

Elijah on the Mountain – 1 Kings 19

You can't go through life in a broken world without experiencing times of intense fear, discouragement, and even depression.

Elijah

- 9th century BC prophet to the nation of Israel
- His entire ministry was dedicated to fighting the idolatry of Baal worship
- Huge victory over the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18
 - Elijah assumes the king will repent or the nation will kick him out
- Unfortunately, that's not what happens (1 Kings 19:1-2)
 - No repentance, no revolution... nothing's changed
 - Jezebel threatens his life...
- And Elijah runs!
 - Runs to Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:3-4,8) (See map below)
 - He was afraid – v3 – “ran for his life”
 - He was utterly depressed
 - Read v3 – “let his servant go” = “I quit” – giving up prophetic ministry
 - Read v4 – because “I am not better than my fathers” – “I’m a failure”
- **Was Elijah sinning when he ran off into the desert afraid and depressed?**
 - There was no blatant rebellion – God didn't tell him to stay in Jezreel
 - When God arrives there is no rebuke or condemnation
 - He ran to Mt. Horeb, also known as Mt. Sinai
 - Elijah is not running *from* God; rather, he is running *towards* God, to the one place on earth where God's presence could most readily be felt
- **When we're discouraged and afraid, we will run somewhere to find help...**
 - You can run to the world, to the idols and pleasures and distractions it offers us
 - Or, like Elijah, you can run towards God. You can seek His help and His healing

3 gifts God gave to Elijah to help him overcome despair

1. Rest (19:5-7)

- God arrives (Angel of the Lord), and the first thing he does is cook!
- God saw the *first* thing Elijah needed was a hot meal and a good night sleep
- Many assume that every problem can be solved by reading the Bible and praying more
- **It IS GOOD to read the Bible and pray more...** but sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is eat a good meal and go to bed early
 - Our physical needs are not unimportant!
 - God created your body and united it to your spirit: one affects the other
- When you feel afraid or depressed, what you may need most is simply REST
 - You cannot neglect your physical body without paying a spiritual price
 - Get a physical, improve your diet, get exercise, get more sleep, take a vacation

2. Reminder that God's at work (19:9-18)

- God gives Elijah an object lesson
 - Stand on the mountain while God passes by
 - Hurricane – what Job saw – but God was not in it...
 - Earthquake – what Israel saw in the Exodus – but God was not in it...
 - Fire – what Moses saw in the burning bush – but God was not in it...
 - Finally, God shows up **face to face** in a gentle, quiet whisper
- What is God trying to teach Elijah?
- To answer, we must understand where Elijah had gone wrong in his thinking
 - What does Elijah think about life? (v10)
 - “I have been very zealous for you”
 - i.e. “I did everything I was supposed to, so where are the results?”
 - **Elijah expected instant results**
 - “I alone am left”
 - He didn't see anyone else stepping up to fight idolatry
 - **He overestimated his importance in God's plan for the world**
- God is teaching Elijah that **even though sometimes God works in big, flashy ways**, such as a hurricane or earthquake or fire, **usually He whispers**. He **works quietly, invisibly, and behind the scenes** where it is easy to miss
- And yet, His quiet whisper had raised up 7000 faithful Israelites – far more than Elijah's miraculous, public ministry.
- That's God's point – His quiet whisper can accomplish more in our world and in our lives than we could ever imagine!
 - That humbled and encouraged Elijah
- Choose to believe that God is at work all around us even if we don't see it
 - He does not need your help. You are not indispensable
 - There's more power in His whisper than in all our furious effort
 - God is at work all around us even if we don't see it – take it on faith
 - It will help free you from the burdens that lead to fear and despair

3. Renewed Focus in life

- God's final gift to Elijah in this passage: the gift of **simplicity**
- Elijah had let his life get complicated, but all he needed to do was focus on one thing: **raising up next leaders for the nation**
- When you feel overwhelmed, you may need to **SIMPLIFY**
- The first item on your list should be your relationship to God
- **What are your Top 3 priorities for this summer?**
 - Spending extra time with one of your children?
 - Getting some vacation and rest?
 - Working on some part of your marriage?
 - Building a habit of getting to the gym and eating healthy?

If you want to find your way out of despair, fear, and depression, you've got to simplify

