

Something From Nothing

1 Kings 17

Introduction

- Communication has been important through this period of time
 - Most of us have had to utilize alternative means for everyday communication
 - Church
 - Phone calls instead of in-person visits
 - On-line Sermons instead of in-person worship
 - Letters to communicate important information
 - Tithes and Offerings through mail
 - Home/Family
 - Drs. Appointments online or phone
 - Distancing when visiting
 - Cards
 - Phone calls
 - My kids FaceTime with my mom
 - Period when they were unable to see my mom, so they FaceTimed her
 - They took her around the house as they participated in different activities from school work, art projects, to reading books, Barbies and Legos.
 - It was as if my mom was there even though she was 60miles away. The kids had integrated her into their normal day to day activities.
- New Sermon Series: “God’s Messenger: How Elijah Communicated in Uncertain Times”
 - Elijah was a prophet called by God to communicate a very important message
 - In order to communicate the message, Elijah would have to adapt in order to navigate the difficult circumstances imposed by the King and Queen who opposed Elijah’s message.
 - What we hope to accomplish through this series is a clearer understanding of how we can become God’s messengers of hope during a time when our normal routines and way of life have been disrupted.
 - As we said in the last sermon series: This is an opportunity for us to bear witness to God’s presence as we trust in God’s promises.
 - Be sure that what we communicate not only through words but through our actions is truly God’s message
 - For Elijah it was more than a message, but a way of life.
 - Elijah’s life spoke much like the way my kids FaceTimed my mom. In whatever Elijah did or wherever he went, God was present.
 - If we can apply Elijah’s example to our life, then we can bear witness to God’s presence during these uncertain times.
- Background
 - Israel’s kings were never stable, which may be the reason that God did not want them to have a king
 - David and Solomon proved to be productive kings despite their flaws

- Since the time of David and Solomon the kingdom was on a downward spiral toward Exile.
- King and Prophet
 - King was to govern under the authority of God
 - Prophet was a spiritual mediator between God and the King and God's voice to the people.
- Ahab
 - Elijah served as a prophet during the reign of King Ahab
 - 1 Kings 16:30 (ESV), "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him."
 - 1 Kings 16:33 (ESV), "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him."
 - Married a Jezebel who worshipped Baal; influenced the faith of Ahab
 - Baal was considered the god of fertility. Worshipped for rain and crop production
 - Deuteronomy 11:13-17
- Israel's faith had been disrupted by the misguided and out-right disobedience of her kings
 - The leadership moved them away from faith in God to put their hope in the gods of the land
 - Contradicting the Law of God, which was to govern their lives, but also had strict penalties if the Law was not followed.
 - Imagine being in Elijah's position
 - We may respond by saying, "I'm glad God hasn't called me to be a prophet."
 - Yet, God has called us all to be a witness to his truth
 - Our witness is put to the test especially during uncertain times like the ones we face today.
 - People are looking for answers. They want to know there is hope beyond the current circumstances.
 - What message are you sending?

Drought

- Introduced to Elijah as he pronounces a drought before Ahab
 - 1 Kings 17:1
 - Elijah was only communicating what was set before in God's Word
 - This wasn't an arrogant statement, instead as a prophet, Elijah was holding King Ahab accountable.
- A drought would not only impact the king, but it would impact Elijah's well-being greatly
 - In the midst of living God's Word, would Elijah be able to live by faith?
 - "Between a Rock and and Hard Spot"
 - Elijah's message not only contradicted Ahab's actions, but it also put Elijah's life in danger.
 - Where is the message of hope?
- Canceling in person worship was difficult
 - Why not just take a chance?

- Responsible for the health and well-being of our congregation
- Respectful of the health officials put in the position to guide us through a pandemic
- While these are circumstances we could have never imagined taking place, the hope was that our faith could meet the challenges we faced.
- Consider canceling in-person worship as a drought
 - I'm not suggesting that this is God's judgement; that's a whole other conversation/sermon
 - Instead consider the hardship that it created for us to fellowship in our faith
 - And yet, the hope is not in the situation-but in the God who provides no matter the circumstances.
 - The message of hope is not in the circumstances, but in the God who works through all circumstances to provide what we need, when we need it!
- In order to be a good communicator of God's message, we have to be able to communicate in less than ideal circumstances
 - We have to be willing to adapt
 - To place our hope and message not in the circumstances, but in the God who works through all circumstances to provide what we need, when we need it!

God's Direction

- The most important message that Elijah would communicate was not the drought, but how Elijah lived through the drought.
 - It would require Elijah to trust God to provide something from nothing
 - You can't get something for nothing until you don't have anything left to give!
 - A good reminder when it comes to following God's will.
- God directed Elijah to flee
 - [1 Kings 17:2-7](#)
 - Flee from Ahab
 - Flee deeper into the drought/wilderness
 - Less than ideal circumstances- hope is not in the circumstances, but in the God who provides no matter the circumstances!
- It's one thing to call yourself a Christian and carry a Bible; It's a whole other thing to live by faith.
 - Elijah not only pronounced God's Word
 - Elijah lived God's Word
 - To give all he had until he had nothing
 - God then can begin to make something from nothing
- At some point, living by God's Word will cost you something
 - In the instance of Elijah, it cost him the comforts he once knew
 - It required him to experience hardship
 - You can't be God's messenger unless your faith has been tested!- something from nothing!
- Elijah's message and faith stood in contrast to Baal, the god of rain and crops
 - When Elijah took a stand, God provided direction

- A brook for water
- Ravens delivered food
- God is revealing himself through Elijah's faithfulness!
- In order to be a good communicator of God's message you have to accept that the message you communicate may not be well received.
- You don't have to be the loudest voice in the room to share a powerful message
 - If God is directing your life, your message is in the way you live
 - When difficult or uncertain times come, you can stand in the hope that God is present and God is faithful and God is Provider.
 - Through your faithfulness God reveals himself!
 - God will make something from nothing

The Word Came to Elijah

- The brook dried up
 - 1 Kings 17:8-9
 - God continues to guide Elijah as Elijah exercises faith
 - God does not provide Elijah with a long term plan
 - God literally provides only one step at a time for Elijah to follow
 - Something from nothing
- How many of us would like to receive a Word from the Lord?
 - Assume that Elijah would because he is a prophet, a mediator between God and the people
 - And yet, God desires to communicate not only to us, but through us!
 - Take a good look at the New Testament; it is all about how God communicates to us and through us.
 - Elijah provides us an example
 - Elijah knew God's Word
 - Elijah obeyed God's Word
 - Elijah sought God's direction
- God's next step is for Elijah to go to a widow
 - A widow who was experiencing the effects of the drought
 - A widow would have less means to provide than a regular household, especially considering that she also had a son to feed!
 - Something from Nothing!
 - Just because Elijah followed God's direction once doesn't mean that Elijah's life got easier!
 - You can't be a messenger of God until your faith has been tested. God reveals himself through our faithfulness.
- In order to be a good communicator of God's message you have to communicate with conviction and faith
 - Elijah wasn't sure how God would provide, but he believed God would provide-something from nothing

- His faith was not based on the circumstances but on the God who provides no matter the circumstances.
- The widow seemed like an unlikely source for provision, but God would work through the widow to provide something from nothing.

Widow Blessed Through Elijah's Faithfulness

- Significant opportunity for Elijah
 - Again he must exercise faith in order for God to provide
 - BUT, so must the widow
- **1 Kings 17:10-14**
 - God tests our faith in order that we can reveal God's presence. This is our message!
 - When we exercise faith, God not only blesses us, but God puts us in a position to bless others!
 - Original promise/covenant with Abraham!
- The drought was inevitable, but the blessing was optional
 - Whether it is a drought, a pandemic, or social unrest- trials and tribulations are inevitable in life.
 - God's blessing, however is optional
 - You can't be a messenger of God until your faith has been tested.
 - God reveals himself through our faithfulness
 - The blessing was not only that God provided for Elijah's needs during the drought, but that he used Elijah to bless others in the midst of a drought.
- Notice something about Elijah's character and leadership
 - Elijah was a courageous leader who led by conviction
 - Elijah was a humble leader who knew that his strength rested in meekness-something from nothing!
 - It is that kind of leadership and character that draws people to God and is a blessing
 - It is that kind of message and lifestyle that is needed especially during the trials and tribulations we face today.
- Trials and Tribulations are inevitable, but God's blessings are optional.
- In order to be a good communicator of God's message, you need to communicate with mercy and grace
 - Conviction and faith without mercy and grace is a message rooted in personal gain
 - A message with mercy and grace provides the opportunity to be a blessing during uncertain times
 - It takes the attention off of you and gives room for God to reveal himself
 - Something from Nothing!

Conclusion

- **1 Kings 17:15-16**
 - God reveals himself through our faithfulness
 - Every need was met as faith was exercised
- Elijah was God's messenger during uncertain times

- God is calling all of us as Christians to bear witness to his presence
 - We may ask, “How?”
 - We may feel inadequate
 - BUT through faith and a character of courage, humility and meekness we can deliver a powerful message.
- In order to be a good communicator of God’s message
 - Communicate in less than ideal circumstances
 - Communicate a message that may not be well received
 - Communicate with conviction and faith
 - Communicate with mercy and grace
- I know that these times are difficult for all of us
 - Not only are we going through a pandemic, but we are going through social strife that has the potential to tear our country apart
 - OR it has the potential to pull our country together
 - I see an optional blessing awaiting us through these times
 - Exercise faithfulness in God’s provision
 - Examine ourselves
 - It’s easy for us to turn the television on and assume that what we see doesn’t involve us
 - Or to blame other people
 - IT should cause all of us to look within ourselves and ask, “Am I bearing witness to God’s presence through the way I live my faith?”
- Let’s be reminded that Jesus died for us while we were still yet sinners (Romans 5:8)
 - We must confront our own sin before we have a message to share with others
 - As we confront our sin, we also confront God’s love
 - In God’s love we find
 - Courage
 - Humility
 - Meekness
- God takes our nothing and makes something
- God has a message for you to communicate
 - It will be a message that may require less words and more action
 - Living out your faith before others in such a way that people find hope not in the circumstances that are, but in the God who IS.