

# **When Faith Falters: What God Does When You Hit Rock Bottom**

Even the most faithful people hit walls. Elijah was one of the greatest prophets in all of Scripture, a man of bold obedience and unwavering courage. And yet, just one day after one of the greatest miracles in the Bible, he found himself running for his life, sitting under a tree, and asking God to let Him die.

If you have ever felt that kind of exhaustion or despair, this story is for you.

## **Who Was Elijah and Why Does His Story Matter?**

For six weeks, the life of Elijah has been unfolding as a story about a man just like us. He was filled with faith, obedience, and courage. Over and over, the word of the Lord came to Him and He followed it, regardless of the consequences.

He called down fire from heaven on Mount Carmel. He prayed seven times for rain and God answered. He outran a chariot in a downpour. By any measure, Elijah was on top of the world spiritually.

And then everything changed in an instant.

## **What Happened After Elijah's Greatest Victory?**

After the showdown on Mount Carmel, King Ahab went back to report to his wife Jezebel everything that had happened, including the death of all 450 prophets of Baal. Jezebel was furious. She sent a message to Elijah with a vow: by this time tomorrow, you will be dead.

Here is what First Kings 19:3-4 says happened next:

"Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.'" - 1 Kings 19:3-4 English Standard Version (ESV)

Elijah, the man who stood alone against 450 false prophets, was now running in fear from one woman's threat.

## **Does Being a Christian Mean You Should Never Feel Depressed?**

This is one of the most important questions this passage answers. The answer is no.

Elijah's story exposes a dangerous myth: that a true believer can never feel down. Being discouraged does not mean you are sinful or spiritually weak. It means you are human.

Job asked God to take His life. Jonah did the same. King David, described as a man after God's own heart, wrote psalms from the pit of despair. He cried out:

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?" - Psalm 13:1-2 English Standard Version (ESV)

If you are in a season of discouragement, anxiety, or depression, you are not alone and you are not abnormal. God has not abandoned you, and He did not abandon Elijah either.

## **What Does God Do When We Hit Rock Bottom?**

What happens next in Elijah's story is one of the most tender and beautiful pictures of God's compassion in all of Scripture. God pursues His servant in the middle of His emotional pain. And He meets three specific needs.

### **1. Elijah Needed Rest**

God did not rebuke Elijah for being exhausted. He sent an angel to minister to him. Elijah woke up to fresh bread baked over hot coals and a jar of water. He ate, went back to sleep, and the angel came again with more food and a simple message: the journey is too much for you.

God knew that what His servant needed first was rest and nourishment.

This is a word for many of us today. You cannot keep burning the candle at both ends, week after week, without suffering physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual consequences. These things cannot be separated. God designed us as whole people, and all of it works together.

Rest is not laziness. It is obedience to how God made you.

### **2. Elijah Needed a Fresh Word from the Lord**

After Elijah traveled to the mountain of God, the Lord came to Him and asked a pointed question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah poured out his heart. He felt alone. He felt like his work had been for nothing. He believed he was the only faithful person left in all of Israel.

But Elijah had allowed his circumstances to shape his understanding of reality. He had lost sight of God's perspective. He forgot the ravens. He forgot the widow's son. He forgot the flour and oil that never ran out. He forgot the fire from heaven.

God responded not with a dramatic display of power, but with a gentle whisper. And in that whisper, He gave Elijah two things:

- A reminder that God's kingdom always has a future because it depends on His faithfulness, not ours.
- A correction to Elijah's isolation: there were 7,000 people in Israel who had never bowed to Baal.

The tone of God's question was not harsh. In the original Hebrew, it is tender. It is the kindness of God saying: I am not done with you. Get back in the game.

We need that same fresh word. We need God's perspective on our circumstances, not just our own. This is why spending time in Scripture and in prayer is not optional when life gets hard. It is exactly when we need it most.

### **3. Elijah Needed Community**

God's final provision for Elijah was a person. He sent him to find Elisha, who would become his companion, his student, and his successor in ministry.

You and I were never meant to face the Christian life alone. That is why God gave us the church. Part of your identity as a believer in Christ is that you have a new community. We need each other to pray for one another, support one another, and be honest with one another.

One of the most damaging patterns in the church is the habit of pretending everything is fine when it is not. If we cannot be real and honest with our brothers and sisters in Christ, where can we be? Church must be a place where we can share our struggles, ask for prayer, and stop performing.

When we refuse to be open with one another, we leave the same way we came in. That is not what God intended when He gave us the body of Christ.

## **Life Application**

This week, identify which of these three things you need most right now: rest, a fresh word from the Lord, or community. Then take one concrete step toward it. If you need rest, protect your sleep and say no to something that is draining you. If you need a fresh word, commit to spending time in Scripture every day this week and ask God to speak to you through it. If you need community, reach out to one person in your church family and be honest about where you really are.

Stop pretending you are fine if you are not. God met Elijah in His lowest moment with gentleness and provision. He will do the same for you.

Ask yourself:

- Am I running on empty right now, and what would it look like to actually rest this week?
- Have I allowed my circumstances to shape my view of God's faithfulness, and what truths do I need to remember?
- Is there someone in my church community I can be genuinely honest with about where I am spiritually and emotionally?