

# 1 Kings 19:1-18

## Mount Horeb

Image Church // Mountains Week 5

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### Intro

We are in a series called **Mountains**, where we're looking at key mountaintop moments throughout the Bible...

**We are on a journey that will lead us to Easter...**

- *We want to invite people to experience a people and, ultimately a person!*

Remember, **WE'RE GOING TO BE ADDING A SERVICE on Easter Weekend!**

- **9 and 10:45...**
- Also need a few more folks to jump in and serve... Serve 1 attend 1 for Easter... BTW if you've interested in volunteering or you serve as a volunteer in any way can hang in here after the service for 8 min to make sure we're on the same page...

**If you have your Bibles go ahead and grab them and turn to 1 Kings 19...**

**Build the tension...**

Ahab, king of Israel married to Jezebel... Started serving her god-Baal... Wicked duo...

- God holds off rain because of their rebellion and wickedness...
- Elijah Comes to Ahab...
- Huge showdown between two prophets of Baal and Elijah to reveal who the true God is...
- Make an altar ask your god to call down fire to light it...
- God shows up!

**Summary of 1 Kings 18:40-46**

- Has the prophets killed...
- Tells Ahab to go celebrate...
- Elijah prays 7 times- God sends the rain...
- Tells Ahab to get his chariot ready and head home
- *Elijah outruns the chariot ahead of Ahab v. 46*

### 1 Kings 19:1-18

<sup>1</sup> Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don't make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!" <sup>3</sup> Then Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, <sup>4</sup> but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! Lord, take my life, for I'm no better than my ancestors." <sup>5</sup> Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. So Jezebel hears about what happened and she is ticked... And says she's going to kill Elijah...

**You have to see what Elijah was up against...**

- Jezebel has killed God's prophets before...
- And she is as committed to Baal as Elijah is to God...
- She also has the fierceness that Ahab lacks...
- And she's intently motivated she wants revenge...

So, *Elijah's afraid...*

- So he flees for his life into the desert...
- What had been an incredible victory was now ending in what felt like defeat...
- He assumes that this is the end of his ministry...
  - He leaves His servant behind as if to resign from his position...

And what we see is a man of **faith** that's turned into a man of **fear**...

- His fear is has crippled and debilitated him...
- He's in total despair...
- Exhausted with nothing left...

*Elijah is at his end*, he's had enough, and he tells God that he wants to die...

- *The irony is that he fled into the desert to save his life, and now he wants God to take it...*
- It seems that the day of travel caused him to reflect more on his situation and sent him further into **despair**...

And so we're faced with the question: **How will the Lord prove to be God now?** *This is the underlying question of the story.*

**Let me ask you this:** *Have you ever been there... Have you ever found yourself in a place where you are at your end, where you have nothing left? Some of you are there right now...*

- *Where you're up against something, and you feel like there's no hope?*
- *A place where you're afraid in the midst of the unknown?*
- *A place where you just want to give up spiritually?*

**What about this:** Have you ever done the right thing, the thing that honors God, and then the back end of it didn't turn out well for you? Things didn't go as you planned?

- Maybe you hoped for a blessing, but what you got seemed like a curse?

**Example:** *You did the right thing at work and it turned out bad for your career...*

- *You chose to serve and sacrifice and it's put you in a really hard spot that you didn't expect...*

**Illustration:** *When Ashley and I planted Image church we never expected what we would encounter...*

- *Pandemic, sons diagnosis of his disease, seizures, Epilepsy...*
- *We're here for you God...*

**Despair.** Have you ever been there where you have obeyed God and things took a turn and you find yourself in a place of despair...

Every one of us either has been or will find ourselves at a point where we're at our wits' end, where we feel down and out, in over our heads...

- A place where we have more fear than faith... Where we have more questions than we do answers...

*Let's pick back up in verse 5:*

Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, "Get up and eat."<sup>6</sup> Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.<sup>7</sup> Then the angel of the Lord returned for a second time and touched him. He said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you."<sup>8</sup> So he got up, ate, and drank.

Elijah is at his end. He's lying there asleep, wanting to die... And God shows up... He sends an angel to give him some food...

What we need to see here is that **God meets Elijah where he is**

**The same is true for you... When your at your lowest point...**

- The angel doesn't show up and say, *are you kidding me right now, Elijah, do you not remember all God's done? Get up and get it together!*

God meets Elijah right where he is, giving Him what he needs...

- He doesn't say have more faith...
- ***He meets him where He is... And gives him what he needs...***
- That's what God will do for you...

So, God meets Elijah where he is with compassion and care providing food for him...

Now, here's the thing... This isn't the first time that God has miraculously provided for Elijah in the midst of a difficult situation...

- **1 Kings 17:2-4** God sent Elijah in the desert during the drought and commanded the ravens to feed him...
- **1 Kings 17:7-16** God uses a poor widow miraculously provides through her...

**IOW:** What God does here with Elijah is give him a subtle reminder of His faithfulness in the past...

Here's what we need to remember... ***God's faithfulness in the past gives you reason to trust in His faithfulness in the future!***

- *Sometimes, the thing that we need the most in times of despair is to look back at God's faithfulness in the past...*
- We get tied up in where we are, but we forget where we've been and how God's provided and been faithful...

#### Verse 8:

Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>9</sup> He entered a cave there and spent the night. Suddenly, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup> He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life."

Here's another way that God responds to Elijah in the midst of his despair... **God listens!**<sup>1</sup>

- Here's the thing, when God asks a question, it's never to get information... He already knows the answer...
- He asks a question to get Elijah to express the reality of his heart...
- To give him space to express how he really feels...

Family, listen to me, God's willing to listen to your doubts, fears, and frustrations...

- *Example: David all throughout the Psalms...*
- Historically in the church, Christians have been horrible at this... They feel like they have to *just trust God and never vent to Him...*
  - Like it's wrong or disobedient...
  - *God never rebukes Elijah for His frustrations...*

God's not above or unable to sit with you in your fear and frustration...

**Illustration:** AG and prayer time at night... She doesn't want to pray, and I say, tell God that and ask Him to change your heart...

*God listens to you in your moments of despair...*

#### Verse 11:

<sup>11</sup> Then he [God] said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord's presence." At that moment, the Lord passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs 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. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller via JD Greear, *When Godly People get depressed*.

Such a moment here where we see the power of God...

- And yet in the midst of the power of God on display through the wind, earthquake, and the fire...
- We see the tenderness...

*God responds to Elijah, who's at his end, in the midst of his despair, with a whisper...*

- God is not a tyrant, He's a loving Father to those that are His...

We also, *I think*, get an illusion of the unexpected ways that God works...

- We would expect God to be in the wind storm, earthquake, and the fire... but He comes in a soft whisper...
- God oftentimes tends to work in unsuspecting ways which is what we're going to see in a little bit!

There's another way that we see God respond to Elijah here, **God gives Elijah His Word!**<sup>2</sup>

- *You say well, I wish in the midst of my despair God would give me His Word like this...*
- He HAS given you His Word, and it is no less powerful and no less miraculous...
- God has a word for you in the midst of your despair!
- I know that it may be hard to open it, but there's an anchor of hope in there...

For me: **Psalm 61-63**... *Read it out of Bible...*

**Verse 13:** Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"<sup>14</sup> "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies," he replied, "but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they're looking for me to take my life."

This is the second time God's asked Eljah **why are you here?**

<sup>2</sup> Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 8, The New American Commentary, 223.

God wants Elijah to really evaluate where he's at...

- God has fed him like he has before, God has spoken to him as He has before...
- Why has he really fled??

And yet ***Elijah responds the same way as he had before...***

- Israel has abandoned you, I'm all that's left, they want to take my life, all is lost, there is no hope...

The problem is that what Elijah's done is that he's put God in a box...<sup>3</sup>

***He's allowed the disappointment of his circumstances to dictate his view of God...***

- Isn't that so often what we do?!?
- When things get hard, when things don't go how we want when our faithfulness doesn't produce the outcome we want...
- Or the actions of others aren't fair or what we wanted...
- We put God in a box, acting as if all is lost and there is no hope...

And we become frustrated at God, acting as if He's the one that's let us down, when in reality, it's not God who's let us down, it's our unmet expectations...

- We have a desired outcome and when it doesn't happen, we come to God hopeless as if all is lost and it's all His fault...
- When in reality we're just dealing with the frustrations of unmet expectations...<sup>4</sup>

But what God's about to show is that He is a God that works outside of our expectations... That all hope is never lost...

<sup>3</sup> Paige Benton Brown weekly Bible study via YouTube

<sup>4</sup> Words are my own but thought idea was generated from Paige Brown, *Ibid*.

### Verse 15:

<sup>15</sup> Then the Lord said to him, “Go and return by the way you came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as king over Aram. <sup>16</sup> You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup> Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu. <sup>18</sup> But I will leave seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

In the midst of what seems like a hopeless situation where all is lost,

**God is working and He’s in control and He has a plan...**

- Remember the question: **How will the Lord prove to be God now?**

When Elijah thought that he was the only one left... God says, “You think you are alone, but I have 7,000 in Israel who haven’t bowed down to Baal”...

- God is working in ways that Elijah didn’t see, and he calls Elijah to trust Him!

*Here’s the thing, though, **God didn’t change his circumstances; Jezebel still wants to kill Him...***

**What God’s done is change where Elijah’s eyes are fixed. God lifts Elijah’s eyes off his circumstances and puts them on Him!**<sup>5</sup>

- Showing Elijah that He’s in control and He has a plan, that Elijah can trust God in the midst of what seems like a disparaging situation!

**And then God tells him to go back the way he came...** God calls him out of his despair and back into faithfulness...

- When Elijah didn’t have the strength, when he was at His end, God showed up...
- **Hebrews 13:5** *never will I leave you, never will I forsake you!*
- **Psalm 23:** When you walk through the valley of the shadow...

**Here’s the thing, God may not change your circumstances, but he can take you from despair to dependence...**

- And the anchor is faith and hope...
- And that breeds endurance...

**Illustration:** When my son was diagnosed with Smith Kingsmore... We spiraled... Life forever changed... Never being empty nesters... Etc.

- A buddy of mine called to check in, he had a son with special needs...
- MANA for Ireal in the desert...

**Here’s the thing...** What Elijah got to experience through God’s faithfulness to meet Him in his despair, His faithfulness to work in seemingly impossible situations... Was just a taste of what was to come... It was shadow...

\*The climax of God’s faithfulness, the culmination of His plan, the essence of hope, would come through the person and work of Jesus...

It’s the way that God deals with broken circumstances and despair by providing a way out of them for good one day!

**Gospel**

The cross shows us Just how much God was working when no one could see it...

- Before the foundations of the world...

The cross is God’s faithfulness in the past that can give you confidence in the future...

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion [VAMP]

Despair pulls you away from the things of God... Into isolation...

Despair derails you from your purpose... The cross reminds you of it...

When you find yourself down and out... Hope is not lost... God is not absent...

- He will meet you where you are...
- He listens to you...
- He has given you His Word...

Confidence in this reality comes by looking back at the cross...