

# Take Up The Mantle

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Go with me in your Bible to 2 Kings 2 and verse 13. Let me read three verses with you, tell you a story, and then I want to share with you the five points I want to give you again tonight.

I don't usually do that, but I felt like these two messages, it worked best that way. 2 Kings 2 and verse 13. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan.

And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and smote the waters and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he had also smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went up.

And when the sons of the prophet, which were to view at Jericho, saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

Father, I pray tonight that you would call some of our young men, some of our young ladies, some of our older men, some of our older ladies, into your service.

[ 1 : 01 ]     God, there's so many places that need a new church in Atlanta, around the United States, and all over the world. God, in the scriptures, you were calling out people.

And I want to ask you to continue to call out. God, I thank you for the way you have taken from our number people that maybe weren't even thinking or heading that way, but you sent them on their way to carry the gospel.

And I thank you for that. And tonight, God, I pray that our church would continue to have a hungry heart to see you do great things. And I'll give you great honor and glory and praise for all you do in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, back in 1 Kings, Elijah's getting to the point that the Lord's going to take him home. I guess he's getting older.

And the Lord sends him to appoint a couple of kings and a prophet. And that other prophet is a guy, and Elijah has his mantle around his shoulders or whatever, and he walks up to Elisha, and he just takes the mantle and slings it over the top of Elisha.

[ 2 : 04 ]     And Elisha knows exactly what's going on. He understands. God told Elijah, you go find Elisha. And so he goes and he finds Elisha, and he throws a mantle on him. And Elisha realizes, God has a plan for me.

So we get to 2 Kings 2. The transfer of leadership and power is going to go from Elijah to Elisha. I don't know if you ever have a problem keeping up with those two guys, but J comes before us.

That's how I keep them apart. J comes before us. Elijah's the first guy. Elisha's the second guy. And so in the story today, we're going to start off in the very beginning of the chapter. And Elijah and all the prophets, they know, all the sons of the prophets.

It's like a Bible college. And they all know that today's the day. They all know that. They know it. And so Elisha's always around Elijah. He's always following him. He's always real close to him.

And so Elijah kind of gets rude with him at the very beginning of the story. Elijah says to him, Elijah says, hey, God wants me to do some stuff. Why don't you stay here while I go do it? And Elisha says, are you crazy?

[ 3 : 04 ] I am not leaving you. I'm going with you. And so they go down and they get that job done. And when they get through with that job, Elijah turns to him and says, I got another trip to take. Why don't you stay here, son?

Let me go do what I got to do. And Elisha says, there's no way I'm leaving you. I'm going with you to do the job that God's given you. And they do that like three times that statement is made.

And three times Elisha says, as long as the God of heaven's alive and I'm alive, I'm going with you. That's just the way she is. And so the young men that are in the Bible college, they keep saying to Elisha, don't you know today's the day?

Don't you know today's the day Elijah's leaving? Don't you know today's the day Elijah? It must have been a weird thing. Elijah probably knows today's the day. Elisha knows. Everybody knows today's the day. All you're doing is waiting on the chariot. You don't know when it's coming, but it's coming.

And so as they go to leave, there's 50 guys, and they're all watching Elijah and Elisha as they walk off. And as they're going through there, Elijah looks at Elisha and he says, son, you're stuck by the stuff.

[ 4 : 01 ] Let me ask you, you can have anything you want. What do you want? He said, I'd like a double portion of the spirit that God's put on you. I'd like a double portion on me. And Elijah said, boy, you've asked for a hard thing, but I'll tell you what, if you see me go up, when I go up, you'll get that double portion.

And so as they're walking along, Elijah takes his mantle off and slings it down and hits the water and says, where's the Lord God of Elijah? And the water parts and they walk across on dry land.

They get over to the other side of the river and the chariots of God come down and swoop down and pick up Elijah and take him off. And on the way up, his mantle falls out of the chariot. And when it falls out of the chariot, Elisha reaches down and picks up the mantle.

He rips his clothes. His heart's broken. He goes, my father, my father. In other words, I've lost my teacher, my mentor. I've lost a man. He's gone to heaven. And he starts back to the river. And when he gets to the river, he says, God, where are you?

Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And he splites the river. The river dries up and he walks across. And the preacher boys all know the man of God, Elisha, has the power of God on him. And then he goes about to do his ministry.

[ 5 : 01 ] So I want to show you five things. We're going to walk through this passage of scripture. Number one, the number one thing here, how in the world can you take up the mantle? That's the name of the message. Take up the mantle. How do you do it? Number one, you don't be easily offended.

Don't be easily offended. Number two, be a participant and not a spectator. Be a participant and not a spectator. Number three, hunger for all you can get. Hunger for all you can get.

Number four, pick up the mantle. And number five, do the job before you. Let's have a word of prayer again, if you will. Too much prayer never hurts. Father, call somebody.

Touch somebody's heart. Send a missionary to China. Send a missionary to Africa. Send a missionary to India. Send somebody to start some churches in Atlanta. Send somebody to New York City.

Send somebody to Los Angeles. Send somebody to Chicago or Miami. Send somebody to New Orleans. Send somebody to one of these places that are so desperate in need of the gospel. I pray you do that.

[ 5 : 58 ] And I'll give you praise and honor and glory for what you do. In Jesus' name, amen. Go with me, if you would, to 2 Kings 2 and verse 1. We're not going to read all this, but if you've got your Bible open, I think you'll get the idea. This point is don't be so easily offended.

You know, you'll not make it in a ministry if you don't get some pretty thick skin. A lot of people got a lot of things to say. You can't do it right. If you are doing the best you can, it won't be right enough. And if you do wrong, it'll be wronger than it is.

And that's just the way it is. And so in this story, one of the things that really strikes me is how Elisha is a young man. He comes out of a rich family. He had 12 yoke of oxen plowing in front of him.

He comes out of a family where he's probably been pampered. He comes out of a family where he's probably been in leadership. And now he's with Elijah. And Elijah is less and congenial with him. Read with me, if you would, verse 1.

And it came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by whirlwind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord has sent me to Bethel.

[ 6 : 59 ] And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord lives and as thy soul lives, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. Now watch the story. Go with me if you would. Do you understand what's going on here?

Here's the young pup getting ready. Here's the old man that's been doing the ministry a long time. Here's the guy that's looking to be in the same ministry position. And Elijah looks at Elisha and he says, Stay here, son.

I got things to do. And Elisha says, I'm not leaving. I'm not leaving. I have spent my life with young people around me. And God's wanting to be in the ministry. And you know, you got to really be careful.

They get offended pretty easily. I don't think Elijah cared about that. Elijah says, Tarry here, I pray thee. Tarry here, I pray thee. And he says, Stay. But Elisha says, You're not leaving me.

I'm going. You're not leaving me. I'm going. Look at verse 3. And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel, that's the Bible college students, came forth to Elisha and said, Do you not know that the Lord will take away thy master from your head today?

[ 7 : 56 ] And Elisha says, Yeah, I know it. Just be quiet. I know it. Just be quiet. Everything's going to be okay. You just leave me alone. So Elijah says in verse 4, Tarry here, I pray you.

Will you stay here? Now that's some real nice sounding stuff. I just want you to imagine it with me. I'm getting ready to go preach somewhere. And one of the young guys comes along. Here comes Greg. And Greg says, Hey, can I go with you? Where are you going to preach?

Just stay here, son. I got things to do. Just stay here. Don't bother me. I got a place to go. And Elisha says, I will not leave thee. In verse 4, he says that again.

And then if you will go to verse 5, they say, Do you know he's leaving? And in verse 6, he says, Tarry here again. And he responds, I will not leave thee. So watch with me if you would. Don't be so easily offended.

If you're going to be used to God at vision, if you're going to be used in the music ministry, if you're going to be used in the children's church, if you're going to be used in the pulpit, if you're going to be a missionary, whatever way you're going to be used, you can't be easily offended.

[ 8 : 56 ] No matter what Elijah says to Elisha, Elisha will not leave him. You don't know this. I was just actually sitting on the front row thinking back when we were in the deacons and training meeting, I mentioned the singers this morning and I forgot one or two.

I didn't think about them. And I literally sat there thinking, oh my goodness, I said, I never said a word. Because you know, if I forget somebody, I get in trouble. I get in trouble. Like if I forget to mention one, that one's like, well, you're probably everybody's kid, but my kid.

People just carry their feelings on their shoulder. If they do nursery duty, they need it mentioned. If they clean up the building, they need it mentioned. If they give any special money, they need it mentioned.

Whatever they do, they need it mentioned. But Elisha sticks to the man of God. He's not easily offended. He doesn't need to be coaxed, sweet talked. He just sticks to the man of God. He was there to serve and not be served.

He was there to serve and not be served. It wasn't about Elisha. It was about God and what God wanted him to do. And that's what it's going to take if you're going to do the work of God. We've got to say, I'm not going to get my feelings hurt.

[ 10 : 02 ] Now, you probably are going to get them hurt, but just do what you've got to do to get over it and get back up and go on and continue on in the ministry. It wasn't about how Elijah made Elisha feel.

The story, not one word. You know, I mean, if this is a passage of Scripture for millennials, if this is a passage of Scripture for Americans, if this is a passage of Scripture for Alphasidians, Alphasidians, you know what it's going to say?

Elijah said, Terry here, son, till I get back. And the next verse is going to be, and this made Elisha feel really bad. He didn't feel wanted. He didn't feel appreciated. He felt like no one respected the work he was doing.

Isn't that how it would be? But the Scripture says, the Scripture says he did not let anything deter him from his purpose. I would just like to show you something.

Go with me to Colossians 3, verse 13. I really wish you'd look this verse up. I ask you to please look up the verse and mark it. When you go to church, you've got to learn how to not get offended. When you go to church, you've got to learn how to not get offended.

[ 11 : 06 ] It's a big deal. The bigger the church is, the more people that are in the church, the more people that you know, the more people there are to offend you. This is not a new problem.

It's an old-timey problem. It's been going on forever. Have you ever driven down the road and seen two churches, Baptist churches, on the same road? And one of them is like Macedonia, and the next one right down the road is Greater Macedonia.

Have you ever seen that? I've seen that. I don't know if you've seen it. Here's First Baptist Church, and I've seen another one. In fact, in this very city, there's one called First Baptist, the other is called Another Baptist. I mean, it's just like, we're going to make sure, hey, both of us are the real First Baptists.

It's just the way it works. And so there's vision and real vision. There's vision and greater vision. There is the real lovers of Jesus and them other people.

But look at Colossians 3, verse 13. Forbearing one another, forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ also forgave you, even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.

[ 12 : 12 ] And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of maturity, perfectness. Let's go back through that verse with me, if you would, quickly. Forbearing one another. You know what that means?

Putting up. Putting up with each other. I really never quite understood the word forbear in English. I mean, I understood it. I looked it up.

I knew what it said in the dictionary. But when I got down to prove, they, you know, the word was *aguantar*. And it's a word. It's like, will that chair hold me up? If I sit on it, will it forbear me?

Can it take the pressure I'm about to put on it? If we put that much water in that balloon, will it burst or will it forbear? Will it hold on? And so here's what the Bible said. You know what's going on in church?

I think sometimes everybody thinks we're all going to hold hands, sit in a circle and sing, kumbaya, and everybody's going to love everybody and nobody's going to get their feelings hurt and everything's going to be sweet. But when the Apostle Paul wrote the church at Colossae, when he wrote that church, he said, guys, you're going to have to learn to put up with each other.

[13:10] You all got an uncle, you all got a cousin, you all got a brother-in-law or a mother-in-law, praise Jesus, but you got somebody in your family you just got to put up with. You don't get easily offended if you're going to do ministry.

And look at this, you forbear. You put up with each other. And then when you've put up with them, they hurt your feelings. And when they hurt your feelings, look what the next thing it says. You see the next verb in there? You're forbearing.

The next gerund. The next thing into the I-N-G, you put up with them and then you forgive them. Look at that. You put up with them and then you forgive them. You put up with them and then you forgive them. You know how you forgive them?

The same way Jesus forgave you. If any man have a quarrel against any, so we're fussing and fighting in the church and you took my seat, you took my parking place, you marked on the walls in my Sunday school class, you tore up stuff in my room, your kid hurt my kid out on the church playground, your kid called my kid a name.

Come on. It's all going on. Forbearing, forgiving. And how do we forgive? Like Jesus did. How he forgave us. You know how he forgave us? I didn't deserve it. Did you? How many of you would say, I deserve to be forgiven?

[14:14] Say amen. You didn't deserve it. Jesus is down on a cross and they lead him to the cross and as they nail him to the cross, he said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. Hey, Jesus taught us to forgive. We're putting up with, we're forbearing, we're forgiving, and we're forgiving like Jesus.

And then it really capstones the whole thing in verse 10. He says this, and above all that, put on charity. That's a good word. That's love that you don't expect them to love you back.

It's charity love. That's the word that's used right there. When you give to charity, what do you expect? In modern day times, now you expect goodwill to give you a receipt that you can take it off on your taxes.

Say amen. But the very idea of charity is you're walking down the street. If you were in a place like Peru or anywhere around the world, there's almost always beggars unless you're in a very developed country. There's beggars everywhere and they're pulling on you and they're asking for money and they're asking you to give them stuff and you know what?

You hand it to them and they don't do anything. They don't do anything. Betty and I were in Ariquepa and we had just gotten there and my Spanish wasn't that great. Not that great now, but it certainly wasn't that great after only a year in language school.

[15:18] And a lady showed up at the door and knocked on our door and she had a sick child in her arm and she had a prescription in her hand and she needed this medicine from the doctor and so she handed me that and she's telling me in Spanish, she said, I really need help.

My child is sick and I got feeling so bad for that lady. I went in and I got her some money and I walked out and I said, let me just pay for the whole thing. I'm just going to pay the whole deal. Here's how it is. That's what she said. It costs her some money right there. I'll take care of it.

I was in town the next day and she came up to me again. Same kid, same prescription. I just paid for it all yesterday and she looked at me and said, would you please help me? And I said, I guess all white people look alike, huh?

Because I paid for that yesterday. When I left Peru, she was still there, new kids. She just rented kids or something. She was a professional. She was a professional but you got to say, hey, I'm going to give charity.

That's what you're doing. You're giving charity. You know what God said? I'm supposed to love you like charity. I don't expect you to give it back. We don't love each, I'll forgive you if you forgive me. I'll love you if you'll love me.

[ 16 : 17 ] I'll invite you to supper if you'll invite me to supper. No, it's charity. That's the word he used and then he said, it's a bond of perfectness, a perfectness. It's the bond of maturity. It's the strength of maturity.

So we need to follow the Lord Jesus, watch and learn till God gives us a job. That's what Elisha did. Don't get easily offended. Don't get easily offended.

Number two, go with me if you would to chapter two and verse seven. Be a participant, not a spectator. Be a participant and not a spectator. End the story. It's just as clear as day.

The Bible says in 2 Kings chapter two and verse seven, and 50 men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off. I don't really get that. I mean, if I'm in the Bible college and Elijah's about to leave there and I know he's leaving, I'm trying to push Elisha out of the way.

I'm kind of like, hey, if you're going to give a double portion to Elisha, how about a quarter portion to me and one and three quarters to him? How about something for me? I'd have been wanting to say something. But look what it says there. The sons of the prophets went and stood to look, to watch, and to see.

[ 17 : 23 ] And they too, Elijah and Elisha, stood by Jordan. Verse eight, and Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters and they were divided hither and thither so that they too went over on track around.

50 Bible college students, 50 sons of the prophets, 50 men of God, 50 guys preparing to be used to God watching. One guy be the man of God and the other guy be the student that's going to get to be the man of God.

They see and they watch God do stuff but they don't participate. The truth is God's got big stuff he's doing in our church. Big stuff's happening in the children's ministry.

Big stuff's happening in the teen ministry. Big stuff's happening in the music ministry. Big stuff's happening in the Spanish ministry. Big stuff's happening everywhere and we can all sit and watch or we can get in the game. I might not do the same job you do but I don't want to just sit and watch.

In 2 Kings 2 and verse 16, they didn't participate but they sure had an opinion. That sounds like Baptist. They don't participate but they got an opinion.

[ 18 : 23 ] Look at 2 Kings 2, 16 and they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants 50 strong men. Oh, there's 50. Hey, there's 50 of us and we're strong. Thank Jesus for that.

Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master lest the pervention of the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up and cast him up on some mountain or some valley. And he said, No, you will not send him.

Now, watch what happened. Here's the story. These guys come and they say, We don't know what God did. I mean, you know, the chariot came down and he got eligible. What did he do with him? Maybe he threw him out of the chariot. Maybe he tossed him on a mountain somewhere.

Maybe he left him in the valley. Who knows what God did to his man? We don't know. Somebody ought to go look for him. And we got 50 strong guys. I hope they're not the same 50 guys that's been watching. But I probably think they were, don't you?

Amazing. Same number, you know, and the watchers were the last time. This time they want to go look. They got an opinion and they want to go look. Look at verse 17. It said, And they urged him till he was ashamed. They bugged the fire out of him till he gave in.

[ 19 : 19 ] You know how your kids do you. Can I have that? No. Can I have that? No. Can I have that? No. Can I have that? No. Can I have that? No. Yeah, you can have it. If it's not your kids, it's your wife or your husband. Come on, tell the truth. And when they urged him they sought for three days but they couldn't find him.

And in verse 18, And when they came back to him for he was still there in Jericho, he said to them, Didn't I tell y'all not to go? Didn't I tell you? See, they doubted the man of God. They doubted Elisha.

Elisha told them, Hey, that's not true. You don't have to worry about it. Elijah's not on a mountain. Elijah's not. God didn't just dump Elijah. That's not what happened. But they wanted to go back to the way things were. They weren't ready to get on with God's current plan.

You see, they were Elijah's boys. They weren't Elisha's boys. And now it was pretty obvious Elisha was the guy the guy was putting in charge. And they were saying, Let's see if we can't find Elijah before we accept you.

Tonight, you should decide to quit being a spectator. I mean that. It's what the text is going on in the text. But I challenge you, quit being a spectator. What are you going to do with your life?

[ 20 : 25 ] Get off the bleachers and get into the game. Why would you watch God use Elisha while you sit on the side and criticize? Every one of you should be saying, I need to do something.

I need to be involved. Betty and I got married. I wanted to be in the ministry so bad I could taste it. And I went to my pastor.

His name was Billy Kitchens. I haven't talked to him in 40 years. I don't know what's happened to him. And I told Billy Kitchens, I said, Man, I want something to do in the church. It's a larger church. I don't know, 300 or 400 people.

And I said, I'd like a ministry. I want something I could do in the church. And Billy Kitchens said, I'll get you something. I'll get you something. And I went to Billy Kitchens over and over. And I kept saying, Come on, can I do something? Let me, I'll be on the janitorial staff.

Just let me do something. We had big buildings. We had all that. And I kept bugging him. And finally, I was going to go in and tell him, That's it. I quit. I'm leaving. I'm going to another church where maybe they'll give me something I can do. And so I walked up to him and I was just ready to let him have an earful.

[ 21 : 23 ] You know, he's an old guy, probably 40. And I was a really old guy, like 18 or 19. And he said, Here's a business card. Call this guy. He wants you to be his youth pastor. I've been working on it ever since you asked. But you know, if you want to get involved, somebody finds you a job.

I called that guy up and I said, Hey, my pastor, Billy Kitchen, said you might have a job for me. I could be a youth director. He said, Yeah, we don't even know what one of them is in our church, but Brother Billy said, you do good at it.

And so come on over. When I went, I said, Now what's my job? He said, I don't know. I ain't never had a youth director. I said, What am I supposed to do? He said, Well, God leads me. I guess God will lead you. You figure it out yourself. I told him I wanted to have a youth retreat.

He said, I don't believe in that. No retreating at this church. You got to go forward. I said, Could I have a youth forward? He said, Sure. That's not a joke. Willard Willis used to say every time it rained, he'd say it doesn't take but about eight drops of water to keep 50 Baptists out of church.

And then he said every time, he regularly said, You can be baptized in every creek in Georgia until every frog knows you by name but you'll still go to hell if you ain't saved. He said that all the time. No education but what a great man of God.

[ 22 : 34 ] You should decide to quit being a spectator. God has a plan for your life. Offer yourself for the ministry. Do something. Do something. Don't sit there. Ask where you can help.

You should get with somebody in the church. Get with deacons. Get with Sunday school teachers. Get with church staff. Get with somebody and just say, Hey, I need something I can do. I don't want to be a spectator.

Number three. Hunger for all you can get. Hunger for all you can get. I love this part of the story. If I were traveling to churches and preaching, this is where I'd spend a lot of time. But look at 2 Kings 2 and verse 9.

It came to pass when they were going over that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. He said, Buddy, you've hung around. You keep coming around. And so I'm fixing to leave.

Why don't you tell me what you want me to do? And Elisha said, I'll tell you what I want. Now I would have said, If I could just be 10% of the man of God you are, I'd be so happy. I mean, you're a great man of God. You're Elijah. Could I just be a little bit?

[ 23 : 29 ] He looked at him and said, I'd like to be two times the man of God you've ever been. I want double your spirit. A double portion of your spirit. Verse 10. Elijah said, Well, you sure have asked for a hard thing.

Nevertheless, if you see me when I'm taken away, you'll get it. Verse 11. And it came to pass that a chariot of fire and horses of fire came down and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

And Elisha saw it and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, the horsemen thereof, and he saw him no more. He took all of his own clothes and he tore them in two pieces.

He ripped his clothes. That was the sign they did when they were brokenhearted. You see, he wasn't easily offended. He wasn't easily offended. He was a participant, not a spectator.

He didn't leave working at his daddy's farm and being the foreman of his daddy's farm to go sit down somewhere and wait. He said, I gotta be in the game. And he was hungry.

[ 24 : 30 ] And in the story, his persistence paid off. His persistence. He gained the confidence of the man of God. He gained the confidence of the man of God to the point he could ask what he wanted. He said, hey, just tell me what you want.

I told you I was going down there and I told you not to go. And he said, you said you was going. I told you not to go and you said I was going. And I told you not to go and I said I was going. All right, just ask what you want. I can't get rid of you.



Might as well let God use you. He could ask what he wanted. And he asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. I don't know if you have any idea what that means.

But all my life, I've known preachers and great preachers and great men of God that were greatly used. And I would have never even had the nerve to dream of saying, God, make me twice the man of God he is. But Elisha did and God wrote it in a story.

I think it's a pretty interesting point. He hungered to be used of God. Wait expectantly. Would you write that down somewhere? I don't have time to show you this.

[ 25 : 27 ] I think it's an exciting thing in this passage of scripture and this is off topic. I'm running a rabbit. So here it comes. You ready? They knew that the angels, the horses of the Lord and the chair of the Lord was coming to get Elijah and they were ready and Elisha was ready.

You know, I know Jesus is coming back. I know he's coming back and I ought to live like that. I cannot imagine us ever thinking so much like that. Can you? Can you imagine us thinking like that about Jesus coming back?

They got up in the morning and everybody said, well, this is the day. This is the day. This is the day. And Elisha said, I know it's the day. Just be quiet. I know it's the day. Just be quiet. I don't know what day Jesus is coming back but I think we ought to be expectant.

But let me just go back to the subject now. But you know, God has something he wants to do with you. You ought to be waiting expectantly for the coming of Jesus but you ought to be waiting expectantly for God to use you.

Nobody in this room is extra. There's not a set of tonsils in here we can just take out and everything's okay. We don't need you. There's not an appendix in here that doesn't belong in the body.

[ 26 : 31 ] Everybody in this room every joint every person every person in this room God has a plan for you. God wants to use you. You're not extra. You say, well I'm not that good at this. You don't have to be good at this.

How about that? You say, well I don't think I can speak like that or I don't think I can teach a Sunday school class. Hey kid, you got something you can do. God gifted you. It's a weird little church.

Let me just tell you y'all are a weird little bunch of people. You see the little young ladies that were up here singing just a second ago? What a thrill. What a thrill. Somebody's taking time to teach a bunch of young ladies.

That means all the other ladies that sing are old ladies because it's a comparison thing. Say amen. You know, it doesn't matter. You're taking nursery.

Nursery. Can you imagine having held William Carey in a nursery? Can you imagine being somebody in a nursery that took care of Jason Holt in Chile and prayed over that little boy and he was right over here on Bethelview and somebody caring about that kid and go, you realize there's not an unimportant job here.

[ 27 : 38 ] You should get involved. You should want it. You should wait patiently. It's time for you to serve. Get training to be used of God. Wait your turn and wait until God is ready for you to take Elijah's place.

This is a beautiful thing. I'll show you this Thursday night, Lord willing. In the next chapter, they're going to be looking for the great man of God and Jehoshaphat's going to know who it is. It's going to be Elisha and he's going to say, I know it.

And so is the son of Ahab going to know he's a great man of God. But it's interesting in chapter 3, guess what they say? Elisha, the guy who poured water on the hands of Elijah, is here. They didn't even remember him as a big shot.

He actually ends up working twice as many miracles. He actually ends up being a greater man of God. Maybe, maybe, however you figure that stuff, who knows? He had more notches in his gospel gun than Elijah did, but he was known as the guy who poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Won't you find what you can do? God's got a place for you. Elisha leaves a position of prestige and follows Elijah and just does, well, the Bible's verse for it in verse chapter 3.

[ 28 : 47 ] You'll be there Thursday night. He poured water on his hands. You don't understand that here because we got spigots. We got faucets. We got nice sinks. But I used to travel in Prue. We'd get to a little restaurant and it'd be a thatched roof, a thatched grass roof and a dirt floor and a table and somebody cooking over either a fire or a kerosene little stove like a camp stove and they're cooking and we're getting ready to eat and you want to wash your hands and when you go to wash your hands, you go in this little place and you got to have somebody pour water over your hands and so you get your hands wet and you go, it's like camping.

You have somebody pour water. That's who Elisha was. Elisha, how'd you get started in ministry? I don't know. I polished his shoes. I don't know. I poured water on his hands. I don't know. I did whatever job needed doing.

I don't know. I packed his suitcase for him. I just did what I could till God was ready to use me. 2 Kings 2 and verse 13. Pick up the mantle. This has already been read but we're going to read it again.

Chapter 2 verse 13. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan. He took a mantle of Elijah that fell from him and smote the waters and said, where is the Lord God of Elijah when he also spent in the waters they parted hither and thither and Elisha went over.

In verse 13, Elisha wept at the passing of his mentor. He tore his clothing a sign of grief. He called him his father. He had learned a lot and he loved him a lot. He had learned by being with him just like Jesus was with his apostles.

[ 30 : 13 ] In Mark chapter 3 and verse 14 he chose them that they might be with him but he was ready for action. I don't know what you could think of but I can only imagine as a chariot and horses come flying out of the sky and they're on fire.

I mean that's what the Bible says. I don't understand that. I don't know what that means. And they swoop down and they pick up on Elijah and as they take Elijah up in the air all of a sudden the mantle falls down out of heaven where he's on his way up and Elisha looks down and he's like that's my chance.

And Elisha reaches down and says I'm in business. God's letting me take over the job. And he walked back and he wrapped the mantle look at it and he wrapped the mantle like he'd seen Elijah do. And he walked up the water like he'd seen Elijah do.

And he said where's the Lord God of Elijah? And he smote the water and the water parted and he walked back through. He was ready for action. He knew God was going to put him in the ministry. He was planning and preparing for this day.

He believed God had called him. And he called on God and he picked up the mantle. He called on the same God that had used Elijah and he expected God to use him. He expected God to use him.

[ 31 : 18 ] He saw God do great things with him too. Because when he hit that water it spread. Can you imagine what that must have been like? I don't know if he kind of fearfully picked up the mantle.

I mean I'd have been picking it up and saying okay I'm going back to that water. I don't know. God said I was going to be the next man. I wonder hey God where are you? Boom. But when he did it the water parted and he walked through on dry land.

He saw God do great things. He now knows that God's given him his power. It's time to do the work that God's given him. It's time to take action. And he headed back towards the ministry God had for him.

By the way 2 Kings 2 verse 15 the boys are still watching. 2 Kings 2 verse 15 and when the sons of the prophet now these are grown men by the way these are grown men these sons of the prophets that's just a term that like when Paul called Timothy's son that's the kind of term it is the sons of the prophets which were to view we're over in Jericho looking and they saw him and they said wow the spirit of God does rest on Elisha and they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him the only reason you're not being used of God is you haven't picked up the mantle he has laid down for you.

You don't have to be a preacher you don't have to be a pastor you don't have to be a missionary you don't have to be a Sunday school teacher but I can promise you this you're not supposed to be a knot on a log you're not supposed to be a spectator there's something for you to do you can be involved in discipleship you can be involved in things from as lowly a position as cleaning a building to make sure everybody else can worship or taking care of a nursery but you ought to find a job you could do last thing and I close do the job before you do the job before you see Elisha went straight to do the ministry the young men knew that Elisha was the new man of God I love that they saw him and they said the spirit of Elijah does rest on Elisha God's on him like he was on the original God's on this new guy like he was on the old guy there's a few things I think are interesting these are question marks in my notes so you can take it like that he spent a lot of time with Elijah was he different from them did he have

[ 33 : 31 ] God's calling did he have a different spirit is it that they saw the water part what is it that made them know that's the man of God but they knew they knew it is time for you to quit being easily offended it is time for you to be a participant and not a spectator it's time for you to hunger for God to use you it's time for you to pick up the mantle and do the job God has in front of you nobody in this room ought to be sitting this isn't a vacation spot I'm not trying to be ugly but all of us ought to be in the ministry so in the chapter he went and he healed the water in 2nd Kings chapter 2 and verse 19 the water was bad the ground was barren and he put some salt and he said bring me a new cruise he put some salt in it and he spread it on the spring and cast the salt in the spring and in verse 21 he healed the waters in verse 22 the waters were healed he went and God used him just like he had used Elijah miracle number one and then 2nd Kings chapter 2 verse 23 he was going out to do the ministry and some young men made fun of him in 2nd Kings chapter 2 and verse 23 these little children here you got to remember the children the little children were the people under the age of 20 when they went up to when they went when they crossed over into the promised land or when they crossed into when they disobeyed God and they wouldn't cross into the promised land he let everybody die until the age of 20 all those are little children these aren't six-year-olds that are making fun of the man of God they're sitting they're sitting little kids that get candy bars little suckers in my office these are young men maybe 15 20 30 years old they're smart mouths look what they said if you would they mocked him in verse 23 they said go up well see that's what Elijah done go up that's what

Elijah did bald head go up you bald head they made fun of him get out of here we don't need you why don't you go up like Elijah did why don't you get out of here we don't need another man of God we got rid of Elijah we want to get rid of you they're making fun of him and Elijah turns and he curses them in the name of the Lord and two she-bearers came out of the wood and tore ripped apart forty and two children of them it was easy to respect Elijah he was the man but now it's Elisha and maybe he's not the man in their mind and maybe they can mock him and make fun of him but God said you're not going to do that and get away with it you're not going to mock and make fun of my new man I put in place and God honored Elisha's prayer I want you to just remember this God has a work for you to do get up and go do it you might not be Elijah you might not be a preacher you might not be a missionary you might not even be a Sunday school teacher you might think to yourself

I can't teach Sunday school hey can you take a role can you talk to people who are absent like one of the some of several of the people in this room in this church they've been over to Mary Deleuce's house they've helped they've been a blessing they've just done ministry you didn't know about it but God does they've been in the house and they've been helping and see that's ministry as much as me standing here that's ministry what they're doing God has a job for you to do so don't be so easily offended quit it stop being a baby stop being a baby forbear forgive and love be a participant get off the seat and get in the job get in the game get out of the stands get on the field be hungry for God to use you be hungry for God to use you all you need to do is take one little job and when you're doing that one little job just won't you ask God can I do one little bit bigger and you'll just be surprised and you don't have to know what you give sir you don't have hunger for God to do more with you pick up the mantle

I think we all think that if I could have been there when all that happened I would have picked up the mantle I wouldn't have been one of those 50 I would have been there like Elisha wanting the power of God on my life but I don't believe that the majority of us have been sitting so long we're used to it we've been getting our feelings hurt whining about how somebody hurt our feelings when Jesus said follow me take off your cross let's go die it's time to get in the ministry