

The Law of Continuance - Elijah

Ice Breaker: How do you refresh yourself after being exhausted from stressful events or life circumstances?

Note: The first seven questions provide depth and context to the passage covered in the sermon. You may cover the context or skip to 1 Kings 19 and begin with question 7 if your group is familiar with the events on Mount Carmel.

Read 1 Kings 16:29-33, 17:1

1 Kings 16:29-33 (NIV) *29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. 30 Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. 31 He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. 32 He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. 33 Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him.*

17:1 *Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."*

1. What do we learn about King Ahab, Jezebel, the Lord, and Elijah? What is the judgment of the Lord as spoken by Elijah? (Deuteronomy 11:16-17)

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 (NIV) *16 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. 17 Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will*

yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you.

Read 1 Kings 18:1-6

1 Kings 18:1-6 (NIV) *1 After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land." 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria, 3 and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, his palace administrator. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the Lord. 4 While Jezebel was killing off the Lord's prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) 5 Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals." 6 So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.*

2. How long has the drought persisted and what was the result? What are King Ahab, Jezebel, the Lord, and Elijah doing at this point?

Read 1 Kings 18:16-22

1 Kings 18:16-22 (NIV) *16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" 18 "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. 19 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." 20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. 21 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. 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.*

3. What was Elijah's challenge to the people? How did the people respond? In what way does the world try to waver between two (or more) opinions when it comes to God?

Summary of 1 Kings 18:23-38

Elijah then suggested a challenge to see which god was the true God, Baal or the Lord. The 450 prophets of Baal were to choose from two bulls which one they will cut into pieces and put on wood for a fire. Elijah would do the same. Each were to call on their god to send fire and burn up the meat. The one that sends down fire will be the true God.

The 450 prophets went first and called on the name of their god from morning to noon. When nothing happened Elijah began taunting them. So they began shouting louder and slashing themselves with swords and spears. Still no response.

Then Elijah called all the people assembled to help him rebuild the torn down altar of the Lord. He dug a trench around the altar and put meat on the wood. He then had the people pour four large jars of water over the wood and the offering. He had them do it three times. At the time of the sacrifice, Elijah 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."

38Then 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.

4. In what way does God want to use us to demonstrate that He is Lord? How should we be praying for our nation, fellow Christians, and the world?

5. What was the result of this demonstration of God's power at the altar?

1 Kings 18:39-41 (NIV) *39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!" 40 Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there. 41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain."*

6. How did the people respond to this demonstration? How do you think Elijah felt at this moment?

Read 1 Kings 19:1-10

1 Kings 19:1-10 (NIV) *1 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." 3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. 7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and*

spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

7. What was the response of King Ahab, Jezebel, Elijah and the Lord to the previous events?

8. Why did Elijah travel to Mount Horeb? How do you respond to fear or threats?

9. Why do you think Elijah gave into fear and depression after God had just done an amazing demonstration of His power?

SERMON POINT 1: ANTICIPATE THE LOWS AFTER THE HIGHS and **SERMON POINT 2:** TAKE CARE OF THE BASICS: FOOD, EXERCISE & REST

10. Tell about a time you experienced a letdown after a success. How can we prepare ourselves ahead of time for the letdowns after success?

11. How is God's response to Elijah an encouragement for us?

SERMON POINT 3: BEWARE OF THE PITY PARTY

12. How does Elijah's response to the Lord's question in 1 Kings 19:9 show that he had become self-focused and had lost a clear perspective? (Recall 1 Kings 18:4, 30, 39 and look forward to 1 Kings 19:18)

13. How does fear keep us from seeing what God is doing in our midst? How does God show up in times of fear?

Read 1 Kings 19:11-18

1 Kings 19:11-18 (NIV) *11 The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He replied, "I*

have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” 15 The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

**SERMON POINT 5: FIND GOD’S PRESENCE IN THE WORD, NOT THE
DRAMATIC CIRCUMSTANCE**

14. What does 1 Kings 19:11-13 tell us about the presence of God? What can we do to have clear perspective even in troubling times?

15. God is expanding Elijah’s ministry by having him anoint Hazael king over Aram and Jehu as future king over Israel and Elisha as his apprentice. How did God’s new assignment show Elijah that He has a plan for him and is working his will? How does knowing God has a plan and uses us in its execution encourage you?

16. Why is it important to involve others in the work that God is doing in and through us?