

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
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Series: BC  
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### Elijah and the One True God

Alright Let's Go!! So, I moved to Dallas, TX with my wife Kristen in 2002; we were newlyweds. Here's the deal, we were in Atlanta for a long time, loved it. We told the Lord that we're going move to Dallas. Here's our plan...we're going move to Dallas. I'm going to go to seminary for four years and then God here's what we're going to do...we're going to go back to Atlanta when we're done. And that usually doesn't work well when you inform God what His plans will be. I don't recommend that. And so, we ended up staying in Dallas, TX. I took a job at a church called Watermark Community Church. I worked there for a long time. I got hired to work with newlyweds, pre-married couples, and married community. Really, it was going to be a job where I worked with married and single, but they decided to hire two people instead of one.

And so, they shoved the two of us in a really small working space. They called it in office, it was really a closet. That would be the best way to describe this room. No windows, interior, small. The other guy they put in the room with me who got hired at the same time, maybe you've heard of him before, his name is Jonathan Pokluda, otherwise known as JP. And so, JP worked with singles I worked with marrieds as we lived in the 'cloffice' together and worked there for a year and it was great. We talked about Bible, theology, relationships. We helped each other grow, We always asked questions back and forth to each other.

Well - fast forward a few years. We moved to different roles quickly, moved out of the 'cloffice', and now he's, my boss. And I am so thankful that he is. He is an amazing, amazing friend and boss and pastor. And we would sit down on a regular basis just to go through different areas of ministry to help sharpen me. And one of the things I've really come to appreciate about JP is that for his team he doesn't just care about us professionally, he also cares about us personally. And so, he was helping me with some professional issues but then we pivoted to some personal issues.

He said, "Scott you are really good at what you do. You're a great dad, a great husband, you are really good with married couples...but there's an area of your life personally that really confuses me. Can I share it with you?" And he's my boss, so I have to say yes. And I say, "Yeah what is it?" He says, "Well it is your language. You don't cuss every day. You don't cuss every week. But I've worked with you long enough and I've shared the 'cloffice' with you and I've seen you from time to time... and your words aren't really clean." And so, I try to start to justify. I don't know how you defend and justify, but I did it like this. I'm like, "Well you should have seen me before I was a Christian and then as a new Christian. And then I had the audacity to rattle off the names of the few other people on staff saying, "they are so much worse than me" ... throwing them under the bus.

And he says, “Scott, we’re talking about you right now. We are talking about your mouth. It says in Ephesians 4:29, **Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths except what is helpful or beneficial for building others up so that it may benefit those who listen.**” And he goes, “I just don’t see consistency in your life. You say you’re a follower of Christ, but then there are areas that aren’t fully aligned with what it means to follow Him.” So not only did he challenge me, but then he said let me give you some specific ways that maybe I could help you.

And so, we had a little bet with one another for a year. Every time I said a bad word, I had to pay him \$100. Every time he said a bad word, he would pay me \$100. Let’s just say for a few months my kids didn’t eat very much, okay. I am hemorrhaging out money. If you’ve ever wondered, how is he driving that nice of a car? I’m pretty sure I paid for that car, OK. It worked and I’m grateful. It’s not 100% fixed, but so much better than it used to be and continually moving in the right direction.

The reason I tell you that story is because there was an area of inconsistency in my life. I claimed one thing, but I lived out another. I was really fully devoted in most areas, but there was one area that I was holding back. I really didn’t think it was that big of a deal at that time. And I don’t think I’m alone. I think we all have areas of our life where we’re inconsistent between what we claim and how we live.

For you it might be the way that you spend your money...maybe you aren’t generous in the way that you give money to the church. So therefore, you think you can waste it on whatever you want. Maybe it’s with your eyes and you’re justifying... you don’t look at hardcore porn, but you look at Game of Thrones and Bridgerton. You just compromise there. Maybe it’s with your schedule and you’re running all over the country every weekend. You are watching volleyball games of your kids and baseball and soccer and every sport. Or maybe you’re watching every single show under the sun on Netflix and Apple TV and Hulu. Yet you don’t have time to read your Bible, or disciple your kids, or pray with your spouse, or go to Life Group. See I think, every single one of us is inconsistent in some way, in what we claim and how we live it out.

Well God has given us a great text that we get to learn from this morning. We are continuing our series called BC where we’re looking at Old Testament stories. These stories are written BC - Before Christ - before he was born in a manger. But these stories all point to the larger story of who Jesus is, they all point to the work and person of Jesus Christ. And we’re going to continue this series today looking at the story of Ahab and Elijah in 1 Kings 18. So, if you have your Bible open it up to 1 Kings. We’re going to spend some time in there starting in verse 16.

Let me tell you what we’re going to see today. The most important thing I want you to walk away with is this idea that if the Lord is God, then follow Him. Not halfheartedly, but with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And if the Lord is God, then follow Him. And in that, we need to decide who we’re going to follow, we need to realize that a false God will never deliver, and a true God, the true God, will always deliver.

Now 1 Kings, just to give you a little bit of background there, we’ve got God’s people who are in the land of Israel. They’ve gone into the Promised Land. There are 12 tribes that are united under

the banner of Israel. But somewhere along the way, because of the sin of the people and the sin of the leaders, God's people get divided up into two kingdoms. There's a northern Kingdom called Israel and there's a southern Kingdom called Judah. They are no longer one family working together. It's almost like there are these two tribes that coexist instead of being 12 tribes united. And you need to know that every king that's over Israel was a bad and wicked king.

But specifically, today we're going to talk about the worst and most wicked king out of all of the bad kings. The other thing that you need to know about the context is that there's a severe drought that's going on in Israel. For three years, at this point, there's been no rain. That means that the crops are not being watered. That means that the animals have nothing to eat on. There's a severe famine and drought in the lands. But much worse than the physical drought is a spiritual drought...where the hearts of the people are pulled away from the Lord.

So, let's go to 1 Kings chapter 18. We're going to start in verse 16. It says, **"...Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said to him, 'Is that you, you troubler of Israel?'"** See Ahab called Elijah a troubler because he blamed Elijah for the drought. Elijah turns around and says, **"I have not made trouble for Israel,"** Elijah replied. **"But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."** So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, **"How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him. But the people said nothing."**

So, let's talk about a few of the characters we meet in this story so far. You've got this guy named Ahab, the most wicked and vile king in all of Israel's history. First Kings 16 says, **"that no other king did more to frustrate or anger the Lord."** He's married to a real prize of a woman, named Jezebel, she is the queen. The two of them collectively do everything they can to pull people away from the One True God to worship the false gods.

Next, you've got Baal. It's either pronounced - Baal or Ba'al – there are all different ways that it is said. But collectively, here's what I want you to think of with Baal. Baal is a false god. Baal is a category, a collection, of false gods that they would pray towards. If they wanted good weather, they would pray to the Baal of weather. If they wanted money, they would pray to the Baal of money. If they wanted children, they would pray to the Baal of fertility.

We've also got the people of Israel. So, the people of Israel - these are God's people - they're supposed to be walking with the Lord. Instead, they're staggering between the two. They worship God one day and then they worship Baal the next. They go back and forth.

We've got Elijah. Elijah is from the Tishbe. And so, Elijah the Tishbite, he's a prophet. A prophet is somebody who speaks divinely inspired words for the Lord. And then, we've got God Himself - the one true God. The God that we have talked about weekly in this series and that we talk about every single week here at Harris Creek.

And so, here's the story. We've got people who are supposed to be worshiping God, but instead they waver between who they worship. Sunday, they worship the one true God. Monday, they're worried about money, so they worship the Baal of money. Then they go back to God and make a sacrifice. Then they want to have a child and so they worship the Baal of fertility. They go back and forth. And Elijah says, "Let's get all the people together. Let's send smoke signals out. A tweet, an email, whatever you do to get all the people of Israel to come up on this mountain." And I've been up on this mountain before, Mount Carmel, it's really high up. All the people assemble there, and he says to them, "It's time to decide who you're going to follow. If the Lord is God, follow him. If Baal is god, follow him. But quit this wavering back and forth."

*1. We need to decide who we're going to follow.*

This word, waver, that's in there in the Hebrew text actually means to limp or to stagger. And so, they're not standing firm on anything. They waver and they limp back and forth.

Here's what I think that this looks like...it's August 1<sup>st</sup>, I've got some great news for you. In 27 days, college football starts again! Now the Bears don't play until 34 days from now, but college football starts. I cannot wait! But let's say in this fictitious college football season, our Baylor Bears are playing the Aggies of Texas A&M., Okay? Not a real game this year, I knew someone would do it, it happens every time. And so, you know we're in Waco and I'm all in. I'm driving the bandwagon, "Sic 'Em Bears". I'm with most of you guys. So, we're going to go to the opening game where they play each other. It's Baylor against A&M. A&M kicks it off and Baylor gets that ball. Imagine that I've got my Baylor hat on, a Baylor jersey on, and my friend next to me has the same. Baylor gets the ball...we march down the field. It's another first down. And we go down...we score a touchdown... "Sic 'Em Bears". We're all fired up! Right, we're up seven to nothing

Okay, we kick off and now A&M gets the ball. And this guy that I'm with takes off the Baylor hat, takes off the green jersey and puts this disgusting maroon on. He puts on an Aggie hat and jersey. He reaches in his pocket, and he pulls out a ring that looks a lot like my high school class ring. Then he starts whooping and giggling and all this stuff. Then he's like, "Hullaballoo. Caneck. Caneck." Then "farmers fight! farmers fight!" A&M brings the ball down the field...they get a touchdown. Then he starts making out with the person next to him. It's really weird and confusing, but that's what Aggies do and so I don't understand but he does it. And then...and then the Aggies kick it off. Baylor gets the ball back...he takes off the maroon and puts on the green and when Baylor scores he joins in with "Sic 'Em Bears"! And then the Aggies get it back and he goes back and forth - it's confusing. Which team are we for? What are we doing? That what God's people are like here. It's like I'm going to worship this team one day...I'm going to worship this team the next day. It doesn't make sense. Decide who you're going to follow.

And we may think, well, we're not like that. We don't bounce back and forth on teams. We're not like God's people here, but I think we really are. See we all tend to waver in our faith. We're not as strong and fully devoted as we think we are or want to be. And here's what God's word says when we fence it and when we waver.

Galatians 1:10, **“Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”** Which is it? Worship people or worship God? Please people or please God?

Revelation 3:15 and 16, **“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”** Quit being so neutral and stuck in the middle. Be strong!

Matthew 6:24, **“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”**

We just waver back and forth. One of our core values here at Harris Creek is that we would be people who are devoted. That doesn't mean half-heartedly devoted. It's not to love the Lord with half your heart, half your soul, half your might. It's all of it. And so, we need to quit wavering. We've got to decide who we're going to follow.

And when we waver, here's what happens. We miss out on this deep intimacy with Jesus Christ. When we're half-hearted, we miss out on what it means to really be fully devoted, to benefit from walking with Him. We're weak in our faith and we waver, and we seek the approval of people, and we seek the stuff that comes from likes and follows and money. We become just like politicians, we just kind of waver between what the people want and we're missing out on a deep intimacy with Christ.

It's confusing. People leave the faith over hypocrites and I'm not pointing the finger, I'm the same way at times. Author, Brennan Manning, says, *“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. This is what an unbelieving world finds simply unbelievable.”* This is the most important decision that we will ever make...who we are going to follow. Not what school will you go to, not who will you marry, not what job will you take...but who will you follow? And so, we need to be people who decide that we're going to follow the Lord and stop wavering between the Lord and the world.

The story continues in verse 22, **“Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. 23 Get two bulls for us. Let Baal’s prophets choose one for themselves and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”** Then all the people said, **“What you say is good.”**

So, I've read this story a bunch of times over the last couple of weeks and months. Just been stuck in it, learning from it and every time I read it, it kind of reminds me of this...it's a little bit of a boxing match. Okay, maybe you've seen Space Jam. There're two teams. There's one side

and the other. And they're competing against each other. And I almost picture it like this...the mic drops from the ceiling and the MC grabs the mic. And he says, "LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE! On this side, we have accompanied by his wife, Jezebel and 450 prophets of Baal. The god he represents holds a lightning bolt in one hand and a club in the other. He is the most wicked king in the history of evil kings. Let's give it up for Ahab!!!" And the people are going crazy!!

Then the MC says, "And in the other corner, smells a little bit funny, clothes are funny, he has no friends. He's all by himself. He's from Tishbe. Let's give it up for Elijah." Don't you picture that as well? That's what I picture every time. Right? And so, the two sides...it's not fair. Okay, all the people are over here on Ahab's side. This is the winning side...the home side...home field advantage. Everyone's rooting!! This is what it would be like.

There are five to six hundred in this room. It would be like all of you against me. That's not me saying you're the bad guys and I'm Elijah. The good guy and the one sole one cheering for the Lord, but I am saying that it would be an unfair fight. And that's what we got here. We've got all the numbers, the home field advantage, everything on this side. Then one person all by himself speaking truth.

The story continues, **"Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." So, they took the bull given them and prepared it.**

**Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.**

**At noon" This is one of the best parts. "At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So, they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.**

So, Elijah says to them, "Let's each take a bull you go first. You cut yours out, you put it on the altar. They cut it up, they're dancing around it. There are 450 of them dancing around like a bunch of maniacs. They are screaming on the ground – up then down worshipping and screaming. Elijah on the other side says, "Hey! Where's your god?" The ESV translation actually says maybe he's in the bathroom. Potty humor - maybe he's in the bathroom. He's dropping a deuce and the fan is on. I don't know what's going on. He's watching the Olympics. He's cheering really hard for team Israel or whatever team he's cheering for. I don't know it. Maybe he's watching Ted Lasso. He's really consumed, and he can't hear you. Maybe he's sleeping or he's traveling. Wake up."

And so, they start going louder and crazier. And they're not just dancing. Now they grab swords and start cutting themselves and their blood is going everywhere. This is like every teenage boy's favorite story - potty humor and blood and drama - it's amazing. Blood is going everywhere...and nothing happens. No one answered...the fire remains unlit.

## 2. *A false god never delivers.*

And you may be thinking that we are not like the prophets of Baal. We don't dance around. We don't slash ourselves. We don't cut. We're different than they are...or are we? Just like I think we're a little bit like the people of Israel, I think we're like the prophets of Baal. Now our worship may not be the same worship that they have, but we have things we worship. What about that Baylor game in the beginning? Maybe you worship Baylor. Depending on what happens in that game. - if the Bears win, it's the best day ever and if they lose, things are horrible. You're grumpy. You get frustrated. You say bad words. Maybe you worship "Likes, Followers, and Shares". And so, you share something on Instagram. Then you come back a minute later to see how many people liked it. How many people commented? Did it get shared to somebody's story? If it does, great! I'm worth something. If it doesn't, then I'm miserable. I worship the god of attention. Maybe it's your grades. Maybe you find your value in athletic ability; the car you drive; the home you own; the shoes you wear; the pants you wear. I mean when you find your value in anything but Jesus, we worship these false gods, and they are never ever going to deliver.

Christopher Wright says in the book, *Here are your Gods, "The worship of Baal is alive and well in western culture - with our idolizing of sex and money. As the Canaanites (and Israel after them) worshiped fertility in its broadest sense, so we worship its modern equivalents."* What I've seen in my life, what I've seen in countless other lives, is that the false god will never, ever come through. No high is good enough. No binge is good enough. It's never going to satisfy. You're always going to come back for more. And the reason Baal doesn't answer, is because he's a false god who cannot see, cannot hear, cannot walk, cannot feel. He cannot do anything.

See, I know what it's like to worship a false god. I would largely tell you the reason why I am no longer in Dallas, Texas and why I'm in Waco, is because I burned out of my prior job. I thought I would die in Dallas. I thought they'd have to roll my bones out of our home in Richardson or church at Watermark. I loved working there, but I burned out. The god that I worshiped was the false god of my reputation. I cared so much about what other people thought of me. And so, every opportunity I got I took. Every chance to teach; every chance to write; every chance to expand my influence and my job. I said yes, and I said yes, and I said yes.

Maybe, if I get enough approval, maybe if I do enough stuff, maybe if I get enough likes/follows, enough money...then maybe...it'll be worth it. And some of that stuff came. I got a book deal. I got a bigger job. I had a team I led. But I was empty. There could never be enough. Along the way, I burned myself out. I stayed up till 1 am working. I'd get up at 5 am. I neglected my health. I was overweight, my blood pressure high - every issue you could think of. I neglected my kids. I didn't miss many of their games, but most of the games I was at I was consumed by work. I'm checking my email and texting and working all the time. And I'd stay up so late and

get up so early and it was never enough. I burned out...and I got tired...and fortunately I went through a period of rest and healing. I am so glad to be here in this place. And I'm still not over it, but I'm working and moving in the right direction. I'm incredibly grateful. But I worshiped my reputation. We all have false gods that we worship, and they will never ever ever deliver.

Verses 30-35, I'm going to summarize this portion of the text. So, Elijah says to the people, "You've been watching Ahab and the prophets of Baal try to do their thing. It hasn't worked. I want you to come over here now." He calls them over, he prepares the altar, and puts the wood out. He gets 12 stones, one stone for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. I think it's a little bit of a reminder when he puts the stones down. As he puts the stone down for Benjamin and he looks and sees someone from the tribe of Benjamin. As he puts the stone for Dan down, he sees somebody from the tribe of Dan and somebody from the tribe of Judah. And he's reminding them of when they used to be the same? "Remember when we were all the same - God's people working together? We weren't divided and we worshiped the One True God, but now we're split into two kingdoms and we're worshipping false gods. Do you remember?"

So, he reminds them to worship the Lord. He puts 12 stones down, he cuts the bull, he puts the bull on the altar and then he does something crazy. He says, "Let me get four guys. I want you to take four large barrels and I want you go to all the way down this big mountain. Go find four barrels of water." So, they find four barrels of water and they bring it up. Then he tells them to dump it on the altar. So, they pour it all over the altar. There's a little trench he built around the outside of it. He says, "Go down and do it again." They go down the mountain, get four more barrels and bring it up. Can I remind you they're in the middle of the three-year severe famine? They find water and they do it a third time. There's 12 large barrels of water on top of this altar. The wood is soaked, the animal is soaked, the trench around it is full.

I'm not a big camping guy, but I think it's probably pretty hard to light a soaking wet fire. Why don't you go swim underneath water and see if you can set something on fire underwater? That is what he's doing. He's stacking the deck against himself and it's kind of crazy. Right. He's going to get killed. There are 450 crazy people here - we know they have knives and swords. Elijah is all there by himself. He's wasting water. He's wasting their time. He douses his altar with water.

**Verse 36, "At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!"**

Do you know what Elijah means? It means 'The Lord, He is God'. That's what his name means! Elijah did not dance around the fire. He didn't cut himself. He didn't slash. He didn't scream. He simply did the humble thing; he falls down on his face and he prays. He says, "God this is not for me. This is not about me. This is about your fame, your renown. Would you please turn your



people's hearts back again?" The fire falls. It sets the thing on fire - everything is burned up. The visual - think of it - of this fire that has burned up completely and the other one still has the bull on it. Nothing has happened to it. The true Lord has done the work here.

### *3. The true God always delivers.*

What we see over and over and over and over and over in the Scriptures... is that God consistently stacks the deck against Himself. Think of the odds in this one... They've got home turf - Mount Carmel is probably the home of Baal. They've got the numbers. Their altar is dry. Elijah is all by himself. He's got a soaking wet altar, it's not his home turf, and God set the one on fire. The true God always delivers.

Remember the story of Moses? God's people leave Egypt. They've got the most powerful person in the universe chasing after them with thousands of troops and chariots. And here are God's people - slaves with no money, with nothing. All they have is what they got from the Egyptians. They come up against this Red Sea. The deck is stacked against God, but He splits the sea. He delivers His people. God puts Daniel in a den with a bunch of lions. God closes the mouths of the lions and spares Daniel. The Midianites are attacking God's people. Gideon takes 300 men and defeats thousands of Midianites. The true God always delivers, and it does not matter how badly the deck is stacked against Him.

I know this story personally because the deck was significantly stacked against me. I grew up in the northeast. I don't know if any of you are from the northeast, but people don't talk about their faith in the northeast. I grew up in a home with a mom whom I love. My dad died at a young age. I have one brother. We were not a Christian family. I found pornography at the age of seven and became full-on addicted and lived out everything I saw over the next couple years. I started drinking; started doing drugs; got a potty mouth - you already heard that. I'm a glutton. I worship my reputation. God can't save me! It's like I've been doused with water all over me...there is no hope. At the age of 22, I'm in North Carolina and I meet this guy named Will Hall. Will shares the Gospel with me. It's the first time I think I've ever heard the Gospel in my life. And I wasn't interested in what he shared, but I was intrigued by his life and the way he lived.

I moved to Atlanta to go to grad school for physical therapy. Will moved to Atlanta and we started meeting on a weekly basis and he disciplined me. He taught me God's Word. We memorized scripture. I went to church, and I was in a small group. I started praying and I stopped doing all the bad stuff and started doing all the good. And I thought, 'Okay God, I'm a Christian now. I'm doing all the good and I've stopped all the bad. And for years, for week after week after week, I thought I was a Christian because I jumped around, and I slashed, and I danced, and I called God's name and I did everything that you're supposed to do to get His attention.

It wasn't until February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1998, when I finally surrendered my life to Jesus. I realized that there was nothing that I could do to earn His affection. It is by God's grace alone that I am saved. The same God who lit the fire, who can save me, is the same God who saves every one of us. The deck is stacked against every one of us because of sin. Here's what we know to be true - Romans 5:8, **“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we (you and I) were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

And we also see the deck stacked against the Son of God, Jesus. Born in a manger, born out of wedlock, a carpenter – He fails to meet everyone's expectations. Isaiah says that He was very humble in appearance. He's not somebody that people would look at to want to follow. He teaches all these amazing things, but the deck is stacked against Him. He goes to a cross, and He dies. They put him in the grave... the deck is stacked against Jesus. But God raises Him from the dead. In the most amazing act in the history of history...and all we need to do is to believe in what God has done through His son, Jesus. The same God who raised Jesus from the dead, is the same God who lit the fire, is the same God who took hold of my heart in February of 1998 and is the same God who sent His son for you and for me.

Here's what I know to be true about this story. On the surface this story looks like it is a battle between a lot of people and one person. It looks like it's a battle of Baal and 450 prophets and this powerful king and his wicked wife against one person all by himself. But the truth is that this is not a battle between many men and one man: between thousands of people and one. This is a battle between a false god and the one true God. See it really doesn't matter how many prophets there are on this side. It doesn't matter how many are against you - whether it's four or four thousand or four million or four billion. If you are on God's side, then you have everything you need. The true God always delivers! So, if the Lord is God, then let's be people who follow Him. We need to decide who we're going to follow. We need to realize that the false god will never ever, ever come through and that the one true God always delivers.

In the beginning of this message, I shared about a part of my life where I was not following God. I was half-heartedly following Him. I want to give you an opportunity to apply this to your own life as well. So, in every chair there should have been an index card, a blank index card when you walked in. I know a lot of you don't have pens, but if you do, I want you to grab a pen and I want you to write something on top of the card. I want you to write this phrase that's in 1 Kings 18:21 and the same phrase you've heard me say repeatedly. **If the Lord is God, then follow Him.** And if you don't have a pen borrow one from a neighbor or you can type it in your phone. I want you to take this home with you and I'm going to tell you what I want you to do with it. If the Lord is God, then follow Him and I want you to write underneath it, I want you to write what's the area of your life where you are not following God wholeheartedly. Maybe it's your words... Maybe it's your money... Maybe it's your eyes... If you don't think you have one, I'll give you the answer, pride... Maybe you're prideful... What is it in your life?

If the Lord is God, then follow Him. This could change every single day for me - it could be my eyes, it could be my thoughts, it could be money, it could be what I eat.

I've got four sons who I love dearly. I'm really proud to be their dad. They're 12 and 14 and 17 and 17 and the area where I am having trouble trusting God, is with their future and with their success. I just want to control it and give counsel and tell them what to do and what not to do. I just want God to be God in their lives, I don't want to be their god. So, for me it's success and future of my kids. I don't know what it is for you.

Here's what I want you to do with this card. This is not for you to keep on your own, this is for you to share with someone else. That doesn't mean go give it to a stranger. That means when you are with your Life Group, I want you to share the answer to this question. I don't want you just to sit here on Sunday and think that was a helpful message and forget it. This is an easy way for you to grow in community and to grow in your struggles. Share with your Life Group, share with your spouse, share with your roommates. If the Lord is God, I want to follow Him and here is where I need your help. Do that for each other. Let's be people who don't half-heartedly follow God, let's follow Him completely.

God, thank you that you chose to keep this text so that we could learn from it thousands and thousands of years later. God, I pray that we would be people who if we profess that you are the Lord then we're going to follow you. I pray that we would stop chasing after the false god. That we would stop worshiping the things of this world. Instead, God I pray that you would help us to see, to remember, to realize that you always deliver. It doesn't matter how badly the odds are stacked against us. You are the one true God! God, we confess, and we pray, and we dependently come to you and say we can't do this on our own. Apart from you we could do nothing. So, will you please help us to wholeheartedly follow you? God, we know that you are Lord and so let us follow you. If any in this room don't know you God, I pray that they would maybe for the first time hear the truth of the Gospel. To know about a God who loves them, loves them so much that You sent your son for us. We love you! Thank you for the truths that are within this passage.

In your name we pray, we know that you are God and so help us to follow you. In your name we pray – amen.