**ELIJAH’S DEPRESSION AND GOD’S TREATMENT**

1 Kings 19:1-18

Key verses 10-11a

 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.” The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”

**Introduction**

 In the previous passage, we learned that Elijah won the great victory against the false prophets. But today’s passage shows that he became a different person because he lost his faith. But God is faithfully helping him in several ways. May the Lord help us to rely on the unfailing love of God so that we may gain strength and vision again in the Lord our God regardless of the situations and serve our Master’s business faithfully.

1. Read verses 1-5a. What was Jezebel’s response when Ahab told her everything Elijah had done? (1-2) What did Elijah do? (3-5a)

1-1, Read verses 1-5a.

 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 and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went on 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.

1-2, What was Jezebel’s response when Ahab told her everything Elijah had done? (1-2)

 ***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.”***

* Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. It is kind of like saying that she is a real boss for her husband.
* Now she 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.”
* She should have said that she was wrong and Yahweh is truly the living God. Instead, she responded with a vow to kill within 24 hours the man who exposed the lie of Baal worship.

1-3, What did Elijah do? (3-5a)

***3 Elijah was afraid[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%2019&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9391a)***] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went on 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.***

* Elijah was afraid. She could have ordered a soldier to kill Elijah instead of saying anything if she really wanted to kill him. But Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.
* He failed at this stage of his mission life due to fear. He could have prayed to the Lord and actively relied on God instead. But he chose to run away as a fugitive.
* Although he had a great victory, we can see his weakness and he was a human being like us. God’s servants need comfort and support the most always.
* He prayed to die. But thank God who did not answer his prayer. Also he said, “I have had enough” He might have expected that Ahab and Jezebel may repent of their sins and the leaders of the northern kingdom may come back to God.
* But what he had served and done for the Lord seemed to be in vain from His sight. But by God’s grace, he was able to sleep under the bush(shade) in the wilderness.
1. Read verses 5b-10. How did God provide for Elijah’s physical needs? (5b-8) How did God allow Elijah to express his frustration? (9-10)

2-1, Read verses 5b-10.

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.”

2-2, How did God provide for Elijah’s physical needs? (5b-8)

***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.***

* He was asked to eat twice. God first helped him according to his physical needs. Physical needs are important.
* It was very gracious for God to deal with this with his servant. We might have expected rebuke. But God was very gentle with nice treatment.
* Elijah must go on a 200 mile and 40 day trip to Mount Horeb. (Mount Sinai) It indicates that God allowed him to take time to recover from his depression.

2-3, How did God allow Elijah to express his frustration? (9-10)

***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?”***

* Elijah went into a cave and spent the night. Oftentimes man withdraws himself for a while to have his own space and needs time to recover from his weakness.
* “What are you doing here?” God knew the answer to this question as Adam was asked with the similar question. But it was still good for him to speak to the Lord to express his frustration.

***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.”***

* Elijah protested to God, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty…” It meant that it was not fair for a servant of God to suffer in such a way that he had a right to complain.
* “I am the only one left” In fact, it was not true because God preserved many godly people. But it was his own perception and belief. Elijah was in his own thought prison with the unreasonable nature of unbelief and fear.
1. Read verses 11-18. What can we learn from God who revealed Himself to Elijah personally? (11-12) What was his response? (13a) What were God’s words of direction for him? (13b-18) How can we go back the way we came, by faith?

3-1, Read verses 11-18.

 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.”

15 The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

3-2, What can we learn from God who revealed Himself to Elijah personally? (11-12)

***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.***

* First God knew him in person and knew what the depressed and discouraged Elijah needed indeed. What was lacking in Elijah those days, was God’s presence.
* “The Lord is about to pass by” God brought His own presence before him. Where? It was not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire.
* Elijah probably looked for God in dramatic ways. Certainly God appeared in such a fantastic way to stop rain or send fire on the altar when he prayed in the contest.
* But most of the time God is gentle but steadfastly appears Himself. This same lesson is to be learned over and over by us all.
* God wanted to meet him in the quiet whisper of a voice instead of spectacular manifestations. God wanted to teach him about the true nature of God.
* Elijah probably expected that through the dramatic display of power at the mount Carmel the northern nation would repent of their idol worship.
* “One powerful prayer and one conference would change a nation” Sounds familiar? When we make the decision to be servants of God, we fall into these kinds of statistics and suffer with a sense of loss.
* The small voice of God was gently speaking to the heart of Elijah and in fact it was more powerful than any spectacular display of God’s judgement.
* Praise the Lord who blessed us with the same small voice by helping us to grow as independent Bible teachers who look into the words of God and hear one word.
* We do not want to exchange this unique blessing. Although we are not professionally trained in the seminary school, still God’s mighty work is possible in our personal study of the Bible.
* God's gentle voice is more powerful than anything else in this religious arena. May the Lord help our children see the value of accepting one word as the most valuable and blessed legacy of our church so that they may grow as powerful Bible teachers!

3-3, What was his response? (13a)

***13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.***

* At once Elijah senses that God was present in the still small voice in a way. So immediately he humbled himself when he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. In holy fear he was ready to listen to the Lord.

3-4, What were God’s words of direction for him? (13b-18)

 ***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.”***

* God asked the same question and Elijah answered the same answer. In this way God did bear with him again so that he may look at himself with holy fear.

***15 The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus.***

* God gave him something to do. He needed to stop looking at himself and his own difficult situations. He needed to get on with what God wanted him to do.
* “Go back the way you came” indicates that he must go back to his Master’s business again. He must overcome inner fear and all kinds of calculation and trust and believe in the Almighty God once again.
* It would be a very different step from that which brought him down to Beersheba and the wilderness. It is like God’s word to Gideon, “Mighty warrior! Go with the strength you already have had in the Lord God.”

***When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.***

* There are 2 specific things that he must do for God. First, he must anoint Jehu, son of the Nimshi king over Israel. Second, he must anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel to succeed him as prophet.

***17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu.***

* God’s justice will be fulfilled eventually. Jehu and Elisha will accomplish it according to God’s justice.
* God would not allow the institutional persecution or the promotion of idol worship to go unpunished.

***18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”***

* Yes, it is indeed that God lives! He reserved 7000 in Israel - all those whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whole mouths have not kissed him.
* When Elijah sustained himself quietly despite his depression, God steadfastly and faithfully raised up many servants for His glory.
* Elijah had probably a fixed idea about spectacular events such as Mount Carmel, but God did more productive and fruitful works behind the scene.
* God helped him to see through what God has been doing continually despite his seemingly set back. Praise the Lord!

3-5, How can we go back the way we came, by faith?

* Oftentimes we may not see what we must see because of our limited eyesight. But God is doing His mighty work at this moment as well.
* All we have to do is to go back the way we came, by faith. One of the ways to do this might go back to our original calling in our campus ministry after a long pandemic break.
* Our Bible students are coming back like 7000 prophets with a vision that they would grow to be Bible teachers.
* May the Lord help us to go back the way we came to serve campus evangelism and outreach ministry so that we can achieve weekly 300 1 to 1’s and 30 disciples may be established. Amen.

**One Word: Go back the way you came, by absolute faith!**