

Keep the Faith: Lessons from Africa (Week 3)

July 21st, 2024

“COURAGE VS. FEAR”

Primary Text: 1 Kings 19:1-21 (NLT) – *A story from the life of Elijah the prophet of God.*

Fear – *An unpleasant and often strong emotion caused by anticipation, awareness, or danger.*

Things we have heard:

- War of the Worlds – *Alien Invasion* 1938
- Global Ice Age – 1950's
- The Population Bomb - 1968.
- Killer Bees – 1980's.
- The Biggest fear today is Money – **Economy, Debt, and Income**, which affects the stewardship of people's finances.

Luke 12:4-5 (HCSB) ⁴ *“And I say to you, My friends, don't fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. ⁵ But I will show you the One to fear: Fear Him who has authority to throw people into hell after death. Yes, I say to you, this is the One to fear!*

The Contest

1 Kings 18:20-21 (NLT) ²⁰ *So Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to Mount Carmel. ²¹ Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, “How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!” But the people were completely silent.*

The Fear

1 Kings 19:1-3 (NLT) *When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ² So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: “May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them.” ³ Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there.*

How God Restores Courage to a Faith-filled Disciple of Jesus.

I'm Exhausted. I Need to Get Some Rest. Fear and anxiety were amplified and exaggerated when Elijah was tired.

1 Kings 19:5-6 (NLT) ⁵ *Then he (Elijah) lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, “Get up and eat!” ⁶ He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.*

Putting My Priorities in God's Order. Fear and anxiety affect my decision-making by replacing principles and values with urgency and crisis.

1 Kings 19:14-16 (NLT) *Elijah said, ¹⁴ “I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.” God replied, ¹⁵ “Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram. ¹⁶ Then anoint Jehu grandson of Nimshi to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet.”*

Trusting Gods Sovereignty Over the Worlds Panic. Hoaxes, lies, and headlines have to be confronted with the character of God in our past, present, and future.

1 Kings 19:18 (NLT) ¹⁸ *yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!”*

2 Timothy 1:6-8 (HCSB) ⁶ *Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands.* ⁷ *For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.* ⁸ *So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me His prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.*

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

1. How have past fears like the War of the Worlds, Global Ice Age, the Population Bomb, Killer Bees, Y2K panic been amplified by media and societal influences, affecting our responses to uncertain events like the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Can you share a personal story of how media, relationships, or cultural narratives influenced your thoughts and actions through fear?
3. How do you sift truth from misinformation in a world filled with sensationalized stories, especially when faced with fear-inducing information?
4. How do you relate to the dilemma the Israelites faced between faith and societal pressures during Elijah's confrontation on Mount Carmel?
5. How does reverent fear of God, rather than paralyzing dread, impact your strength and faith during challenging times?
6. How can lessons from past societal fears help us confront present anxieties and crises with resilience and faith?
7. When have your fears overshadowed your faith, and how did you refocus on God's sovereignty?
8. Share a time when fear challenged your faith in God's providence, and how you regained peace and trust in His control.
9. How can Elijah's experience in the cave inspire seeking solace and guidance during times of fear and uncertainty?
10. Reflect on how you align your priorities with God's Kingdom values to overcome fear and find direction.
11. How can you prioritize seeking God's Kingdom daily to combat fear and align with His will, as advised in **Matthew 6:33**?