

## Jason Smith - Purpose in the Pause Part 3 - **Turbulence Ahead**

**Text:** 1 Kings 19:1–15

When life becomes turbulent, God may use the pause to help us rest, recover, hear His voice, and return to our purpose.

Don't mistake turbulence for abandonment. God may be closer than you think.

### **Turbulence Doesn't Mean You're Going Down**

- Anyone who has experienced turbulence on a plane knows the feeling:
  - You tighten your seat belt.
  - You grip the armrest.
  - You watch the flight attendant to see if they look concerned.
  - You wonder, "Is everything okay?"
- Turbulence can make you feel as though the plane is falling apart, even though the plane may still be completely on course.
- The pilot understands something the passengers cannot see:
  - The turbulence is temporary.
  - The aircraft was designed to endure it.
  - The destination has not changed.
  - The pilot is still in control.

### **Illustration: The Seat-Belt Sign (SHOW PIC)**

- When turbulence begins, the pilot doesn't tell passengers to start running through the cabin.
- The sign comes on telling everyone to sit down, buckle up, and remain secure.
- Sometimes our spiritual response to turbulence should be the same:
  - Stop running.
  - Sit down.
  - Hold on to what you know.
  - Trust the One guiding your life.

Just because your life is shaking doesn't mean your life is crashing.

- Life has turbulence:
  - Emotional turbulence
  - Relational turbulence
  - Financial turbulence

- Spiritual turbulence
  - Unexpected changes
  - Disappointment and exhaustion
- One moment, you feel like you are soaring.
- The next moment, it feels like the bottom has dropped out.
- That is where we find Elijah.
  - He had just experienced an incredible victory on Mount Carmel.
  - God answered with fire.
  - The false prophets were defeated.
  - Elijah appeared fearless and powerful.
- But in 1 Kings 19, one threat from Jezebel sends him running for his life.

### **Truth:**

You can experience victory publicly while fighting a storm privately.

## **1. The Delay After the Battle**

**Scripture: 1 Kings 19:3–5**

**“Elijah was afraid and ran for his life... He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. ‘I have had enough, Lord,’ he said. Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.”**

- Elijah reached the place where he said, “I have had enough.”
- He was dealing with:
  - Fear
  - Physical exhaustion
  - Emotional depletion
  - Spiritual discouragement
  - Isolation
  - Distorted thinking
- Elijah had poured himself out until he felt like nothing was left.

## **Burnout Often Follows a Battle**

- Elijah’s lowest moment came immediately after one of his greatest victories.
- Sometimes we assume a spiritual victory makes us immune to exhaustion.
- But even strong people become tired.
- Even faithful people become discouraged.
- Even prophets need rest.

**Truth:**

**Being exhausted does not mean you are unfaithful. It means you are human.**

**Notice How God Responded**

- God did not shame Elijah.
- God did not lecture Elijah.
- God did not say, “After everything I just did, how can you feel this way?”
- God allowed him to sleep.
- Then God sent an angel with food and water.
- Before God addressed Elijah’s assignment, He addressed Elijah’s exhaustion.

**Illustration: The Warning Light (SHOW PICTURE)**

- When the warning light appears on your vehicle’s dashboard, covering it with tape does not repair the engine.
- You can ignore the warning, but the problem continues growing beneath the surface.
- Exhaustion, irritability, isolation, and hopelessness can be warning lights.
- God may be telling you, “Pull over. Something needs attention.”

**Truth:**

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is rest, eat, pray, and allow God to care for you.

**Application**

- Sometimes God delays the journey because we need to rest rather than rush.
- Rest is not always laziness; sometimes it is obedience.
- You do not have to feel guilty for needing a pause.
- Do not wait until you completely collapse before admitting you are tired.
- Let trustworthy people know when you are struggling.

**Question**

- What warning lights have been appearing in your life?
- Are you tired physically, emotionally, spiritually—or all three?

**Point to Remember:**

God met Elijah under the broom tree. He will meet you in your place of exhaustion too.

**2. God Speaks in the Stillness**

**Scripture: 1 Kings 19:11–12**

**“Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart... but the Lord was not in the wind... After the wind there was an earthquake... After the earthquake came a fire... And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”**

- Elijah had seen God move dramatically before.
- On Mount Carmel, God answered with fire.
- But this time, God did not speak through the spectacular.
- There was:
  - A powerful wind
  - An earthquake
  - A fire
  - Then a gentle whisper
- God was teaching Elijah that He is not limited to dramatic moments.

**We Often Look for God in the Loud**

- We want an undeniable sign.
- We want an immediate answer.
- We want the situation to change overnight.
- We want God to shout over everything competing for our attention.
- But God’s whisper does not compete with the noise.
- His whisper invites us to become still enough to listen.

**Illustration: The Whispered Conversation**

- If someone across the room begins shouting, you can hear them without moving.
- But if someone whispers, you must draw closer.
- A whisper creates intimacy.
- God’s quiet voice may not mean He is far away. It may mean He is inviting you closer.

**Truth:**

God is not silent simply because He is not shouting.

**The Cave Was Not Empty**

- Elijah felt alone, but God was there.
- Elijah felt forgotten, but God knew exactly where he was.
- Elijah believed his ministry was over, but God was already preparing his next assignment.
- The cave felt like isolation.
- God turned it into a meeting place.

**Illustration: Turning Down the Radio**

- When you hear an unusual sound coming from your vehicle, you turn down the radio so you can identify it.
- The problem may have been present for miles, but the noise kept you from hearing it.
- Some of us need to turn down the noise in our lives:
  - Social media
  - Constant entertainment
  - Other people's opinions
  - Endless activity
  - Our own anxious thoughts

**Truth:**

Stillness is not wasted time. It is sacred space where God's voice becomes clearer.

**Application**

- Make room for silence.
- Read Scripture without rushing.
- Pray without bringing an entire list.
- Sit in God's presence and listen.
- Take a walk without your phone.
- Turn off the noise long enough to hear what God has been saying.

**Question**

- What noise is making it difficult for you to hear God?
- Are you looking for a dramatic sign while overlooking His gentle whisper?

**Remember:**

The whisper of God is more powerful than the noise surrounding you.

**3. The Delay Prepares You to Keep Going**

**Scripture: 1 Kings 19:15**

**“The Lord said to him, ‘Go back the way you came...’”**

- After the running, resting, eating, listening, and recovering, God gave Elijah another assignment.
- God did not leave him beneath the tree.
- God did not leave him inside the cave.
- God restored Elijah and sent him forward.

**Elijah Thought It Was Over**

- Elijah said, “I have had enough.”
- God essentially answered, “I am not finished with you yet.”
- Elijah saw an ending.
- God saw a season of restoration.
- Elijah saw failure.
- God saw fatigue.
- Elijah saw a cave.
- God saw a place of preparation.

**Truth:**

Your lowest moment does not have the authority to cancel God’s purpose for your life.

**Restoration Comes Before Recommissioning**

- God did not immediately push Elijah back into ministry.
- First, God allowed him to rest.
- Then God fed him.
- Then God listened to him.
- Then God spoke to him.
- Finally, God sent him.
- God’s order matters:
  - Rest
  - Recovery

- Revelation
- Recommissioning

### **Illustration: Aircraft Maintenance**

- When an aircraft is grounded for maintenance, it may appear that nothing productive is happening.
- It is not moving.
- It is not carrying passengers.
- It is not gaining altitude.
- But trained technicians are inspecting, repairing, strengthening, and preparing it for another flight.
- The delay is not destroying its purpose; the delay is protecting its future.

### **Truth:**

**You may feel grounded, but God could be performing divine maintenance.**

### **Don't Rush the Recovery**

- We often want to leave the cave before God has finished healing us.
- We want another assignment before we have regained our strength.
- We want the mountaintop without the process of restoration.
- You cannot remain in the cave forever.
- But you should not leave it before God has completed His work.

### **Application**

- Allow God to heal what the last battle wounded.
- Do not make permanent decisions while emotionally exhausted.
- Receive the help God sends.
- Let the whisper of God redefine your future.
- When God says it is time, get up and move forward again.

### **Question**

- Have you mistaken a season of preparation for a season of punishment?
- What if this pause is preparing you for your next assignment?

### **Remember:**

**Elijah's delay did not disqualify him; it readied him.**

## **Conclusion: God Is Present in the Turbulence**

- Elijah was a spiritual giant, but he still experienced turbulence.
  - He became afraid.
  - He ran.
  - He isolated himself.
  - He wanted to quit.
- Yet God never abandoned him.
  - God found him.
  - God allowed him to rest.
  - God fed him.
  - God listened to him.
  - God whispered to him.
  - God sent him forward again.
- Maybe you are experiencing turbulence today.
  - Your emotions are shaking.
  - Your relationships feel unstable.
  - Your plans have been interrupted.
  - Your strength is disappearing.
  - You wonder whether God has forgotten you.
- But turbulence does not mean the plane is going down.
- A delay does not mean the destination has been canceled.
- Silence does not mean God is absent.
- Being grounded does not mean you have been forgotten.

## **Closing Illustration: The Pilot Is Still in Control**

- Passengers may panic because they cannot see what the pilot sees.
- They cannot see the instruments.
- They cannot see the path ahead.
- They cannot hear every conversation with air-traffic control.
- They must trust the one in the cockpit.

## **Final Truth:**

You may not understand the turbulence, but you can trust the Pilot.

This week:

- Identify your “broom tree”—the place where you can intentionally rest.
- Spend at least ten quiet minutes each day with God.
- Take a walk without your phone.

- Read Scripture slowly.
- Journal what you are feeling.
- Pray without an agenda.
- Stop trying to force an immediate answer.
- Listen for God's gentle whisper.
- Ask for help if you are overwhelmed.
- Remember that God is not finished with you.

**Closing:**

- Turbulence is temporary.
- God's presence is constant.
- The cave is not your final destination.
- The delay is not the end of your story.
- God is restoring you, speaking to you, and preparing you to move forward again.

Don't mistake turbulence for abandonment—God is