**I Will Not Leave!**

Exhort

Let’s take a moment and continue to worship God! Let’s give Him our thankfulness that He saved us! Let’s give Him our worship because He loves us, and we love Him! Let’s give Him our praise that He has a purpose for our lives!

Aren’t you thankful that God desires a relationship with you?! It is amazing to think that the God who created everything, was manifest in flesh to die for our sins, and rose on the third day did that to have a relationship with us!

If we are honest, sometimes there are things in our lives that separate us from God. Hebrews 12:1 appeals for us to let go of weight and sin that separate us from God. Someone say “weight.” Someone say “sin.” We have heard teaching and preaching on getting rid of the sin in our lives that separate us from God. But what about the weights? It might not be sin or wrong, but it is something that creates distance between us and God.

We have to make up our minds today that we will live for God no matter what! We aren’t just thankful for what He has done in our lives; we also love Him so much that we won’t let sin or even weight create distance between us and God.

II Kings 2:9-10 KJV

“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.”

Elisha wants a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. Someone say “spirit.” Elisha asked a hard thing but could receive it and, ultimately, he did receive it because he made up his mind that “I WILL NOT LEAVE!” Elijah knew the key for his predecessor to receive what he asked for is to have a made up mind that he will not leave. Today, God wants us to make this some commitment!!!

Title: I Will Not Leave

The first person to come up here gets this ten dollar bill! How many of you all would like not just this $10 but millions of dollars’ worth of gold?! People would sail the ocean blue to find gold. People would sell all that they have to try and find gold in the western part of the US. People are willing to do a lot to try and get rich by finding gold!

Sharon L. Lechter and Greg S. Reid wrote a book called *Three Feet From Gold: Turn Your Obstacles Into Opportunities*. In this book they tell the story of R.U. Darby’s uncle. He learned that failure can often happen when we quit. A temporary struggle can easily lead to quitting, which leads to failure and regret!

This man got what was called “gold fever” in the gold-rush days. People would sacrifice so much to travel to the west side of the United States in hopes of finding gold. If they found gold, it would indeed change their lives forever. But in order for them to find gold, they had to not only sacrifice; they had to have a made up mind to never stop.

When he arrived in the west, he started digging with a pick and a shovel. After weeks of labor, he was rewarded by the discovery of the shining ore. He needed machinery to bring the ore to the surface. Quietly, he covered up the mine, retraced his footsteps to his home in Williamsburg, Maryland, told his relatives and a few neighbors of the “strike.” They got together money for the needed machinery, had it shipped to where he found the shining ore. The uncle and Darby went back to work the mine.

The first car of ore was mined and shipped to a smelter. The returns of what they found proved they had one of the richest mines in Colorado! A few more cars of that ore would clear the debts and eventually lead to them getting RICH. The more they drilled, the higher the hopes of the men were because they just knew that the gold was close.

Unfortunately to them, as they continued to dig for days, the vein of gold ore disappeared. They continued to drill but couldn’t find the gold. The drilled and drilled but still nothing! Finally, they decided to QUIT.

He sold the machinery to a junk man for a few hundred dollars. All of his sacrifice and others’ contributions were sold for a few hundred dollars. He took the train back to the east coast to go home.

The junk man called his friend that was a mining engineer to look at the mine and do a little calculating. The engineer advised that the project had failed, because the previous owners of the drilling machinery were not familiar with “fault lines.” His calculations showed that the vein would be found just three feet from where the Darbys had stopped drilling! The mining engineer was right, and the gold veins were exactly where he said they were. They were just THREE FEET AWAY! The Darbys were three feet from gold, but they stopped digging! The junk man made millions of dollars from the ore in that mine!

We have to make up our mind that we will not quit just three feet short. We will not quit living for God. We will not leave but we will stay, and we will strike gold! This spiritual gold is living in a relationship with God. It’s gold to know Him. It’s gold to be kept from the consequences of sin. It’s gold to know that we will call Heaven home. It’s gold to walk in the purpose He has for us. We will not stop three feet short. We will not quit. WE WILL NOT LEAVE!

Elisha had this same dilemma. He was just a few steps away from being spiritually rich.

II Kings 2:9-10 KJV

“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.”

Elijah told him it was a hard thing, but he also understood that Elisha was willing to never give up because he has proven it! The first time Elijah met Elisha is found in I Kings 19 just a few chapters before the verses we just read. At the end of this chapter, Elisha made up his mind that he wanted to be spiritually rich by following Elijah. Elijah’s name means “Jehovah is my God.” Elisha wanted to be associated with Jehovah being his God!

At the end of chapter 19, Elisha gets rid of everything to follow Elijah. It wasn’t sin that he got rid of but rather it was weight. It was things that would prevent him from fully following Elijah. Elisha starts to follow Elijah, but he had to continually make up his mind that he wasn’t leaving. It wasn’t bad things, but it wasn’t the best thing. Like us, for Elisha to become spiritually rich, he had to have a made up mind to never quit!

Gilgal is a place of a memorial to God as found in Joshua 4:19-24. It was a memorial to remember what God has done in the past for the children of Israel. God parted the Jordan River for the Israelites to walk on dry land to the other side. The Israelites made a monument to always remember what God did. Elijah and Elisha both were at Gilgal.

II Kings 2:1-2 KJV

“1 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. But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So they went down to Bethel.”

They are at this memorial from their past and Elijah suggests that Elisha just stay there. Elisha could have been satisfied with what God has done in the past. He could have been satisfied with the little bit of spiritual gold that he found, but Elisha wanted more! He told Elijah, “I WILL NOT LEAVE!” We cannot be satisfied with what God did yesterday. We can’t be satisfied just thanking God for what He has done in the past. We must get a desire to press toward the future that He has for us. There are greater things in store. Don’t be satisfied with the past. God has more if you are willing to make up your mind to not quit. I WILL NOT LEAVE!

Elisha continued on with his journey.

Bethel is the place known as “the house of God”. In Genesis 28:10-19, Jacob wrestles with God and his whole life is changed. Aren’t you thankful for how the house of God has impacted your life? The church is amazing. The body of Christ makes a positive difference in our lives. There is nothing like being a part of the house of God! Psalm 133:1 affirms, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” I am thankful to be a part of the house of God!

II Kings 2:3-4 KJV

“3 Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent!”

4 Then Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So they came to Jericho.”

They were at the place known as the house of God and Elisha could have been satisfied calling it quits there. We must be very careful that attending church does not replace our walk with God! Church is important, and church is essential. But coming to church is not the same thing as being in a relationship with God. I’m not just satisfied with what God has done in my past nor am I satisfied just experiencing Him at church. I want to feel His presence in the morning when I enter into my prayer closet. I want to feel His presence when I’m reading His Word daily. I want to feel His presence when I pray for my friend at school. I want to feel His presence when I am teaching that one on one Bible study. I want to walk with God daily. I don’t just live for God because of church. Like Elisha, I WILL NOT LEAVE!

Elisha continued on with his journey.

You might know about Jericho from the children’s song, “Joshua and the Battle of Jericho.” This history is found in Joshua 6:1-5 where the children of Israel marched around the walls of Jericho once every day for six days. On the seventh day, they march seven times. On their seventh time around, the priests blew horns and the people shouted. The walls came tumbling down and the Israelites started to seize the Promised Land.

II Kings 2:5-6 KJV

“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.”

They arrived at the place of past victories. Elisha could have stopped with past battles won. Yes, I won in the past, but for me to not lose in the future, I must keep going. I can’t quit now! I can’t survive off of past victories. I want to keep winning. I want to keep going. I want to keep striving to be spiritually rich. There’s more that God wants to do. I WILL NOT LEAVE!

Elisha continued on with his journey.

It is interesting that the next verse reveals that the people that tried to talk Elisha into being satisfied watched from a distance.

II Kings 2:7 KJV

“And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.”

We must be careful to not allow people who aren’t walking with God to influence us. We can’t allow friends who only are a part of the things from God from a distance to have our attention. We can’t be influenced by people who are on the fringes! They might have given up, but we won’t. We will make up our mind today that WE WILL NOT LEAVE!

The last stop that Elisha could have stayed in was Jordan. His life is coming full circle as the first stop was a memorial by Jordan. The significance of Jordan can be found in Joshua 3:1-17. Elisha has already overcome being satisfied living for God only through what God has done in the past. Elisha has already overcome being satisfied living for God only through the house of God. Elisha has already overcome being satisfied living for God because of past victories. He has shut out the voices that try and walk with God from a distance. Now he is back. Elisha arrives at Jordan.

Elisha had to separate from people and not be satisfied living for God because of the miraculous. He didn’t merely want the presents from God; he wanted the presence of God!!! Elisha didn’t want to live for God because of what he could get out of it. Elisha wanted to live for God because he wanted a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. Elijah walked with God and Elisha loved that and he wanted even more of God!

Don’t stop at Jordan. Don’t stop at Gilgal. Don’t stop at Bethel. Don’t stop at Jericho. DON’T STOP NOW! Make up your mind I WILL NOT LEAVE! Jesus is my God, and I WILL NOT LEAVE! I want more of Him. I am not satisfied with where I am in my relationship with Him. I don’t just want the miracles; I want Him! I don’t just want the church; I want Him! I don’t just want past victories; I WANT HIM! I AM NOT LEAVING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM FOR ANYTHING!!!

Music

We can’t be satisfied with the spiritual gold we’ve already experienced when there are even more riches in our walk with God if we make up our mind that WE WILL NOT LEAVE!

II Kings 2:8-14 KJV

“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?”

Elisha cries out, “Where is the God of Elijah?” I haven’t left because I want more of God!

God wants to do so much more in our lives. John 10:10 declares that He has life and life more abundantly for us. Jeremiah 29:11 declares that He has a future and a hope for us. Matthew 6:33 declares that He will take care of us if we seek Him first. Romans 5:20 declares that grace will rule in our lives. Philippians 1:6 declares that we can be confident that His promises will come true in our lives. Romans 8:38-39 declares that nothing can separate us from His love.

We have to make up our mind that WE WILL NOT LEAVE! Jesus is my God, and I am not stopping for anything. I WILL NOT LEAVE. I love the memorials of God, but I don’t serve Him for tradition. I love God, and I WILL NOT LEAVE! I definitely love the house of God, but I will live for Him not just on Sundays and Wednesday. I WILL NOT LEAVE! I love the victories that He has won in my past, but I don’t live for Him out of a sense of a debt I owe Him. I love Jesus, and I WILL NOT LEAVE! God has done the miraculous, and the gifts are amazing. But that is not why I live for God. I WILL NOT LEAVE! Whether others follow Him from a distance, I’ve made up my mind that I WILL NOT LEAVE!!!

Let’s all come to the altar to make a fresh commitment to God that we will not leave a relationship with Him. Regardless of what others do and regardless of if He ever does anything else for me, I will not leave. I love Jesus, and I’ve made up my mind that I WILL NOT LEAVE!

There is more of God, but you can’t stop short. You can be spiritually rich if you walk with God daily!