



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
AND
IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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June 29, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

3rd Sunday after Pentecost

First (Epistle) Lesson: [2 Corinthians 11:21b-30](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 62 CW⁹³

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [1 Kings 19:19-21](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 9:51-62](#)

UNDIVIDED ATTENTION
On Christ's Call for Commitment
A LOVING COMMITMENT

1. **Our commitment** _____.
2. **God's commitment is** _____.
3. **Consider all of your** _____.
4. **God provides** _____.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

When is the last time that you committed to something without really thinking about it? Maybe you're thinking about someone who asked you to help move or help to do something and you just go "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah." I'm talking about anytime you've clicked on one of those boxes. Do you know what I'm talking about? Anytime you sign up on Apple, on Android, pretty much anything where you sign those terms of agreements, the service terms, and usually there is a little box. I once saw this picture that a guy printed out all the terms of agreement of Microsoft Office, of every time Apple updates their software and everything it says. If you print it in small print, how tall it would be! It would go from the ceiling down to the floor. How many of you have read that? Now they sometimes make you actually scroll to pretend that you read it, but you click it. Have you committed to something that you're not really sure what it's all about?

It's interesting to think about how we sometimes are very easy to commit to some things but then in our world, the idea of commitment has kind of changed as well. You might hear from people, sometimes the older generation will talk about the younger generation and they say, "They're just so afraid of marriage. People will have kids and

live together, but they won't commit to being married." They've kind of already committed in so many different ways, but they won't make that commitment and how actually having the commitment, to make those promises, how that is such a blessing to the relationship where you don't have to fear, you're not afraid, and you can forgive and bless this relationship instead of always being afraid or always having the ability to not be committed in an instance. The commitment is a healthy thing and as much as we sometimes are frivolous with our commitments, we are also afraid of commitment. But when you are committed to people, the right people, in marriage and in friendships, those commitments and the people that you trust (the ones that keep their word), how important that is.

Today we're going to look a little bit at commitment—the commitment that God has for us, **a loving commitment**. And then why we can be committed to God and why we **want** to be committed—not as “I have to do this” but again, **a loving commitment**.

When we look at our text in [1 Kings 19](#), it's only a small section, but in order to really understand the commitment of Elisha and put it in perspective, I think we should take a step back and get the context and look a little bit at the life of Elijah first.

The chapters leading up to this section where Elijah calls Elisha are maybe some of the more exciting, some very memorable sections of Scripture. This is the time when many of God's people were publicly worshipping someone else. There were all of these prophets of Baal, this false idol, and Ahab and his wife Jezebel were ruling, and things were kind of a mess. That led us to Mount Carmel, where Elijah takes on these prophets of Baal in this very memorable picture where they set up the offering and all these prophets of Baal are dancing around and Elijah even mocks them. “Is Baal sleeping? Pray harder.” And the prophets of Baal even cut themselves and they do everything to get Baal to burn up this offering, and nothing happens. Then God brings down fire and burns up the offering. Elijah is able to defeat many of these prophets and he's thinking “*Yes! Things have changed!*” Only to wake up and find that Ahab and his wife Jezebel have now issued a death threat on Elijah. He goes from the literal mountain top of Mount Carmel and seeing God bring down fire and being victorious over these prophets of Baal to then running for his life.

If you remember what happens as he is running from his life, he wishes that he was dead. He is running. He is afraid. He is not trusting God because he is running away. Now he is running away and wishing—he is in this depression—and what does God do? He says “You must sleep and eat.” God feeds him and has him rest up. Then finally, he gets to a point where he is talking to God and God says, “What are you doing here?” Elijah says “I've been zealous for you! But I'm the only one left.” We know this isn't correct, but in order to help Elijah, this is where God puts him in the mountainside, in the cave. First there is this strong, violent wind and it says God was not in that strong, violent wind; then an earthquake and then a fire, which just previously He had been in a fire, but now He wasn't in the fire. But then in this small whisper, small voice, the Word

of God—it's a pretty amazing picture of our Savior, the Word of God, the Word that He gives us, showing how God doesn't work in the ways that we imagine (always with power) but in the ways that He does and especially through His Word. As He does this, He then gives Elijah commands to go and anoint two kings and then go anoint his successor, Elisha, who we see here.

Why talk about this? We have Elisha here in a bit, who is very committed, but how committed was Elijah? Would you say that his commitment was 100% because he did so well? He was this amazing prophet but what is true about him and about us is **our commitment wavers**. We see these difficulties in the face of life, in the face of opposition, in the times we don't understand how God is working, and because we have these mountain top moments and then we have these horrible times, we say "God, where are you? Why have you let this happen? I just want to die! I'm so alone. Where are you?" Our commitment wavers and we need to understand that's what happens for us as sinful people.

We're going to talk about how we can be committed and how we want to be committed, but we have to understand the truth is if God's prophets, like Elijah, this great man who did so many amazing things, who did amazing miracles, if he was depressed, if he sought to understand God and God promises that there are 7,000 who had not bowed down but yet he thought he was alone and God had deserted him, there are times when we might **feel** that way. The important thing, though, is to understand we might **feel** that way, but the truth is that **God's commitment is unwavering**. So as much as we might **feel** that way, we have to see the truth—that God is committed to us, He has loved us and He is working behind the scenes even though we don't have the full picture.

I think Elijah is such a great example of this, where he didn't understand but God had it, and he just saw a tiny little picture. What we so often do is we are so turned in on ourselves. "I'm the only one." Or we are looking at the difficult things that have happened. Elijah had a death threat, pretty much a bounty on his life, so he didn't know how to handle it. He was weak. But unlike Paul, who said "I'm going to boast in my weaknesses and trust in God," he began to be focused too much on himself. It's so easy for us to do that, but we have to see God's unwavering commitment to us. He had a plan for Elijah. He had other people who were followers of Him, and He was always working a plan. The biggest commitment that God has for us is that He has worked the plan of salvation.

Last week we read about how God had planned to send Jesus to save us from before the beginning of time. It's hard for us to even fathom God's plans. It's hard for us sometimes to even think about tomorrow let alone next week or to think about our life in general, but to think about how much God loves us, enough to send His Savior, to be our Redeemer, to take away every one of our sins. How committed He is to you! He understands that we have fallen short, that we are wretched sinners, and He sent Jesus

to die for you and for me for that very reason, because we couldn't save ourselves. That's His commitment to you and to me. We have to see that as much as we might waver, your God loves you and is so committed to you.

Then we see what Elijah does as he then calls Elisha. We see him go to him. We see a picture of Elisha. He is following along with 12 teams of oxen in front of him. He was driving the 12th team. This might be a small detail, but what does that tell you? It's not a small farming operation. It was he and his family, and the people he was working with were fairly wealthy. Then as Elijah came to him, he called him by throwing the cloak over him. ***Then Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah. He said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother good-bye! Then I will follow you." Then Elijah said, "Go back! For what have I done to you?" So Elisha turned back from following him. Then he took the team of oxen and slaughtered them. Using the equipment from the oxen as fuel, he cooked the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he got up, followed Elijah, and served him.***

So first, this is always an interesting thing because we put this text with that New Testament Gospel text where Jesus is telling people, "Anyone who turns back to say goodbye to his mother and father is not worthy of following me." So is that what Elisha is doing here? Is he unworthy of following because he wants to say good-bye? I think Jesus knows what is really in the heart, so when these people are like "I want to follow, but... this thing," how was Elisha different? When he is going back to say good-bye, he is going back to say "Good-bye," not to stay connected to his family but to kiss them good-bye. How do we know this? How is he going to show how he has cut off his ties from home? It's because he takes those oxen, slaughters them, takes the equipment, makes a fire out of it, and cooks up the oxen. He is not turning his hand back to the plow, but he is being committed to Christ, to God, to Elijah, to being a prophet.

When we look at Elisha, the truth is that he had a lot of things to consider. He had his family. He probably had his wealth. His job, if there are 12 oxen there, other people probably depended on him. He had other commitments. A good thing for us to do is to **consider all of your commitments**. This is what Elisha did as he considered everything and he said "What is the most important but to follow God and to follow Elijah and to do God's word." I think a good thing for us to then consider is what are all of your commitments?

One of the books we just finished for my pastor coaching program was a book from a pastor speaking a little bit about time management and how to serve in the best way. One thing he mentions is that our world puts things in a difficult situation when it comes to people and our commitments. How many friends do you have? He talks about how years ago your community, your friendships were a small group of people that lived in a town and worked together and you only had connections with this small amount of people. You had your family, your co-workers and then maybe some other contacts, but now you may have thousands of contacts on social media. You have this commitment,

that commitment, these people, so can you be committed to all the people in your life in the same way? You have your immediate family. You have close friends. You have co-workers. Then you have a lot of other people. Social media and the way that our phones work with notifications and messages constantly, we kind of make it like we have to treat everyone the same, but you can't. Don't you have to be more committed to those people who are closest to you? If you don't understand that, or maybe you've never thought about that, it probably stresses you out because you have all these other people, all these other contacts and think *"I have to talk to them. I have to reply to them."*

If you think about that with people, what about the commitments in your life as well? You have certain commitments—your work, your family, some hobbies. Can you be committed to everything in the same way? You have to prioritize. You have to make some things to be more important than others. But we get so stressed out and worried and over commit. Have you ever done that before? So you have to think about it and think about what is most important. For each of us it's different. Hopefully you put family up there and then making a living to provide for people and your hobbies and other things are up there, but what else should be up there as a commitment? What is most important for your life and for your physical, emotional, spiritual health is your relationship with your Savior. We have to see that and understand that. I can spend time with Him in so many different ways, but if I don't consider that, if I haven't seen that other commitments are pulling at me—what he said in the book is that we're in the "attention commodity time" where everyone wants your attention. TV, social media, everything wants your attention, and your Savior wants your heart, not just your attention.

So how can we analyze that and understand we can't be committed to everyone in the same way, we can't be committed to everything in the same way, but we especially want to see that we're committed to Christ because of what it means for us and our souls—an eternity, not just a short time, but for all time. God is concerned not just about spiritually but, as we saw with Elijah, to feed him, to have him rest, we need to be healthy and understand our Savior loves us in all these things.

How do we know that and how does Elisha show his trust in this? The thing that Elisha did that probably astounded people was he took those oxen and then the equipment and burned them up. What is he showing by that? I think he was showing he didn't need those things anymore to provide for him. He was putting his trust in God because **God provides above our means.** We can trust in Him. It's hard to be committed sometimes to things because *I have to lean back on this, on my strength, on old ways, maybe how this used to go or I'm afraid of this or what might happen*, but to understand God's ways are so much greater than ours. His plans are greater than ours. And most of all, they are greater than my works.

If you think about the plow and the field, this is the work that Elisha was doing and now he is giving it to God and saying "God, I'm going to trust you. I know that your love is great for me, that you are going to provide more than what I can do, because you've sent your Savior, because you love us so much. For them, He loved the nation and He had promised to send a Savior. But for us, we see that whole picture that God loves us so much, that He is so committed. Scripture says if God has given us Jesus, if He loves us that much, how will He not also give us all things. [\(Romans 8:31-33\)](#)

It doesn't mean life won't be hard. It doesn't mean we won't struggle to understand or we won't go from a mountain top and have those down times, but don't forget that your Savior is committed to you. God loves you so much and it's not up to you. He loves you and as much as we need to be committed to Him to shun sin, the obstacles in our way, to shun the things that distract us from Christ, know it's a loving commitment.

We can go back to that picture of marriage; that He loves us so much and we don't have to be afraid of it because of all the great things that He has done for us. If you were to be committed to anything, commit to Christ and the Gospel and His love. There's nothing greater. So see the loving commitment that Christ has for you and know that you are loved and redeemed. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.