



Faith Fits – Elijah

CHECK-IN

How are you? Where have you seen God working in your life in the last week? And... today's Scripture has a man on a journey, needing some food to get through it. So, what's your favorite snack? Are you a health nut, munching on celery and carrots? Do you pack up some granola and Gatorade? Maybe you go full 8-year-old and rock Oreos and a juice box? Ready, go!

OPENING PRAYER

**Patient God, forgive us when we lose sight of what really matters,
And help us find rest and sustenance in you.**

INTRODUCTION

Tantrums aren't just for toddlers. (Anyone who watches reality television can attest to that.) But even the most righteous Biblical characters were prone to the occasional meltdown. We like to think of our heroes of the Bible as stoic, unflappable icons who always held

it all together and never lost their nerve. We like to picture them as Captain America, swooping in to save the day, fighting for truth and justice, giving a quotable line, then riding off into the clouds on a flaming chariot. But here's the thing, many of those iconic Biblical characters were more like The Hulk, than Cap. Nearly all of them had at least one epic meltdown, (the Bible Characters, not the Avengers,) and we still know them as pillars of the faith. So, maybe there's something we can learn from these heroes and the tantrums they threw... cuz, let's be honest, we're not above the occasional "faith fit" either.

Question 1: What most often causes your meltdowns? Is there an area of life that has a greater tendency to lead to a bit of a fit? What about it sets you off?

SCRIPTURE

Let's begin with one of the most renowned prophets of the Bible and one of the best *faith-fits* of all. Partly because, looking back, it's kinda funny. And it comes from the prophet...

ELIJAH

Here's your set up. We're rewinding the clock about 2900 years to the time when Israel was ruled by kings. And the man who was king when Elijah was prophet, Ahab, was literally the worst. And that's not an opinion, the Bible says so. "[King Ahab] did more to provoke the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel

before him.” (1 Kings 16:33b NLT) That’s not how you want to be remembered. He married Jezebel, (yes, *that* Jezebel.) He brought the worship of the pagan God Ba’al back to Israel. He earned the title. He also wanted to hunt down and try to kill Elijah, and maybe for good reason. See, a few chapters before what we’re going to look at today. Elijah challenges Ahab’s prophets of Ba’al to a bonfire challenge, (great story for a different day.) Suffice to say, he wipes the floor with them, thoroughly embarrasses King Arab, and sends them off with their tails between their legs. But his celebration is short-lived. Ahab goes back after this embarrassment, tells Jezebel what happened, and she vows to kill Elijah. Here’s what happens next...

Read 1 Kings, chapter 19, verses 3 through 8

Elijah has a meltdown. He’s just won this major victory over the prophets of Ba’al. He’s just proven the power of God. And he’s just confirmed that God is on *his* side. He should be riding high. But nope, he lays down under a broom tree, prays for God to take him now, and has himself a little *faith fit*.

Question 2: What catches your attention about this passage? If you were Elijah, what would have been your reaction to the situation? Would you have done the same thing?

REFLECTION

Have you ever felt like Elijah? Have you ever felt like no matter what you do, no matter how big a win you get, it feels like there’s always an

army bearing down on you? It all just becomes too much, and you just wanna sit down under a broom tree, look up to Heaven, and pray, “Jesus, I hope you’re coming back soon, cuz I’m ready to go.” Here’s the thing, it’s okay to feel like that. It’s okay to get to that breaking point. And it’s okay to have a bit of a meltdown when you get there. God understands. Sometimes you just have to let out the frustration, and sometimes that’s gonna look a bit like a tantrum. And that’s okay. Thing is, though... we can’t stay there. We can’t live in the tantrum. We can throw a fit, get the emotions out, but then we have to learn from whatever it was that caused it, get back to life, and move forward.

Question 3: Consider the area of life you addressed in question 1. Is there a situation right now that has you on the edge of a meltdown? How close are you to finding the nearest broom tree to have yourself a little fit?

Do you ever wonder if God looks down on us like a parent might look at a child having a meltdown, and chuckle a little bit over whatever it is that we’re throwing a fit over? Like, we start a tantrum, God wraps us in a parental hug, and goes, “Oh, sweetie, it’ll be okay... I know your boss is a butthead, but we’ll get through it.” The answer is probably, “yes,” because when we look at the story of Elijah, how does God respond? Elijah throws a fit, and God gives him... a nap and a snack. Yup. Go back and read it. It’s wrapped in Bible-speak, but that’s exactly what happens. Elijah has a meltdown and God

prescribes a nap and a snack. It works on toddlers... it works on prophets. Thing is, it works on us, too.

We too can benefit from a nap and a snack. (Both literally and figuratively.) First, if you find yourself on the brink of a meltdown, if you are overwhelmed, stressed, ready to go sit under a broom tree and throw a fit, it's okay to feel that way... but maybe, it's time for a "nap." And by that we mean, take a break. If it's work that's stressing you out, use one of the PTO days simply to breathe. If it's family, or the kids, or stress at home, arrange with the significant other to take turns taking a night off. If it's life and the news and the country and social media, the world will still go around if you don't check Facebook or Instagram for a couple days. Maybe, just maybe... you interpret this one literally... and take an actual nap. Whatever it is, step away from it for a bit. It's okay. When Elijah woke up, a) He wasn't dead, b) the army hadn't caught him. It's okay to take a break and rest. Learn from Elijah's faith-fit, and take a "nap."

Question 4: What would a "nap" look like in reference to the situation you mentioned in question 3? How can you take a break from whatever it is that has you on the verge of a fit?

The second thing we learn from Elijah's fit is this: we all need a little snack. Look at what the angel says in verse 7, **"Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."** (NLT) The angel knew that Elijah needed a snack to give him physical strength, sustenance for the journey. We need a "snack" that will give us *spiritual* strength. Because, when we have a faith fit, when we

meltdown and want to give up, the journey ahead seems impossible. The future seems daunting and we just don't want to face it. Hence, the tantrum. But we cannot live in the meltdown, God wants more for our lives than to live in that space. And so, God knows we need "snacks" that give us strength for that journey. Or, like Elijah, the journey will be too much for us.

So, what are those spiritual snacks? What's the granola bar for your soul, giving your spirit sustenance for the journey? Maybe it's studying scripture or your daily devotional. Maybe it's meditating to a Richard Rohr podcast or reading the latest Brene Brown book. Maybe it's going for a drive with the windows down cranking the latest worship Spotify playlist. Heck, maybe worship with The Connection is your spiritual snack. If you can't think of anything else, the "Oreos and milk" of spiritual snacks, the old stand-by that satisfies every time, is prayer. Spend time in prayer to give your soul sustenance for the journey. Grab yourself a spiritual snack.

Question 5: What is your favorite *spiritual* snack? What is an activity or spiritual discipline that gives you sustenance for your journey? How can you use it to address your answer to question 3?

CLOSING

Ask yourself... what is the army that is after you? What is it that has you on the brink of a meltdown, raising your blood pressure, making you go, "God, I can't take it anymore... Jesus, take me now"? First, know that it's okay to be upset. It's okay to meltdown. It's okay to

throw a bit of a tantrum... we just can't *stay* there. So, this week... take a "nap." Take a break. Do what you need to do to find rest. And then, have a snack, a *spiritual* snack, something to give your soul sustenance for the journey. Because, when we are on the brink of a fit, God opens his arms, invites us in, says, "aww, it'll be okay..." and offers us a nap and snack.