

NOTE: This was Pastor Fedena's final message to the church he pastored for 31 years in Fairless Hills, PA

"THE MANTLE OF MINISTRY IS PASSED"

TEXT: 2 Kings 2:1-14 (see below)

THESIS: To reveal the transference of ministries from Elijah to Elisha.

INTRO.: A. No one was ever called upon to step into larger shoes than Elisha. **"THE MANTLE OF MINISTRY IS PASSED"** nonetheless. How could he ever possibly have Elijah's greatness and power? Elijah was the man of God miraculously fed by ravens, multiplied food for a widow, raised the dead, slew the 450 prophets of Baal, called down fire from heaven to consume the offering on the altar and on another occasion to consume 120 of Ahaziah's soldiers, shut off the water supply from the clouds above the earth for 3 ½ years, had parted the Jordan River, and finally was transported to heaven, without dying, in a blaze of glory!

2 KINGS 2:1-14 *And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. 3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. 5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. 7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. 8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. 9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. 11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. 13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; 14 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 also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.*

B. But just before he went to heaven in a chariot of fire, his protégé, Elisha, begged him for *a double portion of his spirit!* What amazing insight. What holy desire. What God-instilled zeal. He could have requested wealth, fame, fortune, or wisdom. But instead desired God's power to serve Him. (v.9) In the N.T. we are told to *"covet earnestly the best gifts..."* Surely that is what Elisha did. To understand what Elisha desired we must know what it was that energized his mentor...

I. ELIJAH'S MINISTRY:

A. Heavenly Power:

ILLUS.: When Elijah spoke Kings trembled. When Elijah prayed God listened. When Elijah asked the fire fell! This is what Elisha sought.

1. The primary prerequisite for any man-of-God is the power of God!
2. He must desire it, seek it, beg for it, never be satisfied without it.

ILLUS.: Many of the "great" preachers of today have organizational ability, charisma, personality and charm, but lack God's power. They build huge churches, have multi-faceted ministries, and can sway audiences with their pulpit ability, but have little power with God. There is often little in their ministries which cannot be explained without the Lord.

B. Believing Prayer:

James 5:17-18 *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

1. Elijah's God has not changed and the formula for God's power has not changed.

2. Elijah's God wants to display His power in our lives through believing, fervent, passionate prayer just as He did in Elijah's ministry.

C. Faithfulness In Apostasy:

1. Elijah's and Elisha's power was given to them because in a day of awful apostasy they stayed true to their God; we live in such a day and God is looking for men-of- God who will stand.

ILLUS.: It is true that in a time of weakness Elijah doubted God and even prayed to die. But because he had proven himself faithful over the long haul, God forgave his lapse, and not only sustained him with one meal that lasted him for 40 days (!), and never answered his prayer to die...**Elijah never died!**

2. To have God's power, you must be willing to pay the price; God's power never made any man popular; e.g., Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Peter, Paul, Jesus.

ILLUS.: Power must be preferred over popularity. Doctrine must take precedence over friendships. God's Word must have preeminence over pleasures. Principles must have place over convenience. Loyalty must prevail over compromise. Both Elijah and Elisha stood against the apostasy of their day and they were not concerned about popularity, fame, friendships, or prestige. They did right because it was right, not because it was applauded. (We need to learn to applaud duty over talent, gifts, personality or looks!)

D. Faith Over Doubt:

ILLUS.: Both men believed that God could and would do the impossible (part the Jordan river) when they acted in faith. Both men had to trust God to protect them against the enemies of God on numerous occasions; e.g., Elijah against Satan's 450 priests. Both men believed God could raise the dead and both saw God do so.

God can use YOU to resurrect the dead (win those dead in trespasses & sins). God can protect you against His enemies and Satan. God can take care of YOUR family. He can answer YOUR believing prayers. When you take YOUR stand against unbelief at work, at home, with relatives, He will support YOU. He can supply YOUR needs (food, clothing, shelter, etc.). WHERE IS THE LORD GOD OF ELIJAH? (v.14) He is alive and active today, just as in Elijah's day!

II. ELIJAH'S MANTLE: (Cf. 1 Ki. 19:19-21; v.8,14)

A. A Sacred Symbol:

QUOTE: Spurgeon: "If ever I could have any great reverence for relics, I should like to have Elijah's mantle."

1. Elisha had seen the prophet use the mantle as a display of God's power. V.8
2. Elisha knew that there was no intrinsic power in the mantle, but it symbolized his mighty ministry.

ILLUS.: The mantle was like Samson's long hair. It was like Moses' rod. It was but a **symbol** of the power of God's Spirit.

3. The mantle had become synonymous with Elijah's power with God.

- a. No doubt he had worn it when he raised the widow's dead son.
- b. Surely he had worn it when he called down fire from heaven on Mt. Carmel & slew the priests and prophets of Baal.

ILLUS.: Elijah is gone, but his mantle is left behind. It is a symbol of the transference of God's power from Elijah to Elisha. Elisha's question is NOT "Where is the mantle of Elijah?" But "**Where is the Lord God of Elijah?**" Elijah is not interested in Elijah's symbol, but in Elijah's power; not in Elijah's mantle, but in Elijah's God!

If God has done anything in this ministry under my leadership, it was surely not due to Pastor Fedena, his personality (!), appearance (!), or appeal (!), but due to God's power! **It is my desire to pass on to the next pastor not my legacy as a pastor, but faithfulness to God's Word, a zeal for lost souls, a desire to capture this community for Christ, to expand the outreach of FBC, to feed the church, and to stay clean in morals, untainted in finances, sound in doctrine, & a blessing to me & the people of FBC.**

B. A Spiritual Secret: v.9b

1. He has Elijah's mantle, but he needs Elijah's God!
2. He knows if he can have Elijah's God, the mantle will be simply something symbolic.

ILLUS.: I have seen preachers mimic other preacher's style, voice, accents, gestures and mannerisms because they had seen God use those men. But what they needed was **the God of those preachers and a portion of their power!** Paul and Peter were completely different, but they both had the same God. Spurgeon and Roloff were complete opposites, but they both had God's power.

If you have Elijah's God it will not matter if you have his mantle, but if you have his mantle without his God, you will have nothing!

3. Elisha takes the mantle of Elijah and parts the waters of Jordan as Elijah had done and thus receives an answer to his question: "*Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*" v.14

CONCL.: "THE MANTLE OF MINISTRY" is being passed today from Pastor Fedena to the next preacher. It is but a symbol of God's desire to continue a...

**CHRIST-HONORING,
SHEEP-FEEDING,
SOUL-WINNING,S
SIN-FIGHTING,
BIBLE-DEFENDING,
DOCTRINALLY-SOUND, &
MORALLY-CLEAN...**

...ministry to the next generation of FBC.