

## LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM ELISHA #3 "The Need For Bears"

2 Kings 2:23-25

*Strange story: Actually shows us the need for bears in leadership; The ability and wisdom to confront opposition.*

### I. PERSEPECTIVE

#### A. The reality of ministry is opposition

1. Elisha is stepping into God's will – 1 event later these men come and oppose him strongly
  - a. *V23 some young men came from the city and mocked him...*
2. This is true in any ministry: Not every person will be your fan - There will be those that oppose
  - a. **Some haven't made up their mind about you:** *They won't respond enthusiastically*
  - b. **Some simply don't prefer you:** *They don't prefer your personality/humor, etc.*
  - c. **Some are insecure:** *They will act like they can't stand you (might not be true!)*
3. These kinds of people don't have to be dealt with: **Not everyone needs to die!**
  - a. Some will warm to you over time
  - b. Some won't hurt you – even if they never change
  - c. Some you can help in crisis: *This will change their hearts/minds*
  - d. Some will resolve their own issues – so they won't come across as being in opposition

#### B. But there are people who are in opposition – and they are damaging

1. Some have things at work in them that can be harmful to others
  - a. Immorality
  - b. False doctrine
  - c. Witchcraft (both black magic and extreme manipulation)
    1. *Scholars say Bethel was a hub of false religion that involved sexual perversion and witchcraft*
2. The key is open defiance
  - a. They were saying this publicly: To prevent others from responding to Elisha's ministry

### II. CONFRONTING

#### A. Some people struggle in dealing with opposition

1. They have their own issues with insecurity/rejection/lack of confidence
  - a. Some can't stand to have anyone not like them: *They are vulnerable to manipulators*
  - b. Some hate the emotional trauma of confrontation
  - c. Some have the misguided ideas that it will take care of itself – or it doesn't matter
2. Their answer is to ignore opposition – allow it to go on
  - a. Things are never fixed: *Man asked me about a woman who had opposed him publicly for years!*
  - b. Damage can be done that overwhelms God's purposes:
    1. David not dealing w/Absalom brought destruction to the Kingdom
      - a. *Pastor allowed a religious guy to influence/take church; Dominant man to throw tantrums*
      1. *I just don't like confrontation*

#### B. A necessary part of leadership is confrontation

1. **It begins with spiritual confrontation:** *V23 he cursed...spiritual prayer*
  - a. *I forbid this*
  - b. *Sometimes I go and pray at church over seats/by name: Some are healed – some neutralized*
2. **It sometimes involves words personally spoken:**
  - a. *Trying to resolve: Laying out the issues*
  - b. *I will not tolerate this/not going to work*
3. **Sometimes there must be judgment:** *V23 he cursed...this cannot continue! Radical story with practical truth*
  - a. Removal from ministry
  - b. Forbidding certain contacts (new converts, etc)
  - c. Marking them to others
  - d. Discipline: Removal from the church
    1. You will not be good at this/you will need advice to do these correctly/at the right time
      - a. **Proverbs 24:6** *So you need advice when you go to war. If you have lots of good advice, you will win.*

### III. PROGRESS

#### A. The issue at stake is progress

1. When we fail to recognize or fail to deal with defiance – we stop progress
  - a. **The people are not helped:** Some in the church are literally harmed by opposers
  - b. **The church is stunted:** There are people who are sent by hell to block God's will
    1. Balak sends Balaam to stop the progress of COI – keep them from going into the promised land
  - c. **Our ministry is stunted:** We fail to grow – some growth comes only as we learn to confront
2. But when we do deal with opposition correctly: The result is progress
  - a. **2 Kings 2:25** *Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.*
    1. People are helped- they make progress
    2. The church makes progress – sometimes growth
    3. We make progress personally: We break a spirit off of our minds – or learn skills