

## **Elijah On The Run**

*1 Kings 18:41-19:8*

### Introduction

- Long Run this week
  - Hot and Humid
  - Body gets tired easily
  - Route cut short due to what looked like thunder clouds; didn't want to get caught in storm while crossing the bridge
  - Made it back to Civitan Park; 1/2 mile away from original goal
  - Had to dig deep in order to run another 1/2 mile
  - The feeling of completion felt good, despite being hot, sweating and tired
- Sermon Series "God's Messenger: How Elijah Communicated During Uncertain Times"
  - Elijah has scored what appears to be a great victory
  - Everything has been leading up to the moment in which God would reveal Himself as the One True God
  - Elijah got to take part in this moment through the Showdown on Mount Carmel
  - In many ways, it was a moment of vindication for Elijah who had been on the run from Queen Jezebel.
  - Through the Showdown on Mount Carmel, God proved that faith in Baal had no value, especially compared to Elijah's Lord.
  - You would think that everything from here on out would go in Elijah's favor and he would ride off into the sunset.
  - Instead, what we will learn today is that Elijah is once again on the run
    - As he runs into the wilderness, Elijah becomes weary and tired
    - His faith is on empty and he is ready to give up
    - He will have to dig deep in order to reach the destination that God has for Elijah
  - Remember last week, Elijah challenged Israel to choose between Baal or the Lord. Asked the question: "How long will you continue to limp between two different faiths?"
  - Even prophets limp at times. There are moments that serving God becomes overwhelming and we feel like just giving up.
  - What we will learn today is that when we feel like giving up, God's grace and strength reaches far deeper than we can imagine. While the journey may be too great for us, God's grace and strength are greater.
  - Just as the showdown at Mount Carmel proved that Elijah's Lord was God, God will once again reveal Himself in the wilderness to pick Elijah up in Elijah's moment of despair.

### The Hand of the Lord

- Recap Showdown on Mount Carmel

- Baal vs. The Lord
- Prayer at alter
  - Prophets of Baal pray without any response
  - Elijah prays and immediately the Lord shows up and consumes the alter in fire
- All the people worshipped the Lord
- **1 Kings 18:41-42**
  - Can't be quite sure whether Elijah is praying when he bows down or if he is collapsing from complete exhaustion. It's quite possible it is a combination of both.
  - One thing that it does appear to parallel is what occurred in **1 Kings 17:21**
    - Widow's son died
    - Elijah does the only thing he knows to do; Pray!
    - Three times Elijah prayed and the boy was raised to life
    - Here again, Elijah has his servant to look for signs of rain and on the 7th time it rained.
  - Return to what we know- discipline of prayer
- **1 Kings 18:45-46**
  - Important: The Hand of the Lord was on Elijah
    - Represents God's presence and power
    - Reflection of Elijah's faith
  - King Ahab will go on to tell Queen Jezebel what Elijah has done
    - Elijah will again flee for his life
    - Hand of God will keep Elijah in the midst of this chaotic moment
  - Elijah will struggle to see the hand of God or understand it
    - Instead of a victory parade, Elijah is running into the wilderness
    - Elijah's life doesn't get any easier after Mount Carmel, it actually becomes more difficult!
  - Example of interceding for others especially during COVID-19
    - Only thing we can do is pray and encourage
    - Connection to faith that draws us together in way that we may not fully understand, but it represents the hand of God on us.
  - Like a small child lost in a crowd, a parent's hand guides them through the chaos to the place of security.
    - This is the image that we need to have today. God's hand on our life
    - The recognition that we are on a journey that we haven't quite reached our destination
    - There will be moments when we grow weary, moments when we limp
    - If we can allow God's hand to guide us, we can find refuge and strength to reach the destination.

Enough is Not Always Enough

- 1 Kings 19:1-4
  - Afraid- running for his life
  - Alone- left his servant in Beersheba
  - Wilderness- Elijah is lost, not necessarily geographically, but spiritually
- Can you resonate with Elijah's plea?
  - "Enough is enough!"
  - "I'm not better than the people before me!"
  - Elijah is right back where he started. Mount Carmel proved to be a deterrent to Elijah and yet it improved the life of his enemies as rain washed out the drought!
  - Elijah has had enough. He can't go on.
- Key Point: When Elijah, or any prophet for that matter, is seeking direction usually there is "a word from the Lord."
  - There is no word from God at this point
  - In fact, there is no word until you get to vs. 9
  - "What are you doing here" indicates that Elijah is not at the divine appointed destination.<sup>1</sup>
- Last week's illustration about praying and receiving no answer
  - Could be that we are calling the wrong line
  - God isn't there
  - We have to continue to seek where God is to remain in God's will
- Example of Jackson's Baseball Team
  - Fun experience watching this team play this year
  - Last year was frustrating in part because we didn't win a lot, but more so because the kids didn't seem to have that "fight" in them, the will to dig deep and hang in there through a tough inning.
  - This year is different. Second game of year we played a tough team, we got down, but we didn't quite. Lost the game but several of us parents who experienced last year felt something different.
  - Next game, we were in another tough battle.
    - Tough inning put us down two a run
    - Kids came back; got two men on base
    - Jackson's turn to bat, drove a ball high into the outfield. Outfielder missed the ball. Both base runners scored and Jackson got a triple.
    - The next inning the kids played good defense and held on to the game to win. Jackson's hit ended up being the winning hit.
  - What the parents are excited about is that this team knows how to hang in there, how to keep fighting.
    - Fourth game of the season, all sorts of kids started hitting the ball
    - Everyone stepping up and making plays

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<sup>1</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008, pg. 636.

- Sometimes, Enough is not always enough
  - We haven't yet reached our destination
  - God wants us to dig a little deeper
  - In those moments that we really grow in our faith.

### God Provides: The Journey is too Great

- **1 Kings 19:5-7**
  - Similar encounter with the widow when God provided
  - God provided something out of nothing
  - Elijah was ready to give up, but God was not done with Elijah
  - When Elijah didn't have enough, God had more than enough!
- Let these words sink in: "**The Journey is too Great for you (vs. 7)**"
  - Encouraging words?
  - Words of truth. The journey was too great for Elijah and it is too great for you and I.
  - We can't reach the destination without God's provision.
  - The only way Elijah will make it is through God's provision
  - This is God's grace. Our sin is too great. Our human strength and will power is not enough. We need God's provision to reach the destination!
  - If we are going to dig deep it has to be more than will power. It must be a response of faith and determination aligned with the Spirit of God that resides within us.
- **1 Kings 19:8**
  - Important parts
    - 40 days journey; Mount Horeb (mount of God)
      - Reflective of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness
      - Upon their journey they too would encounter Mount Horeb
      - Mount Horeb is the place in which God delivered the 10 Commandments to Moses
      - It was a direct encounter with God
      - The Israelites journey didn't need to take 40 days, it was only after wandering around that 40 days elapsed toward getting to their destination
    - In the strength of that food
      - God provided what Elijah needed for the journey
      - Elijah hadn't yet reached his destination, in fact he was actually on a detour toward his destination.
      - But God doesn't leave Elijah on his own in the wilderness
      - The Hand of the Lord was upon Elijah through the detour, guiding him back on the path toward God's will.
- **Psalm 23:5, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."**

- Typically used for funerals, but there is so much of this verse that fits Elijah's journey
- He hasn't reach his destination, in fact he is lost, ready to give up, Elijah has had enough
- BUT, when the journey is too great God provides
- God doesn't provide Elijah with some grand plan or vision. Instead, God provides one step at a time.
- Elijah's success was not dependent upon how the King responded, but whether Elijah continued to walk in faith despite the results.
- There is a lot about our journey that will not make sense
  - At times our victories will seem hollow
  - At times we will feel like we don't have enough
  - At times life won't be fair
  - BUT remember that the journey we are on is too great for us.
    - The only way to reach our destination is through the provision of God's grace and strength
    - When we are lost, the hand of God can guide us back

### Conclusion

- We don't become God's messengers because the journey of life is easy
  - Last week I said our journey is what becomes our message
  - It is the story of how we have come to the point of saying, "God, enough is enough. I can't go any further."
  - In that moment, the hand of God provides for us
    - Gives us what we need for the journey ahead
    - Leads us back on the right track
- Throughout this time, Elijah could not see the hand of God in his life.
  - He was too consumed with despair
  - But God did not leave Elijah alone in the wilderness
  - God found Elijah under the broom tree and provided
- The beauty of **1 Kings 19:7**
  - Doesn't make sense unless you see the grace and strength of God
  - The journey is too great
  - Elijah must arise and go in the strength of what God has provided
- Dig deep
  - More than will power, but in the Holy Spirit that resides within our faith
  - When we dig deep we depend more on God and grow in our faith
  - God takes us to a destination we could never reach on our own.