

## Passing the Mantle

2018-07-29 - Year B - Pentecost - 7-24 - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas  
2 Kings 2:1-15; Psalm 114; Ephesians 4:1-16; Mark 6:45-52

### Christian Calling

- “Vocare” Latin for “call or summon.” It is from this word that we get the English words “vocal” and “vocation.”
  - We tend to think of “vocation” as a job. But there can be a lot more meaning to your work if, through prayer, you come to discern a particular calling that God has for your life.
  - Calling in the Bible: We heard Ezekiel’s calling in our readings three weeks ago, we can also recall the famous passages in which prophets like Moses, Jeremiah, and Isaiah were called. Jeremiah 1:4-5.
  - To have a call brings meaning to your work, and it can become a part of your identity

### Respite and Rest

- We don’t have a record of Elijah’s calling in the Bible, but we do have lots of stories about his ministry, and he is one of the more notable prophets in the OT. We can be sure that he had a clear sense of God’s call to him to be a prophet.
- Elijah’s prophetic ministry was not an easy one, he was frequently at odds with king Ahab and with the king’s wife, Jezebel. This conflict is largely over issue of Baal worship.
  - Great prophetic duel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal.
  - When God proves himself to be the one true God, Elisha slaughters all of the prophets of Baal, and makes Jezebel very angry! 1 Kings 18:40
- Elijah on the Mountain crying out to God - 1 Kings 19:14-16
  - The very next verses, beginning at vs. 19, tell the story of the call of Elisha.
  - God brings relief quickly. - 1 Kings 19:21
  - Elijah still has a few more missions to accomplish throughout the rest of 1 Kings, but when we get to the beginning of 2 Kings we see the dramatic transition of ministry from Elijah to Elisha.
- Sometimes we get to a place where we need to step back from the things God has called us to and rest.
  - This might be a major scaling back or retirement, as in the case of Elijah.
  - It might just be raising up a ministry partner to help you.
    - Tag team wrestling.
    - Moses raises up judges - Exodus 18:13-27
- We all need to be training our replacements and working ourselves out of a job.

## He Who Comes After Me

- Reasons we don't train or include others
  - We don't think they can do as good of a job as we can
    - Controlling micromanagers. Words that have described me from time to time. The root of this is pride.
  - We don't want to take the time to train them
    - Training kids to do chores!
    - It does take time to train others, but once they are trained things run along so much more smoothly!
  - We enjoy the work that we do and we don't want someone to take that away from us.
    - Photography and design at Trinity.
    - I ended up hiring graphic designers who became very competent photographers and were far better at graphic design.
  - Our identity is wrapped up in the things we do (as is often the case with a calling), and we are afraid of losing our identity and someone displacing us.
    - If this does happen, rejoice! God will call you to something new.
    - Too often we are stuck in a win/lose mindset.
    - In the Kingdom of God, there is plenty of calling to go around!
  - We don't want them to show us up - Again, pride!
    - It is better to focus on the grander vision of the Kingdom.
    - We should actually desire that our successors do a better job than we did, because this is always a win for the Kingdom.
    - Cheer them on, encourage them, give them a good foundation to stand on.
    - Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's spirit - 2 Kings 2:9, meaning he became the rightful heir (successor) to Elijah's prophetic ministry (see Deuteronomy 21:17).
    - Elisha performs the same miracles as Elijah (though more gloriously) and he then goes on to perform a number of miracles that Elijah didn't do.
    - I think Elijah would have been delighted!
- Connect Elijah, to John the Baptist, to Jesus
  - People have often seen a connection between Moses and Elijah
  - These are the two great prophets who appear with the transfigured Jesus on the mountain, and Jesus is seen to be greater than both of them.
- Greater works - John 14:12
  - As followers of Jesus, we are not greater than Jesus, just like Elisha is not greater than Elijah.
  - We are called to do great things in the name of Jesus, building up his kingdom and passing the mantle of faith and ministry on to other generations that they, too, might do great things in the name of the Lord.
  - So pass the mantle, pray for God to bless those who follow you, and watch the Kingdom continue to grow!