



Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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CONNECTIONS

Message preached on Sunday Morning, November 24, 2024

Here at Grace, we always take the Sunday just before Thanksgiving and celebrate you. We celebrate the congregation. It is our way, as pastors, to simply say...we couldn't do this without you, so thanks!

WHEN praying about what to minister today...the Holy Spirit directed me to a passage in Luke...one that we are very familiar with.

Luke 16:10-12 – Jesus is talking about living in the Kingdom of God.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

NOTICE: If someone can be trusted in the little things...he can be trusted in the BIGGER things.

IN OTHER WORDS: A lot of people are not promoted, because they have not been found faithful in the little things.

REMEMBER: Song of Solomon 2:15 – It's the little foxes that spoil the vines.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

NOTICE: Your faithfulness in fleshly things will lead to promotions.

This can mean at work...absolutely. It also means with actions.

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

God will always connect you with someone in order to INCREASE the KINGDOM, INCREASE the person you are connected to, AND INCREASE yourself.

God works through human CONNECTIONS. He connects you to others in order to see your faithfulness to those people.

Proverbs 28:20 – “**A faithful man shall abound with blessings:** but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.”

VERY IMPORTANT: We can NEVER think connection WITH GOD without connecting to His body...His men and women of God...those whom God joins us with.

We, here at Grace, understand this mentality as covenant relationships.

HONESTLY covenant connections.

BASICALLY the greatest quality in the kingdom of God and these relationships is faithfulness.

Without faithfulness...you will NOT increase or be promoted.

“Faithfulness” – consistency, trustful, trustworthy

BELOVED: God is a covenant God...**HE ALWAYS operates through covenant and covenant-minded people.**

THINK ABOUT THIS: Even Jesus connected Himself with 12 men before He stepped into what He accomplished.

Genesis 2:18 – “And the LORD God said, ***It is not good that the man should be alone***; I will make him an help meet for him.”

BELOVED: God is not looking for LONE RANGERS...He is looking for TONTOS, who will connect themselves with others to help THEM become all that THEY are to become in the KINGDOM... THEN God will do the same for them.

REMEMBER: Three reasons God connects us to others...

- 1.) His kingdom first.
- 2.) The increase of the one you've been connected to.
- 3.) Your promotion and fulfillment in life.

OUR JOB is to BE FAITHFUL with whomever God connects us.

The Story of Faithfulness

In 1 Kings 18 we see an AMAZING VICTORY in the life of Elijah.

YOU SAY: See, Pastor Thad, we can do it by ourselves.

ANSWER: Well, sure.

HOWEVER: It is followed by chapter 19 when he gets AMAZINGLY discouraged.

- * He wants to stop, quit and die! 19:4
- * God has answer to this attitude.

FIRST: Eat! He was hangry! Fellowship! Happy Thanksgiving.

THOUGHT: Don't miss our fellowship tonight.

SECOND: Go on a vacation...a journey. 40 days!

He travels to a cave (vs. 9) and is still in MAJOR isolation mode.

Never good for anyone. Ever!

Yet, it is a temptation.

This vacation had a purpose...God wants him connected to someone who will edify, challenge and enable him.

God wants the same for you: edify, challenge, enable.

THIS IS THE TIME that God teaches him to listen to the still, small voice

HOWEVER: In all that God has done...not a lot has changed (vs. 14). He is still complaining! He is still BY HIMSELF.

NOW: What does that SMALL VOICE tell him to do?

ANSWER: Go connect with Elisha!

- * That is what Elijah was missing.
- * Elijah was doing great things...but he needed the help.
- * We find that Elisha served Elijah for somewhere between 8 to 20 years. Faithfully!

Many of us would look at that relationship and say...WOW, Elijah must have been wonderful to hang out with. Such a pleasant man of God.

HOWEVER: From the start we see a discouraged man of God who was probably not that pleasant.

You see...when God connects you to someone...there will always be tests.

Tests of faithfulness on day ONE and tests of faithfulness on the LAST DAY.

I have seen people who professed faithfulness on day one and completely messed up at the end.

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND...tests of faithfulness come...but they are opportunities to either remove yourselves or move into your promotion.

Often we are cool with connections...until the pressure comes along. Opportunities to leave...to take an easy way out...easy life.

1 Kings 19:19-21 – The calling of Elisha

- 19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.
- 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?
- 21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

IMPORTANT FIRST POINT: Elijah obeys God and goes to get Elisha. However, if you read this passage, it doesn't seem like he wants to do it. He seems to still be stuck in self pity.

Vs. 19 – He basically walks up to Elisha...throws his mantle on him (doesn't place it lovingly)...and keeps walking. :-)

That makes me laugh. He is not in this...he is not having an ordination service. Just a toss of the cloth and keeps walking...doesn't SAY ANYTHING!

Vs. 20 – Elisha chases him down and says, let me go kiss my mom and dad goodbye (seems reasonable).

Elijah answers a polite and intimate, "Go ahead, what have I done to thee?"

BASICALLY: "Whatever, I didn't want you. God made me do it."
(AMP) – "Settle it for yourself."

We see a couple tests right here for Elisha...moving towards his purpose by being CONNECTED.

1.) Family ties.

It is really easy to allow family responsibilities keep you from staying faithful.

I'm not talking about big events, per say...I am talking about I can't join you today, because I need to spend time with my family doing this or that.

I'm talking about scheduling family get-togethers for Sunday morning.

I'm talking about mom and dad, grandma and grampa have always attended this church or that church...so must I.

REMEMBER: When Jesus was ministering and his family came to Jesus while He was ministering and wanted to talk with Him.

He said, nope! What I am doing is most important (Mark 3:31-35).

2.) Offense.

REMEMBER: When Namaan came to get healed from Elisha and Elisha didn't even come to the door. Namaan thought at least the man of God would come to the door and do something dramatic to call on God for his healing! He was offended!

THIS IS kinda what I am seeing here.

Surely, Elijah could have stopped. Lovingly wrapped his mantle around him. Sang a song. Said a prayer. Made his request...and wait for an answer.

BELOVED: The amount of times I have seen offense stop a connection, stop the move of God in a place...is mind boggling!

Cain was offended at Abel.
 Joseph's brothers were offended at Joseph.
 Miriam and Aaron were offended at Moses.
 David's brothers were offended at David.
 John the Baptist was offended at Jesus.

SPIRIT OF OFFENSE: Hears thing that were never said and perceives thing an insult where none was given.

ILLUSTRATION: The people who had CONNECTED with Grace Ministries...dad corrected one... a bunch of them were offended and left.

QUESTION: What did Elisha do? Get offended? Give Elijah a piece of his mind?

Vs. 21 – He went and made a fire...with his yoke.
 He made dinner with his yoke of oxen.

WHAT IS HE SAYING: This is no longer my life...I am connecting myself to Elijah!
 No turning back! No turning back!

INSTEAD of getting his feelings hurt...he doubled down for the double!

Next Test

MOVING AHEAD: Finally the day has come...everyone and their brother knows it is the day that Elijah is going to be taken up. 2 Kings 2

APPARENTLY: This was common knowledge amongst the prophets of the day...the school of the prophets around the area.

NOTICE: They all kept telling Elisha that his master was being taken up today!
 Elisha kept saying, "Shut up!"

IN OTHER WORDS: He was NOT plotting his promotion...he was satisfied with this connection.

Vs. 2 – Elijah tells him to stay with that group of prophets.

Vs. 4 – Elijah tells him to stay with that group of prophets.

Vs. 6 – Elijah tells him to stay with that group of prophets.

QUESTION: Was Elijah just trying to get rid of him?

ANSWER: No, every prophet in those schools KNEW that Elisha was the heir-apparent to Elijah...he was on deck and everyone knew it.

So, Elijah was basically saying, "Go head, stay here and get things started for your own ministry...start now, before I am gone!"

BELOVED: It is basically a shortcut.

3.) Shortcuts are tests.

BASICALLY: I could grow quicker with this connection. I could see the end result...get rich...be promoted quicker.

I am convinced this was Judas' downfall. He wanted the promotion more than he wanted the relationship.

When he connected with Jesus he was like cool...how could this go wrong.

UNTIL Jesus started talking about Himself dying.

Judas, "That won't help me at all."

His short cut to riches...sell Jesus out.

Stay connected.

Elijah's consistent answer, "I will NOT leave you."

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING: It wasn't until all these opportunities for quicker promotion were passed that he got his opportunity for the DOUBLE.

2 Kings 2:9 – "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."

FUNNY REPLY: vs. 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."

QUESTION: Why was it a hard thing?

ANSWER: Because a double portion wasn't something that Elijah could actually give to him. It had to come from God.

KEY TO RECEIVING: He had to stick with him until the end...had to see him when he is taken.

2 Kings 2:11,12

- 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.

NOTICE: The chariot of fire went in between Elisha and Elijah and Elijah went up into heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha was tempted to get his eyes on the chariot of fire (who wouldn't). But he didn't.

4.) Distractions

The final test on faithfulness is distractions.

All sorts of distractions.

Mark 4:19 – says it keeps us from harvest (weeds, thorns).

Busyness of life!

Flashiness of stuff.

Even, "I'm going to stay at home and study by myself."

Conclusion

The thing that we must understand...God doesn't connect you with anyone so that you just waste your life.

The connection is always leading you to more...even more than the person you were connected with.

Think about this...

- * David and Solomon (Solomon was greater)
- * Moses and Joshua (Joshua went into the promised land)
- * Elijah and Elisha (the double)
- * Naomi and Ruth (marriage and babies and lineage)
- * Jesus and us!

John 14:12 – "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

God has connected us...we must stay faithful to one another.