



Fear Is Not Our Future

Lessons From Elijah And Elisha

Growth Group Curriculum

January 29, 2023 – 1 Kings 18:45-46; 1 Kings 19:1-14; Exodus 33:18-23; Psalm 142; 1 Cor. 13:9-12
“A Gentle Voice”

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

In our text we encounter a very different Elijah than we saw at the top of Mt. Carmel. After running ahead to Jezreel – the capital of Israel, Elijah is disappointed to find out that nothing had changed after God’s appearance at Mt. Carmel. Israel had not repented. Ahab and Jezebel were still ruling over Israel. This disappointment leads to discouragement and then despair.

Elijah soon learns that Jezebel is after him and runs for his life. He stops at Beersheba. We read about Beersheba often in the OT. Over the generations Beersheba was a place where several people had contact with God. Isaac (Genesis 26) and Jacob (Genesis 46) both heard from God in dreams at Beersheba and Hagar (Genesis 21) was in the wilderness of Beersheba when God spoke to her.

Beersheba is significant in that it is in Judah, the southern kingdom. Elijah is no longer in the northern kingdom of Israel. By leaving his servant behind in the most southern part of Judah, Elijah is signaling that he is done being a prophet. He thought he and God had been victorious at Carmel. He expected things to change, but nothing seemed to be happening.

Yet, God was not finished with Elijah. Though Elijah wanted to die, that was not in God’s plans. God provided sustenance for Elijah and then called him on a 40-day journey to Mt. Horeb, which is better known as Mt. Sinai. In this narrative we see numerous similarities between Elijah and Moses, which is perhaps why both of them show up on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus in the synoptic gospels.

Two different times God asks Elijah the same question and two times Elijah answers in the same way. God is trying to get him to see that God has a different plan, but Elijah wants nothing to do with it. He was still disappointed and discouraged, even though God had shown up and spoken to Elijah.

The Lord reassures Elijah, with the assurance that God’s word never fails. Fear does not win in the end and God does have a good and perfect plan. Even though Elijah thinks all is lost, we see later in this chapter that God still has 7000 prophets, whose knees have not bowed to Baal.



Exploring the Text

1 Kings 18:45-46

⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The power of the LORD came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

1 Kings 19:1-14

¹⁹ Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.” ³ Elijah was afraid^[a] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” ⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” ⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

⁷ The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” ¹¹ The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁴ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

Exodus 33:18-23

¹⁸ Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” ¹⁹ And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” ²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” ²¹ Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Psalms 142

A maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.

¹ I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. ² I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble. ³ When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk people have hidden a snare for me. ⁴ Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. ⁵ I cry to you, LORD; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” ⁶ Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. ⁷ Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12

⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.



Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

1. In 1 Kings 18:45-46, we read that a triumphant Elijah runs all the way from Mt. Carmel, where the Lord had sent fire to consume Elijah's sacrifice, to Jezreel, the capital where King Ahab and Queen Jezebel ruled, a distance of approximately 30 miles. He was filled with joy at what God had done, and expectant about what he believed God would do in Jezreel. Pastor Paul told us that Elijah expected a "Ninevah moment" when the people of Jezreel would repent and return to God as the people of Ninevah had done after Jonah prophesied to them. He was ultimately disappointed because the people did not respond as he expected them to respond. Have you ever experienced a time when you expected God to "show up" in a particular way and it didn't happen? How did you feel? What did you do?
2. God had appeared in an incredible way on Mt. Carmel and Elijah had successfully bested the 450 prophets of Baal, yet when Jezebel threatened his life, he was afraid and ran away. Why do you think he reacted in that way?
3. What lessons can we learn from the story of Elijah, in 1 Kings 19:1-14?
4. Why do you think God appeared to Elijah in a "still small voice", rather than through the wind, the earthquake and the fire? (1 Kings 19:11-12)
5. Pastor Paul told us that God reveals Himself differently to each of us. Why do you think this is so? How has God revealed Himself to you?
6. Psalm 142 was written by David, when he was hiding in the cave from King Saul. Things surely were not going as David expected them to be. What can we learn from this Psalm that can help us when we feel depressed or in despair?
7. Pastor Paul said that God writes Himself into the narrative of our lives. What does this statement mean to you?
8. What can each of us do to make ourselves more receptive to hearing God's "still small voice"?

