

# The double portion

## Part 1

Speaker	A. Creeth
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*Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.*

[00:00:00] We read from the book of Kings, the first book of Kings, chapter 19, the closing verses. 1 Kings 19 verse 19. So Elijah departed then and found Elisha the son of Shaphat who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him and he with the twelve and Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him 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 and he returned back from him and took a yoke of oxen and slew them, 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 [00:01:08] unto him. In the second book of the Kings in chapter 2. And it came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal and Elijah said unto Elisha tarry here I pray thee for the Lord has 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 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 today and he said yea I know it hold ye your peace and Elijah said unto him Elisha tarry [00:02:10] here I pray thee for the Lord has 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 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 today and he answered them yea I know it hold ye your peace Elijah said unto him tarry I pray thee here for the Lord has sent me to Jordan and he said as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee and they too went on and 50 men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off and they too [00:03:02] stood by Jordan and Elisha Elijah took up his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters and they were divided hither and thither so that they too went over on dry ground 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 Elisha said I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me and he said thou hast asked a hard thing nevertheless if they see me when I am taken from thee it shall be so unto thee but if not it shall not be so and it came to pass as they too went on and talked that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire and part of them both asunder and Elijah [00:04:05] went up by a whirlwind into heaven and Elisha saw it and 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 he took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan 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 has smitten the waters they were parted hither and thither and Elisha went over those of you that were [00:05:05] at the recent conference will have detected I think a theme that was running throughout the conference we were exhorted to follow the Lord to have him before us as our pattern our example and our object and the conference closed with an address by

our dear brother on the meal offering which sets forth the perfection of the pathway of our Lord Jesus Christ well we have those elements here in this chapter that I've read this evening it was Elisha's determination to follow his master and nothing could or would turn him aside [00:06:05] three times he was tested and three times he said as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee he knew that the secret of his blessing lay in this that he kept close to his master and so he clave unto him and while the thought is in my mind may I just say this that he had no instruction to follow Elijah it was Elijah that was told to go from one place to another but Elijah put his disciple to the test and as I've said he was determined not to be turned [00:07:01] aside so you see with Elisha it wasn't a question of being instructed to have some special command it was a question of affection he loved his master he was determined to keep close to him that was the motive that kept him going and urged him on and so beloved friends I feel it is so with us in this remarkable journey that is traced for us here in the second chapter the second book of Kings we have a glimpse of the path of discipleship true discipleship that our Lord Jesus Christ calls upon us to follow the call had come to Elisha hadn't [00:08:05] it in the previous book that little section that we read together when Elisha a simple humble man was pursuing his earthly calling plowing with ten yoke of oxen and Elijah had passed by and placed his mantle upon him and we see there that here was a man apparently I was judge content to follow his occupation and yet grievously sore at heart no doubt as he thought of the infidelity and unfaithfulness of the people at large and yet he himself was entirely separate from that prevailing unfaithfulness and to such an one the [00:09:02] call was made to him and he had the opportunity either to follow Elisha or to go back to his loved ones we know the choice he made he arose and went after Elijah and ministered unto him that was the moment of decision it was complete I remember many years ago a young teacher coming up to me on the beginning of religious instruction lesson and saying to me whatever does this mean he had his Bible open to this 19th chapter the last verse that we read together he says I can't understand it it says that Elisha slew the oxen and boiled their [00:10:05] flesh with the instruments of the oxen and so on what does it mean I said well I suppose it means that he he burned his boats behind him there was no going back he made a complete breach with the past he had a new object a new occupation before him a new master and he was determined to follow his master he arose and went after Elijah and ministered unto him and perhaps the greatest commendation we find in scripture of Elisha was that he poured water on the hands of Elijah now that's very blessed you know that if we are following the [00:11:01] Lord so closely that we are ministering unto him and serving his people so wholeheartedly that we bring refreshment to our Lord isn't that something worth striving for he poured water on the hands of Elijah. Well we won't go into all the details of this journey for one thing I'm not sure there's seem to be some uncertainty as to which Gilgal this was because a glance at the map seems to suggest that there could not have been the place where Joshua came and where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away but in any case Elijah directs Elisha to go on he says you stay here I'm going to Bethel but Elijah [00:12:06] says well I'm coming too and so he goes on following his master. Bethel we know is full of scriptural references it's a place where Jacob the fugitive and wanderer had that wonderful vision of a ladder reaching up into heaven but where God reached down to him and where God pledged him the support of his grace and his care. We were reminded this afternoon of the faithfulness of God and we can't make too much of that. Most important God is a faithful God he never goes back [00:13:04] on his word he keeps his word and he remains true to those poor simple followers of his blessed son. So Bethel reminds us of the house of God and the fellowship of God's people but Elijah says we go on to Jericho a graphic reference I suppose an illustration of this present world a place with a pleasant situation as we read but where there was the curse as we know resting upon it. This world that has no nothing to offer to the follower of the Lord [00:14:07] Jesus much to attract but nothing to minister to him and yet it was at Jericho where the power of God shines out where God triumphantly broke the power of the enemy and brought his people safely and triumphantly into the land but they went on

from Jericho and Elijah follows hard behind his master he would not leave him he knew that the secret of his blessing lay with his keeping close to his master and the secret of our blessing as Christians beloved friends lies just [00:15:02] there with when we are near to our Lord Jesus it was when Peter's eye was taken off his master that he began to sink and if our eyes are off that blessed one whom we follow then we too will fail as Peter did. But they come to Jordan and throughout the scriptures Jordan has one meaning it speaks to us of death it speaks to us of the death of Christ in the time of Joshua we know that the Ark of God went first and the feet of the priest stood at the brink of the Jordan and the waters were divided and the people passed over there was a way [00:16:05] provided for them and so it reminds us that our blessed Lord has provided a way for us a way through death a way of deliverance and as we are identified with him as the one who has gone down into death but now has risen again and has taken his place in the heavens so we are delivered from this present evil world that is God's way of deliverance for us so Jordan speaks to us of death and we as those that believe in the Lord Jesus are identified with him in his death and so we have passed out of death unto life it has made us dead to the [00:17:04] world and the world dead unto us that is God's purpose and God would have us to enter into it in a very practical way but what I would want to impress upon us tonight is what happened after they had passed through Jordan and stood on other ground on the other side Jordan then it was that Elijah said unto Elisha ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee and it was on the eve of his departure out of this world to go to the father that the Lord Jesus said to his disciples he says hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name ask and [00:18:09] ye shall receive that your joy may be full ask and ye shall receive and whatsoever you shall ask in my name that will I do that the father may be glorified in the Son that is a promise that's made to you and to me as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as those that have followed the Lord he's brought us out onto resurrection ground if you like and we can ask in his name the risen Lord and he has pledged to respond ask and ye shall receive and there was a [00:19:13] further test for Elisha think what he might have asked for he could have asked for a long life he could have asked for riches and all that this life on earth could offer to a man but this is what he says I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me a double portion of thy spirit I think that was wonderfully humble and gracious on his part I don't think that he was grasping after a [00:20:05] double portion of the power and fame of Elijah but you see he wanted to represent his master and he would have the double portion of his spirit now if you turn back to Deuteronomy you're acquainted with this aspect you have the double portion that belonged to the firstborn it was God's provision that the firstborn son should be able to fulfill all the obligations that lay upon him that he should be able to worthily represent his father you see the father looked for the elder son to follow on to carry on his name as it [00:21:06] were and for that reason he was to be given a double portion the double portion of the firstborn which was the beginning of his strength so that this portion was for strength and blessing it belongs to us as firstborn ones we are brought into the church of the firstborn our blessed Lord as head of that church is the firstborn from among the dead and we are firstborn ones as identified with him and the double portion is ours do we enter into it do we avail ourselves of it do we appropriate it to ourselves Elijah [00:22:08] responded he says that was a hard thing nevertheless if they see me when I'm taken from thee it shall be unto thee but if not it shall not be so there's one condition if they see me if your eye is upon me you shall have what you desire you crave for this double portion well there's only one condition you must keep your eye fixed on me and you must be on the alert and you must have your gaze fixed upon me as I ascend upward don't look down on yourself don't look down upon things on earth or be occupied with things down here I'm going [00:23:05] to ascend and you must follow me your gaze must be riveted on me and you will be able to enter into this double portion beloved friends where is your gaze where is mine is it focused on things of earth or is our gaze riveted upon the ascended man at God's right hand the Son of God's love we can find much to occupy us here but they are things that don't minister to our spiritual nature they don't provide the

spiritual food that our souls long for we need to have the upward gaze to be occupied with our blessed Lord now risen [00:24:05] now glorified the double portion is ours if we are prepared to answer to the simple conditions laid down if thou see me or how we allow our thoughts and eyes to be drawn to other things but God has set his son at his own right hand as the object of our hearts not only a pattern for our walk blessed as that is we cannot make too much of the perfect humanity the perfect pathway on earth of the man of sorrows we love to trace that pathway do we not but for strength and [00:25:10] energy for our Christian lives we need to be concerned and occupied with the Lord in glory if thou see me when I am taken from thee can we not realize that Elisha's gaze never left his master after that he kept his eye upon his master and when the chariot of fire and the horsemen thereof as they swept them asunder and Elisha was caught up by the whirlwind into heaven I'm sure that the disciple's [00:26:04] gaze was riveted upon the ascending man he knew that was the secret of his power and so he watched him and two things notice two things characterize Elisha here it says for one thing he saw him no more he cried out with wonder and ecstasy my father my father the horsemen thereof and he saw him no more and the Apostle says in 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 if we have known Christ after the flesh from henceforth know we him no [00:27:01] more that is to say we are no longer to think of him in connection with Israel his earthly people or with this earth but we are to know him after a new order as we were singing in our hymn son of God his incarnation open first the tale of grace son of man in new creation leader of a chosen race well may glory crown him in the ordered place we are to know him with a new in a new relationship a heavenly one and to know that our link is with him where he is in that heavenly glory but it says of Elisha that he took hold of his own clothes and he rent them into pieces he had finished with what belonged to him [00:28:05] in his past life his clothes well it speaks doesn't it in scripture of our habits and our behavior of the garments that we wear and it wasn't a question of just laying them aside and on some future occasion putting them on again he'd finished with what characterized him in the old life he rent them in two pieces he took up also the mantle of Elijah he would wear the character of his master he would represent his master the ascended man that was to be his object from this time forth he would be a worthy representative of the man who had gone to heaven are we thinking along those lines as our blessed Lord who [00:29:12] went down into death for us now that he's risen past beyond the reach of death and judgment God's right hand crowned with honor and glory as he looked down upon us as he sees us in our daily walk does he see those that are representatives of his son does he see some reflection of Christ in our lives it's what he looks for this world has cast out his blessed son they have no room for him no place for him he is not here and the only testimony is to be found in those that confessed his name is our testimony burning bright for him [00:30:05] in our local reading at Portsmouth we are going through a rather difficult book in the Old Testament Zechariah we came to the fourth chapter we have the we had a week ago the rather interesting account of the golden candlestick with the olive trees on one on each side and this candlestick was fed by a bowl at the top I gather and the olive trees fed the oil into the bowl and through the bowl there were pipes sevenfold pipes that led to the seven lampstand so the light was kept burning it's a little picture of the testimony in this [00:31:03] world it speaks of witness or testimony and that witness was seen in Israel in times past God's purpose is to be seen in the church today and in the members that make up that church but when we were considering this our brother Peter Nunn happened to be with us and he expressed the thought that I won't apologize for repeating because it was passing through my mind also at the time when he gave utterance to it but the point was he said that it's quite possible he said that the testimony the lights of the candlestick might be dimmed what would be the cause of that would there be a shortage in the supply no he said the supply speaks of the [00:32:02] power of testimony coming from God he sees that the that on his side God supplies all that is needed but if there is a failure in testimony if our testimony individually and collectively is growing dim it means that somewhere along the line there is the pipe clogged and we have to see to it that the channel is kept free well a simple thought but I

think it's suggestive I think it speaks to us of the need to see that our testimony is not hindered by worldliness by the things of this life crowding in but let us see that we are so occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ that we [00:33:08] are bright witnesses for him for he has left us here that we should shine for him in this dark world well faith's vision of Christ in the glory is the secret of power for the Christian on earth that was true in Stephen the first Christian martyr here was a man that was fully absorbed with his master with the glorified person of Christ he was a man on earth full of the Holy Spirit of God and his gaze was upward on his blessed Lord and he was able to represent him [00:34:02] worthily here he was God's representative our Lord's representative so that he could represent his master in the face of all that hatred and persecution with those stones hurling about him he was able to bear witness to his absent his rejected but glorified Lord Lord lay not this sin to their charge he said he was expressing what our Lord himself had expressed father forgive them they know not what they do so you see it is possible for a simple believer on earth to draw all his resources from heaven itself because that's what Stephen was doing and at the same time to represent his master upon earth may God help us thus to do that we might worthily represent [00:35:09] the one who has pledged us the double portion for strength and blessing if we only have our eye engaged with himself our blessed Lord and we know how Paul started his Christian career with a vision of Christ in glory wasn't it so on that Damascus road as he was stricken down in the dust of that road he saw the glorified Lord and that vision motivated him throughout his life he he could not get it from his memory or from from his heart and he was determined to serve his master [00:36:05] with all the loyalty that he possessed and it was his purpose to represent his blessed Lord in every way he possibly could and the vision of the glorified Christ the man in the glory was the motive that urged him on in his devoted service here in this world and so that same Apostle says we all looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory you see it's only in measure as the old I the old self is practically renounced as we accept God's judgment upon it at the cross that Christ is manifested [00:37:10] in us because that's what God desires that we should manifest the life of Jesus here in our walk and in our ways well beloved friends Elijah had gone but Elijah's God remained and what we all need is faith in the unseen the unseen person of our Lord and Savior Israel failed when Moses disappeared in the mount yet Moses himself endured as him as he saw him that is invisible and the failure of the church is thus is just this that she's failed because she has lost faith in the [00:38:07] unseen person of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the unseen spirit that he's provided and in the unseen resources that are at the disposal of the church and of all believers but God is unchanging and the realization of our blessing comes when we see our blessed Lord crowned with honor and glory the Holy Spirit is with us and he is the double portion we haven't to ask for the outpouring of the Spirit of God that has taken place at Pentecost we are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit to see that other things do not crowd out his power and his activity but it's not intelligent to pray [00:39:09] for the outpouring of God's Spirit when he has already demonstrated his grace and power by bestowing that Spirit upon us and within us but like the children of Israel the rock hasn't to be smitten the second time but we are they were to speak to the rock and the blessing would be theirs and we have to speak as it were to ask and we shall receive we have arisen a glorified Lord at God's right hand all the resources of heaven are available to us if we only draw from that hidden unseen resource but whenever our hearts are filled with a vision of glorified Christ then [00:40:01] we can walk and serve in the energy of that God-given power for we should be strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory unto all joyfulness as it and loneliness and so forth and this is our need dear friends closer still closer to him never losing sight of the person to whom we belong and who by grace belongs to us if those see me we shall be lifted above the difficulties and problems and trials of life if those see me we shall walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing if those serve me we shall serve him if they see me we shall serve him shall we not where he wants us to serve and how he wants us to serve and if we if they see me we shall [00:41:07] exhibit the character of that blessed man who has

won our affections and who has given us this privilege of following his steps help us to cleave to him with real purpose of heart may it be so for his name's sake