

Earth, Wind, & Fire

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2-7 Read all from Keynote. [Chairs!]

II. Slide8 **Intro:**

A. Have you ever run away? Have you ever struggled with depression? A Lapse in faith? Tired of ministry? Failure? Ever just want to die? [well, you're in good company]

1. Could be because of a *relationship problem*...most are. Could be because of *stress. Overstrained. Over worked.*

B. Slide9 Map - Carmel to Jezreel (18m) to Beersheba (125m./ultramarathon) to Wilderness (20m?) to Horeb to Damascus. [Just under 12 min miles if ran all 24 hours, did in a day]

C. Outline: *Elijah under a Tree. Elijah in a Cave. Elijah in a Field.*

III. Slide10 **ELIJAH UNDER A TREE (1-7) w/his own thoughts**

A. (3) He ran for his life - it's interesting in ch.18 *he risked his life for God's Glory*, in ch.19 *he try's to save his life for his own sake.*

1. Here he believed the queen's words & not God's word. Fear replaced Faith.

2. In vs.3 *he ran for his life*, in vs.4 he wanted to *run from life (he wanted to die).*

B. Certainly there was a **physical** cause to his failure: the great contest on Mt. Carmel had undoubtedly **wearied** Elijah **and drained** him emotionally. Christians would do well to take better care of their bodies, especially after times of intense ministry and sacrifice.

1. Slide11 Mark 6:30,31 *Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. 31 And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.*

2. But the main cause for Elijah's failure was **spiritual**: he saw Jezebel **and** failed to see the Lord. He listened to Jezebel's threats and forgot to wait for God's promises.

C. (4) **Praying to die** - Moses felt this way (Numb.11). As did **Jonah**. As did **Jeremiah**.

1. I bet you have also. *I know I have.*

- a) But *taking your life* isn't the answer to *despair* for 2 reasons: **1) it is selfish**
2) it does not bring glory to the Lord.

2. Let those who **long to die**, leave **God** to choose the day; else they may miss the horses and chariots of fire. F.B.Meyer

D. (6) In a desert...that's good stuff (fresh bread & cool water).

IV. Slide12 **ELIJAH IN A CAVE (8-18) w/God**

- A. (8) **Horeb, the mountain of God** - in contrast to *the mountain of Baal* (i.e. Carmel at that time) 18:42.
- B. We could call this *Elijah's Man Cave*. Or, *Elijah the Cave Man*. *Elijah Spelunking or Caving*.
- C. (10) Note 2 exaggerations here:
1. *The children of Israel have forsaken Your cov* (really? see 18:39).
 2. *I alone am left* (really? see 18:4 Obadiah's 100?)
 - a) **Depression** can cloud our thinking, it can distort what is true.
- D. (13 & 9) **What are you doing here, Elijah?** - God *had not* sent him here as He had directed him to other places.
- E. (18) For each **public** servant of God who is known, there maybe thousands of secret disciples. *Careful on your judgments*.
- F. Let's remember this verse as we continue...Ps.103:13,14 *As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame* (or, understands our constitution; how weak we are); *He remembers that we are dust*.
- G. Slide13 Look at God's **3-fold approach** to bringing *healing* to Elijah:
1. He **comforts** him 1st (4-10). Then **teaches** him (11-14). Then **restores** him(15-18)
- H. **Did you see where God starts?** It's where you & I should start also...**Level#1**.
- I. We want to start at *level 2*. *We want them fixed*. So we give them a teaching or a verse...*Rom.8:28 bro!* When maybe it's best to bring *them a meal*.
1. At a conference I was at, the speaker brought up the point...**We bring meals to women who have just had a baby, or had surgery...but** have we ever thought to bring a meal to someone with *depression* or *mental illness*? (why not?)

- a) **How graciously God refreshed His servant.** The Lord knew that Elijah needed **food** and **rest**, as well as *spiritual quickening*.
- b) Here God **let's him find rest**, **brings him a meal**, **let him rest again**, then **brought him another meal**.
2. Just start there! **Maybe** instead of just feeding Elijah once he's letting us know that there might be **a length of time** involved. *It might be a few times/days for some. A few weeks for others. A few months for others.*
3. **Level #2** is where the healing comes in...**but** again might just take some time to get there. **Be patient.** **Level 2** is where you get the opportunity to remind or teach them...**who God is, and how to hear His voice.**
- a) Yes **God is Fire** & as we saw in the last chapter, He can show His presence in fire.
- (1) But often we think more in terms of a **fireplace** or **fireworks**...
Fireplace, warm/cozy (too familiar).
Fireworks, takes us high but leaves us low (too emotional).
He's more like a solar flare! [dangerous & illuminating]
- b) **Slide14** But He **wasn't** in the *Earth/quake, Wind or Fire* :)
- c) **Slide15** God appears to Elijah in a **still small voice** - (*lit. the sound of thinnest silence*) a delicate whispering voice. Literally, *the tone of a gentle blowing* (K&D).
- (1) **The sound...of silence!** Huh, that sounds like an old Simon & Garfunkel song...*Hello darkness my old friend, I've come to talk with you again, Because a vision softly creeping, Left its seeds while I was sleeping, And the vision that was planted in my brain. Still remains. Within the sound of silence.*
- (2) **Slide16** When you're trying to hear God's voice/will for your life...**what are you listening for?** *Thinnest silence? Delicate whisper?* [not always big/noisy]
- d) God shows He's not only **more powerful** than Baal, **but** more importantly, in His *essence* He was a being who was *totally other* (transcendent) **than** the deity worshipped on Mount Carmel.
- (1) Nature is often times in Scripture the vehicle of God's voice. **But** here the reminder, **not the storm of Sinai, but the whisper of Calvary is what touches & opens hearts.**

(2) We all need to get alone with God; are Carmels must be followed by our Horebs. Then we receive fresh commissions; and there God teaches us to inspire others purposes with which He has filled our own hearts. Meyers

e) The absolute silence of God echoed in Elijah's ears. And now with this *deeper understanding of the fullness of God* he's able to continue in ministry.

(1) God proved to be something quite different - far bigger - than he had ever expected. [*mowing my lawn*, I started crying, when I 1st was studying *God's Sov*]

4. **Level #3** is helping them to find **Purpose** in their life. [Call of Duty]

a) And Jn.10:10 is for *every Christian*...not just the mega-Christians.

b) *Slide17a I have come that they may have life, & that they may have it more abundantly* (NKJV). *My purpose is to give them a rich & satisfying life* (NLT). *I came so they can have real & eternal life, more & better life than they ever dreamed of* (MSG).

c) *Slide17b* (15-18) How exciting to hear those beautiful words *Go return!* *Backsliders may be encouraged by them. Go return, find purpose, reason* to live again. **Motivation** to get out of bed...or climb out of your cave. *Go return*, and find your **aim**, the **intention** for your life.

J. **Many allusions to Moses:** [He seems to reconnecting w/the God of Moses]

1. Both were 40 days/nights in the wilderness. Ex.24:18
2. Both lacked bread & water. Ex.3:6
3. Both met God on Sinai.
4. Both waited in a cave for a divine appearance. Ex.33:22
5. Both waited as God passed by both. Ex.33:22
6. Both covered their faces. Ex.3:6
7. Both men escaped fire & thunder as part of God's presence. Ex.3:2
8. Both get to appear later & meet with **Jesus**, *Mnt of Transfiguration*.
 - a) **Moses & Elijah**, the 2 greatest OT prophets

V. *Slide18* **ELIJAH IN A FIELD (19-21)** *w/his successor*

A. (19) *12 yoke of oxen* - symbolizes the wealth he was giving up.

- B. (20) What do you think is different with the guy Jesus was talking about who *went back*?
1. Lk.9:61,62 *Another said, Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but **first let me say good-bye to my family**. But Jesus told him, Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is **not fit for the Kingdom of God**.*
 2. Vs.21 gives us his purpose: He's burning his bridges...*literally*. Ending his old occupation.
- C. Elijah was not forsaken - for God was with him.
- D. Elijah was not alone - for 7000 hadn't bowed to Baal.
- E. Elijah was not finished (in ministry) - for God had work for him to do.
- F. Elijah was not finished (in his present ministry) - for God had a young man ready to be trained to take his place.