

Elijah Runs

1 Kings 19:1-18

King Ahab - missed what God had done. Instead, he ignored the facts about the Lord, and called attention to the acts of Elijah - how he had mocked the Baal priests, confused them, and eventually had the people help kill them. King Ahab's response took glory away from Yahweh, focused attention on the instrument, and fanned the flames of jealousy, revenge, and hatred.

Jezebel - Threats, relying on her gods again, futile she attacked God's servant, not the Lord, which would be unwise, People stubbornly cling to their self-made gods be it humanism, materialism, power, or whatever. Jezebel's actions were in keeping with her character. It's what we would expect,

Was Elijah anticipating a different response from Ahab and Jezebel?

Life is full of disappointments and if we are not extremely careful, those expectations will derail us as they become demands of our heart. It is not wrong for us to hope for the best and to look to the Lord for that. First Corinthians 13:7 says "love . . . believes all things, hopes all things." The same is true for faith. But 1 Corinthians 13:7 also says, "love bears all things, . . . endures all things." Please note, believing and hoping is sandwiched between bearing and enduring.

God holds us responsible for trusting in Him, for obedience, for love, for endurance, and for faithfulness to do what He has called us to do. He does not hold us responsible for the results. The results are in His hands, not ours. We can't change people, and we often can't change our circumstances, only God can. When we focus on our expectations and make the results we want the source of our happiness, security, or significance, we end up in the Elijah syndrome - fearful, ready to run away, and engulfed in feelings of failure and depression or fear and frustration.

Elijah's Humanity

Elijah reacted rather than responding to God. And so it can be with us. We so often react rather than respond by faith in what God is doing.

"Elijah was a human being as we are." James 5:17

"In fact, you have made my days just inches long, and my life span is as nothing to you. Yes, every human being stands as only a vapor." Psalm 39:5

"All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return." Ecclesiastes 3:20

Elijah entered the wilderness on his own accord, not God's. Nowhere in this chapter do we find Elijah calling on the Lord or seeking His direction. The problem was not that he arose and ran, or went down to the desert to hide. It was that he did so without God's direction and without God as his primary shelter.

How do we respond in the midst of life's troubles?

10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life."

Elijah suffered from loneliness, exhaustion, unrealistic expectations, continued comparisons to others, and fear of death.

God Answers Elijah's needs

(1) Before He dealt with Elijah's spiritual condition, He rejuvenated Elijah physically with rest and nourishment.

(2) He then got Elijah to face his true condition, the real problem. Taking the position of a counselor, the Lord twice asked Elijah "why are you here?" In other words, take stock, think about what you have been doing (vss. 9 and 13).

(3) God spoke to him personally in verses 9, 12, 13, and 15. This illustrates the need to be in the Word where we listen to the Lord (hear His still small voice), focus on Him, and apply truth.

(4) He got Elijah active and involved in ministry again. Note the "Go, return on your way . . ." in verse 15. Give it to the Lord. Rest, relaxation, and solitude with the Lord needs the balance of involvement in work and ministry, but always out of a spirit of faith, never just activity.

(5) God provided Elijah with a companion. He commanded him to find Elisha. Elijah was trying to do too much himself. He had to learn to share the work load and burden with others. Eventually, others must be able to share our load and even take our place.

Grace we are given

God has given us grace in our times of need.

“Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me. 10 So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:8-10