

Overwhelmed Series

A TASK FOR THE WEARY

1 KINGS 19:15-21

Text: 1 Kings 19:15

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¹⁵ *And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:*

Introduction:

In this 19th chapter of the book of 1 Kings, we have been watching some events unfold in the life of this man named Elijah.

We saw how he fell into pride and became discouraged and defeated.

We saw him as he ran into the wilderness and prayed to die.

We saw him make a journey to Mount Horeb to seek for a word from the Lord.

We saw the Lord confront Elijah and show him that the root of his problem was that he had allowed circumstances in his life to eclipse the face of God.

When we last visited with the prophet he is standing in the mouth of a cave on Mount Horeb, wrapped in his mantle, responding to God's questions.

When we left Elijah on that mountain, he is still defeated, discouraged, complaining to God about the mess that he is in.

1 Kings 19:14

¹⁴ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

As these events continue to unfold in the closing verses of this chapter, we are allowed to see the fact that God is not finished with Elijah just yet.

All of the events of this chapter have been leading up to what happens in these verses.

Notice:

1. THE MISERY OF THE PROPHET (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.

A. We See Elijah Running (vss. 1-3)

B. We See Elijah Retiring (vss. 3-4)

C. We See Elijah Rationalizing (vs. 4)

2. The Ministry of the Prophet (vss. 5-14)

1 Kings 19:5-14

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? ¹⁰ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹¹ And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: ¹² And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? ¹⁴ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and

I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

A. A Ministry of Consideration (vs. 5-8)

B. A Ministry of Compassion (vs. 5-9, 13)

C. A Ministry of Confrontation (vs. 9-14)

3. THE MENDING OF THE PROPHET (VS. 15-17)

1 Kings 19:15-17

¹⁵ And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael *to be* king over Syria: ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint *to be* king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint *to be* prophet in thy room. ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass, *that* him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

A. It Involved a New Commission

This time God sets the prophet straight and tells him how things really are. God has a threefold plan for getting Elijah back on track.

- A Commission of Promise

Elijah is told to return to Israel through Syria. There, he is to anoint 2 kings and a prophet. He is given an important assignment from the Lord. He is given evidence that the Lord is not finished with his life.

- A Commission of Peace

As Elijah hears the commands he is being given by the Lord, he hears that he is to anoint a man named Jehu to be the king over Israel. This must have been music to the ears of the prophet. This meant that Ahab and his reign of wickedness would be coming to an end.

What all this means for the prophet is that, in the end, he and his message will be vindicated.

B. It Involved a New Comfort (vs. 18)

- The Comfort of a Kindred Spirit

In this verse Elijah is reminded again that he is serving a big God.

- The Comfort of a Knowledgeable Saviour

It seems to me that Elijah had forgotten that God knew all about him, his problems, his enemies and where the solutions were. It must have comforted the prophet's

heart to be reminded that God knows all about, before we ever tell Him about it.

C. It Involved a New Companion (vs. 19-21)

1 Kings 19:19-21

¹⁹ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. ²⁰ 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? ²¹ And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and 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 unto him.

- They Enjoyed Fellowship

When Elijah went into the wilderness, he left his servant behind in Beersheba, v. 3. He was all alone. God knew this was not good and He gave him a man named Elisha. Elisha was to be a companion to Elijah and would take Elijah's place when his ministry ended. God gave him a man who was like-minded. Elisha was a man with whom Elijah could fellowship. They both shared a common call from God and they both wanted

to see the Lord honored and glorified. These were men who could fellowship together.

- They Enjoyed Friendship

I like the concluding words of this chapter, "and ministered unto him." God knew that the burdens Elijah carried were too heavy for him to bear alone, so He gave him a confidant, a friend, a peer. He gave him one to walk beside him through the valleys and through the difficulties. Notice that God told Elijah to meet three people, v. 15-16. Notice also that Elisha is the first one Elijah meets. God puts this man into the prophet's life to help him along his way!

A true friend is a blessing beyond the value of words. If a person has as many as one or two genuine friends, he or she is a wealthy person.

Close:

As this chapter in the life of Elijah comes to an end, we find him well on the road to recovery.

The Lord's ministry in his life has delivered him from the brink of death and of shipwreck.

You are on the verge of quitting on the Lord. You are discouraged and defeated. Others have wandered off

into sin and are living lives that are no pleasing to the Lord.

May we allow the Lord to do in our lives that which He desires.