

What It Takes to Take Up the Mantle

2 Kings 2

Taking up the mantle requires:

1. Perseverance. (vv. 1-8, 10b-12)

a. Elisha had to persevere in at least two ways.

i. *Physical* perseverance – Elisha had to follow Elijah for 25 miles as the two of them crossed the Jordan

ii. *Emotional/Mental* perseverance – At both Bethel and Jericho, Elisha was reminded that his spiritual mentor would soon be taken away.

iii. No matter the cost, Elisha was willing to persevere.

b. Likewise, if you and I are going to take up the mantle, we've got to be willing to follow the footsteps of our Savior through all manner of trials and adversity.

2. Faith. (9-10a)

a. Elisha asked Elijah for a hard thing. Even Elijah realized the very improbable nature of the request.

b. While Elisha's request may have been improbable, it wasn't impossible.

c. Why? Because we've got a God "who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

d. What prompted Elisha to ask for such "a hard thing?" FAITH!

e. When was the last time you or I asked God for a hard thing? Is it because we doubt God's power?

3. Action. (vv. 13-15, 19-24)

a. After Elisha saw his master translated up into glory, he didn't just sit there and yearn for the days of old. He picked up the mantle, went down to the Jordan, struck the water, and called on the Holy One of Israel. He moved on!

b. Because he was willing to take action, God used two miracles through Elisha to demonstrate His love (vv. 19-22) and His judgment (vv. 23-24).

c. As the Body of Christ, we've sung "Standing on the Promises," but we've done a whole lot of "Sitting on the Premises."

d. The time for talk is over – it's time for action (Luke 9:62).

4. Prayer. (v. 25)

a. Once Elisha left Bethel, he traveled 56 miles to Mt. Carmel. Why would he do that?

b. The Scripture doesn't tell us exactly why, but I'm convinced he traveled back to that special place in order to spend some time of prayer and solitude with God – much like Jesus, Paul, and a multitude of others did when they began their ministries.

c. Here's the bottom line: We can persevere and have faith and take action, but if what we do isn't bathed in prayer then we're only spinning our wheels.