

JOURNEY TO MT CARMEL

1 KINGS 17-19

Text:

Introduction:

Elijah was a unique prophet.

He was the only one who did not die besides Enoch, because he was taken up in God's chariot.

God sent this extraordinary prophet to minister in extraordinary times.

1 Kings 16:33

³³ And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

Ahab, the king of the 10 Northern Tribes of Israel married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. (Baal worshippers)

We will see how this great prophet of God was an ordinary man like you and me.

James 5:17-18

¹⁷ Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the

earth by the space of three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

1. ELIJAH'S COMMITMENT – 1 KINGS 17

Elijah was committed to preach God's Word and trust Him for provision.

A. His Preaching (vs. 1-2)

1 Kings 17:1-2

¹ And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. ² And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

He delivered God's Word—verse 1

- This was a sudden message
- This was a sobering message

They had violated God's law.

Deuteronomy 11:13-14

¹³ And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴ That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

Remember:

- God's Word is not mocked. We will reap in accordance to the principles, promises and command of God's Word

B. His Provision

- At Cherith (vs. 3-7)

1 Kings 17:3-7

³ Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. ⁴ And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. ⁵ So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. ⁶ And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. ⁷ And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Cherith means "cutting"

This was the place where perhaps God cut away some of the doubt in Elijah's life. He built up his faith and trust. Elijah learned that as God protected Him he was safe in His will.

"It's doubtful that God can bless a man greatly until He allows him to be hurt deeply."

Sometimes you will run into dry seasons where you

may even feel that God has failed you.

God has not failed you. He wants you to turn the trial into triumph.

- At Zerepath (vs. 8-14)

1 Kings 17:8-14

⁸ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, ⁹ Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. ¹¹ And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. ¹² And she said, *As* the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. ¹³ And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. ¹⁴ For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

God wanted Elijah to completely trust Him. (God knew where he was.

Zarephath means “refinery or melting place”

Elijah was further refined at Zarephath.

This provision may not have only been for him, but also for this woman and her son.

Illustration:

Preacher to a Farmer—“If you had 100 cows, would you give 50 to God?” “Of course I would, preacher.” “What about if you had 1,000 chickens, would you give 500 to God?” “I sure would,” replied the farmer. “And if you had 2 hogs, would you give one to God?” “That’s not fair. God knows I have 2 hogs.”

She gave and the Lord returned it back to her.

2. ELIJAH’S CONFLICT – 1 KINGS 18

Like us, Elijah was involved in spiritual warfare.

A. Ahab’s Perception (vs. 17)

1 Kings 18:17

¹⁷ And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel?

B. The Nation’s Problem (vs. 21)

1 Kings 18:21

²¹ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Their problem was indecision.

The people had been led astray by their leaders. Elijah now challenges them to make a definite decision.

Joshua 24:15

¹⁵ And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

C. Elijah's Proposal (vs. 22-24)

1 Kings 18:22-24

²² Then said Elijah unto the people, I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. ²³ Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: ²⁴ And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

Elijah set up the contest to favor what the Baalites believed concerning their god.

He built an altar made of twelve stones (vs. 31) – used often in Israel's history to remind the 12 tribes of God's goodness, power, and faithfulness to them.

Next he had them dig a trench around the altar and three times had water poured over the altar.

D. Elijah's Prayer (vs. 36-40)

1 Kings 18:36-40

³⁶ And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things at thy word. ³⁷ Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God. ⁴⁰ And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

The fire came down! It consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and all the water in the trench.

E. The People's Response

1 Kings 18:39

³⁹ And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God.

3. ELIJAH'S CONSOLATION – 1 KINGS 19

Remember: After every great victory there can be a valley of discouragement.

A. Elijah's Retreating (vs. 1-4)

1 Kings 19:1-4

¹ And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. ³ And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

Note—Jezebel's threat—verse 2

All that Jezebel wanted was to get rid of the man who was so distressing and dangerous to her.

Elijah just defeated 450 prophets of Baal and killed them.

He prayed down the rain, and he outran Ahab's chariot from Mt. Carmel to the Valley of Jezreel which is about 10 miles.

Now the threat of one woman sends him in flight.

Elijah forgot who had protected him for the last 3 ½ years (verse 2).

Remember:

2 Timothy 1:7-8

⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. ⁸ Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Illustration:

One summer night during a severe thunderstorm a mother was tucking her small son into bed. She was about to turn the light off when he asked in a trembling voice, "Mommy, will you stay with me all night?" Smiling, the mother gave him a warm, reassuring hug and said tenderly, "I can't dear. I have to sleep in Daddy's room." A long silence followed. At last it was broken by a shaky voice saying, "The big sissy!"

B. Elijah's Resting (vs. 4-5)

1 Kings 18:4-5

⁴ For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) ⁵ And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

The answer to why Elijah ran could have been that he was physically exhausted.

The physical exhaustion caused Elijah to not respond to this idle threat:

The fatigue affected Elijah's spiritual state. Fear became his motivation, due to losing his focus on the Lord, he lost faith. Under normal circumstances Elijah would have sought God.

The fear and fatigue also affected Elijah's mental state. A person's mental and emotional state is often affected by his spiritual state.

Elijah is now worried, drained physically, lacking faith and now is discouraged to the point of depression.

Illustration:

A young man decided he wanted to be a boxer. He decided to take private lessons. He found a boxing coach at a nearby gym who agreed to give him twenty-six weekly sessions. As part of his instruction, the young man was required to spar with other aspiring boxers at the gym.

After the first session, he was sore and swollen. He didn't realize that it would be this difficult. The battered youth had some questions for his coach.

“You say there are twenty-six lessons in this course?”
“That’s right,” answered the teacher. “And the rest of them are going to be like today?” “That’s right,” the coach replied.” Scratching his head, the student asked, “Well, sir, I was wondering if I could take the other twenty-five lessons by correspondence?”

1 Kings 19:4

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

Lester Roloff said:

“Elijah pitched a pity party in a Juniper jungle.”

C. Elijah’s Refreshing (vs. 5-9)

1 Kings 19:5-9

⁵ And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat. ⁶ And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. ⁷ And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee. ⁸ And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. ⁹ And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

God cared for his physical sustenance—verses 5–8

God provided for time to sleep—verses 5a, 6b

Close:

God wants to refresh and renew everyone today.

- For the Lost—Romans 6:23

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- For the Saved

1 Kings 19:9

⁹ And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

This is a convicting question: Elijah, up to the point when Jezebel sent her threat, was trusting the LORD.

“Is this a time for such men to retreat, when the public has such need of them?”