

When Enough Doesn't Seem Like Enough

I Kings 19:1-18

Elijah has been representing God to a very rebellious Israel. He has two great adversaries, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Therefore, Elijah has spent much time keeping himself secluded from public view. Because of Israel's idolatry, God, using Elijah, has caused it to not rain for 3 years. There has just been a showdown between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. God has caused Elijah to triumph gloriously. Exultant, Elijah comes down from the mountain and soon learns that his battle is not over. His enemy, Jezebel, is going to use her powers to destroy him. Physically and mentally exhausted, Elijah flees. Read I Kings 17-19.

The parallels between Moses and Elijah are tremendous. Here are just a few comparisons:

- Both confronted wicked, idolatrous Kings and were hunted by them.
- Both spent a lot of time in the wilderness. They were sustained and fed by God in the wilderness.
- Both met with God on Mount Horeb (Mt. Sinai). Note the use of the number 40.
- Both had the glory of God pass before them on the same mountain.
- Both had to deal with Israel's idolatry and unfaithfulness before God.
- Both battled with great troubles and discouragement. Through God, they kept serving.
- Both met with Jesus Christ on the mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9).

Now let's examine Elijah's experience, after fleeing Jezebel.

"It is enough now. O LORD, take away my life: for I am not better than my fathers." (I Kings 19:4) Elijah is feeling the exasperation of trying to improve his world and seeing that it is still the same (I John 2:15-17). God did not require Elijah to be better than anyone else. Our job is to be faithful, not to make comparisons (I Corinthians 4:1-7 cp. 3:1-8; II Corinthians 10:12,17-18 cp. 2:14 – 3:6; John 3:26-30). Note that God did not argue with this exhausted man. He let Elijah sleep and then He fed him (vs. 5-7).

"What are you doing here, Elijah?" (I Kings 4:9 & 13)

It was Elijah's idea to go to Mt. Horeb, not God's. He has already run the entire length of Israel. Now he is running into the wilderness. God is asking Elijah to think this through. Elijah's answer is evasive. His pride is confused. Didn't he do everything God asked? He has been patiently serving for years, enduring much trouble. Wasn't the victory on Mt. Carmel supposed to be the big turn around? Now everything should be different, but people are still stubborn and unbelieving.

Elijah is also experiencing self pity. "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (vs. 10 & 14). He has found no human encouragement. Elijah wants to simply escape what seems to be a hopeless situation.

"...Wind... earthquake... fire... a still small voice." (I Kings 4:11-12)

Elijah hides in a cave while the Lord makes demonstrations of His great power, but God gives no instructions or revelations during those demonstrations. Finally, there is a still small voice, like a gentle breeze blowing the leaves. Then God addresses Elijah's problem (vs. 18). God has been working and accomplishing His purposes, using Elijah the whole time. The results are within God's timing. As for Elijah, he has more work to do now that he's rested and has vented his frustrations (vs. 15-17). It doesn't look like Ahab and Jezebel have much future! Elijah was a courageous man. When we get away from the awe of God and from doing His will, our very strengths will become our weaknesses.