

Elijah's Restoration– 1 Kings 19:9-18

Elijah was a man just like us. As we read through 1 Kings, we have seen Elijah do amazing things. His prayer life, obedience and faithfulness show an incredible closeness to God - but we also see his mistakes and flaws, while God remains incredibly faithful. We see a man that is relatable to our lives, and our attempts to be faithful and obediently - and a God who still remains incredibly faithful.

Elijah has challenged the Baal followers and their god on Mount Carmel, and has seen huge spiritual success. Despite the prophets of Baal giving everything they could, their god did not respond. Elijah prepares his offering, making it as difficult as he could, and yet his God, the God of Israel, responds with an all-consuming fire. Following this spiritual success, Elijah is confronted by Queen Jezebel, who promises to kill him. Elijah's response came from fear of man, and gave up - yet God stays faithful, providing for him in his time of need.

Read 1 Kings 19:9-18

How Quickly We Forget (vs 9-10)

'The word of the Lord came to him' (v9). This is not the first time we have heard this phrase in this series. Three times already in the past two chapters, we read the word of the Lord coming to Elijah, and has told him to go somewhere and do something. This time, it comes to Elijah, but it doesn't tell him to go. Instead, it asks him a question - "what are you doing here?". Elijah has sent up camp in a cave. Because of what has happened with the prophets of Baal, and Jezebel's response, Elijah is hiding away. God has called Elijah to speak to the nation of Israel - to rebuke kings and rulers - but he is hiding away. With the situation Elijah is in, he has forgotten all that God has previously done, and has walked away from the task God had given to him.

Elijah has seen provision by ravens, and jars that refilled. He has seen the dead raised to life. He has seen power that turns rock to dust. Yet all these things, because of where he is now, have fallen away. He has forgotten all that God has done, and is hiding in the cave. One person's opposition has turned massive victory in to overwhelming defeat in Elijah's mind. Elijah has forgotten about what God has done, and so, who God is. Consumed by the immediate, Elijah has forgotten the bigger picture. God is the One who stands firm, but Jezebel is the one that he sees.

When confronted by opposition, trials and temptations, we can hide away in our own caves. Our focus can be drawn to the immediate issues - the problems we face. In these times we need to cling to who God is, and what He has done. We can be consumed by our current battles, but we have a victory that is far greater. Elijah could remember the victory of Mount Carmel. We have the victory from Jesus on the cross - which is far greater than anything that can come against us. In our weakness, God remains the same God who won the victory at Calvary. In our trials, it is important to remember what God has done, and who He is.

Q. How can our struggles and opposition prevent us from seeing the bigger picture God has planned?

Q. How can we remind ourselves of the victory won by Jesus, and how God remains faithful through our trials?

God Speaks (vs 11-12)

Q. How do we expect the all-powerful God to speak to us and direct us?

In previous chapters we have heard God speak through the fire. He has proven Himself to be an immensely powerful being. Here Elijah experiences a powerful wind that tears mountains apart, then an earthquake, then a fire - but God is not speaking in these moments. His display of power isn't in a show of might - in the wind or earthquake or fire. Instead God speaks in the sound of a low whisper. God can reveal Himself in the loud fires and earthquakes - but we need to take time to listen for the whisper. Instead of the massive actions, God chooses to speak to Elijah in the still small voice.

We can expect God to move in the big powerful displays - we wait for God to make His purposes clear by shouting in the wind, through the earthquake or by the fire. Yet there are times when God speaks in the still, small voice. God is God when sent the all-consuming fire, and He is still God when He spoke in the small voice. Are we giving time for God to speak in the still voice, or are we too busy that He needs to shout in the big displays? We can miss the whisper, the reassurance, the calm voice of God if we don't take time to listen to Him.

Q. How can we be tempted to give more weight to big displays, and ignore the quiet reassurance from God?

Q. What challenges do we face in taking time to hear God? How can we make time for the small voice of God?

Mountain Moments Begin in the Cave

When Elijah was in the public eye, he appeared strong. He stood at Mount Carmel, with all Israel watching - and displayed the power of God. Where people could see, Elijah was a great example after God's heart. Yet in the cave, when he was all alone, Elijah shows his weakness - he is afraid and has forgotten all that he knew.

It's easy to be bold and to be confident in public - where everyone can see you. When people are looking on, it can be easy to seem like you have everything together. The real challenge comes when we are alone, in the cave. When no-one can see how we respond - that makes clear how we really react. Character is made, not in the big and public moments, but in the quiet moments - alone when no-one is watching. If we are to become more like Jesus, we need to take time with God - alone where no-one is watching. We need to know the still small voice when no-one is watching.

Q. How can we be tempted to give the appearance of being a 'good Christian' ...at church? ...with friends/family?

Q. Where do you find time to be alone and honest with God? How do you allow God to speak in these moments?