

Small Group Guide: Soul Care - Part 2

Based on the Life of Elijah | 1 Kings 17-18

Overview

This week's sermon continued our Soul Care series by examining two pivotal moments in the life of Elijah: the resurrection of the widow's son in Zarephath and the confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Through these events, we see how God works through life's deepest valleys to bring about repentance, resurrection, and revival -- and how persistent, faithful prayer is the engine behind it all.

Key Takeaways

- Some of life's deepest valleys come after life's highest highs. This is a pattern seen in the lives of Elijah, Moses, and even Jesus.
- When we are in the valley, God is not punishing us. He is pursuing us.
- Grief and doubt in the face of tragedy are not signs of weak faith. They are honest, human responses that God meets with compassion and power.
- The resurrection of the widow's son was a shadow pointing toward the greater resurrection of Jesus Christ, which changes everything -- our perspective, our grief, and our understanding of God.
- There is no revival without repentance, and there is no repentance without first recognizing the truth of the resurrection.
- Prayer was the consistent thread running through every miracle in Elijah's life. Faithful, persistent, specific prayer is what God calls us to.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Think about a time when a spiritual high was followed by a difficult low. Without going into too much detail if you are not comfortable, what was that experience like? Did it catch you off guard?
2. Before this sermon, how familiar were you with Elijah as a figure in Scripture? What did you already know about him, and what surprised you?

Digging Deeper

3. The sermon pointed out that both Elijah and the widow quickly forgot God's past provision when tragedy struck. Why do you think it is so easy to forget what God has done for us when we are in the middle of pain?
4. The widow assumed God was punishing her when her son died. The sermon made the distinction that God is not a punisher but a pursuer. How does that distinction change the way you process hardship in your own life? Is it easy or difficult for you to believe that in the middle of suffering?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, where Paul describes the hope believers have because of the resurrection of Jesus. How does the reality of the resurrection practically change the way we grieve? Have you seen this play out in your own life or in someone else's?

6. The sermon described Elijah's challenge on Mount Carmel as a direct confrontation between the real God and a false one. In what ways do people today -- even people inside the church -- waver between two opinions, as Elijah described? What does that wavering look like in modern life?
7. The sermon highlighted that every prayer Elijah prayed had one purpose: to reveal the truth about God to unbelieving people. How does that challenge or shape the way you think about your own prayer life? Are your prayers primarily inward-focused or outward-focused?
8. James describes Elijah as a man just like us who prayed earnestly and saw extraordinary results. What does it do for your faith to know that Elijah was an ordinary person? Does it make persistent prayer feel more or less accessible to you?

Personal Reflection

9. The pastor asked the congregation: Who is your one? Who are the specific people in your life who are far from God that you are praying for by name? Take a moment as a group to share one name if you are comfortable, and commit to praying for one another's people throughout the week.
10. The sermon ended with a challenge to pray over specific spaces -- chairs, classrooms, neighborhoods, boundary lines. What would it look like for you personally to take that kind of intentional, physical approach to prayer in your own home, workplace, or neighborhood?

Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following:

- Write down the names of one to five people in your life who are far from God. Place that list somewhere visible -- your refrigerator, your journal, your phone lock screen -- and pray over those names every day this week.
- Spend time in a specific physical space that matters to you -- your home, your workplace, a school -- and pray intentionally over that space and the people who occupy it.
- Reflect on a past valley experience and write down at least one way God was pursuing you during that time, even if you did not recognize it then. Share that reflection with a trusted friend or group member.
- Memorize Elijah's prayer from 1 Kings 18:37, where he asks God to answer so that people will know He is God and that He is turning their hearts back again. Use it as a template for your own prayers this week.
- If you are currently in a valley moment, resist the temptation to isolate. Reach out to one person in your group or church community and let them know where you are. Allow others to pray with you and for you.

Closing Prayer

Close your group time by praying specifically for the people each member named. Ask God to bring about repentance, resurrection, and revival in the lives of those who are far from Him -- in your families, your neighborhoods, and your community. Pray that God would set your hearts on fire and make your group a community of people who pray with the same earnestness and faith that Elijah demonstrated.