

I. Intro

A. Text: **1 Kings 19:1-2**

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” (1 Kings 19:1-2)

B. Context

1. The Mountain Top Experience(s)
 - a. Let It Rain (**1 Kings 18:41-46**)
 - b. Mt. Carmel (**1 Kings 18:30-40**)
 - i. Fire From Heaven
 - ii. Removed False Prophets
2. Elijah Was An Unusual Bruva, but the course of His life was very natural

II. God Uses the Wilderness

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” (1 Kings 19:1-2)

A. God Can Use the Wilderness to... Expose Vulnerabilities and Weaknesses

³ And when he saw *that*, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there. (**1 Kings 19:3**)

1. Stood Boldly Against 450 Prophets of Baal and 400 Prophets of Ashterah
 - a. Elijah's history was not one of fear at all.
 - i. Proven to be ridiculously courageous

2. **Revelation: “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours...”**
(James 5:17a).

- a. Elijah had a track record for valiant, fire calling down from heaven, make it rain ministry.
 - i. But he had a nature like ours.
 - ii. He had issues like you and me.
 - iii. He knew something about fear and failure.
- b. In public, the Hand of the Lord came upon Elijah and the miraculous resulted.
 - i. But in the private places of his wilderness, it became painfully apparent that Elijah had major flaws.
 - ii. In and of himself, he was frail like you and me.
- c. Elijah had been zealous for the things of the Lord, but he felt like throwing in the towel (**v. 4**)

⁴But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!” (1 Kings 19:4)

- d. It's enough!
 - i. The pressure of ministry was paralyzing
 - ii. Doing the right thing, but he got tired.
- e. Actually prayed that he might die.
- f. Weary in his well doing (**Gal. 6:9**)

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. (Gal. 6:9)

- i. We know what to do and what not to do.
- ii. Problem is that the not growing weary is based on reliance on the Holy Spirit
- iii. Bearing of other's burdens... Not growing weary... etc.

3. Encouraging to see Elijah's weakness

- a. Highlights the difference between God and man.

- b. Reminds me that I've got blind spots too.
 - i. Encourages me to be honest with God concerning my weaknesses and invite Him to visit the places of my weaknesses with His grace.
- c. If you moved in Elijah (despite his weaknesses), then you can do the same thing in/ through me.

* I am convinced that God is sovereign. Since He's Sovereign, there is nothing outside of his control. And if you found yourself in the wilderness, then he allowed it, planned for it and ordained it. God can use the wilderness to show you something about you.

- 4. God sent an angel to feed and minister to Elijah (**v. 5-7**)
 - a. The angel visited him twice.
 - b. Elijah went in the strength of that food for 40 days and 40 nights until he arrived in Horeb (Mt. Sinai).
 - c. Found himself in a cave

B. God Can Use the Cave... to Minister a Word in Due Season

⁹And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." (**1 Kings 19:9-10**)

- 1. What are you doing here?
- 2. Everyone else turned their back on You, God. I'm the only one left... And they want to take my life. (**v. 10**)
- 3. Building the Kingdom of God in the midst of a crooked and a perverse generation can be discouraging.
 - a. Lonely
 - i. Taxing
 - ii. Void of Tangible Results
 - b. Look at what I did, God? None but me.

4. Sovereign: All about Him.
 - a. God set apart a people for Himself.
 - b. *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; (Is. 43:25)*
 - c. Since His plan was to set apart a people for himself, then know that He's GOING to have a people for Himself!
 - i. He knows how to reserve a remnant for Himself.
 - ii. He knows how to preserve those who have yet to even acknowledge that He is God.
 - iii. be born into His family.
 - iv. He knows how to make rocks cry out in praise to Him (if necessary).
 - d. But somebody is gonna worship God. He'll see to that Himself!

*God can use the cave to speak ... and remind you that He's still in control.

5. Draw near: I'm about to speak to your heart!
 - a. Remember: Elijah had traveled 40 days and nights to Horeb, the Mountain of God
 - i. Another name for Mt. Sinai
 - ii. Same mountain where God showed Himself to Moses and Israel in the book of Exodus (**Ex. 20:18-21**)

¹⁸ Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

*²⁰ And Moses said to the people, “Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.” ²¹ So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. (**Ex. 20:18-21**)*

- iii. The more you draw near to God, the more you aware of your own sinfulness.

- iv. In the Presence of God, transformation takes place. Habits are laid down; relationships are released... In His Presence.
- b. Current:
 - i. Strong Wind tore the side of the mountain out and broke up the rocks up. (**v. 11a**)
 - ii. Strong Earthquake shook like before (**v. 11b**).
 - iii. Big Fire (**v. 12b**)
- 6. God spoke through a “*Still Small Voice*”
 - a. Could God have been speaking in a “*Still Small Voice*” in Exodus?
 - i. I wonder if it was only lightning and earthquake and fire to those on the periphery (in Exodus).
 - b. The “*Still Small Voice*” did not stop the earth from quaking, the fire from burning or the wind from shredding.
 - i. It looked like all hell breaking loose on the outside.
 - ii. The fact that God was speaking in still calm voices did not stop the chaos.
 - c. Wrapped his face with his mantle and pressed in.
- 7. Repeat
 - a. What are you doing here (**v. 13b**)?
 - b. Everyone else turned their back on You, God. I’m the only one left... And they want to take my life. (**v. 14**)

C. Launch You Into the Next Season

¹⁵ *Then the LORD said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.¹⁷ It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of*

Jehu, Elisha will kill.¹⁸ Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.” (1 Kings 19:15-18)

1. Go Back Through the Wilderness (with purpose)
 - a. Anoint the next King of Syria : Hazael (**v. 15**)
 - b. Anoint the next King of Israel: Jehu (**v. 16a**)
 - c. Anoint your successor: Elisha (**v. 16b**)
2. Side Note: I have reserved 7,000 who've never bowed to another.
 - a. 7,000 who've never kissed Baal
3. Elijah stayed in his season of pity, until he found a young protégé to invest in.
 - a. Almost lost his focus and his direction in ministry, until he found someone to train up and disciple.
4. Elijah found Elisha in the field, plowing with 12 yoke of oxen.
 - a. Elijah walked by and threw his mantle on the young man. Then he kept moving forward.
 - b. The springboard to Elijah's path out of His wilderness, was a young man named Elisha.
 - c. It may have seemed that young Elisha was the one benefiting from the mantle being passed.
 - d. But Elijah was the one benefiting the most.
5. Almost as if God was saying, “I took you through the wilderness so that you could identify your successor and propel each other into the next level of ministry”.
 - a. I love you too much to waste your wilderness experience.
 - b. I've got an Elisha, a Joshua, a young Timothy waiting in the wings.
 - c. And you can't enjoy your next assignment until you've identified and invested in your successor.