict. Let us march under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, and fight the good fight of faith, and win eternal honors; for the truth will triumph, and we may be more than conquerors through Him who has loved us. The precious hours of probation are closing. Let us make sure work for eternal life, that we may glorify our heavenly Father, and be the means of saving souls for whom Christ died.—

- Yet, we are distracted...

- I have question:

Christian Service Chapter 9—The Call to Arouse

Eternity stretches before us. The curtain is about to be lifted. What are we thinking of, that we cling to our selfish love of ease, while all around us souls are perishing?

Have our hearts become utterly callous?

Can we not see and understand that we have a work to do in behalf of others?

My brethren and sisters, are you among those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not?

Is it in vain that God has given you a knowledge of His will?

Is it in vain that He has sent you warning after warning of the nearness of the end?

Do you believe the declarations of His word concerning what is coming upon the world?

Do you believe that God's judgments are hanging over the inhabitants of the earth?

How, then, can you sit at ease, careless and indifferent?

- Famous Parable

Matthew 21:28–31 ESV

“What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same.

And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.

- Most SDA
 - second son.

- Sadly,
 - We know truth.
 - We study truth.
 - We talk about sharing.
 - Rarely get around to it.

- I see what Jesus
 - said to the Pharisees
 - and I fear what
 - he could say to us.

Matthew 16:1-3 ESV

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the

appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

- He reproved them
 - because they claimed
 - to know the truth.
- He rebuked them for
 - know it all
 - but not
 - living it.
- They knew the prophetic signs.
 - they had present truth
 - but didn't live it.
 - (present truth sermon)
- We hold a solemn position!
 - like Ezekiel

Ezekiel 33:1-8 ESV

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman, and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand.

“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

- Today I
 - APPEAL to you
 - CALL to you
 - CHARGE you
- No
 - God Himself
 - Calls you

- to work
 - in the vineyard!!
 - Sacrificially.
- But we must
 - finish the story:

As Elisha ran after Elijah, he already knew what his answer would be.

English Standard Version Chapter 19

“Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.”

His answer was, “yes, I accept the calling of being a prophet and your successor but let me just say goodbye to my parents.”

The part that surprises us is Elijah’s response:

New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update Chapter 19

“Go back again, for what have I done to you?”

Perhaps his mind races for a second to find the meaning in those words.

Did I misunderstand? Is he not calling me to the prophetic office?

But rather quickly he settles on the correct interpretation of Elijah's words.

Prophets and Kings Section 2—Prophets of the Northern Kingdom

This was not a repulse, but a test of faith. Elisha must count the cost—decide for himself to accept or reject the call. If his desires clung to his home and its advantages, he was at liberty to remain there. But Elisha understood the meaning of the call.

A test it was. Elisha was driving a yoke of oxen when Elijah approached. The bible also says that there were people with him. We can only assume these people were his servants.

Elisha was a man of means. He survived the famine with at least one set of oxen. He was a master in his house.

To put it differently, he had a good business and he was doing well with the other things on his plate.

He had a decision to make.

He gave God the most clear answer possible.

Will I stay a farmer? Will I continue my life of ease? No!

He goes back to the oxen. He slaughters them. He brakes the yoke. He creates a fire from it. Then he burns the animals on the fire.

No turning back. Then he sought Elijah to assist him.

Elisha had a decision to make

You and I

› And so do each of us today.

What is standing between you and sacrificial service in the Lord's vineyard?

- I appeal to you
 - find it
 - sacrifice it.

Seek Christ.

Seek Salvation.

Seek service.