

**Sunday, June 26, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Third Sunday after Pentecost**

Bible Study – Luke 9:51-62 and 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14

“Brought Home in the Spirit”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes)

In groups of two or three, respond to the following, “When do you feel most at home?”

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14. Context. The 2 books of Kings tell the story of the tribes of Israel from the death of David and the succession of Solomon to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Ephraim (also called Israel or eventually Samaria) by the Assyrians in 722 BCE and the destruction of the southern kingdom of Judah in 586. The central prophetic figure in the first part of this narrative is Elijah (“My God is Yahweh”), whose disciple Elisha (“My God is salvation”) takes center stage in the second part. This week’s reading tells the story of the succession of Elisha. As the two prophets cross the Jordan, the allusions to Moses are obvious: just as Moses parted the waters with his staff, so now Elijah parts the waters with his mantle. And just as Joshua received the prophetic spirit from Moses, so Elisha has indeed inherited a “double share” (the principal portion) of Elijah’s prophetic charisma and power. Elijah’s ascension in a fiery chariot and horses led to the tradition that he never died and would return to usher in the age of the Messiah.

Luke 9:51-62. Context. This week’s reading plays on the story of Elijah and Elisha: Elisha became the devoted follower who put his teacher above all else – the same challenge that Jesus lays down for his followers. And, as Elijah had been “taken up” at the end of his journey in Gilgal, the same thing was about to happen to Jesus in Jerusalem. But unlike Elisha who later on punished those who mocked him, Jesus rebukes his disciples when they seek to punish the Samaritans who rejected him. Jesus faces rejection three times in Luke’s gospel: at the beginning of his ministry in his hometown of Nazareth, here in Samaria, and finally in Jerusalem.

Read Luke 9:51-62 and 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Luke 9:51-62 and 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Do you identify more with Elijah (the one who is superior; the one who is the mentor) or with Elisha (the one who seems to be dependent on another; the one who is the mentee)? Why?
- Who holds power in your church? [pastor, church council, trustees, staff/pastor relations committee, worship committee, informal matriarchs or patriarchs] Do they exercise power well? If not, who might you be in conversation with to help?
- How can we be good stewards of power?
- If the “author” in authority can mean to “breathe into or be a creative agent,” how might that change how we view those in authority?
- Who have you been empowered by? [God, leaders at work or at church, family members] Whom do you feel called to empower?
- Why do you think the disciples responded the way they did in Luke 9:54?
- How would you restate Jesus’ answers to the would-be followers?
- **(R)** What do we learn about God from this passage? What does this passage tell us about ourselves?
- **(R)** How is it possible to experience “home” wherever the Spirit guides us?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

God our refuge, we are only truly present when we are in your presence. Empty us of ego, power, and the need for status or fame. Empty us that we might be filled with the presence of your Spirit to see the hurts and needs in others that we might be present with them, trusting that you are already present and inviting us deeper into your love. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.