

Jealous for God

1 Kings 19:9-21

Introduction

- Failure to Thrive
 - Notification on Death Certificate
 - Really doesn't specify a cause of death
 - Essentially it means that a person has not ate, lacks mobility, and over-all has stopped living.
 - There are several days a week that the same description could be said of me!
- A scarier reality
 - Many people walk around, to use the title of a T.V. Show, as "The Walking Dead"
 - There is a real issue of failing to thrive
 - A failure to live to our full potential, or in a spiritual sense, to live to the fullness of our God-given purpose.
- "God's Messenger: How Elijah Communicated During Uncertain Times"
 - Living example of someone who has hit a roadblock that has cause him to experience "A Failure to Thrive"
 - The Showdown at Mount Carmel took everything that Elijah had
 - Instead of a victory parade, Elijah is left to run for his life
 - Deep in the wilderness, Elijah finds a broom tree that he has decided will be his place to die
 - Literally Elijah says to God, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers (1 Kings 19:4)." *It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers (1 Kings 19:4).*
 - While we can sympathize with Elijah, what we discovered last week and what we will explore with greater depth today is that Elijah's journey into the wilderness was not God's will for Elijah.
 - Elijah has been a faithful messenger for God
 - The circumstances that Elijah has faced do not seem fair
 - At what point is enough, enough?
 - From last week, God sent an angel to Elijah saying, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you (1 Kings 19:7)." *Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you (1 Kings 19:7).*
 - When we have had enough, God has more than enough to supply grace and strength.

- Our journey becomes our message. It's not necessarily the destination- but God uses the journey to communicate a message to us and through us.
- The message that God reveals to Elijah is not necessarily what Elijah wants to hear
 - Essentially, God says to Elijah, "I want you to go back; anoint two new kings and anoint Elisha to be a prophet that will follow you."
 - When you sense a failure to thrive, you don't want to be asked to do more. And yet, this is exactly what God is leading Elijah to do. And what we will find is that the hand of God will provide for Elijah the path and the essential provisions to fulfill God's will.
- All of us at some point will hit the wall where we feel as though we are at "A failure to thrive"
 - In that moment, can we remain attuned to the will of God and allow his hand to guide us where we need to go?
 - Can our desire for God, or as Elijah will describe it today "jealous for the Lord" draw us closer to God's will rather than running from it?

Jealous for the Lord

- 1 Kings 19:9-10
 - "What are you doing here, Elijah?"
 - Twice God will ask this question of Elijah (vs. 9 & 13)
 - It's not that God doesn't know the answer
 - Instead it is an opportunity for Elijah to identify his location in regards to God's calling
 - This question, as we said last week, indicates that Elijah is not where God desires him to be.
 - Elijah's actions are certainly justified, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they are right.
- Jealous for the Lord
 - Forsaken Covenant
 - Thrown down alters
 - Killed your prophets
 - Elijah only one left and *they* seek his life (its really only Queen Jezebel)
 - Elijah is setting himself apart as though righteous and yet being treated unjustly

- His jealousy is that his enemies have gotten off clean, while he has suffered and continues to suffer
- Neighborhood Home Owner's Association
 - Neighborhood in a stir this week- upset
 - Some justly
 - Others not so much
 - Hurt feelings; Bad blood
 - Building up for sometime, but the latest stir was ignited by a vote over the color of window panes.
 - It sounds ridiculous, but in the heat of battle it feels like there is so much at stake
 - Aftermath, all the board members resigned from the Home Owner's Association
 - General consensus is that the Home Owner's Association needs to dissolve because things in our neighborhood were so much better when we didn't have one
 - To some degree it appears as though they are right, however my fear is that what is really happening is that we are running away from the real problems
 - The potential to be a great neighborhood is not in everyone going home, but instead in finding the best means to work together for the common good—which at the end of the day appears to be what everyone really wants, they just don't know how to get there.
 - They have lost their purpose
- Elijah wants to be used by God
 - Elijah is jealous for God to reveal His power once again in the midst of a situation he doesn't feel as though he has the stomach for
 - Elijah's wilderness experience takes him outside of the will of God, but as we discovered last week **1 Kings 18:46, "And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah"**
 - It is the hand of God that will guide Elijah back on the right course
- Is there anything redeeming about being "jealous for the Lord?"
 - Elijah chooses to focus on the immediate threat, Queen Jezebel. In fact, in the midst of Elijah's jealousy the threat is bigger than Queen Jezebel. Elijah has now included everyone is out to get him!
 - Elijah doesn't choose to focus on God's provision.
 - Elijah doesn't choose to focus on God's miracle on Mount Carmel

- Elijah still failing to thrive despite the food and water provided in the wilderness
- All Elijah can do in his jealousy is feel as though he is the victim
- Can you identify at least one thing that is keeping you from being an effective messenger of God?
 - An obstacle
 - A sin
 - Something you have blown out of proportion
 - A place where you are failing to thrive
- Although these are not things that God desires for our lives, they are moments that lead us into the wilderness where only God can save us.

The Still Small Voice

- **1 Kings 19:11-13**
 - On Mount Carmel God revealed Himself in the fire that fell from heaven and consumed the altar, eventually God would send rain as the confirmation that the Lord is God.
 - BUT, on Mount Horeb God is not found in
 - The wind
 - The earthquake
 - The fire
 - Instead, God is found in the *sound of a low whisper*
- The challenges of Covid-19 and ministry- yet seen or heard the voice of God (very simple things)
 - Unity
 - Birthday wishes
 - Message of hope
 - Phone conversations
 - Paula Rogers
 - Tired, weary- uncertain future
 - Dr.s gave her two choices
 - Let things run their course
 - Fight to possibly extend life
 - Paula chose to fight as much as possible

- Required additional procedures that otherwise she could have forfeited
- Weigh is it worth it?
 - I have faith, I want to live
 - I'm going to keep doing what I can
 - Stay focused on all the ways God has blessed me!
- Difficult conversation that really blessed me and in many ways similar to the low whisper of the Lord
- How do we combat those obstacles that may be holding us back as messengers of God, or those areas that are keeping keeping us from reaching our God-given potential?
 - It is the recognition of the presence of God is in our life
 - Elijah felt alone in the wilderness, unjust, jealous
 - The hand of God is upon Elijah
 - The word of God is in a low voice to get Elijah's attention
- **1 Kings 19:14**
 - Elijah hears the voice, but it only asks the same repetitive question
 - What Elijah hears is his plea of injustice bouncing off a wall
 - What Elijah doesn't see is the presence of God sustaining Elijah, even as he is running away- failing to thrive
- The fact that Elijah is jealous for God is not a bad thing
 - We should all be jealous for God
 - Jealousy is what drives us to want more of God and to seek God
 - But if the obstacles in your life are keeping you from thriving, then consider where exactly the presence of God is in your life.
 - Go where God is- take what God gives you
 - Take the example from Elijah- sometimes God's presence is found in a low whisper instead of the wind, earthquake, or fire!

Return On Your Way

- **1 Kings 19:15-18**
- Return on your way
 - Don't run away, but instead go back!

- Your potential isn't in the wilderness, but in the heat of battle- where God will prepare a table in the presence of your enemies (Psalm 23:5)!
- There is a promise- leave 7,000 in Israel who are faithful
 - Forsaken the covenant
 - Tore down alters
 - Killed the prophets
 - Seek my life
- Despite Elijah's failure to thrive- God has been using him to sustain the faith of a nation!
- How does God answer Elijah's prayer?
 - God reveals the truth of Elijah's calling
 - Elijah finds God in the Wilderness- low whisper
 - The Hand of God redirects Elijah's path
 - God provides the next steps- return on your way
 - A promise- 7,000 faithful!
 - Ultimately God is using Elijah to establish the next generation of faithful followers, in order that the story of God's salvation will continue
 - Elisha means "God saves"
 - Elijah's jealousy for the Lord at least causes him to seek God
 - The hand of God directs Elijah back on the right path

Conclusion

- Sometimes even God's most faithful followers and messengers run into the wilderness
 - We would rather run away
 - Suffer from a failure to thrive
 - Even though the wilderness is not our final destination- God offers us grace and strength in the wilderness
 - The journey is too great for us
 - Our jealousy for God can enable us to seek God, discover his presence in our life and the hand of God can lead us back on the right path.