

## When God Picks You Up

Series: Days of Elijah

1 Kings 19:1-9

July 24, 2016

Welcome again to worship. I'm so glad you are here.

Before I begin my sermon today, I want to say something. Last week, I said some things that hurt, upset, and caused discomfort for several of you. I want you to know that I never intended for my words to do that, but after the fact, I realized the depth of the hurt you felt. I want to publically apologize to anyone I hurt. I am truly sorry.

I felt hurt as well, knowing that I hurt you, as did Myra. This made us realize something. We already know that we love this church and all who are here, but this made us see even clearer the depth of that love when we realized the pain you felt and that I caused. Again, I apologize that you were hurt. I am truly sorry.

You know, sometimes in families, we all say things, do things, react to things that we wished we had not done. It happens. We don't always agree in families, but what we do is work it out. We talk. We work out our problems. They ask for forgiveness.

And there are times when in life we make mistakes. We get ourselves into situations that we later realize we wished we hadn't.

And you know, the great thing about the Bible is that it is not afraid to talk about those things, those events in the lives of God's people when they were not what God intended. The Bible doesn't sugar-coat or ignore the faults and failings of the people in the Bible. It is not some "yes-book" that only tells you how great and awesome and spectacular this person or that person is. It tells you the people's struggles as well. Think about it:

- Adam and Eve: They were the first people God created. No one else will ever be those two. Pretty special. Walked and talked with God every evening in the most beautiful garden ever. But the Bible tells us that they disobeyed God.
- Noah: Built this incredible ark and saved his family and the human species as well as the animals. Afterwards, gets stone cold, flat out drunk. I mean, wasted, and it causes division in his family.
- Abraham: followed God's call to go to a new land and was called righteous because of his faith. But he was a liar and didn't completely trust that God would protect him.
- His wife Sarah: she went with Abraham on this journey of faith. She was promised that she would have a son... and she laughed, then when she was confronted, she tried to say she didn't laugh.
- David: Here was a man after the heart of God, who dreamt of building a Temple to God. He also seduced a married woman, then had her husband killed to cover it up.
- Solomon: He became king after his father David. God came to him and told him He will give him anything he would want. (I would have probably asked for an airplane!) Instead of riches or power, Solomon asked for wisdom to rule the people. God was so impressed and pleased that He told Solomon, "I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for – both riches and honor – so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among

kings.”<sup>1</sup> But Solomon let the power and prestige go to his head and had 700 wives and 300 concubines, and then started worshipping false idols, so that when he died, the country was in such turmoil that it split in two.

During our series “Days of Elijah,” we have talked about the prophet Elijah. I want to invite you to take your Bible and turn to 1 Kings 17.

When we look at Elijah’s ministry, we see an impressive resume.

- Chapter 17: He confronted the evil king Ahab with some pretty bad news: no rain until God says so.<sup>2</sup>
- He trusted God with his life when God said to hang out beside a brook and wait for ravens to feed you.<sup>3</sup>
- He then followed God’s command and went to a town in Sidon, and in the process saved the life of a widow, as well as her son, not once, but twice.<sup>4</sup>
- Chapter 18: After 3 years of drought, Elijah was pitted against 850 pagan prophets at Mt. Carmel. He confronted the people of Israel: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”<sup>5</sup> Then he and God defeat the prophets of Baal and Asherah.<sup>6</sup>
- Verse 41: He told Ahab that rain was coming, and if he wants to make it back home, he would need to leave immediately. Then verse 45-46. Elijah became like the Six Million Dollar Man and outran Ahab’s chariot the 6 miles to the town of Jezreel.<sup>7</sup>

That’s some pretty awesome stuff. But here is where we see Elijah falter some, and because the Bible is not afraid to point out the blemishes, we can learn something about the God we serve.

I invite you to turn to 1 Kings 19.

READ VERSE 1-2

Jezebel was enraged about the death of her prophets because they had told her everything she wanted to hear, prophesying her future power and glory. Their job was to deify the king and queen and help perpetuate their kingdom. Jezebel was also angry because her pride and authority were damaged. Elijah was a constant thorn in Jezebel’s side because he was always predicting gloom and doom. Since she could not control his actions, Jezebel vowed to kill him.<sup>8</sup>

So what does Elijah do when he hears Jezebel’s threat from her messenger?

READ VERSE 3a

He was afraid and ran for his life. Elijah had shown himself to be a man of faith and courage who trusted God for miracles. He had just won a great spiritual victory. 850 to 1 odds were no big deal to him, but 1 to 1, Jezebel verses him... that’s too much to take. The shock of Jezebel’s resistance after Mount Carmel led Elijah to forget the power of God, so he fled.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 3:12-13 (NIV)

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 17:1

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Kings 17:2-6

<sup>4</sup> See 1 Kings 17:7-24

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings 18:21 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> See 1 Kings 18:1-38

<sup>7</sup> See 1 Kings 18:46

<sup>8</sup> Life Application Study Bible, 1 Kings 19:2

### READ VERSE 3b-4a

From Jezreel in the north to Beersheba in the far south of the Promised Land – as far away from Jezebel as he could get. The distance from the top of Mount Carmel to Beersheba was about 120 miles, which would have taken an ordinary single traveler around six days.<sup>9</sup>

Elijah is upset, but what is he upset about? Why would he leave his servant at Beersheba and go another day's journey? They are far away from Jezebel's reach. They are in the Kingdom of Judah now, not Israel. And even if Jezebel's had sent a hit squad, and if they had found Elijah's servant, wouldn't that help narrow the search area. It would have been safer to stay together.

But this isn't about safety. No indeed, it is about something else.

### READ 4b

Elijah experienced the depths of fatigue and discouragement just after his two great spiritual victories: the defeat of the prophets of Baal and the answered prayer for rain. Often discouragement sets in after great spiritual experiences, especially those requiring physical effort or involving great emotion.

### MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCES

### FUNNY VIDEOS OF PEOPLE BEING THROWN OFF A TREADMILL

It strikes me that many of us feel like we're on emotional treadmills. Our lives are going faster and faster and we don't know how to slow them down. Some of you wonder how much longer you can keep up the pace. Others of you have been thrown off, and you're not sure how to get back up.

To lead him out of depression, God begins to work.

### READ VERSE 5-8

God first let Elijah rest.

Second, God used the broom tree to comfort him, to give him shade, to remind him of the beauty around us. The broom tree is a bush with many branches and twigs, small leaves, and clusters of flowers.

Third, God gave Elijah a message. Before, Elijah has been responding only to Jezebel's "messenger." The Hebrew word is *mal'ak*. Now it is God's turn to take the initiative with His own *mal'ak*, an "angel" or messenger of His own. It is God's first move in leading Elijah back onto the path of faith from which he has strayed.<sup>10</sup>

This angel tells Elijah that the journey is too great. Elijah thought his journey was over; he has had "enough." Again we have a word play. Elijah says he has had "enough;" the Hebrew is *rab*. But now the angel tells him he is to fortify himself for a further journey, which will otherwise be "too great" (also *rab*). Food is God's response to Elijah both when he cries "enough" and when he needs "enough."<sup>11</sup>

And that journey ends up at Mount Horeb. Anyone know the other name for Mount Horeb? Sinai. And what happened at Sinai?

When Elijah fled to Mount Sinai, he was returning to the sacred place where God had met Moses and had given his laws to the people. Obviously, God gave Elijah

<sup>9</sup> English Standard Version Study Bible, 1 Kings 19:3

<sup>10</sup> English Standard Version Study Bible, 1 Kings 19:5

<sup>11</sup> English Standard Version Study Bible, 1 Kings 19:7

special strength to travel this great distance – over 200 miles – without additional food. Like Moses before him and Jesus after him, Elijah fasted for 40 days and 40 nights.<sup>12</sup>

READ VERSE 9

COMMENT

WHERE WERE YOU

“Where were you, Lord,

When my heart was breaking in two?”

“I was there”, the Lord said,

“Holding it together for you.”

“Where were you, Lord,

When fear showed its face to me?”

“I was there,” the Lord said,

“Protecting you from its grasp and keeping you free.”

“Where were you, Lord,

When circumstances turned my joy to pain?”

“I was there,” the Lord said,

“Those were my tears you felt, not tiny drops of rain.”

“Where were you, Lord,

When my eyes were blinded and I could not see?”

“I was there,” the Lord said,

“Guiding you where you needed to be.”

“Where were you, Lord,

When I thought for me death would be best?”

“I was there,” the Lord said

“Giving you purpose. Giving you rest.”

“Where were you, Lord,

When storms of life encircled me?”

“I was there,” the Lord said,

“Surrounding you with my arms and holding you next to me.”

“Where were you, Lord,

When confusion came and I didn’t know what to do?”

“I was there,” the Lord said

“I placed peace inside of you.”

“Where were you, Lord,

When around me my enemies did swarm?”

“I was there,” the Lord said,

“Protecting you from harm.”

“Where were you, my child

When I called out your name?”

“I was busy and didn’t hear you Lord,

I’m sorry and ashamed.”

“Your repentance has been heard,

I forgive you,” said the Lord.

“It is the heart inside I see.

When you’re in need just call on me.”

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<sup>12</sup> See Deuteronomy 9:9; Matthew 4:1,2

"I'LL BE THERE," said the LORD.