



Last week the stories of Ahab, Elijah, and the widow of Zarephath provided us with examples of how we can respond to adversity. Elijah embraced adversity as an opportunity to see God at work, the widow persevered with encouragement from Elijah, and Ahab turned to wealth and idolatry. As the story continues in 1 Kings 18:1-16, Ahab persists in self-reliance and defiance against God. Instead of submitting to the Lord and repenting of his sin and idolatry, he blames God and Elijah for his troubles and works to make it through the drought and famine on his own.

Caught in the middle of the trouble is Ahab's palace administrator, Obadiah. In the midst of the idolatrous and sinful court of Ahab and Jezebel is a man who is trying his best to love God, and is putting himself and his family at great risk in doing so. Like an ancient Oscar Schindler, he is protecting a hundred prophets of God from Jezebel. While Jezebel is killing the Lord's prophets, Obadiah is hiding them away in two caves and providing supplies, perhaps even using the king's resources to do so. At the same time he is trying to serve the king faithfully by searching for water and food to keep the king's animals alive.

In the midst of the search for water, Obadiah comes across Elijah and appears encouraged and privileged to be speaking with the prophet, until Elijah tells him essentially to summon King Ahab. You can almost see Obadiah's countenance fall as his hope turns to fear. It's presumptuous to summon a king as it is, but Ahab hates Elijah, and the consequences will be disastrous if Elijah disappears again. Not only will Obadiah be executed, but the prophets he is hiding and probably others will perish.

Nevertheless, it doesn't take much to convince Obadiah. A promise from Elijah convinces Obadiah and he obediently tells the king about Elijah's return. Obadiah knows Elijah to be a man of his word. Much like Jesus in the gospels, Elijah has consistently demonstrated faithfulness and perseverance, and Obadiah knows he can rely on him. So despite the personal risks, knowing that his desire to serve the Lord and sustain the prophets is Elijah's goal as well, Obadiah obediently tells Ahab about Elijah's return.

Discussion Questions

What are some of the things, people, or organizations that society tells us we should trust to provide for our well-being? Where do you place your faith?

Who do you know who has endured adversity and ignored cultural disapproval in trusting God? How can you reproduce that in your own life?

Followers of Jesus all believe that God loves us, but do you believe that to mean keeping you from trouble or caring for you through trouble? How should we expect God to provide for us in adversity?